Björn Egner
David Sweeting
Pieter-Jan Klok *Editors*

Local
Councillors
in Europe

Springer VS

Urban and Regional Research International
Volume 14

Björn Egner • David Sweeting
Pieter-Jan Klok (Eds.)

Local Councillors in Europe

Springer VS

Editors
Björn Egner
Darmstadt, Germany

David Sweeting
Bristol, United Kingdom

Pieter-Jan Klok
Enschede, Netherlands

Contents

List of Tables and Figures

List of Figures

List of Tables

1 Local councillors in comparative perspective

Björn Egner, David Sweeting and Pieter-Jan Klok

This book is about local councillors. It presents the results of the third in a series of linked cross-national research projects on comparative urban and local governance research. All three projects have been undertaken by the 'Euroloc' research group – a network of academics with a focus on international comparative research in local government studies. After having concluded the 'Udite Leadership Study' on appointed municipal chief executive officers (see Klausen and Magnier 1998; Mouritzen and Svara 2002) and a comparative study on mayors (often referred to as the polleader project) (see Bäck et al. 2006), the research network addressed the largest number of political actors in local government, elected councillors. In doing so, the last angle of the 'local power triangle' between the head administrator (CEO), the political leader (mayor) and the representative assembly (council) was covered. In this and other publications, the project is often referred to as 'Municipal Assemblies in European Local Governance' or by the acronym *MAELG*.

With this book, we describe and analyse the recruitment patterns, career, party associations, role perceptions and behaviour, and attitudes to democracy, representation, and participation of local councillors. We also consider aspects related to gender and how it impacts on councillor views, explore differences between mayors and councillors, assess the impact of contextual and institutional factors on councillor attitudes, consider councillor views on reforms, roles in governance networks, and their perceived influence over local planning, all in cross-national perspective. In doing so, we analyse data collected in an international survey, covering about 12,000 members of the local political elite in fifteen European countries and Israel. We offer a first cut of our data to make them accessible for other researchers who are interested in local politics throughout Europe and beyond. Thus, the book serves as a foundation for further scientific work on local political elites in order to delve deeply into aspects of local politics.[1] We also aim to provide an insight comparing local politics over sixteen countries, that, as well as being an academic resource is also accessible and of interest to non-scientists outside academia. The book designed to give an analy-

---

[1] A special issue of *Local Government Studies* to be published in 2013, and an issue of *Lex Localis* published in 2012 provide such analyses.

sis of the data to researchers in the field, and also to provide interesting and useful information about local councillors to practitioners, policy-makers, and others interested in local politics.

This chapter discusses the position of councillor before moving on to discussion of the broader trends context within which councillors operate. We then describe the survey that was undertaken, before outlining the contributions of the chapters in this volume.

1.1   The local councillor

Councillors are a crucial element in local representative democracy, linking ordinary citizens to local decision-makers. The 'representational transmission of power' (Judge 1999: 9ff.) is a basic requirement for representative democracy, where there is a 'serial flow of authority from the electorate to their representatives in parliament and then to the government' (Judge 1999: 18). The same 'flow' applies at the local level from local electorates through councillors sitting in local assemblies and then onto the local political executive. Across the countries in this study, there are many different sorts of councillor who in different ways are involved in this transmission of power: differing, for example, according to whether they are paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time, members of the ruling coalition or not, hold executive responsibility or are 'non-executive', 'backbench', or 'ordinary' councillors. Nevertheless, they all have in common that they are 'in a position of formal authority… and [have] to assert [their] political convictions' (Stewart 1983: 71).

Councillors are in many ways the epitome and personification of local representative democracy. Without these locally elected politicians it is inconceivable that a local representative democracy would function in any recognisable way. According to Wilson and Game (2006: 253), elected councillors are 'the instruments through which the residents of a particular geographical area have expressed their preferences for one set of candidates, policies, service standards, and tax levels'. The responsibility is placed on councillors within a representative democratic system to carry out political functions such as resource allocation, judge between the demands of competing interests, and debate matters of public concern.

Councillors can be both internally and externally focused. They are both very much part of the fabric of internal municipal politics, and yet also members of the broader local polity. As Stanyer (1976: 111) observed, councillors are 'members of the local social and political systems, and thus by their existence provide links between the inside and outside of the council chamber'. Local councillors can have external roles within the local community, such as in local

civic organisations. They may also sit in different capacities on any number of boards or agencies. Some may also have roles at other levels of government. For example, Spanish councillors, in addition to a seat in the municipal chamber may also be provincial councillors (Alba and Navarro 2003). Similarly the now curtailed *cumul de mandats* in France allowed national politicians to retain links locally (Loughlin and Seiler 2001). Within the council chamber, there are different duties to perform – executive member, mayoral deputy, council chair or president, committee member, in addition to being a member of the full council.

Much research has considered the roles of councillors, with various typologies being put forward. For example, in the UK context, Barren, Crawley, and Wood (1991) put forward the broad roles of caseworker, manager, and policymaker of councillors, with individual councillors varying in this typology according to their own predispositions to councillor activity. Yet councillor roles are not generic across different systems, nor static in the face of reform. For example, in the Danish environment, and considering the impact of New Public Management (NPM) reforms, Hansen (2001: 117) argued that traditional councillor roles were joined by 'goal steering', requiring councillors to draw back from the minutiae of service delivery towards more strategic considerations of policy. Much of the empirical work on councillors has considered matters such as the social representativeness of councillors and their workload (e.g. Rao 1993). There remains however an absence of research about councillors in a comparative context (Brown et al. 1999).

In addition to the internal roles within the municipal chamber and the organisation of the municipality, and the external roles in the local political system, local councillors are, very often, party members, and play a significant role in attempting to bring their party's views to the fore in local politics. The strength of parties varies considerably between different nations, and within nations can vary according to different sorts of municipality. For example, parties are 'virtually non-existent' (Loughlin and Seiler 2001: 199) in French municipalities below 10,000 inhabitants, whereas in Sweden, for example, the role of parties in local government is stronger (Lidstrom 2001). The ways that councillors relate to their parties can be seen to impact on their role as representative – with questions arising as to whether councillors' loyalties lie with party or with their constituents.

Councillors in Europe are clearly part of the fabric of an internationally recognisable model of local government, for the most part built during the latter half of the twentieth century, entailing a role for them as representatives of citizens, in a local government system that takes on local welfare state functions with some variable degree of detachment from central government. That is not to say that there is not variation in that model. For example, Page and Goldsmith

(1987) and Hesse and Sharpe (1991) both identified different groups of local government systems in Europe. There is also more variation brought about by the democratisation of post-communist states in central and eastern Europe. However, that familiar model has come under stress from various broader forces for change that have led to changes in the governing environment internationally. We now consider the nature of those developments and consider how they might impact on councillors.

1.2   Broader trends and developments

Denters and Rose (2005a) point to several trends that impact on local government in Europe. They are: globalisation; Europeanisation; urbanisation; increased expectations for improved service performance; and greater calls for citizen participation in decision-making. They also note the trend towards local governance in many states (Denters and Rose 2005b). It is worth exploring these inter-related trends briefly in order to set the context for the exploration of councillors in this book.

The argument is often made that globalisation, defined as 'transplanetary process(es) involving increasing liquidity and growing multi-directional flows as well as the structures they create' (Ritzer 2011: 2) impacts on local governments – particularly large city and metropolitan governments – in ways that make them consider in addition to traditional, service based concerns, their profile more broadly. This is often connected to attracting inward investment, economic development, and place marketing (Denters and Rose 2005a). There is debate between about the extent to which cities merely compete with each other for inward investment, or are able to bargain with capital to shape economic development (Gross and Hambleton 2007). It would also be overstating the economic component of globalisation to restrict discussion to the economic realm. For example, 'glocal' leaders in can pursue economic, social, and/or political goals in the international arena (Martins and Rodriguez-Alvarez 2007). Nevertheless it is clear that global trends create gaps in which local governments are able to and expected to act.

Greater integration of European Union states under within the processes Europeanisation also gives municipalities spaces in which to act (Denters and Rose 2005a). Le Gales (2002: 98) characterises Europeanisation as 'a significant political opening', with municipalities able to bypass national level state institutions and gain influence in decision-making in Brussels, with possibilities to overturn national decisions in European institutions. Europeanisation has also prompted and supported the development of transnational city networks, such as

Eurocities, which enable city authorities to articulate the interests of the urban scale at a broader level.

Urbanisation continues across the world, and worldwide the urban population outnumbers the rural. However, as a global process there are uneven trends in urbanisation, with the developing world urbanising at a faster pace than the (largely already urban) developed world (Roberts, Ravetz, and George 2009). Indeed, some cities in western industrialised countries have lost or are losing population (Gross and Hambleton 2007). Nevertheless, the overall trend in Europe is for greater urban populations in larger cities, with urban regions or 'metropolitanization' a feature of advanced industrial societies (Hoffmann-Martinot and Sellers 2005). There are at least two features worth picking out in this picture of urban societies. The first is the diverse population that exists in urban areas, both in terms of matters such as class and identity, and 'new' population pulled in by migration, perhaps from other countries (Newman and Thornley 2011), and further accentuated by processes such as gentrification, adding middle class residents to traditionally working class areas (Atkinson and Bridge 2005). The second is the governance challenges that diverse urban areas present. Denters and Rose (2005a) discuss whether issues of fragmentation and co-ordination across metropolitan areas are a problem requiring attention from policy-makers in the form of institutional design, or whether existing authorities are able to co-ordinate to in order to govern effectively. Newman and Thornley (2011) refer in their discussion of the city region to different ways in which such governance challenges can be confronted, ranging from the creation of specific authorities (such as the Greater London Authority) to frail, issue specific collaborative arrangements.

This discussion of the challenges of governance in urban areas links to another trend discussed by Denters and Rose (2005b: 253) that of 'a shift from more traditional systems of local government to new forms of local governance'. This entails an appreciation of the contribution of various different interests – public, private, voluntary – in numerous different ways – in partnership, on joint boards, or as participants in governance networks in the provision of collective action in an area. Institutionally, according to the government to governance thesis, local state apparatus is considerably more complex and fragmented than it once was (Rhodes 2008). Municipalities operate in a system of multi-level governance, and alongside a large number of quasi-public and private organisations. Analysis of the government to governance phenomenon in Europe indicates that it is not simply a UK trend, and ways in which governance becomes embedded in urban areas differ between countries (John 2001; Denters and Rose 2005). There is also evidence that the extent of governance practices differs between nations, with Norway (Hanssen, Klausen, and Vabo 2006) and

Poland (Swianiewicz, Mielczarek, and Klimska 2006) both offering examples where the expected balance between municipal and non-municipal actors suggested by the local governance lens away from the municipality is not apparent. This implies that in both the post-communist context in Poland, and the social-democratic context in Norway, both to some extent resist the diffusion of governance. The broader point is that the actual practices of governance vary cross-nationally.

Denters and Rose (2005a) also argued that citizens are becoming more demanding in their relationships with local governments, in two ways. First, they demand improved performance, and greater efficiency from local government services, in the context of more individualised and instrumental citizen-state relationships. Many local governments have responded by introducing various market style reforms under the banner of NPM (Kersting and Vetter 2003). The second demand is for a greater say in the decision-making beyond traditional electoral channels. Municipalities have responded by increasing the use of mechanisms designed to facilitate greater citizen involvement in decision-making (Smith 2005). The demands for a greater say in decision-making also chime with the deliberative turn in democratic theory (Goodin 2008). Therefore, at the same time that many local governments are operating in a more fragmented environment, perhaps with less direct control over local service provision than they once had, the public expectations placed upon them to deliver high quality services is rising. Also, the onus may be on elected municipalities to provide channels of participation into governance networks where municipalities themselves have limited control over decision-making.

These processes can be seen to impact on councillors in many different, overlapping, and perhaps inconsistent ways, For example, in relation to globalisation and there is the broad issue of how much councillors value attracting inward investment to their localities in line with the economic logic of globalisation, as well as whether they adopt a primarily inward orientation to their role, or one which is more outward facing. For Europeanisation, the issue arises of how councillors view their role and that of their municipalities within a multi-levelled framework of governance. If urbanisation leads to diverse populations, issues of representation arise: do councillors represent all citizens, and the city at large, or target their representative efforts towards particular citizens or groups of citizens? Turning to the demands of citizens for better services, questions arise as to how councillors view reform efforts towards service improvement, and particularly whether they are disposed to support NPM-style reform efforts, or whether they are more oriented to more traditions forms of public service. For the demands for greater citizen involvement in policy-making, considerations arise about how councillors perceive democracy and mechanisms

designed to include citizens in democratic processes. Reflection on (local) governance prompts an interest in matters such as how councillors view municipal relationships with other actors locally, such as from the private and voluntary sectors, and the extent to which they ought to be involved in forms of collaboration with other agencies.

These processes and reform trends place the role of local councillors as central to the transmission of power from citizens to government outlined at the start of this chapter under strain. Councillors may be unable to transmit or exert power of any sort to or over decision-makers who exist beyond the walls of the municipal chamber, as is characteristic of local governance. The increased use of citizen involvement mechanisms brings another channel for the transmission of power to decision-makers, alongside, and perhaps in competition with that of councillors. The reforms that have been introduced in local governments across Europe in the last 20 years or so (albeit at different rates and to different extents) often appear to have been introduced in local government around local councillors, with little consideration as to the impacts on their role, with the main focus being on improving some other aspect of the system.

For example, several countries in Europe have introduced reforms to strengthen of leadership positions, including the creation of directly elected mayors (Borraz and John 2004). These reforms can bolster political leadership, but at the same can reduce the hold that local councillors have over their leaders. Despite their apparent central position in the institutions of local government, reforms often leave unclear the impact on councillors. The introduction of public participation mechanisms may increase citizen involvement, and perhaps lead to more informed decision-making, but it is often ambiguous if and how councillors are involved in these processes. Similar uncertainties arise around the activities of councillors in governance networks, and as was noted above, NPM reforms can change the orientation of councillors. More dramatically, institutional innovation can create or abolish large numbers of councillors if, for example new authorities are formed, or old ones abolished.

1.3   Structure of the book

The above issues present the context to this volume. The core concerns that lie at the heart of this book build on a long line of research exploring the nature of councillors and their positions in local government, and address the impacts of the recent reform trends as outlined above on local councillors. Therefore, issues of representation, party, gender, and roles are considered – taking in issues such as who councillors are, who they represent, and the influence of party. Democracy is also a central feature of this work, especially the ways in which council-

lors think about democracy beyond the representative sphere and taking into account changes in local democratic practice outlined above. Also with broader reforms in mind, issues of governance networks, councillor influence in development, and attitude to NPM reforms form part of this work.

The book consists of twelve thematic chapters from authors with different academic backgrounds with a common interest in local councillors (see list of contributors on p. 263). In line with other books produced from this research group, rather than attempting to impose some over-arching theoretical or conceptual device onto all contributions, we invite authors to explore the particular theme of their chapter using what they consider to be the most appropriate literature. There are of course limitations in researching these issues using survey data. However, the diversity in context and practice across different countries makes this fertile ground for research. The result is a rich and diverse consideration of the roles, activities, and attitudes of local councillors. Chapters are grouped into three broader blocks of chapters.

Chapters 2 to 5 deal with the *personal attributes and activities* of local councillors. In Chapter 2, Tom Verhelst, Herwig Reynaert and Kristof Steyvers introduce local councillors in terms of their social base, recruitment, activation and career development. They also critically analyse socio-structural attributes like profession, gender, age and education of councillors. In chapter 3, Eran Razin considers the relationship between councillors and their political parties. Chapter 4 by Pieter-Jan Klok and Bas Denters compares councillors' views on certain tasks which are associated with their roles as councillors and draws conclusions from a comparison of role perception and role behaviour across countries. In chapter 5, Hubert Heinelt analyses what councillors think about democracy and if concepts of democracy from political science can be linked to councillors' understandings of how democracy works in the local context.

Chapters 6 to 11 deal with councillors' views on *politics, representation, interest mediation and governance* in their municipalities. Chapter 6 by David Karlsson examines who councillors represent according to different representation styles from the literature, distinguishing between 'trustees', 'delegates' and 'party soldiers'. In chapter 7, David Sweeting and Colin Copus address one of the key questions of local democracy, which is citizens' participation beyond representational mechanisms. In their contribution, they search for patterns in the councillor views on different participation types such as traditional, consumerist and deliberative participation, co-governance or participation via direct democracy. Their chapter is followed by Panagiotis Getimis and Nikolaos Hlepas (chapter 8), who explain how councillors perceive their role as interest mediators for certain societal groups and how interest mediation at the local level differs between the countries covered by the survey taking into account

contextual factors such as city size. In chapter 9, referring to statistics from an earlier project on political leaders in European cities (see above), Dan Ryšavý compares self-perceived influence, distribution of time resources, seniority and future career ambitions of councillors and mayors as two distinctive groups of local political actors. Chapter 10 by Dubravka Jurlina Alibegović, Sunčana Slijepčević and Josip Šipić discusses the significance of gender for councillors' policy preferences and their views on local development. The second group of contributions is concluded by chapter 11, where Daniel Kübler and Larissa Plüss analyse networks in local governance and communication channels in local politics by comparing the influence of local actors and self-perceived influence by local councillors.

The third block contains two chapters with a clear *policy orientation*. First, Max-Christopher Krapp, Werner Pleschberger and Björn Egner (chapter 12) discuss the issues of internal administrative reforms at the local level by trying to find determinants for councillors' views on NPM across Europe. In Chapter 13, Panagiotis Getimis and Annick Magnier addresses the question of nature of the role and influence of local assemblies in governance through a focus on planning. The concluding chapter draws together the contribution of the work, offering overall conclusions on the nature of councillors in Europe. An Annex showing the questionnaire used completes the volume.

1.4   The survey

The survey was conducted by sixteen national teams consisting of the following members:

- *Austria*: Werner Pleschberger, (University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna);
- *Belgium*: Herwig Reynaert, Kristof Steyvers, Tom Verhelst (Ghent University),
- *Croatia*: Dubravka Jurlina Alibegović, Sunčana Slijepčević, Josip Šipić (Institute of Economics, Zagreb),
- *Czech Republic*: Dan Ryšavý (Palacký University Olomouc),
- *France*: Eric Kerrouche (Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Bordeaux Talence),
- *Germany*: Hubert Heinelt, Björn Egner, Max-Christopher Krapp (Technische Universität Darmstadt),
- *Greece*: Nikos Hlepas (University of Athens), Panagiotis Getimis (Panteion University), Alexandra Timotheou,
- *Israel*: Eran Razin (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem),

- *Italy*: Annick Magnier, Daniela Bagattini, Clelia Cascella, Simona Forzoni, Manuela Nicosia, Valentina Pappalardo, Francesco Sacchetti, Cristiano Tessitore (University of Florence),
- *The Netherlands*: Bas Denters, Merel de Groot, Pieter-Jan Klok (Universiteit Twente),
- *Norway*: Jacob Aars (University of Bergen)
- *Poland:* Pawel Swianiewicz (University of Warsaw),
- *Spain*: Carlos Alba, Carmen Navarro (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid),
- *Sweden*: David Karlsson (Göteborg University),
- *Switzerland*: Daniel Kübler, Larissa Plüss (University of Zürich),
- *United Kingdom*: David Sweeting (University of Bristol), Colin Copus (De Montfort University, Leicester).

These teams each conducted the research in their own countries. As such, the coverage of countries in the project is largely the result of self-selection. There is considerable continuity with the previous projects of CEOs and mayors, with some countries appearing in all three projects. In this volume there is a broad coverage of both large and small countries across Europe, and, with the labels of country typologies from the literature of comparative local government studies in mind (e.g. Page and Goldsmith 1987; John 2001, Hesse and Sharpe 1991) there are countries from northern and southern Europe, from central and middle Europe, and from Anglo countries. Also included are former communist states from Eastern Europe, so there is a good spread of European countries included. We have also gone beyond Europe by including Israel in the analysis. This is not the first time the Euroloc network has included a partner from outside Europe – the Udite study included CEOs from the United States. As we are not seeking to test a particular European country typology in this work, including Israel presents no particular analytical difficulties, and adds to the geographical spread of cases.

International seminars of the research group were held at the following venues and with the support of the partner institutions:

- Ghent (Belgium), November 2006, at Ghent University, Department of Political Science
- La Cristallera (Spain), June 2008, at the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, Department of Political Science
- Zurich (Switzerland), October 2009, at University of Zurich, Department for Political Science,
- Darmstadt (Germany), September 2010, at Technische Universität Darmstadt, Institute for Political Science

The written questionnaire was prepared through an analysis of distinct thematic areas (e.g. careers, democracy, roles); it was then discussed and approved in two international meetings (see above).[2] The questionnaire was translated and contextualised by the national teams and finally sent to local councillors in municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants. The bar of municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants was imposed to attain some similarity of the milieu (of urbanity) in which councillors are acting in and thus achieve a consistent sample in all countries. This means that we do not claim to have achieved a representative sample of all councillors in the countries that are included in this survey. We do claim, however, that there is comparability between municipalities and councillors included. However, it is important to bear in mind that in this volume, where we refer to councillors from a particular country, we may not be generalising to all councillors in that country.

Table 1.1: Number of existing and surveyed local councillors over countries

Country	total councillors	questionnaires sent out	sampling rate %
Austria	2,048	2,048	100.0
Croatia	2,260	2,260	100.0
Czech Republic	4,972	4,972	100.0
Switzerland	4,292	4,292	100.0
Norway	4,052	3,056	75.4
The Netherlands	9,242	3,163	34.2
Belgium	9,178	2,833	30.9
United Kingdom	22,168	6,082	27.4
Israel	2,367	625	26.4
Sweden	10,583	2,132	20.1
Greece	5,506	1,110	20.2
Italy	26,302	5,052	19.2
France	35,526	5,934	16.7
Poland	14,839	2,100	14.2
Spain	15,700	2,004	12.8
Germany	51,774	4,060	7.8
Total	220,809	51,723	23.4

It would be impractical to send the questionnaire to *all* councillors in those municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants, because their number is very high – the grand total of all local councillors in those municipalities in the sixteen countries covered easily exceeds 220,000 individuals (see table 1.1). Surveys with such large numbers of respondents and such a large questionnaire are

---

2   The full text of the common questionnaire is included in the Appendix in the version distributed to the national teams for translation in their own languages. In this version, the 'language' used was a 'generic' or 'European' English. This questionnaire was then translated into the different languages of the countries in the study, including a revised 'English' version for distribution to councillors in England, Scotland, and Wales. It was also contextualised in order to fit the particular characteristics of the different local government systems.

extremely expensive if the aim of data collection is a complete count or census. Instead, the research consortium agreed that each country should deliver 2,000 completed questionnaires if possible. It was up to the national teams to decide about the sampling frequency and the selection of the councillors to survey.

As can be seen from table 1.1, there were three countries (Austria, Belgium and Croatia), where the overall number of councillors from municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants was just slightly higher than 2,000. In those countries, the questionnaire was simply sent to all the councillors available. In two other countries (Czech Republic and Switzerland), considering possible turnout rates, national teams decided to ask all councillors to participate even though their number was higher than the 2,000 questionnaire threshold . In all the other countries, samples were drawn from the overall population of councillors within those countries. The sampling rate varied between 75% in Norway and about 8% in Germany, where approximately 25% of all local councillors are located.

Table 1.2: Sampling and Survey Organisation over countries

Country	sampled by	official list available	questionnaires delivered by	questionnaires sent to
Austria	Complete	no	Post	town hall
Belgium	size, region, socio-economic profile	no	Post	town hall and individuals
Croatia	Complete	no	Email	town hall
Czech Republic	Complete	no	post and in person	town hall
France	size and geography	no	Post	town hall
Germany	size and *Länder* distribution	no	Post	town hall
Greece	size and region	no	Email, website, or in person	individuals
Israel	selection by phone	no	post and email	Individuals
Italy	8 socio-economic strata	yes	post and email	Individuals or town hall
Norway	by strata	no	Post	Individuals
Poland	Randomisation	yes	Post	town hall
Spain	Randomisation	no	Post (followed up by email)	Individuals
Sweden	size, economy type, region and ruling party/coalition	yes	Post	Individuals
Switzerland	Complete	no	Post	town hall
The Netherlands	randomisation	yes	Post	town hall
United Kingdom	type of authority and political control	no	Post	town hall

Different sampling procedures were used to select an appropriate number of councillors from the total population of all councillors in the respective coun-

tries. An overview over sampling methods and survey organisation in the individual countries is provided in table 1.2. Those teams who sampled from the full population of councillors chose different sampling methods according to the peculiarities of their countries. Since it was not possible to obtain a full list of all councillors from a single source in most countries, most teams were forced to sample municipalities instead of sampling councillors, making the assumption that a representative sample of municipalities would produce a representative sample of councillors (*cluster sampling*).

Table 1.3: Survey dates and response rates over countries

Country	Survey conducted	questionnaires sent out	dataset	response rate %
Sweden	11/2007 – 03/2008	2,132	1,346	63.1
The Netherlands	05/2007 – 06/2007	3,163	1,222	38.6
Switzerland	12/2007 – 06/2008	4,292	1,616	37.7
Norway	04/2008 – 06/2008	3,056	1,134	37.1
Spain	10/2009 – 06/2010	2,004	520	25.9
Italy	01/2008 – 10/2008	5,052	1,201	23.8
Israel	08/2008 – 03/2009	625	147	23.5
Belgium	02/2008 – 01/2009	2,833	634	22.4
Germany	09/2007 – 11/2007	4,060	894	22.0
Greece	09/2008 – 03/2009	1,110	235	21.2
Austria	02/2008 – 09/2008	2,048	408	19.9
Poland	05/2007 – 09/2007	2,100	328	15.6
Czech Republic	04/2008 – 09/2008	4,972	624	12.6
France	01/2009 – 05/2009	5,934	720	12.1
United Kingdom	02/2008 – 04/2008	6,082	700	11.5
Croatia	07/2008 – 10/2008	2,260	233	10.3
Total		51,723	11,962	23.1

In sampling the municipalities, there were different methods used by the national teams. For example, in Germany the sample considered the number of inhabitants as well as the *Länder* affiliation of the municipality, since the different German *Länder* have different rules for horizontal power relations within the municipalities (*municipal codes*). Similar rules applied for England, where authorities were selected using their authority type (e.g. *district, unitary* etc). Many teams also sampled by geographical distribution or region, socioeconomic context and party control.

Independent from the sampling of municipalities, teams had to decide how to approach the councillors with the questionnaire. Most teams sent a package of questionnaires to town hall. In most countries, the questionnaires were either sent to the council secretary, the council president or the mayor kindly requesting him or her to distribute the questionnaire among the councillors. Some countries used other methods, e.g. emails, websites, and personal attendance by the researchers in town halls. Those teams who could rely on a list of councillors

with names and post addresses contacted the councillors directly. In Israel, anticipating a very low turnout rate, councillors were approached by phone and had a questionnaire mailed if they expressed an interest in completing the survey.

Data was collected during the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 and includes responses of nearly 12,000 local councillors, which constitutes a unique and rich material allowing description and analysis pursuing a number of lines of inquiry. The overall response rate was over 23%, which can be considered good taking the account the length and complexity of the questionnaire. The response rate varied from 63% in Sweden to only 10% in Croatia.

References

Alba, C. and Navarro, C. (2003) 'Twenty five years of democratic local government in Spain', in Kersting, N. and Vetter, A. (eds.) Reforming local government in Europe. Leske + Budrich: Opladen, 197-220.

Atkinson, R. and Bridge, G. (eds.) (2005) Gentrification in a global context: the new urban colonialism. Routledge: London.

Barren, J., Crawley, G. and Wood, T. (1991) Councillors in crisis. Macmillan: Basingstoke.

Borraz, O. and John, P. (2004) 'The Transformation of Urban Political Leadership in Western Europe', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 28 (1), 107-120.

Brown A., Jones, A, and Mackay, F. (1999) The representativeness of councillors. Joseph Rowntree Foundation: York.

Denters, B. and Rose, L. (2005a) 'Local governance in the third millennium: a brave new world?', in Denters, B. and Rose, L. (eds.) Comparing local governance: trends and developments. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 1-11.

Denters, B. and Rose, L. (2005b) 'Towards local governance', in Denters, B. and Rose, L. (eds.) Comparing local governance: trends and developments. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 246-262.

Goodin, R. E. (2008) Innovating Democracy: Democratic Theory and Practice After the Deliberative Turn. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Gross, J. S. and Hambleton, R. (2007) 'Global trends, diversity, and local democracy', in Hambleton, R. and Gross, J. S. (eds.) Governing cities in a global era. Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 1-12.

Hansen, K. (2001) Local Councillors: Between Local 'Government' and Local 'Governance', *Public Administration* 79 (1), 105-123.

Hanssen, G. S., Klausen, J. E., and Vabo, S. I. (2006) 'Traces of governance: policy networking in Norwegian local government', in Heinelt, H., Sweeting, D., and Getimis, P. (eds) Legitimacy and urban governance, Routledge: Abingdon, 90-101.

Hesse, J. J. and Sharpe, L. J. (1991) 'Local government in international perspective — some comparative perspectives', in Hesse, J. J. (ed.), Local government and urban

affairs in international perspective: analyses of 20 Western industrialised countries, Nomos: Baden Baden, 603-621.

Hoffmann-Martinot, V. and Sellers, J. (2005) Metropolitanization and political change. VS Verlag: Wiesbaden.

John, P. (2001) Local governance in western Europe. London: Sage.

Kersting, N. and Vetter, A. (2003) Reforming local government in Europe. Leske + Budrich: Opladen.

Loughlin, J. and Seiler, D. L. (2001) 'France: Between centralisation and fragmentation', in Loughlin, J. (ed) Subnational democracy in the European Union: challenges and opportunities. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Lidstrom, A. (2001) 'Sweden: the end of the 'Swedish model'? in Loughlin, J. (ed) Sub-national democracy in the European Union: challenges and opportunities. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 319-342.

Martins, L., and Rodriguez Alvarez, J. M. (2007) 'Towards glocal leadership: taking up the challenge of new local governance in Europe?' *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 25 (1), 391-409.

Newman, P. and Thornley, A. (2011) Planning world cities. Globalization and urban politics. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.

Page, E. C. and Goldsmith, M. (eds.) *(*1987*)* Central and local government relations. A comparative analysis of West European unitary states. Sage: London.

Rao, N. (1993) Managing change. Councillors and the new local government. Joseph Rowntree Foundation: York.

Ritzer, G. (2011) Globalisation. The essentials. Wiley Blackwell: Chichester.

Rhodes, R. A. W. (2008) 'Understanding governance: ten years on', *Organization Studies* 28 (8), 1243-1264.

Roberts, P., Ravetz, J., and George, C. (2009) Environment and the city. Routledge: London.

Smith, G. (2005) Beyond the Ballot: 57 democratic innovations from around the world. London: The Power Inquiry.

Scharpf, F. W. (1999) Governing in Europe. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Stanyer, J. (1976) Understanding local government. Martin Robertson: Oxford.

Stewart, J. (1983) Local government: the conditions of local choice. George Allen & Unwin: London.

Swianiewicz, P., Mielczarek, A. and Klimska, U. (2006) 'Uneven partnerships: Polish city leaders in search of local governance' in Heinelt, H., Sweeting, D., and Getimis, P. (eds.) Legitimacy and urban governance. Routledge: Abingdon, 114-130.

Vetter, A. and Kersting, N. (2003) 'Democracy versus efficiency? Comparing local government reforms across Europe' in Vetter, A. and Kersting, N. (eds.) Reforming local government in Europe. Leske + Budrich: Opladen, 11-28.

Wilson, D. and Game, C. (2006) Local government in the United Kingdom. 4th ed. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.

2 Political recruitment and career development of local councillors in Europe

Tom Verhelst, Herwig Reynaert and Kristof Steyvers

2.1 Introduction

Why do some people become and stay politicians while others do not? To gain an insight into this question one has to scrutinise the processes by which certain individuals enter, remain and move in office. In the literature on political science, these processes are usually framed by the concepts of political recruitment and career development. The answer to the initial question is related to notions such as the degree of openness of selection into the core of the political system and to whether or not who governs matters for attitudes and behaviour in office. These notions bear on more normative considerations such as: should political office provide a microcosm of society, or does professional responsiveness outweigh representation as the ultimate touchstone of contemporary local democracy? Hence, the importance of these concepts and their associated processes goes beyond mere descriptions of the pathway to office.

This chapter focuses on the recruitment and career development of local councillors in the 16 European countries studied in the context of the project *Municipal Assemblies in European Local Governance*. It starts with an overview of the literature conceiving recruitment and career development as a process with different phases. Subsequently, three different phases are discerned and elaborated on by presenting data for each of the countries included in the database: the social base of councillor recruitment, the activation, apprenticeship and election of the councillors and their career development. In line with the theoretical underpinnings, each phase is considered as a dynamic interaction between the supply of eligible candidates and the demands of selectors in the political system embedded in a structure of opportunities. To organise the characteristics under study in each phase, we discern two ideal-typical pathways to and in office, i.e. the layman mode and its professional counterpart (see below).

Although our database is the first to allow such a broad and comparative perspective, we still have to keep in mind two qualifications. First, the cross-sectional nature of the database does not allow scrutiny of longitudinal trends in recruitment and careers, though the existing literature might provide bench-

marks to which the current councillor profile in terms of recruitment and career development could be compared. Second, its focus on local councillors, i.e. those candidates who actually achieved elective office, narrows the scope of the recruitment process, leaving out those citizens who attempted to, but did not succeed in gaining political office at the local level.

This chapter is one of a number of new contributions on the theme of recruitment and career development.[1] The comparative findings in this chapter have been complemented with a series of articles that seeks to grasp additional (and often causal) mechanisms. In terms of the social base of political recruitment, Reynaert (2012) found that differences in the general pattern not only vary according to country classifications - to some extent municipal size and party affiliation matter as well. Verhelst and Kerrouche (2012) show that the next phase of the recruitment process, councillor activation and apprenticeship, is partly contingent on this social base. Still additional effects emerged from municipal size, ideology and councillor function. Aars, Offerdal and Rysavy (2012) examined the final phase, i.e. the political career. Disentangling the latter in three phases (pre-electoral, in-council and future ambitions), the authors suggest that careers do not develop according to a linear model of professionalisation. Rather they are shaped incrementally whilst varying per phase. Finally, the contribution of Steyvers and Verhelst (2012) seeks to answer the question: do recruitment and career matter for councillors' preferences for task importance? The authors indicate that there is no dichotomy between the preference for inward-looking tasks and outward-looking counterparts in practice. And even though effects of recruitment and career were found, they were embedded in the (supra)-local opportunity structure. Besides, the impact of recruitment and career is mediated by the daily experience of holding the councillor mandate. Hence, these contributions underline the importance of the broader cultural and structural setting in order to gain realistic insights in the proceedings and mechanisms of political recruitment and career.

2.2   Theoretical framework: pathways to and in the council

Political recruitment can be conceived as '…the process by which individuals are selected for inclusion among political elites' (Brady, Schlozman, and Verba 1999: 153). Political careers subsequently emerge as these individuals develop patterns of mobility between offices in the political realm (Marvick 1972). The

---

1   See a special issue of the journal Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government in 2012 (volume 10, number 1). Organised per phase of the recruitment process and subsequent career, the articles are part of the research project MAELG as well. In some cases, authors may have used slightly different operationalisations of the basic dataset.

following sections elaborate on the phases that comprise these processes. After setting our model of recruitment and career development, two ideal-types are introduced and discussed in a shifting structure of opportunities. The different dimensions of our model are summarised in table 2.1 and substantiated according to the characteristics of each ideal-type under study.

Table 2.1: Layman & professional recruitment and career development

Ideal-type	Layman	Professional
Principles	• Representation, equality & inclusiveness	• Responsiveness, expertise & exclusiveness
Process	• Permeable	• Funnel
Practices *Recruitment*		
Social base	• Resembling pluralism/microcosm	• Facilitating isomorphism
Political active stratum	• Adult life experiences • Civic duty/issue motives	• Political families & early life experiences • Partisan/program/career motives
Political apprenticeship	• Local group/organised community life	• Party political cocooning
Election	• Local list • Civil society support	• National list • Party political support
Career development		
Focus	• Free-time • No accumulation of mandates	• Part/Full-time • Accumulation of mandates
Scope	• Discrete • Turnover	• Static/progressive • Stability

2.3   Inside the puzzle box: modelling recruitment and career development

Prewitt (1969, 1970) offers a seminal conception of the recruitment process at the local level comparing it with a Chinese puzzle box: from the many eligibles various selection processes gradually filter out the few elected. Councillor selection first and foremost has a social base referring to the relatively higher political life chances of certain social strata. Political socialisation and mobilisation then carve out politically stratified counterparts by disproportionally providing political stimuli to certain individuals. They allow the orientation of the developed political capital towards elective office. Whilst the former tend towards the more general forms of participation and motivation, further selection and certification mechanisms emerge and function as political apprenticeships. The latter channel (and legitimise) existing political ambitions and institutionally ensure the flow of political talent and resources to fill elective office. This ultimately happens in the final stage of democratic elections.

Whilst some have criticised this model for being too deterministic in terms of sequences, exclusiveness and formalism (Barron, Crawley, and Wood, 1989) a more reformist interpretation (Norris 1997) leaves openness for divergent passages to power in stressing the dynamic interaction of candidates' supply and selectors' demand within divergent structures of opportunities while maintaining the underlying assumption of a gradual and funnel-like nature of the process.

Once recruited, the elected tend to develop a pattern of mobility in office often termed as a political career (Eulau et al. 1961). These careers evolve around two interrelated questions (Guérin and Kerrouche 2008). First, to what extent is the current mandate exclusive in terms of time and dedication (focus)? Second, from which perspective is the current mandate perceived in terms of duration and outlook (scope)?

2.4   Layman and professional: two ideal-types of recruitment and career development

Where the above has focused on the dimensions that are considered important in studying recruitment and career development, two ideal-types might help us to understand the nature and the form these dimensions may take in practice. As the latter can be highly varied and manifold, such ideal-types might help us to develop a framework for inquiry and conceptually organise our findings. Each ideal-type is characterised by a principle underlying recruitment and career development expressed in subsequent types of processes and practices that in combination lead to councillors as being conceived either as laymen or professionals.

By their very nature as ideal-type they will seldom be found in their purest form in the real world. In practice, councillors will most probably display characteristics of both types and will tend only to a limited, not always sequential and/or cumulative extent towards the one or the other. The types should thus be understood as poles on a continuum. We will argue below however, that a shift towards one of the ideal types might occur as a result of changes in the structure of opportunities for councillor recruitment and career development. Finally, such an analysis of course starts from the individual perspective and ignores the potential of differentiated patterns of recruitment and career development within the same council. These types offer critical frames of reference however, bearing in mind the consideration of the mandate of councillor as the base office in almost any local democracy.

The classic notion of the councillor is that of the layman or amateur-politician and it is one of the constituting elements in the genealogy of almost any type of local government (Mouritzen and Svara 2002). This notion is based

on the principle of political equality: notwithstanding some formal criteria of eligibility, any fellow-citizen should be able to come forward as a candidate for political office. As such, emphasis is on the representative (and a specific form of the legislative) role of the councillor. Moreover, representation should be of an inclusive character (it should voice all relevant groups and/or interests in a society, i.e. the idea of a microcosm) and the recruitment process (including the subsequent career) is open. Politics should not be a separate sphere of society as moving in and out of the council chamber is relatively easy from almost any subfield of society (permeable). The council thus largely mirrors the locality it is to govern.

An alternative type is much more exclusive as it conceives politics as a profession, i.e. a pattern of conduct with area-specific standards and routines (Cotta and Best 2000). Chances for recruitment and career development are not equally distributed as individuals need to dispose of a pre-structured and specific set of characteristics to proceed to an elective office. Recruitment and career development are much more closed and funnel-like with fewer successful candidates in subsequent phases. Here, legislating does not so much centre around bringing different voices into the authoritative distribution of values. Rather it is considered as a matter of expertise. The latter is also necessary to hold the executive to account. As such and to a certain extent, representation gives way to responsiveness (Rao 2000).

With these principles and processes also come practices. In terms of the social base that underpins recruitment, laymen tend toward the resemblance model of representation. As the intention is to (proportionally) mirror the varied interests and groups that comprise society, councillors' social backgrounds should be a cross-section of the latter. Recruitment thus produces microcosmic representation driven by the politics of presence (Philips 1995). By contrast, in the professional type of councillor recruitment the social base is much more selective and isomorphic. Groups that dispose of characteristics that are facilitative for political recruitment are overrepresented among elected officials e.g. men, middle-aged, university educated people from the public sector or the so-called talking and brokerage professions (e.g. lawyer, teacher, business manager) and those with local roots (Budge and Farlie 1975; Eliassen and Pedersen 1978).

For laymen, socialisation and activation towards politics are more a matter of adult life experiences (e.g. as a result of involvement in associational life). The inculcation of political information, values and practices and the direction of one's own interest towards politics are not highly influenced or pre-structured by coming from a political family or the early life experiences of the future recruit (Prewitt 1965; Van Liefferinge and Steyvers 2008). Hence, the ideal-typical layman will often refer to their own candidacy for office in terms of a civic

duty and/or a specific issue for the constituency s/he is standing for. Professionals will tend to rationalise their candidacy in terms of party duty, ideological program and/or career motivations (Gordon 1979; Meadowcroft 2001).

Professionals also tend to follow a core route of apprenticeship into political functions that combine longstanding (governing) experiences in political parties with a previous career of other (manifest) elective mandates. For them political parties are an important apprenticeship and selection agent in terms of socialisation, visibility and filtering out candidates (Seligman 1961). As such parties comprise the politicised core of organized community life (Bochel and Denver 1983; Rallings et al. 2010). And although a position in the local council is often considered as a base office, the professional tends to have collected (previous) elective experience in other levels and mandates as well (hence using their political experience to claim a council mandate). Laymen on the other hand tend to be neophytes in politics who did not acquire experience in office beforehand. They go through apprenticeships in the functional equivalent of the professionals' political cocooning, i.e. local group life and/or non-partisan organised community life. From these apprenticeships it is no surprise that while laymen are likely to receive support from civil society (groups), professionals draw more on partisan actors for promotion. Consequently, laymen are also more likely to be elected on local lists (or as an independent) while their professional counterparts come from local branches of national political parties.

Once elected, laymen and professionals also develop different attitudes and patterns of conduct towards office. First of all in terms of focus, for laymen, taking-up office is a leisure-time activity usually combined with another (non-political) profession and as their sole political mandate. As the label suggests, professionals tend more towards the vocational conception of elected office which is taken up part-time (and often in combination with a political profession or one that at least is highly compatible with it) or even full-time (Black 1970; Guérin and Kerrouche 2008).

Secondly, career scopes also differ. Following Schlesinger's typology (1966) laymen tend towards discrete ambitions in not primarily and actively seeking re-election. As a result turnover in the legislature is high. Professionals alternatively try to develop professional continuity (static ambitions) or upward professional mobility (progressive ambitions) within the political realm. As a result, stability in office-holding characterises the legislature and/or dynamism is structured by the optimum occupation of the office under study for functioning as a stepping stone to a higher spot on the political ladder (manifest office).

2.5 A shifting structure of opportunities? Between professionalisation and democratisation

While empirical research should reveal the extent to which councillor recruitment and career development correspond with either the layman or professional model, we suggest that recent shifts in the structure of opportunities councillors ought to function in have provoked the growing importance of the latter ideal-type. Where such shifts in local government undoubtedly are manifold, two deserve special attention in terms of recruitment and careers.

The first would be the regime of multilevel governance in which contemporary European local governments are to function (Denters and Rose 2005). Vertically, this regime implies mutual dependencies between multiplying layers of government ultimately stemming from the alleged hollowing-out of the nation state. Evaporating state power condenses either on higher, often supranational levels like the EU. Alternatively, regionalisation and decentralisation both give rise to a meso-level of government as in the emergence of forms of new regionalism, including attempts to establish metropolitan or city regional governance. Horizontally, policy-making is opened up to the inclusion of non-state actors blurring the distinction between the public and the private sector (John 2001). This includes the quango-like autonomous (municipal) bodies, integrating the broad private sector in the (co-)production and/or -distribution of public services and/or alternative, narrow, ad hoc and more demanding forms of citizen participation. These macro evolutions might call for councillors that have more expertise by means of social background, (quasi-)governmental apprenticeships, full-time dedication to politics and/or careers within the political realm.

The second set of shifts would be those at the meso-level referring to the institutional and electoral context of local government. In relation to governance, it is often assumed that executive leadership is strengthened which provokes realignment of the council as a body of strategic direction and scrutiny, hence corresponding more to the responsive type (Steyvers et al. 2008). But also partisan-electoral shifts occur. Professional-electoral machines political parties tend to monopolise elections even at the local level (Copus 2004). At the same time, classic societal and programmatic functions of parties (the party on the ground) lost relevance to the advantage of the party in public and central office (Katz and Mair 1995). This might produce a recruitment and career development process that are much more self-referential and auto-reproductive, i.e. emphasising socialisation, activation and apprenticeship within the ranks of parties and public office. A subsequent electoral professionalisation both on the level of candidates and their parties might come on the other hand from factors such as media dominance, personalisation of politics and voter volatility.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that two important trends situated in the social base of councillor recruitment seem to contradict the growing predominance of professionalisation in its excluding conception. Both are based on the resemblance model of microcosmic representation. The first has a more longstanding tradition and/or is more actively pursued. It refers to the inclusion of women in elective office (either by gender quota or other measures – see Rao 2005). The second is more recent and/or efforts are often more passive. It refers to gradually giving up nationality as a precondition for eligibility. For instance in some countries, citizens from the EU (or even beyond) are allowed to stand for local office. Furthermore considering the vast mobility and migration of modern citizens, we might expect the number of local councillors with foreign roots to be mounting as well. These trends make us to expect a model of recruitment that in these terms is more open and equal (towards the layman model).

The next section proceeds with the empirical analysis of political recruitment and career in European local governance. Given the hypothesised emergence of professionalisation as the prevailing trend in recruitment and career, we take the professional ideal-type as the analytical point of reference in each phase.

2.6   The social base of councillor recruitment

Starting from our data, we analyse the social base of councillor recruitment on the basis of gender, age, education, profession, ethnicity and local roots in 16 countries. Over and above the general profile of the social base of councillor recruitment, we will look at country differences and particular outliers.

To be a man or not to be a man: that's our first question. As can be seen from table 2.2 the answer is quite simple. On average 70.7% of the local councillors in Europe are men. In Poland, Greece, Italy and Israel this figure is even higher than 80%. Women have more representatives in France and Sweden with respectively 'only' 54.6% and 57.1% of the councillor population consisting of men. The gender imbalance is an old wound on the political scene, and evidently still is. (Local) politics still is a male-dominated activity.

Our second variable is councillors' starting age.[2] Table 2.2 provides a clear picture of the average age of the councillor at the moment he/she started his/her first mandate as a councillor.

---

2   The two original questions were 'How old are you?' (variable 1) and 'For how many years have you been councillor in total?' (variable 2).To have an idea of the age of the councillor at the beginning of his first mandate we subtracted variable 2 from variable 1. This calculation may not be completely accurate in all cases. Nevertheless, we only had this possibility to know more or less the age at the moment respondents became councillor, and it will give a good indication of their age at the start of their first mandate.

Table 2.2: The social base of councillor recruitment

Background	AUS	BEL	CRO	CR	FRA	GER	GRE	ISR	Country ITA	NET	NOR	POL	SPA	SWE	SWI	UK	X (s)
Gender																	
Male	74.4	72.3	74.1	75.6	54.6	78.3	83.3	87.0	86.2	73.3	61.5	80.9	66.7	57.1	68.8	73.6	70.7
Starting age																	
Mean age	39.8	39.6	44.6	43.9	46.7	42.4	41.1	46.7	41.6	45.6	42.6	44.2	38.6	44.0	41.1	48.8	43.1
	(9.0)	(11.0)	(11.6)	(9.8)	(11.2)	(10.4)	(8.5)	(9.7)	(11.4)	(10.1)	(11.7)	(10.8)	(9.8)	(11.4)	(10.9)	(11.9)	(11.1)
Education																	
University	30.5	67.8	58.3	69.0	71.8	54.0	65.1	84.4	48.9	66.7	65.5	66.0	77.0	47.1	58.7	72.2	60.6
Profession																	
Politician	0.3	3.2	1.7	2.3	1.0	0.3	0.4	4.1	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.9	2.9	1.4	0	0.6	1.1
Civil servant	19.1	11.9	9.0	5.7	19.2	19.1	29.1	12.2	11.8	18.5	20.5	11.0	19.6	15.9	19.6	13.4	16.5
Business mgr.	6.9	5.7	9.6	9.9	8.7	11.0	2.2	20.4	6.6	13.7	13.9	10.4	8.0	8.0	11.1	26.2	10.8
Teacher	8.6	13.5	13.6	18.3	12.2	3.7	12.1	8.2	9.7	11.2	11.6	21.4	14.7	8.5	10.1	13.2	11.2
Liberal prof.	5.8	7.3	5.6	13.0	7.0	16.3	23.3	12.2	19.2	6.0	5.1	5.2	12.0	8.8	7.8	11.6	10.0
Total	*40.7*	*41.6*	*39.5*	*49.2*	*48.1*	*50.4*	*67.1*	*57.1*	*48.1*	*50.3*	*51.9*	*49.9*	*57.2*	*42.6*	*48.6*	*65.0*	*49.6*
Ethnicity																	
National	85.3	91.8	85.3	89.4	82.6	93.4	94.5	9.9	96.8	92.0	92.7	93.5	97.0	86.3	78.5	87.1	88.1
Local roots	28.8	30.2	37.6	32.2	21.8	27.6	30.6	26.8	30.3	24.5	25.8	34.0	26.7	23.9	22.0	23.9	26.4
Years lived	(14.4)	(13.8)	(12.8)	(14.0)	(15.2)	(14.7)	(13.9)	(16.0)	(16.3)	(15.5)	(15.2)	(14.0)	(13.1)	(15.1)	(14.3)	(17.1)	(15.4)

We can see that this average age is 43.1 years. Moreover, we find that the average age is lowest in Spain (38.6), Belgium (39.6) and Austria (39.8) and highest in the United Kingdom (48.8), France (46.7), Israel (46.7) and the Netherlands (45.6). Including standard deviations confirms the middle-aged profile of this group.

Thus, our analysis hitherto confirms two classic stereotypes: women are far less present among local councillors and middle-aged people predominate. We now examine the (highest completed) educational level of councillors and the relationship between certain professions and a political mandate as councillor.

What is your highest completed level of education? As can be seen in table 2.2 it is obviously an advantage to have a university degree. 60.6% of the councillors had a university degree the moment they entered local politics. In some countries this is even more than 70% (France, United Kingdom and Spain) or 80% (Israel). The lowest figure is found in Austria (30.5%) - but also Sweden (47.1%) and Italy (48.9%) score below average.

Looking at the answers in the different countries to the question 'to which occupational category did you belong before your first mandate as a councillor', table 2.2 reveals many differences between the 5 categories which represent the typical talking or brokerage professions.

Our data show that 1.1% of our respondents were professional politicians (or the like, e.g. cabinet or party function) before their first mandate as a councillor. The highest number of such politicians is found in Israel (4.1%), Belgium (3.2%) and Spain (2.9%). For those councillors who were civil servants the average is 16.5% with the highest number in Greece (29.1%) and the lowest percentage in the Czech Republic (5.7%). The average across countries for business managers is 10.8% with the highest numbers in the United Kingdom (26.2%) and Israel (20.4%) and the lowest numbers in Greece (2.2%) and Belgium (5.7%). For teachers, the average percentage is 11.2% with the highest numbers in Poland (21.4%) and the Czech Republic (18.3%) and the lowest percentage in Germany (3.7%). Finally for the liberal professions (e.g. lawyer, doctor) with an overall average of 10%, the figures of Greece (23.3%) and Italy (19.2) are quite remarkable.

So generally, around half of the European councillor population (49.6%) comes from one of the selective talking or brokerage professions discussed above.[3] In Greece (67.1%), the UK (65%), Spain (57.2%) and Israel (57.1%), this professional selectivity is considerably higher than on average. The route to

---

3   The overall frequency distribution of the other (not talking/brokerage) professions in the questionnaire is: engineer (8.1%), clerk (11.9%), shopkeeper (4.1%), labourer (5.5%), farmer/fisher (2.4%), student (5.1%), retired (1.6%), housewife/man (1.6%), other (10.1%).

local office in Croatia (39.5%), Austria (40.7%), Belgium (41.6%) and Sweden (42.6%) on the other hand seems to be more varied.

The next variable represents councillors' country of birth. Where were you and your parents born? In the case that either the councillor, mother or father was born in another country, the respondent is considered as of 'foreign' descent. As can be seen in table 2.2 there is one truly remarkable figure. Only 9.9% of the councillors in Israel are considered as 'national'. This has of course to do with the fact that a lot of parents of these councillors were born elsewhere because the state of Israel has a short history. Also for Croatia and the Czech Republic we have to be aware of the specific historical situation. On average 88.1% of the councillors in European local governance are of 'national' descent. We find the lowest percentages in Switzerland (78.5%) and France (82.6%) and the highest in Spain (97%) and Italy (96.8%).

The last variable we examine is 'local roots'.[4] We can see in table 2.2 that on average, councillors had lived for 26.4 years in their municipality at the start of their first mandate. Councillors have the longest local roots in Croatia (37.6 years), Poland (34 years) and the Czech Republic (32.2 years). Shorter periods are apparent in France (21.8 years) and Switzerland (22 years).

To sum up, we tried to answer the question 'what's the social base of councillor recruitment' with the help of several variables. On the basis of our data we can conclude that the recruitment process operates in such a way that it still favours the possibilities for individuals with certain selective characteristics to enter public office. Hence, local councils in Europe are in no way representative of their locality at-large. Meanwhile, the comparative nature of our research reveals significant differences between countries in terms of the social background characteristics of their local councillors. Still we can see a more or less common pattern for Poland, Croatia and the Czech Republic. For the Franco group (France, Italy, Belgium, Greece and Spain) and the Northern and Middle European group (Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway) there are no clear similarities.

2.7   *The activation and apprenticeship of local councillors*

Although it is clear that the social background of the local councillor is a first and important stepping stone in his/her recruitment process, it is probably sel-

---

4   The two original questions were 'For how many years have you lived in your municipality?' (variable 1) and 'For how many years have you been a councillor in total?' (variable 2).To know how long the councillor already lived in the community at the beginning of his first mandate we subtracted variable 2 from variable 1. This calculation may not be completely accurate in all cases but it was the only possibility with the available data.

dom a sufficient or exclusive one. Therefore, the second part of our analysis scrutinises three subsequent phases of the recruitment process: political activation, apprenticeships and election. Results for these phases are shown in table 2.3.

In terms of the initial activation towards politics, almost one out of every three councillors in Europe may have benefited from the privilege of acquiring a taste for politics in the inner circle of family life.[5] Particularly in Scandinavian countries (Norway: 55.2%; Sweden: 43.5%), political families seem to be a common place of socialisation and mobilisation. Councillors from Israel (8%), the UK (16.2%) and Southern-countries such as Greece (19.6%), Spain (22.9%) and Croatia (23.3%) on the other hand are less likely to come from this enabling and exclusive environment.

Secondly, the pattern of councillors' initial motivations to run for office shows clear signals of professionalisation as well.[6] We discuss four motives which qualify as 'professional', either in terms of the personal or party sphere. The vast majority of European councillors (77.8%) indicate that they were inspired by a general interest in politics. Whereas councillors from Scandinavia (Sweden: 97.2%; Norway: 88.3%) and North-Middle Europe (Austria: 92.4%; Germany: 87.2%; Switzerland: 84.1%) mention this motive more than on average, it was less important in Israel (39.3%), Poland (41.6%), Croatia (53.3%), the UK (59.7%), France (62.7%) and the Czech Republic (66.5%). The desire to learn how the political systems functions was deemed important by nearly half of the councillor population (46.1%). Again, Sweden (68.6%) and Norway (58.4%) top the list, before Austria (55.4%) and Italy (54.4%). Scores were much lower on the other hand in the Netherlands (25%), the UK (26.3%), Poland (31.9%), France (34%), Croatia (36.5%) and the Czech Republic (36.6%). Furthermore, half of the councillor population (52.8%) acknowledged service to the party as an important motive to enter the race for office. The percentage of councillors driven by such party duty is particularly large in Sweden (89.1%), Norway (83.4%), Spain (71.8%), Croatia (63.5%) and the Netherlands (62.8%). Representing the party was less important for councillors in Poland (14.2%), Germany (24.5%), France (29.3%), Israel (32.1%), Switzerland (35.7%), Greece

---

5   Original question: 'In the two last generations, were any of your close relatives elected for a political function?'

6   Original question: 'When you first accepted to become a candidate, how important were the following reasons? –general interest in politics; it is a chance to learn how the political system functions; as a councillor I can do a good job for the party I represent; it is an opportunity to enter into a political career'. Percentages in the table represent respondents who indicate that the motive was of great or utmost importance for them.

Table 2.3: Political activation, apprenticeships and election

		AUS	BEL	CRO	CR	FRA	GER	GRE	ISR	ITA	NET	NOR	POL	SPA	SWE	SWI	UK	X
	Political Family																	
Activation	Yes	27.3	30.7	23.3	28.8	30.4	26.1	19.6	8.0	25.4	25.7	55.2	28.2	22.9	43.5	36.1	16.2	31.7
	Motivation																	
	General interest	92.4	71.2	53.3	66.5	62.7	87.2	74.9	39.3	75.6	75.5	88.3	41.6	76.7	97.2	84.1	59.7	77.8
	Learn politics	55.4	44.7	36.5	36.6	34.0	44.5	50.4	45.3	54.4	25.0	58.4	31.9	46.8	68.6	47.5	26.3	46.1
	Represent party	37.7	51.3	63.5	48.3	29.3	24.5	36.8	32.1	46.7	62.8	83.4	14.2	71.8	89.1	35.7	45.3	52.8
	Political career	14.7	12.3	7.3	7.3	9.0	5.3	24.8	18.7	9.1	9.0	12.5	11.3	13.1	14.0	10.2	11.7	10.9
	Political Party																	
Appren	Party member	81.7	78.7	94.5	59.9	49.2	83.7	83.4	66.4	74.1	97.8	88.9	45.8	75.9	98.8	78.7	80.5	80.6
	Local party org	75.1	78.1	89.3	55.8	33.4	77.3	42.2	28.5	69.6	47.4	82.0	26.3	82.0	93.1	67.1	68.9	68.4
	Upper level party org	47.9	44.4	50.3	36.4	8.4	47.8	29.2	26.7	37.1	36.0	40.8	17.3	51.3	56.7	33.8	21.8	38.4
	Electoral position																	
Election	National party list	89.5	78.6	94.2	79.8	31.9	84.5	56.2	21.7	67.5	74.7	85.9	35.1	92.0	96.1	87.8	90.0	78.3
	Support																	
	Party fraction	13.3	60.1	80.8	24.9	31.6	9.1	26.0	26.3	23.5	84.2	49.7	5.7	87.6	32.0	16.7	43.4	38.6
	Local party	76.3	72.0	82.7	68.0	51.9	69.5	23.4	30.8	35.7	85.6	84.8	16.1	90.0	88.3	75.6	76.5	70.4
	National party	31.3	23.5	33.2	26.8	21.3	21.3	16.4	24.4	6.8	-	26.6	5.4	49.4	17.5	17.9	38.6	22.3
	National politician	18.0	14.5	26.4	12.2	18.2	13.4	9.5	23.9	6.9	-	21.4	4.8	29.3	14.6	6.8	23.0	14.7

(36.8%) and Austria (37.7%). Finally, the pure instrumental motive to enter a political career appears to matter less on average. Only 10.9% of the European councillor population mentions this motive as an important activating factor. Country outliers above the average are Greece (24.8%) and Israel (18.7%) whilst Germany (5.3%) is situated below.

Thirdly, besides overtly political motivations, candidates can also actively and (more or less) deliberately go through apprenticeships that prepare and equip them for office. For professionalised councillors, these apprenticeships are often situated in the political realm, comprised by the political party and its party board. Table 2.3 shows that more than eight out of every ten councillors (80.6%) were a member of a political party prior to the first mandate as a councillor.[7] This rate of party membership takes an almost absolute form in Sweden (98.8%) and the Netherlands (97.8%) whilst Croatia (94.5%) and Norway (88.9%) score well above average too. On the other hand, party membership is comparatively low in Poland (45.8%), France (49.2%), the Czech Republic (59.9%) and Israel (66.4%). Moreover, the majority of these councillors held (or came to hold) an elected position in the party board at the local (68.4%) and/or national (38.4%) level as well.[8] Often, high scores on party membership coincide with high scores of councillors holding a position in the party board or association (e.g. Sweden and Croatia). Likewise, low figures tend to correspond to each other as well (e.g. Poland, France and Israel). Furthermore, in some countries councillors are more often member of the local party's board (e.g. Belgium, Norway) or both the local and national party's board (e.g. Austria, Germany, Spain) than on average. In others, councillors are seldom members of the local and/or national party's board (e.g. Greece, UK). Finally, the Netherlands are a particular exception. Although almost every candidate went through the apprenticeship in a political party, comparatively few amongst them move to the upper ranks of its organisation.

Finally as mentioned at the outset of this chapter, parties are of major importance for professional councillors in terms of election as well. On one hand, the proliferation of party politics at the local level is reflected in the number of

---

7   This variable was created by the authors based on two original variables: the date of the first party membership (variable 1, re-coded as the total years of party membership at the moment of response) and the total years of experience as a councillor (variable 2). To know if councillors were member of a political party before their first councillor mandate we subtracted variable 2 from variable 1. This calculation may not be completely accurate in all cases but it was the only possibility with the available data.

8   Original question: 'Do you presently have, or have you previously had, a position (board member etc.) in your party's organisation (beside the party's council group)? – in the local party organisation; upper level party organisations'. This question didn't enable to differentiate between membership of the party board prior to the first elective mandate and afterwards.

professional councillors who are elected on lists of (local branches of) national parties. As we can see from table 2.3, the average ratio for local councillors in Europe is almost eighty per cent (78.3%). Very high figures emerge in Scandinavia (Sweden: 96.1%; Norway: 85.9%), the UK (90%), North-Middle Europe (Austria: 89.5%; Switzerland: 87.8%; Germany: 84.5%) but also Croatia (94.2%) and Spain (92%). In Israel (21.7%), France (31.9%), Poland (35.1%) and Greece (56.2%) councillors are more often elected on a local list or as an independent candidate. On the other hand, parties and party actors can also actively support candidates in the election.[9] Whilst a strong majority of the local councillors in Europe indicate they received considerable support from the local party or party branch (70.4%), councillors answer the same regarding the party faction (38.6%), the national party (22.3%) or national politicians (14.7%). As such it appears that although national parties and party branches proliferate at the local level, their impact is not very large. Countries where candidates received much support from parties are Spain, Croatia, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK. At the other side of the continuum, Greece, Italy, Israel (except for the national parties and politicians) and especially Poland are characterised by the limited support from the party sphere. Furthermore in Germany (9.1%), Austria (13.3%), Switzerland (16.7%), and the Czech Republic (24.9%), rather few councillors received support from the party faction, whilst in Belgium a reverse pattern occurs (60.1%). Further, relatively few French councillors (51.9%) and relatively many Swedish councillors (88.3%) received support from the local party.

From this analysis we can discern some general patterns of activation, apprenticeship and election. When we interpret our findings within the perspective of professionalisation, a continuum of European countries tends to take shape. The professional pole of this continuum is formed by the Scandinavian countries of Sweden and Norway. Both in terms of political families, motivations and party membership and influence, these countries often and strongly resemble the professional core-route to office. Second, a group of countries is characterised by its particular presence of party politics. Councillors from Croatia, Spain, the Netherlands and the UK are often motivated by party duty whilst being embedded in and supported by the latter as well. As the third group, countries from North-Middle Europe (Austria, Germany and Switzerland) bear several similarities, tending towards the professional-type in terms of non-party motivations (except for the career motive) and the position on national party lists. Fourth,

---

9   Original question: 'As a candidate in the last election, to what extent did you have the support of the following groups: your party wing/fraction; your party at the local level; national organ(s) of your party; national politician(s)'. Percentages in the table represent respondents who indicate that support from these actors was great or very great.

some countries hardly deviate from the image of the average local councillor in Europe. This group comprises Belgium (except for large faction support and membership of the party's board) and Italy (except for limited support from the party in the election). The last group of countries is then situated at the layman-pole of the continuum. They qualify as countries in which party politics, political families and professional motivations often play a rather limited role from a comparative point of view. Greece, France, the Czech Republic and especially Poland and Israel belong to this group.

2.8   The career development of local councillors

Once councillors have completed the process of selection and election, they are ready to embark on a political career. In this phase, we expect professionals to differ from laymen both in terms of the focus and scope of their career. Regarding the former, professional councillors take up their office as a part-time or full-time vocation whilst they often accumulate several elective offices in the political realm. The results of table 2.4, however, indicate that the local councillor in Europe would still be situated at the layman-side of our continuum.

On average, a European local councillor spends 48.5 hours per month on council work, equalling around 1.6 hours per day.[10] Being a councillor is thus far from a full-time occupation. Yet considerable variation between the countries under study occurs. In some countries councillors particularly resemble the layman-archetype in terms of time dedication. This group consists of Switzerland (27.5 h/m), the Czech Republic (35.7 h/m), Belgium (35.9 h/m), Norway (36.6 h/m), Germany (38.0 h/m) and Sweden (39.9 h/m). On the other hand, councillors from Italy (62.3 h/m), the UK (72.1 h/m), Greece (80.8 h/m) and Spain (131.3 h/m) spend considerably more time on council business. Besides, the large standard deviations for this variable lead us to expect that the figures might cover a fundamental differentiation according to the function of the councillor in place.

Secondly, we address councillors' multiple-office holding in terms of legislative or executive functions at the supra-local level (i.e. province, region and/or national/federal state).

---

10   Original question: 'How much time do you spend in the following activities (average number of hours per month): council and committee meetings; meetings with the party's council Group: other party meetings and activities; public debates, meetings with citizens etc.; meetings with the administrative staff; field visits to municipal institutions; desk work preparing your activity in the council.' Scores on these items have been added.

Table 2.4: Career development of councillors

	Career	AUS	BEL	CRO	CR	FRA	GER	GRE	ISR	ITA	NET	NOR	POL	SPA	SWE	SWI	UK	X (s)
										Country								
Focus	***Time in Office*** Hours/month	53.1 (35.1)	35.9 (36.3)	44.7 (34.1)	35.7 (31.2)	50.8 (42.9)	38.0 (21.0)	80.8 (65.7)	55.4 (71.0)	62.3 (52.0)	50.8 (23.6)	36.6 (22.4)	43.7 (26.8)	131.3 (80.9)	39.9 (31.8)	27.5 (19.9)	72.1 (42.9)	48.5 (36.0)
	Cumul des mandats Yes	7.5	5.2	2.9	9.3	1.8	13.1	3.9	12.3	3.0	0.4	9.2	0.6	8.2	9.5	9.0	38.5	-
	Profession Politician	5.8	9.7	2.2	10.3	3.4	1.3	3.0	9.6	1.7	0.4	5.8	6.9	34.4	10.7	0.0	5.0	5.4
Scope	***Incumbency*** Yrs in office	10.0 (7.8)	9.8 (8.8)	5.1 (3.2)	7.8 (6.2)	6.6 (7.7)	11.7 (9.2)	7.4 (6.1)	6.6 (6.2)	6.6 (6.0)	6.2 (6.2)	7.6 (7.6)	5.7 (5.1)	6.6 (5.3)	10.2 (8.8)	6.6 (5.9)	9.9 (8.6)	8.0 (7.5)
	Future ambition Static	61.9	42.0	65.3	55.6	44.8	67.0	53.9	52.7	30.3	43.4	42.0	60.9	54.8	46.5	52.9	68.3	50.0
	Progressive	20.5	32.8	10.4	16.9	24.7	9.0	27.6	9.9	42.7	24.2	17.7	13.8	22.2	16.7	23.1	11.9	21.7

This question has been contextualized by each country under study, including the existing tiers of governance or the tiers whose elective offices are allowed to be combined with an elective office at the local level.[11] The mean figure for multiple-office holding is 9.2%. So approximately one out of every ten councillors in Europe combines local office with an elected office at a supra-local level. In the UK, even 40.3% of the local councillors combine their local mandate with a mandate in the county and/or district, but also Germany (13.5%) and Israel (12.3) are situated above average. Accumulation of mandates is rarer in Belgium (6.0%), Greece (3.9%), France (3.6%), Italy (3.3%), Croatia (2.9%), Poland (0.6%) and the Netherlands (0.5%).[12]

Thirdly, a mere five per cent of the European local councillor population qualify as a truly professional politician – whether in the form of an office at the local or supra-local level, or as a member of the party or cabinet.[13] In Spain, one third of the councillors (34.4%) is a true professional whilst some councillors from Sweden (10.7%), the Czech Republic (10.3%), Belgium (9.7%) and Israel (9.6%) are professionalised as well. In Switzerland (0%), the Netherlands (0.4%), Germany (1.3%), Italy (1.7%) and Croatia (2.2%) few councillors hold a profession inside the political realm.

If we summarise the results for councillors' career focus by placing them on our layman-professional continuum, three groups of countries emerge. A first group would consist of Spain, the UK and Israel. Although layman patterns still generally prevail in those countries as well, they tend most towards the professional end of the continuum. Opposed to this group, we can distinguish a group of countries for whom being a councillor resembles the idealistic layman-principle. These countries are Croatia, France, the Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland. The third group consists of countries tending towards the layman-type except for one particular variable. These are the countries whose councillors spend much time in office (Greece and Italy), accumulate elective offices (Germany) or occupy a profession in the political sphere (Belgium, the Czech

11   Consequently four groups emerged: countries that included the national, regional and provincial level (or equivalent) in the survey (Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, the UK), countries that included the national and regional level or equivalent (Croatia, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Norway), countries that included the national and provincial level or equivalent (Austria, Germany, Sweden) and countries that only included the national level (Israel, Switzerland).

12   The surprisingly low figures for Belgium and France could be explained by the fact that only a particular part of the councillor population accumulates offices (often mayors). Furthermore, local mandates are obviously more numerous than mandates at other government levels. Measuring this item the other way around – assessing how many politicians of other government levels hold a local office as well – would probably result in higher figures.

13   This question asked for councillors' current profession, unlike the variable in the analysis of the social background.

Republic and Sweden). Results for Austria largely coincide with the European average.

Besides this distinctive focus, a professional career is also marked by its scope. Accordingly, professional councillors will establish long careers in office and hold corresponding static or progressive ambitions. Since the local elections in the countries of our study take place every 3 to 6 years and our respondents generally acquired 8 years of experience in the council, we see that European local councillors were usually in their second or third term in office when the survey was conducted. The frequency distributions in table 2.4 show that this incumbency rate differs somewhat but not hugely amongst the sixteen countries under study. For example, councillors from Croatia (5.1 years) and Poland (5.7 years) tend to be somewhat less experienced from a comparative perspective. German councillors appear to have acquired relatively more experience (11.7 years). Further, more variation appears in the analysis of councillors' future ambitions. Generally half of the European local councillor population indicates the desire to continue in the current local office whilst one out of five (21.7%) councillors expresses the desire to move into higher office (either local or supra-local). Hence when it comes to future ambitions, councillors' career scope seems to be directed towards the professional-end of the continuum (although in a rather modest fashion since most of these councillors hold static ambitions). The majority of the countries in our survey are situated around these general figures (the Czech Republic, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland). In Belgium and Italy, a large group of councillors holds progressive ambitions to the detriment of static counterparts whilst the reverse pattern occurs in Croatia, Germany, Poland and the UK. Finally, comparatively few Israeli councillors (9.9%) aim for higher office whilst relatively many Austrian councillors (61.9) hold static ambitions.

2.9   Conclusion: Between Layman and Professional

This chapter has focused on the pathway to and in the council, covering the various phases that conceive the processes of political recruitment and career development: the social base of councillor recruitment, their activation, apprenticeship and election and subsequent career development. Each phase represents an interaction between supply and demand within a structure of opportunities shifting between the tendencies of professionalisation and democratisation. To organise the characteristics under study in each phase two ideal-typical pathways were distinguished, i.e. the layman mode and its professional counterpart. Using the professional ideal-type as reference point, data for councillors in 16 European countries provide us with a comparative description of the features

that impact upon how from the many are eventually chosen the few. As can be expected, European local councillors do not tend univocally towards one of these ideal-types in practice. Indeed, variation exists between and within countries and/or according to the recruitment or career phase under study. Nevertheless, a number of trends can be discerned reflecting the shifts in the structure of opportunities mentioned in the theoretical opening to this chapter.

First, our findings confirm the selective and isomorphic nature of the social base of councillor recruitment. The classic statement that elected politicians do not comprise a microcosm of the society they represent is reconfirmed for what is often considered as the base office at the local level. Men, middle-aged and locally rooted people still predominate among councillors, although in some countries the gender balance is more equal suggesting a more resembling form of democratic representation mentioned in the theoretical part of the chapter. In line with our expectations, such democratisation is less marked for people of non-national descent. The overrepresentation of highly educated citizens with a talking and brokerage profession (e.g. teacher, lawyer, civil servant, ...) is also a common trend in many countries, whilst differences exist in the extent of this kind of (intellectual) professionalisation and the specific expression it may take in various polities. So for social background, we found that the professional model of recruitment predominates with some democratising modifications. Within this broader professional embedding, the central and eastern European countries have relatively similar profiles in terms of social base. Country-specific tendencies are more at play for others and less related to the various state traditions found in Europe.

Second, councillor activation, apprenticeship and election show a more variegated pattern and a continuum of countries in terms of professionalisation can be discerned. Councillors in some Scandinavian countries clearly follow a more overall professional core route to office in terms of family politicisation, motivations, party membership, involvement and influence. Another group of countries is marked by the particular presence of party politics in recruitment. Still other countries (particularly in North and Middle Europe) reflect professionalisation in terms of non-party motivations and the position on a national party list. In the final group of countries councillors resemble more often layman characteristics in terms of activation, apprenticeship and election. Some countries deviate from European or state tradition trends. When professionalisation occurs, party political cocooning is thus at the core (whether or not supplemented by other professionalizing experiences). Such findings confirm the dominant nature of political parties as agents of selection and ascription in recruitment and a substantial involvement in their ranks as a key asset for many (future) councillors. Still, party politicisation and its associated function as a

professional electoral machine is unevenly distributed at the local level throughout Europe, creating opportunity for alternative, lay-oriented mechanisms of recruitment.

Third, given the base office nature of a local councillor mandate and the arrangements that surround it, it comes as no surprise that professionalisation is less apparent in terms of career focus. Still, some variation on the layman-professional continuum can be found. In a first group of countries, councillors tend most often to the professional end of the continuum even though laymen still generally prevail. A second group is the opposite with laymen principles dominating more than on average in Europe. The third group also tends towards the layman ideal except for some specific variables (e.g. time dedication, accumulation of mandates or professions in the political sphere). For career scope the balance is reversed however. Councillors in most European countries have gained some political experience, often holding a second or third term in office. Most of them also have future ambitions in staying as a councillor (the large bulk) or moving to higher local or national office. Variation exists between groups of countries in the extent to which progressive ambitions gain over their more static counterparts. Hence, given the relative experience of most councillors and the predominance of static ambitions, the pattern in career scope can be understood as a form of modest professionalisation.

In various countries, councillors are thus somewhere between the layman and the professional type of recruitment and career development. Whilst the days of the amateur-politician might be waning and formal political equality is deceiving in understanding the selective nature of recruitment and career development, the councillor mandate has not become an overall exclusive vocation in which area-specific standards and routines block the road to and in office. Still in many cases we can conclude that 'from the few are chosen the few'.

References

Aars, J., Offerdal, A. and Rysavy, D. (2012) 'The Careers of European Local Councillors. A Cross-National Comparison', *Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government* 10 (1), 63-84.

Barron, J., Crawley, G. and Wood, T. (1989) 'Drift and Resistance. Refining models of political recruitment', *Policy and Politics* 17 (3), 207-219.

Black, G. (1970) 'A Theory of Professionalization in Politics', *American Political Science Review* 64 (3), 865-878.

Bochel, J. and Denver, D. (1983) 'Candidate Selection in the Labour Party. What the Selectors Seek', *British Journal of Political Science* 12 (1), 45-69.

Brady, H., Schlozman, K. and Verba, S. (1999) 'Prospecting for Participants: Rational Expectations and the Recruitment of Political Activists', *American Political Science Review* 93 (1), 153-168.

Budge, I. and Farlie, D. (1975) 'Political Recruitment and Dropout: Predictive Success of Background Characteristics', *British Journal of Political Science* 5 (1), 33-68.

Copus, C. (2004) Party Politics and Local Government. Manchester University Press: Manchester.

Cotta, M. and Best, H. (2000) 'Between Professionalization and Democratization: A Synoptic View on the Making of the European Representative' in Cotta M. and & Best H. (eds.) Parliamentary Representatives in Europe 1848-2000: Legislative Recruitment and Careers in Eleven European Countries. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 493-525.

Denters, B. and Rose, L. (2005) 'Towards Local Governance?' in Denters, B. and Rose, L. (eds.) Comparing Local Governance. Trends and Developments, Palgrave: London, 246-262.

Eliassen, K. and Pedersen, M. (1978) 'Professionalization of Legislatures: Long-Term Change in Political Recruitment in Denmark and Norway', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20 (2), 286-318.

Eulau, H., Buchanan, W., Ferguson, L. and Wahlke, J. (1961) 'Career Perspectives of American State Legislator', in Marvick, D. (ed.) Political Decision-makers. The Free Press: Glencoe, 218-263.

Gordon, I. (1979) 'The Recruitment of Local Councillors: An Integrated Approach with Some Preliminary Findings from a Study of Labour Councillors', *Policy and Politics* 7 (1), 1-37.

Guérin, E. and Kerrouche, E. (2008) 'From Amateurs to Professionals: The Changing Face of Local Elected Representatives in Europe', *Local Government Studies* 34 (2), 179-202.

John, P. (2001) Local Governance in Western Europe. Sage: London.

Katz, R. and Mair, P. (1995) 'Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy', Party Politics 1 (1), 5-28.

Marvick, D. (1972) 'Political Recruitment and Careers' in Sills D. (ed.) International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences. The Macmillan Company & The Free Press: New York, 273-282.

Meadowcroft, J. (2001) 'Political Recruitment and Local Representation: the Case of Liberal Democratic Councillors', *Local Government Studies* 27 (1), 19-36.

Mourtizen, P.-E. and Svara, J. (2002) Leadership at the Apex. Politicians and Administrators in Western Local Governments. Pittsburgh University Press: Pittsburgh.

Norris, P. (ed.) (1997) Passages to Power. Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Philips, A. (1995) The Politics of Presence. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Prewitt, K. (1965) 'Political Socialization and Leadership Selection', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 361, 96-111.

Prewitt, K. (1969) 'From the many are chosen the few', *American Behavioral Scientist* 13 (2), 169-188.

Prewitt, K. (1970) The Recruitment of Political Leaders: A Study of Citizen-Politicians. Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc.: Indianapolis.

Rallings, C., Trasher, M., Borisyuk, G. and Shears, M. (2010) 'Parties, Recruitment and Modernisation: Evidence from Local Election Candidates', *Local Government Studies* 36 (3), 361-379.

Rao, N. (2000) 'The Changing Context of Representation' in Rao, N. (ed.) Representation and Community in Western Democracies, MacMillan Press: Houndmills, 1-9.

Rao, N. (2005) 'The Representation of Women in Local Politics', *Politics and Policy* 33 (2), 323-339.

Reynaert, H. (2012) 'The Social Base of Political Recruitment. A Comparative Study of Local Councillors in Europe', *Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government* 10, (1), 19-36.

Schlesinger, J. (1966) Ambition and Politics. Political Careers in the United States. Rand McNally & Company: Chicago.

Seligman, L. (1961) 'Political Recruitment and Party Structure', *American Political Science Review* 55 (1), 77-86.

Steyvers, K., Bergström, T., Bäck, H., Boogers, M., Ruano De La Fuente, J.-M. and Schaap, L. (2008) 'From Princeps to President? Comparing Local Political Leadership Transformation', *Local Government Studies* 34 (2), 131-146.

Steyvers, K. and Verhelst, T. (2012) 'Path Dependency: Do Councillor Recruitment and Career Development Matter?' *Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government* 10 (1), 85-110.

van Liefferinge, H. and Steyvers, K. (2008) 'Family Matters? Degrees of Family Politicization in Political Recruitment and Career Start of Mayors in Belgium', *Acta Politica* 44 (2), 125-149.

Verhelst, T. and Kerrouche, E. (2012) 'Family, Ambition, Locality and Party. A Study of Professionalization in the Activation and Apprenticeships of Local Councillors in Europe', *Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government* 10 (1), 37-62.

3 Councillors and their parties

Eran Razin

3.1 Introduction

Local government councillors are often perceived as the weakest link in the local government power triangle of mayor, elected councillors and senior bureaucrats.[1] The power position of councillors in particular countries depends on their legal status and the amount of resources and administrative-professional support available to them. Nevertheless, it can also be substantially influenced by the role of party politics in their careers. Councillors can be members of national parties, running for these parties in local elections. Alternatively, they can run for local parties or lists, or run as independent candidates, the latter option viable particularly in majoritarian electoral systems, where councillors represent electoral wards. A different type of party affiliation is demonstrated by councillors who run as independent candidates or in local lists, although practically being party members or informally affiliated to a particular national party.

A diminishing role of national parties in local elections, along with decreasing voter turnout, have been considered to be prime elements in debates over the changing nature of local democracy, labelled in some countries as an emerging local democracy crisis or local democratic deficit. Reduced involvement of national parties in local politics is in line with the post-democracy argument (Crouch 2004), emphasizing the decline of parties as broadly based social institutions. Lamenting the disappearance of the loyal electorate of left-wing parties, Crouch portrayed a new reality of less clearly defined voter identities, in which voters tend not to join political parties and frequently move their vote from one party to another. Their voting behaviour is based on promises for better services, lower taxes and similar considerations, rather than on a substantive ideological discourse. Such a reality could undermine the position of national parties at the local government level.

Non-partisan local lists have been argued to be of growing significance throughout Europe (Reiser and Holtmann 2008) – a process attributed to a crisis of the party system and to the diffusion of local lists from rural to urban local authorities. Local lists have become particularly prominent in Central and Eastern European countries, in the early post-communist years, although occasionally declining later on, along with the consolidation of national parties. In some West European countries, local lists have been a long-term phenomenon in small rural communities, where smaller scale has permitted more direct democracy than in larger cities, but such lists have eventually emerged also in larger cities.

The European mayors survey clearly revealed that party membership and the intensity of links with the party are greater in large cities than in small local authorities. Direct elections reduce party membership, because it is easier for independent candidates to run in such elections, and a strong-mayor form reduces party significance for mayors, because it makes the mayor less dependent on party organs and party councillors (Fallend et al. 2006).

The separation of local politics from national party politics has been a principle explicitly promoted and observed in some countries, such as Canada, where, with some exceptions, municipal elections are non-partisan (Phillips 2010). It has been claimed that political debates of a national scope are largely irrelevant at the municipal scale, because the tasks of local government have little to do with nationwide political agendas, but rather more with professional management of service provision and leadership skills (Welch and Bledsoe 1988; Maisel and Buckley 2005). Proponents of separating local elections from national party politics argue that political-ideological cleavages at the national level could be transferred by political parties to the local level, hampering local deliberations and decision-making, complicating the task of building and maintaining local coalitions, and negatively affecting efficiency in municipal service provision. NPM principles also emphasize the separation of politics from day-to-day running of the local authority. Although not necessarily rejecting the participation of national parties in 'steering' local affairs, the emphasis on running the city as a business hints at a reluctant attitude towards the role of parties in their administration. It should also be noted that at the opposite extreme of NPM practices, political parties could be of marginal significance in traditional kinship-based local politics.

However, there is no broad consensus over notions on the relevance or otherwise of national parties in local politics. The seemingly unsolvable financial crisis of the city of San Diego, California, demonstrates well the weaknesses of a formally non-partisan system of amateurish councillors who represent their district constituency sentiment for social liberalism, perhaps also fiscal popu-

lism, while direct democracy has hampered nearly any initiative to raise taxes in order to close the persisting structural deficit. Lacking a disciplining impact of national parties such contradicting actions rolled on for decades leading to the inevitable financial failure (Erie et al. 2011).

The significance of national parties could be evident in three respects. The first is an instrumental one for the councillor: party assistance in the election campaign, the mobilization of voters who identify with the party, and party backing in the functioning of the councillor. The second benefit could be in making local democracy less chaotic and more manageable; that is, a disciplining impact of large parties on their councillors that makes political compromises through deliberations and negotiations more feasible. A third is the consolidation of democratic values and norms, assuming that the proper functioning of democratic mechanisms at all levels of the state begins with sound democratic practices at the local level. Indeed, the European Mayors study (Fallend et al., 2006) revealed that despite arguments on the decreasing role of parties in local affairs, parties have remained an important element in local politics. Discussing the role of local parties and independent candidates in local government – mainly based on English and Belgian insights – Copus et al. (2012) hint that non-partisan politics at the local level could survive and even increase their influence, but the non-partisan councillors are under constant pressure from national parties that are expected to retain their dominance in local politics.

The data of the MAELG survey provide insights on the role played by national parties in municipal councils in 15 European countries and Israel, enabling the identification of cross-country and intra-country variations, the latter mainly referring to the impact of size of the local authority. Analysis is constrained in its ability to pinpoint explanatory factors for cross-country variations, because these could be a product of socio-political specificities that require a qualitative examination in each country, and because the lengthy opinion closed-format mail questionnaires of the MAELG could produce variations that reflect at times cultural attitudes rather than 'objectively' measured differences. However, in spite of these limitations, the MAELG survey is unparalleled in size and geographical scope, thus providing unique insights on local councillors. These include possible associations between responses of councillors and cross-country contextual factors, such as attributes of local governance systems defined by central-local government relations, welfare state regimes, political traditions, or even the simplistic north-south distinction (Razin and Hazan forthcoming).

3.2   *Party affiliation*

Party affiliation was dominant among councillors in most of the 16 countries included in the MAELG survey, and the role of national parties in local politics has even increased in some places. Independent parties and lists predominated mainly in small local authorities. The use of proportional elections in most countries, along with mechanisms to express candidate preferences, have also reduced prospects for the election of completely independent councillors.

Table 3.1: Per cent of councillors that are party members in 16 countries

Local authority population size	Total	Per cent party members					Total
		10,000-19,999	20,000-29,999	30,000-49,999	50,000-99,999	100,000+	
Sweden	99.6	99.5	99.6	99.6	99.6	100.0	1,307
Switzerland	98.0	97.0	98.7	99.5	100.0	99.2	1,615
Norway	97.6	96.9	98.0	96.2	100.0	100.0	1,127
The Netherlands	96.9	96.0	96.5	97.1	98.1	99.1	1,173
Belgium	95.2	95.2	93.1	97.1	97.9	96.9	623
Spain	94.1	90.6	95.7	89.7	96.0	96.5	512
United Kingdom	92.8	-	-	100.0	85.9	95.3	679
Austria	90.8	88.6	86.7	94.3	95.5	100	403
Croatia	88.6	88.0	95.2	85.3	94.3	84.2	220
Germany	83.7	83.1	77.1	84.1	91.1	91.2	883
Italy	78.5	75.5	85.3	80.6	75.4	80.6	1,156
Czech Republic	66.0	53.8	67.9	66.1	82.6	100.0	617
Greece	63.2	64.4	66.7	53.3	67.1	40.0	234
France	59.5	54.1	57.0	61.3	77.5	93.8	718
Israel	54.1	51.1	41.2	47.8	63.6	80.0	146
Poland	29.5	17.1	23.3	33.3	40.9	71.4	325
Total	86.8	84.1	84.2	87.3	89.7	94.2	11,738

Results of the MAELG survey clearly show that the vast majority of European councillors are party members (Table 3.1), although one has to take into account that party members can also run for local lists, rather than in the name of their national party. The only notable exception is Poland, where less than one third of the councillors surveyed are party members, although in practice many non-party lists in Poland have a hidden relationship to national political parties; that is, they are informally related to a political party (Dudzinska 2008). Other countries with a significant proportion of councillors who are not party members – Israel, France, Greece, the Czech Republic and Italy are all on the Mediterranean or in post-communist Europe, whereas in 'the deep North' – Scandinavian countries, Switzerland and the Netherlands – nearly all councillors are party members (Table 3.1). Councillors in several countries were elected in systems combining list and preferential voting. A majority of Swiss councillors and a

particularly large proportion of German and Czech councillors got their seats due to the preferential voting system, according to the MAELG survey.

The proportion of party members among councillors was higher in large municipalities than in smaller ones (Table 3.1), with three notable exceptions: Italy, Greece and Croatia. In these three countries, the average population size of a municipality of non-partisan councillors was even slightly higher than that of party member councillors. Obviously, where the share of party members among councillors was extremely high, population size was rather irrelevant, because nearly all councillors were party members.

Table 3.2: Left-Right orientation of councillors

Country	Left-Right orientation
Spain	3.72
Austria	4.25
Italy	4.34
Greece	4.60
Germany	4.67
Switzerland	4.67
France	4.68
Belgium	4.76
The Netherlands	4.77
Sweden	4.80
United Kingdom	4.87
Norway	5.11
Croatia	5.19
Israel	5.54
Czech Republic	5.58
Poland	6.02
Total	4.76

Left-Right-Orientation spans from 0 (=Left) to 10 (=Right).

As to the Left-Right orientation of councillors (both party members and non-partisan), a tilt towards the Left is particularly evident in Spain, whereas councillors in Poland, and to a lesser extent Israel, place themselves in the Right wing much more than those in the other 14 European countries (Table 3.2).

Table 3.3: Do you (the councillor) presently have, or have you previously had, a position (board member etc.) in your upper level party's organization and/or in your party's organization at the local level (beside the party's council list)?

| | Position in upper level party organization | | | Position in local level party organization | | |
| | Yes, previously or presently | | | Yes, previously or presently | | |
	All respondents	Only party members	Total N	All respondents	Only party members	Total N
Sweden	56.7	56.8	1,184	93.1	93.1	1,275
Spain	51.3	54.0	458	89.3	91.7	216
Croatia	50.3	49.1	193	82.0	86.6	479
Germany	47.8	54.8	732	82.0	83.1	1,112
Austria	47.9	51.7	328	78.1	80.9	620
Belgium	44.4	46.0	586	77.3	87.0	856
Norway	40.8	41.6	1,077	75.1	79.3	394
Italy	37.1	43.4	964	69.6	79.4	1,129
Czech Republic	36.4	52.4	574	68.9	72.0	662
The Netherlands	36.0	37.1	1,057	67.1	68.3	1,571
Switzerland	33.8	34.6	1,282	55.8	77.8	599
Greece	29.2	42.9	233	47.4	47.3	1,044
Israel	26.7	41.9	135	42.2	61.0	232
United Kingdom	21.8	22.4	608	33.4	47.9	589
Poland	17.3	45.3	278	28.5	44.4	133
France	8.4	13.1	547	26.3	59.0	297
Total	**38.4**	**42.7**	**10,236**	**68.4**	**75.3**	**11,208**

Variations in party membership are obviously related to the propensity of councillors to hold, presently or previously, a formal position in their upper level party organization. In countries such as France, Poland, Israel and Greece, where the proportion of councillors who are party members is low, the proportion of those who held party positions is low as well (Table 3.3). Similarly, where party membership is high, the proportion of councillors holding, presently or previously, upper level party position tends to be high. However, there are some notable exceptions. Swiss and UK councillors tend to be party members, but relatively few of them hold, or held, positions in their upper level party organization. If only party-member councillors are taken into account, much of the cross-country variations disappear; that is, holding positions in upper level party organizations in the low-party-membership countries of Poland, Israel, Greece and the Czech Republic is at par with high-party-membership countries. Only French and British councillors remain exceptional, with very few holding previously or presently positions in upper level party organizations, even among councillors who are party members.

The proportion of councillors who hold, or held, party positions at the local level is far higher, but again, lowest in countries where councillors are least likely to be party members – Poland, Israel, France and Greece – and highest in the same countries where councillors had the highest propensity to hold positions in the upper level party organization – Sweden, Croatia and Spain (Table 3.3). Switzerland is a notable exception, with a slightly below average propensity of councillors to hold party positions, despite the fact that nearly all Swiss councillors are party members. In contrast to the data on those holding positions in upper level party organizations, in countries where councillors are less likely to be party members, particularly Poland, Israel, France and Greece, those who are party members are still less likely hold party positions at the local level.

A large majority of councillors received support of the local level of their party in their election campaign, whereas fewer received such support from the national organ of their party or party wing/fraction (Table 3.4). It should be noted that the proportion of councillors who received the support of the national organ of their party is even lower than indicated in Table 3.4, because some of those who are not members of a national party left this question unanswered (thus were not included in the calculation), whereas others answered negatively.

Party support during elections at all levels was minimal in Poland and in three Mediterranean countries – Greece, Israel and Italy (Table 3.4) – all but Italy characterized by a low proportion of party members among councillors. At the other end, Spanish councillors had the highest proportion of councillors

Table 3.4: As a candidate in the last election, to what extent did you have the support of the national organ(s) of your party, the party wing/fraction and the local level party?

	Support of the national organ(s) of your party		Support of the party wing/fraction		Support of local level party	
	Great or very great (%)	Total (abs. No.)	Great or very great (%)	Total (abs. No.)	Great or very great (%)	Total (abs. No.)
Spain	49.4	472	87.6	491	90.0	499
Sweden	17.5	1,274	32.0	1,258	88.3	1,308
The Netherlands	-	-	84.2	1,209	85.6	1,200
Norway	26.6	1,108	49.7	1,076	84.8	1,118
Croatia	33.2	193	80.8	208	82.7	208
United Kingdom	38.6	655	43.4	599	76.5	659
Austria	31.3	383	13.3	376	76.3	392
Switzerland	17.9	1,382	16.7	1,400	75.6	1,563
Belgium	23.5	609	60.1	614	72.0	622
Germany	21.3	845	9.1	810	69.5	849
Czech Republic	26.8	593	24.9	583	68.0	596
France	21.3	609	31.6	598	51.9	624
Italy	6.8	1,131	23.5	1,129	35.7	1,136
Israel	24.4	119	26.3	114	30.8	117
Greece	16.4	232	26.0	231	23.4	231
Poland	5.4	317	5.7	316	16.1	316
Total	**22.3**	**9,922**	**38.6**	**1,1012**	**70.4**	**11,438**

receiving the support of party organs at all levels. In some countries – Sweden, Norway and Switzerland – party support was mainly at the local level, whereas Spain, the United Kingdom and Croatia led in the proportion of councillors receiving the support of national organs of their parties. Opinions on the mutual influences of the local party organization and the local party elected councillors, and on the cooperation of the leader of the party list in the council with the elected councillors in the list (Table 3.5) are correlated with the previous responses on holding party positions and party support. Whereas most respondents in the 16 countries were positive to the three statements, councillors in the 'less partisan' countries – Israel, Greece and Poland – were among the more sceptical. Only a minority of those who answered these questions among Israeli councillors suggested that the local party organization and its list in the council substantially influence each other, and only a small majority indicated that their party leader in fact keeps them informed and seeks their support. Greek councillors expressed similar views, and French, Polish and UK councillors also indicated in their responses the relative lack of intra-party collaboration. Spain, Norway and Sweden were at the other end of the spectrum.

The vast majority of European councillors did confirm good cooperation with the leader of their party list in the councils – Greece and Israel being exceptions. However, only about two thirds of the respondents confirmed that there is a strong mutual influence between the local party organization and the party group in the council. In three countries – Croatia, Sweden and Italy – the party organization seemed more influential, but in most countries the councillors viewed their influence on their party organization as more marked than vice versa. This was particularly so in Switzerland, The Netherlands and Israel. No clear and systematic associations were identified between the three statements specified in Table 3.5 and either population size of the local authority or the Left-Right orientation of councillors. Cross-country variations apparently have an overriding role in explaining variations in the relations between councillors and political parties; intra-country variations are either much smaller or obscured in a broad cross-country comparative study, unable to depict their specificities.

3.3   Conclusions

Cross-country variations in the role of parties in the careers of councillors reflect specificities of local political systems, political cultures and traditions. However, some general patterns can be observed. First, parties still have a major role in European local politics, despite perceptions on their diminishing signi–

Table 3.5: The proportion of those who partly agree or totally agree with several statements on their parties

	The local party organization has much influence over the decisions of the party's council group	The party's council group has much influence over the decisions of the local party	The leader of the party group usually informs and seeks the support of the party group when decisions are taken
Spain	87.8	88.2	93.4
Norway	83.7	85.5	92.9
Sweden	81.7	77.3	89.9
Croatia	79.6	75.4	87.0
Italy	74.1	74.2	86.5
Austria	64.2	72.4	86.1
Czech Republic	63.2	71.8	85.3
Belgium	62.2	69.8	84.7
Switzerland	58.2	66.3	81.6
The Netherlands	55.4	60.5	76.3
Germany	52.4	58.0	71.5
Poland	50.3	53.5	71.4
UK	49.0	53.5	66.6
France	37.1	45.1	64.4
Greece	35.2	43.1	56.1
Israel	30.1	37.4	43.0
Total	**64.4**	**69.3**	**82.5**

ficance. National parties predominate local politics in Europe's 'North', and whereas non-partisan councillors have a greater share in some 'Southern' (Mediterranean) or 'Eastern' (post-communist) countries, even there national parties play a substantial role in local politics. An explicit sentiment or formal rules that exclude national parties from being involved in local politics are not part of European local democracy. Second, substantial cross-national variations do exist in the role of national parties: in the proportion of councillors who are party members, in the propensity of councillors to hold positions in party organizations and to receive party support, and in the relations among the councillors in the council, its leader and the party organization.

It is tempting to suggest a 'north – south/east' distinction in partisanship, running from highly partisan Scandinavian and northwestern European countries, such as Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and the Netherlands, to post-communist and Mediterranean countries, where the role of parties in the careers of councillors is much more limited, primarily Poland, Greece and Israel. One can also associate the smaller role of national parties with positive attitudes towards new modes of democracy and participation, whereas dominance of national parties in local politics in the 'North' could be associated with more conservative views towards local reforms that go beyond representative democracy (Razin and Hazan forthcoming). However, exceptions exist, primarily the dominance of parties in Spain and Croatia.

The proportion of councillors who receive party support in their election campaign is low in Poland, Greece, Israel and Italy, and to a lesser extent also in France. The British majoritarian system is characterized by a very high proportion of councillors who are party members – a substantial number of them have received party support as candidates. The majoritarian system in the UK is perhaps reflected in the relatively low proportion of those holding positions in the upper level party organization, and in the relatively weak links among the party list in the council, its leader and the party organization.

Local authority size does influence positively the involvement of national parties in local politics, but exceptions exist and this variable also becomes rather irrelevant in countries where nearly all councillors are party members.

Relating partisanship among councillors to the POLLEADER typology of local government systems (Heinelt and Hlepas 2006) also leads to inconclusive results. Weak partisanship characterizes strong mayor forms of the Franco and Central-East European types, but Spain is a major exception. A major role of parties among councillors characterizes North-Middle European types, regardless of the power position of the mayor. The precise explanatory factors could be related to specificities of the national political systems and the local political traditions, but regardless of these factors, the relations between councillors and

their parties markedly influences the role of councillors in local decision-making.

References

Copus, C., Wingfield, M., Steyvers, K. And Reynaert, H. (2012) 'A place to party? Parties and non-partisanship in local government' in Mossberger, K., Clarke, S. E. And John, P. (eds.) The Oxford Handbook of Urban Politics. Oxford University Press: New York, 210-230.

Crouch, C. (2004) Post Democracy. Polity Press: Cambridge.

Dudzinska, A. (2008) 'Non-party lists in local election in Poland' in Reiser, M. and Holtmann, E. (eds.) Farewell to the Party Model? Independent Local Lists in East and West European Countries. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 105-126.

Erie, S. P., Kogan, V. And MacKenzie, S. A. (2011) Paradise Plundered, Fiscal Crisis and Governance Failures in San Diego. Stanford University Press: Stanford..

Fallend, F., Ignits, G. And Swianiewicz, P. (2006) 'Divided loyalties? Mayors between party representation and local community interests' in Bäck, H., Heinelt, H. And Magnier, A. (eds.) 245-270.

Heinelt, H. And Hlepas, N.-K. (2006) 'Typologies of local government systems' in Bäck, H., Heinelt, H. And Magnier, A. (eds.) The European Mayor, Political Leaders in the Changing Context of Local Democracy. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 21-42.

Maisel, L. S. and Buckley, K. Z. (2005) Parties and Elections in america, 4th ed. Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham.

Phillips, S. D. (2010) 'You say you want an evolution? From citizen to community engagement in Canadian Cities' in Brunet-Jailly, E. And Martin, J. F. (eds.) Local Government in a Global World, Australia and Canada in Comparative Perspective. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 55-80.

Razin, E. And Hazan, A. (forthcoming) 'Attitudes of European local councilors towards local governance reforms: a north-south divide?', *Local Government Studies*.

Reiser, M. and Holtmann, E. (eds.) (2008) Farewell to the Party Model? Independent Local Lists in East and West European Countries. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden.

Welch, S. And Bledsoe, T. (1988) Urban Reform and its Consequences, A Study in Representation. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

4 The roles councillors play

Pieter-Jan Klok and Bas Denters

4.1   Research questions and conceptualisation

Local councillors find themselves in an interesting position in local government. In the traditional model of representative democracy, the council is pivotal in an electoral chain of command (Dearlove 1973). On the one hand they are elected to represent the citizens in their municipality, transforming citizens' preferences into local policy (Denters 2005). Here the main task of the councillor is to ensure responsiveness vis-à-vis the local citizens (De Groot, Denters and Klok 2010). On the other hand they have to make sure that actors in other positions in local government (the executive and the administration) act in accordance with the citizens' preferences. Here the main task of the councillor is to ensure the accountability of the executive leadership and its administrative apparatus. Formulated in this way the councillors perform an intermediary role between citizens and the executive (Toonen 1991). In all countries involved in the MAELG project, political parties constitute an important fourth type of actor in local government. Parties offer citizens, in their capacity as voters, the choice between 'different bundles of issues and solutions' (Klingemann et al. 1994: 8; Judge 1999: 70-96) and are in most cases the prime vehicle for councillor (re)election.

This position of councillors amidst other relevant actors in their municipality implies that councillors have to perform several roles or tasks. These tasks can be seen as more or less important by councillors (role perceptions) and can be fulfilled to a varying degree or performed with more or less success (role behaviour). This distinction between role perceptions and role behaviour is related to both the sociological concept of explaining (role) behaviour (Merton 1968) and the attitudinal model of planned behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). If councillors are faced with a multitude of tasks we might wonder which tasks are seen by them as particularly important and which of these tasks are actually performed by them. Moreover, in line with the general theories mentioned above we might wonder whether these role perceptions (importance of tasks) are related to role behaviour. These questions become increasingly relevant in the context of several institutional reforms that aim to improve the way in which councillors perform the different tasks. The UK and the Netherlands have for in-

stance adopted reform policies that are aimed at strengthening both the representative and the scrutiny role of the council (Berg and Rao 2005; Denters and Rose 2005). The relative importance of the different tasks of councillors might also change as a result of long term trends in sources of democratic legitimacy (Vabo and Aars 2012). Traditional representative 'input based democracy' might be replaced by 'output based democracy', where the focus is not so much on the representative tasks of the councillors, but on the tasks related to producing the actual outputs that citizens demand as customers (Haus and Heinelt 2004). Consequently we ask the following research questions:

1. Which aspects of their tasks are seen as particularly important by councillors? (role perceptions)
2. Which aspects of their tasks are particularly well fulfilled by councillors? (role behaviour)
3. Is there a relationship between councillors' role perception and role behaviour?

We will answer these questions both on the overall level (all councillors included in the MAELG project) and on the level of the different countries. The countries included in the research project show differences in institutional rules concerning the positions of the councillors in relation to the other actors that are relevant (citizens, executive and political parties). In some countries the institutional position of the political party is very strong. In these countries the councillor has to function in a system that can be labelled as a 'local party democratic system' (Vetter 2009). Consequently the tasks that have to be performed in relation to the party might be seen as very important to the councillors. Other councillors might find themselves in an institutional context that can be labelled as 'local citizen democratic systems', giving citizens a stronger position in their relation to the councillors (Vetter 2009). Likewise, it can be expected that performing the tasks securing responsiveness will be seen as very important by councillors in these systems (Manin 1997). Institutional differences between countries are likely to be related to differences in political culture (Almond and Verba 1989). The general psychological or value orientations towards the political system are likely to influence the role orientations of local councillors, as these role orientations can be seen as a specification or operationalization of general notions of democracy (Heinelt 2012a). Thus, national variations in political culture are likely to contribute to national variations in role perceptions and subsequent behaviour.

In this chapter we focus on the analysis of role conceptions and behaviour, both on the general and national level. Further research on the relation between institutional and cultural variables and role conceptions and behaviour is beyond the scope of this volume. Some work in this field has already been done (Heinelt 2012b; Denters and Klok 2012), relating both individual characteristics and national differences in culture and institutional setting to role perceptions and behaviour for a number of these tasks, using the same MAELG dataset.

In order to answer the research questions a further conceptualisation of the tasks of councillors is needed. In relation to the *citizens* that are represented, councillors have to be responsive: they have to be aware of the preferences and interests of citizens and transform those into decisions by the municipality. We distinguish between a substantive and a procedural conception of this role. In the substantive version it is important that the content of the policies adopted by the municipality are in accordance with the opinions of the citizens (Miller and Stokes 1966; Thomassen 1994). This implies that councillors represent the main requests and issues from local society and define the main goals of the municipality accordingly. In the procedural conception of this task, responsiveness does not necessarily imply that the representative should constantly 'actually and literally act[s] in response to the principal's [citizens] wishes' (Pitkin 1967: 155). But, if in rare situations the demands of the represented conflict with the decisions of the representative, the latter owes his/her constituents 'a good explanation of why their wishes are not in accord with their interest' (Pitkin 1967: 209f.). In the procedural conception of responsiveness, councillors should (a) become aware of the concerns of the voters and be willing to express these in the council and (b) be willing to engage in a public debate in which the councillors explain and justify the council's political decisions to citizens.

Whereas the tasks in relation to the citizens have by some been labelled as 'external' (De Groot 2009; Heinelt 2012), the tasks in relation to the executive and the administration can be seen as 'internal'. In relation to the executive, councillors might see themselves as a countervailing power that has to ensure that the executive is concerned with the views and interests of the citizens, as represented by the councillors themselves. This implies that councillors need to control the activity of the executive and possibly other organs in the municipal organisation, in order to ensure accountability (Lupia 2003; De Groot 2009). On the other hand, councillors might see themselves as part of the collective of 'municipal government', in which case it would seem perfectly natural to support the executive as one of the important organs of government, enabling them to fulfil citizens' needs. This conception of their task might be especially strong for councillors who themselves hold an executive position, as might be the case in some countries. The omnipresence of political parties and their role in the

(re)election of most councillors suggests that councillors also have specific tasks in relation to their party. The prime task in this relation would be to ensure that the party programme, on which they have been elected by the citizens in the first place, should be implemented.

The tasks described above are all clearly connected to the position of the councillor in representative democracy. The questionnaire that we used also contained a question on a task that fits more in a role conception where councillors themselves take direct action (mediating conflicts in local society) and two questions on the representation of specific interests and views (of minorities and women). Because one of the aims of this volume is to present a complete overview of the views and orientations of local councillors in Europe, we include these items in our analysis.

In accordance with the conceptualisation described above the MAELG questionnaire contains two questions to measure role perceptions and role behaviour, each regarding ten aspects of the task of councillors. The first question (Q.10) measures role perceptions: *'In your experience as a councillor, how important are the following tasks for you as a councillor:*

- *Defining the main goals of the municipality (define goals[1]*)*
- *Controlling municipal activity (control activity)*
- *Representing the requests and issues emerging from local society (represent)*
- *Publicising debate on local issues before decisions are taken (publish debate)*
- *Explaining decisions of the council to the citizens (explain decisions)*
- *Implementing the programme of my political party/ movement (party program)*
- *Supporting the executive (support executive)*
- *Mediating conflicts in local society (mediate conflict)*
- *Promoting the views and interests of minorities in local society (minorities)*
- *Promoting the views and interests of women in local society (women)'.*

For each item the possible answers are: none (0); little (1); moderate (2); great (3) and very great (4).

---

1   Between brackets is the label that we will use in our figures and tables.

Role behaviour is measured by question 24: *'In your experience as a councillor, how would you define your contribution regarding the following tasks?'*, using the same ten tasks as question 10 and the same answer categories.

The formulation of this question implies some ambiguity, as the concept of 'contribution' might be interpreted in terms of 'the activities that I have performed' in relation to this task (the role behaviour as such), or as 'my contribution to the fulfilment of this task in general' (the result of my behaviour). In the second interpretation the question measures not only role behaviour, but also its effects. We are not able to draw conclusions on which interpretation has been dominant with the respondents, as it might be subject to subtle variations due to translation into the different languages of the research group.

4.2   The role perceptions of European councillors

The tasks that constitute the core of the representative democratic model are still seen as central by the councillors in this research. In figure 4.1, the mean values of the response by councillors on the questions regarding the importance of different tasks are presented, ordered by decreasing importance.

The substantive tasks of defining the main goals of the municipality and representing the issues from local society have mean scores of around 3.4, indicating that they are seen as very important by respectively 55% and 48% of the councillors. These tasks are seen as only moderately or less important by only around 10% of the councillors. Controlling municipal activities and explaining decisions to citizens are seen as somewhat less important than defining goals and representing issues, but their mean scores are still above 3, so on average these tasks are seen as of somewhat more than great importance. The task that could be seen as an attempt to increase the possibilities for citizens to become more active in local democracy, publicising debate before decisions are taken, has a mean score of 3.0. The other five tasks have scores below 3, indicating they are seen as somewhere between moderate and of great importance. Of these five, the task of implementing the programme of the councillor's political party or movement is seen as the most important, with a mean score of 2.8. This result implies that party politics is still very much alive in Europe. First, it can be expected that there will be some variation between the different countries, as the institutional role of the party in local politics will vary considerably (more on this issue later in this paragraph). Second, it can be expected that councillors that are members of a (national) party see this task as more important than councillors that are elected as an individual or independent candidate. It is possible to differentiate the role perceptions between councillors that are members

of a national party (mean score 2.9), members of a local list (2.5) and councillors that are elected as individual or independent candidates (mean score 1.9).[2]

Figure 4.1: Importance of different tasks as perceived by councillors
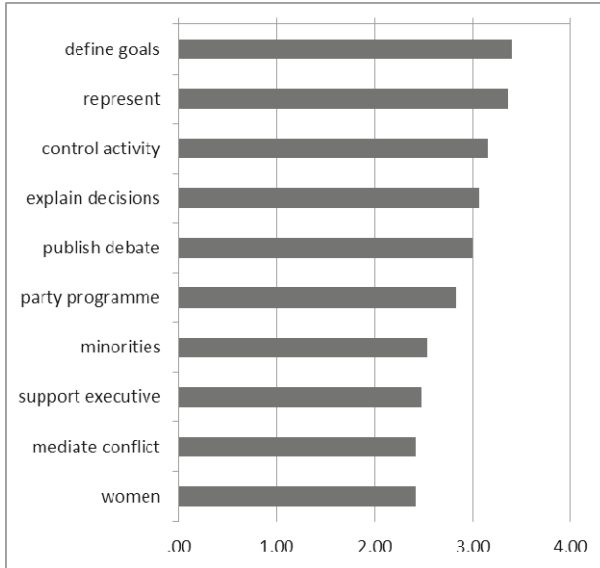
Mean values (0-4)

These results indicate that party politics is substantially less important for nonparty councillors and rather more important for members of national parties. As almost 80% of councillors are elected as a member of a national party, their role perception is dominant in the overall mean score (only 2% of the sample is an individual or independent candidate).

Two items refer to the promotion of views and interests of specific groups (minorities and women). Of these the representation of minorities is seen as more important than women (2.8 versus 2.4). At first sight this seems at odds with the results on the question on which specific groups councillors represent (Question 16), as described by Karlsson in chapter 6. In his analysis the representation of women scores higher than the representation of ethnic minorities. The difference might be related to the fact that in this question the minorities are specified as 'ethnic' minorities, whereas in question 10 the minorities are not

---

2   Differences are clearly significant at 1% level.

specified, possibly referring to a broader group of minorities, whose representation could be seen as more important. As can be expected, the promotion of the views and interests of women has a higher priority for women (2.9) than for men (2.2) [3]. Both the representation of minorities and of women are higher priority with councillors who consider themselves politically left, than with those on the right of the political spectrum. These results are in line with those using the question (16) on the representation of specific groups.

This leaves two tasks that score an average of around 2.5 in terms of their importance: supporting the executive and mediating conflicts in local societies. The relatively high score of the importance of supporting the executive seems to indicate that councillors see themselves to a large extent as part of the collective of local government, rather than as a counterbalancing power versus the executive. Using the answers on question 26 (offices that councillors currently hold or have held in the past) it is possible to differentiate the role perceptions on this task.

Table 4.1: Importance of different tasks as perceived by councillors in different countries

	de-fine goals	Rep-re-sent	con-trol activ-ity	ex-plain deci-sions	pub-lish de-bate	party pro-gram me	mi-nori-ties	sup-port ex-ecu-tive	me-diate con-flict	wom en
Germany	3.63	3.40	3.26	3.25	2.92	2.62	2.53	2.24	2.79	2.36
Switzerland	3.02	3.16	2.86	2.73	2.84	2.73	2.33	2.15	1.98	2.15
Czech Republic	3.52	2.99	3.17	3.04	3.01	2.53	2.00	2.64	2.41	1.96
The Netherlands	3.61	3.25	3.36	3.04	3.13	2.92	2.56	2.62	2.10	2.10
Italy	3.17	3.48	3.25	3.08	2.82	2.89	2.54	2.55	2.70	2.59
Sweden	3.78	3.46	3.44	3.33	3.37	3.39	2.77	2.85	2.25	2.91
Croatia	3.00	2.95	2.66	2.84	2.78	2.81	2.27	2.82	2.44	2.44
Norway	3.54	3.41	2.90	2.83	2.82	3.36	2.60	2.21	1.86	2.32
Poland	3.50	3.55	2.80	3.21	2.90	1.61	2.73	2.84	3.17	2.24
Austria	3.67	3.50	3.35	3.26	2.88	3.23	2.82	2.58	2.95	2.88
Greece	3.63	3.60	3.55	3.30	3.27	2.75	2.90	3.25	3.21	3.00
United Kingdom	3.10	3.50	3.04	3.17	2.97	2.44	2.63	2.36	2.73	2.28
Belgium	3.07	3.31	3.12	2.92	3.12	2.82	2.66	2.13	2.35	2.26
France	3.28	3.34	2.87	3.29	3.09	1.82	2.33	2.14	2.66	2.39
Israel	3.74	3.67	3.73	3.39	3.26	1.89	2.60	2.86	2.55	2.72
Spain	3.41	3.58	3.39	3.16	3.04	3.35	2.72	2.89	2.96	2.90
Total	3.40	3.36	3.15	3.07	3.00	2.82	2.54	2.48	2.42	2.41

Mean values, 0-4.

For three possible executive offices (member of the executive board, president of the council, delegate of the mayor) we see an average score of 2.4 for councillors who have never been in this position, a score of 2.5 for those who have

---

3   Differences are clearly significant at 1% level.

been in this position and a score of 2.8 for those who are currently in this position. This indicates that those who are currently in an executive position perceive supporting the executive as more important than those who are not in such a position. This indicates that at least some councillors agree with the orientation of them being a countervailing power versus the executive.

So far we have provided the results for the entire sample of councillors. It might be expected that considerable variation exists between the role perceptions of councillors from different countries, as countries vary in institutional and cultural dimensions. In table 4.1 the role perceptions are presented for the sixteen countries involved in the MAELG research. The table is presented in order to provide the exact data on the different role perceptions.

Figure 4.2: Difference between the national mean and the overall mean in role perceptions by councillors on the first five tasks
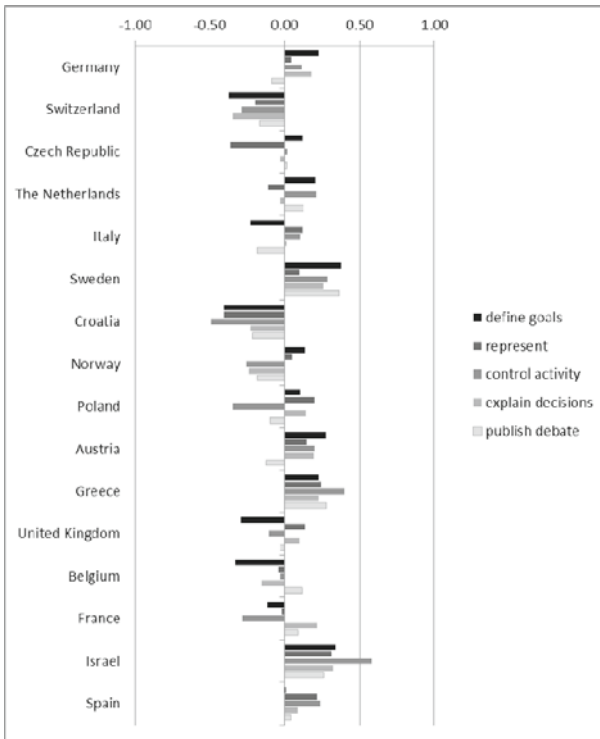
However, in terms of analysis we prefer to use the difference between the scores in the countries with the overall mean for all countries on each task. These differences are presented in figures 4.2 and 4.3 (splitting the ten tasks into two sets of five, in order to prevent information overload in the figure).

Figure 4.2 presents the results for the five tasks that score highest on importance (define goals through publish debate). The results show that in two countries the councillors perceive all five tasks consistently of lower importance than the overall mean (Switzerland and Croatia). For three countries the opposite holds true: councillors consistently perceive all tasks as more important than their colleagues (Sweden, Greece and Israel). In the other countries the role perceptions of the councillors do not differ that much, or at least not consistently with the overall average. When looking at the magnitude of the differences we can conclude that national differences on these five core tasks of representative democracy are limited. With exception of the high importance of the task of controlling municipal activity in Israel, no difference with the overall mean is higher than 0.5. All in all we can conclude that there is huge support for these five tasks, across all countries in Europe that are included in this research.

Figure 4.3 presents the results for the five tasks that score lowest on importance (party program through represent women). At first glance it is clear that national differences are somewhat higher on these tasks. For 15 tasks the national mean deviates 0.5 or more from the overall mean. In terms of consistently high or low scores it is clear that councillors in Switzerland again score low on all tasks, but this is not the case in Croatia. On the positive side we see that Austria and Spain show consistently high scores on these tasks. Sweden and Greece again show high scores on most tasks, with the exception of mediating conflict in Sweden and implementing the party program in Greece.

When looking at the different tasks it is clear that the task of implementing the party program is the most controversial in Europe. This task is seen as very important in the two Scandinavian countries (Sweden and Norway) and in Spain. Given the strong position of parties in Sweden and Norway these result do not come as a surprise. The high scores in these countries are not due to an overrepresentation of members of national parties: all councillors, even the ones from local lists or independent councillors have high scores. On the other hand the importance of this task is perceived as relatively low in Poland, France and Israel. In these countries we see considerable differences between members of national parties and member of local or individual lists. However members of national parties in these countries consider this task far less important than their colleagues in other countries (on average around 2.2, compared to 2.9 for all).

Figure 4.3: Difference between the national mean and the overall mean in role perceptions by councillors on the second five tasks
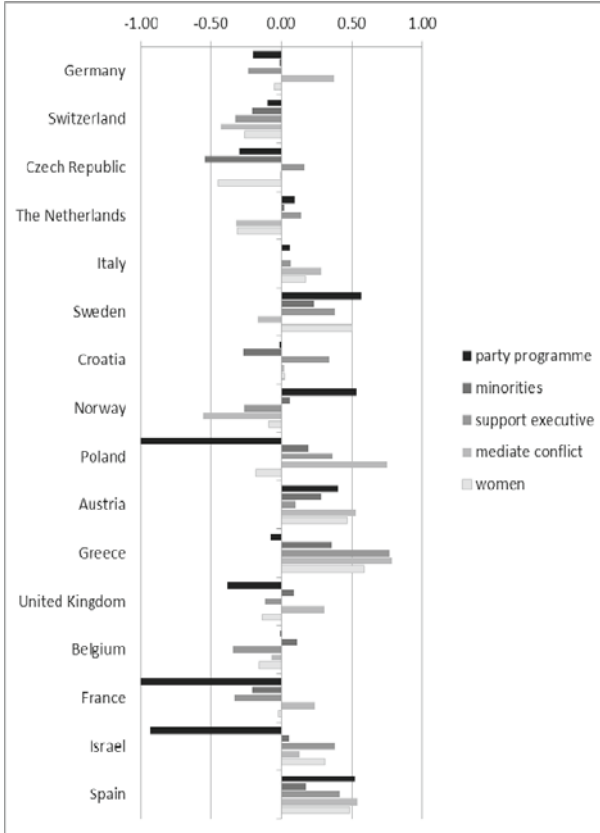
The next task where larger differences exist is the mediation of conflict. This task is seen as particularly important in Poland, Greece, Austria and Spain, and as unimportant in Norway. Supporting the executive is seen as a relative important task by councillors in Greece, not only by those who hold any executive offices, but (in comparison to councillors in other countries) especially by those who have never been in such a position. Promoting the views and interests of women is seen as a particularly important task in Sweden and Greece and somewhat important in Austria and Spain. Also in these cases the relatively high scores are not the result of an overrepresentation of female councillors, but are

the result of a generally high priority of this task for all councillors in these countries (including male councillors).

4.3   The role behaviour of European councillors

After assessing the role perceptions of the European councillors we now address the topic of their matching role behaviour. How do councillors perceive their contribution to the ten tasks that are under investigation? In figure 4.4 the mean values of the response by councillors on the questions regarding their contribution on different tasks are presented, in the original order of the importance of the role perceptions (figure 4.1).

Figure 4.4: Contribution on different tasks as perceived by councillors
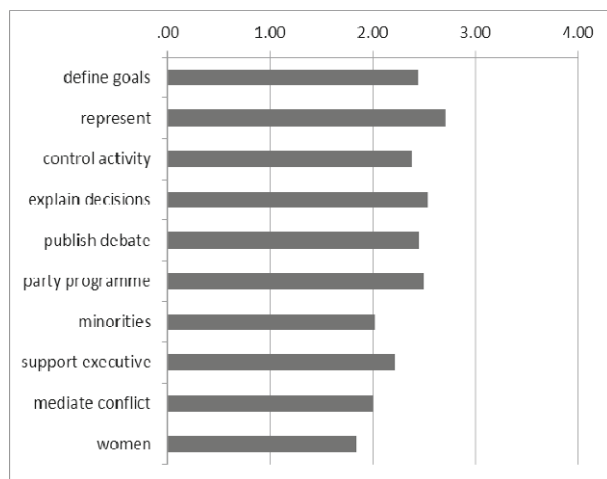
Mean values (0–4).

The first observation from figure 4.4 is that the mean scores are substantially lower for the contribution than for the role perceptions. None of the scores is higher than 3, indicating that it might not be that difficult to see these tasks as important (role perception), but it is much harder for councillors to have high contributions to these tasks. The task of representing the issues from local society has the highest mean score of 2.7. Only 16% of the councillors indicate that their contribution to this task is very great; 38% see their contribution as moderate or less. The task of defining the main goals of the municipality that was seen as most important in the role conception, has dropped to the fifth position in

terms of the relative contribution (mean value 2.4). However, the differences with the other main tasks are very small (all in the 2.5 to 2.4 range). The task of implementing the programme of the councillor's political party or movement has made the highest increase in terms of its relative position, with a mean score of 2.5. This result implies that party politics is even more important in terms of what councillors actually do, than in terms of their role perceptions. Again, it is possible to differentiate the role behaviour between councillors that are elected as members of a national party (mean score 2.6), members of a local list (2.3) and councillors that are elected as individual or independent candidates (mean score 1.8).[4] These results indicate that for members of national parties, party politics is the task that scores second in terms of their role behaviour (directly behind representing local issues). On the other hand, for independent councillors, this task scores lowest of all tasks in terms of their contribution.

The other four tasks that scored relatively low in the role perceptions also score low in terms of the contribution by councillors. Of these, supporting the executive is the only one with a mean that is higher than 2 (2.2). Again one might wonder whether there is a difference between councillors that hold an executive position or not. We see substantial differences here. For the three positions mentioned before (member of the executive board, president of the council, delegate of the mayor), the mean score for councillors that currently hold this position is around 2.8. The councillors that have never been in this position have scores of around 2.1. Although the difference between these councillors on this task is relatively large, we see a general pattern that councillors in executive positions score higher on their contribution to all tasks than their colleagues that have never been in such a position. This might be a reflection of their higher ability to influence daily practice in local government. The remaining three tasks (representing minorities, representing women, and resolving conflict) have a relative position that is in accordance with their position in terms of role perceptions. As can be expected, contribution to the task of representing women scores higher for female councillors (2.3) than for their male colleagues (1.7).

As was the case for role perceptions, it might be expected that considerable variation exists between the role behaviour of councillors from different countries. In table 4.2 the role behaviour is presented for the sixteen countries involved in the MAELG research. The table is presented in order to provide the exact data on the differences in role behaviour. However, in terms of analysis we again prefer to use the difference between the scores in the countries with the overall mean for all countries on each task. These differences are presented

---

4   Differences are clearly significant at 1% level.

in figures 4.5 and 4.6, splitting the ten tasks into two sets of five, using the original order of importance in terms of role perceptions.

Table 4.2: Contribution to different tasks as perceived by councillors in different countries

	de-fine goals	re-pre-sent	con-trol ac-tivity	ex-plain deci-sions	pub-lish de-bate	party pro-gram me	mi-nori-ties	sup-port ex-ecu-tive	me-diate con-flict	wo-men
Germany	2.49	2.58	2.32	2.57	2.41	2.30	1.98	1.99	2.28	1.73
Switzerland	2.29	2.49	2.25	2.29	2.31	2.55	1.74	1.91	1.55	1.61
Czech Republic	2.35	2.31	2.31	2.48	2.28	2.27	1.66	2.37	1.97	1.54
The Netherlands	2.52	2.54	2.48	2.16	2.48	2.50	1.89	2.20	1.66	1.38
Italy	2.07	2.72	2.33	2.59	2.31	2.42	2.05	2.05	2.20	1.97
Sweden	2.54	2.73	2.39	2.47	2.42	2.77	2.11	2.24	1.63	2.12
Croatia	2.56	2.81	2.52	2.85	2.73	2.63	2.33	2.88	2.55	2.49
Norway	2.43	2.78	2.18	2.32	2.40	2.98	2.01	1.96	1.54	1.68
Poland	2.89	3.09	2.41	2.89	2.73	1.62	1.79	2.77	2.75	1.65
Austria	2.62	2.65	2.47	2.73	2.37	2.78	2.15	2.15	2.33	2.22
Greece	2.87	3.12	2.85	3.05	2.79	2.60	2.67	2.96	2.91	2.65
United Kingdom	2.31	3.00	2.09	2.76	2.58	2.24	2.32	2.24	2.39	1.79
Belgium	2.21	2.78	2.53	2.67	2.57	2.56	2.22	2.06	2.13	1.83
France	2.90	3.02	2.51	3.08	2.82	1.70	2.01	2.91	2.47	2.09
Israel	2.13	2.59	2.34	2.40	2.09	1.53	1.80	1.69	1.88	1.63
Spain	2.61	2.99	2.84	2.66	2.52	2.96	2.52	2.79	2.68	2.52
Total	2.44	2.71	2.38	2.53	2.45	2.49	2.02	2.22	2.00	1.84

Mean values, 0-4.

Figure 4.5 presents the results for the five tasks that score highest on importance (define goals through publish debate). The results show that overall there is not much difference between councillors in different nations on their contribution to these tasks. Only for explaining decisions the differences are higher than 0.5, in Greece and France. This is in line with the findings on the role perceptions, where we have seen a high level of agreement on these tasks. In none of the countries the councillors perceive their contribution on all five tasks consistently lower than the overall European mean (Switzerland might be seen as an exception, but the differences are only marginal). In terms of the role perceptions the Swiss councillors also had relatively low scores on these tasks. These results show that the consistently low scores on role perceptions on these tasks in Croatia are not replicated in role behaviour. For three countries we see that councillors perceive their contribution to these tasks as higher than their colleagues in Europe. For Greece this is consistently the case, for Poland and France this is the case for four tasks, but not for controlling municipal activity.

Figure 4.5: Difference between the national mean and the overall mean in role behaviour by councillors on the first five tasks
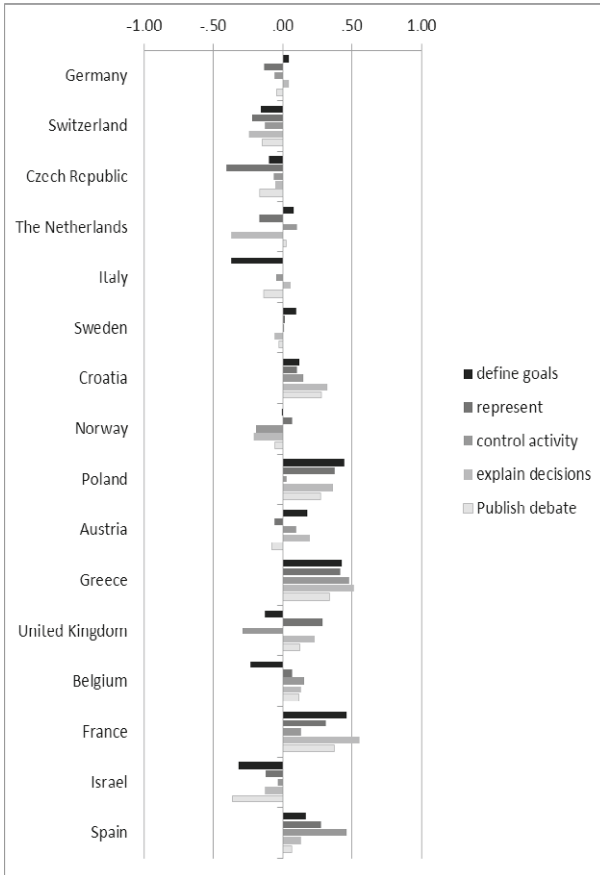
For Greece this is in line with the high scores on role perceptions, Poland and France did not belong to the high scoring nations on these role perceptions. These results also show that the consistent high scores on role perceptions on these tasks in Sweden and Israel are not replicated in role behaviour.

In figure 4.6 the results are presented for the second five tasks. As was the case with the role perceptions, the data indicate that there is substantially more variation on these five tasks. In all, 19 differences are 0.5 or higher.
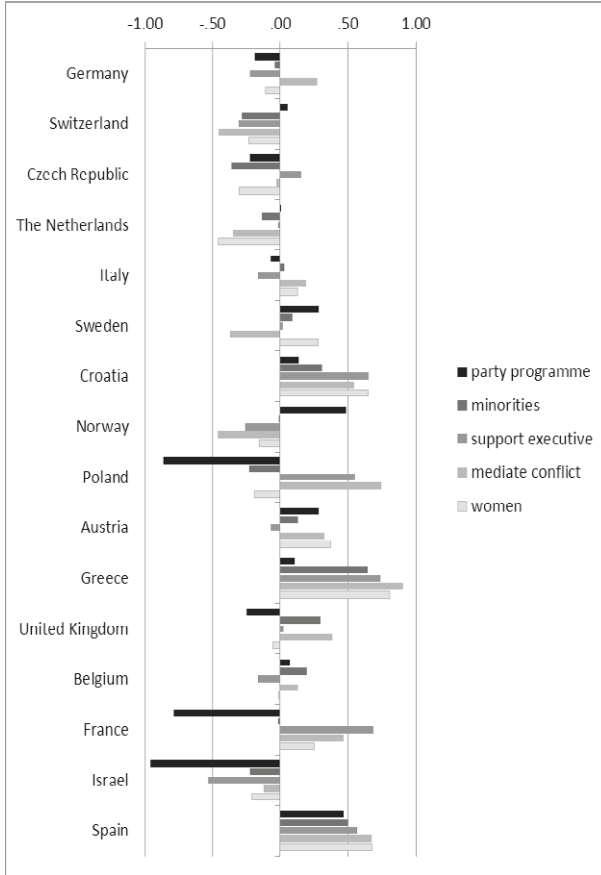
Figure 4.6: Difference between the national mean and the overall mean in role behaviour by councillors on the second five tasks

In terms of consistent response no country has clear low scores on all five tasks. Israel has very low scores on two tasks, but also some moderately low scores. Switzerland has moderately low scores on four tasks. For Switzerland this is consistent with the low scores on the contribution on the first five tasks, and also consistent with the average score on the role perceptions on the second five tasks. Three countries have more or less consistently high scores on the contribution to the second five tasks: Spain (all five), Croatia and Greece (four tasks).

For Spain and Greece this in line with the high scores on importance of these roles, for Croatia it is not.

When looking at the specific tasks it becomes obvious that there is again, as with the role conceptions, considerable difference of perception of the contribution of councillors to the realisation of their party programs. The pattern of response is also very similar: the same countries have low scores (Poland, France and Israel) and two of the same have high scores (Norway and Spain). Sweden has an only moderately high score on behaviour, against a high score on role perception. As has been the case with the role perceptions, the low or high scores of the different countries are a general phenomenon for councillors from national parties, from local lists and for independent councillors. All categories score low or high relative to the councillors in the same group in Europe. For these countries party politics is an overall feature, that is either strong or particularly week for all councillors.

Supporting the executive is the next task where we see a number of large differences. The contribution to this task is seen as particularly low in Israel. This is not in line with the score on the importance of this task (which is rather high). For five countries the score on this task is very high: Croatia, Poland, Greece, France and Spain. For four of them this is in line with the high score on importance of this task, only France has a low score on this role perception. Again, councillors that are in an executive position generally have higher scores than those that have never been in such a position, but the national differences are seen for all types of councillors.

The tasks of mediating local conflicts and representing women also have some high scores for some countries. They seem to be part of a general response pattern on these tasks: they score high in Croatia, Greece and Spain. The only exception is the high score on mediating conflicts in Poland. For Greece, Spain and Poland these high scores are in line with the accompanying high scores on the importance of these tasks (role perceptions). For Croatia this is not the case.

After devoting considerable attention to the countries that have role perceptions and role behaviour that are different from the mean, it is appropriate to signal that there are also some countries where scores on these variables are generally close to the European mean. These are Germany, The Netherlands, Italy, The United Kingdom, Belgium and (with one exception) The Czech Republic. They seem to define 'the middle of the European road' in terms of role perceptions and role behaviour.

4.4   The relation between role perceptions and role behaviour

In the third section we gave attention to the relation between high and low scores on national role perceptions and role behaviour. Here we will relate the role perceptions and the behaviour in a more systematic way. One way of doing that is by comparing the level of the scores on the perceptions and the behaviour for the different tasks. This provides insight in what could be called the 'role behaviour deficit': the extent to which role behaviour (performance) is lower than role importance (level of ambition). This comparison can be made on an overall and on a national level. The second analysis is on an individual level: to which extent is there a correlation between councillors' role perception and their accompanying role behaviour?

Figure 4.7 provides the overview of the difference between the mean scores for role perceptions and role behaviour for the ten tasks under scrutiny. At first glance it is obvious that there is a general 'role behaviour deficit': for all tasks the negative values indicate that the mean score on behaviour is lower than for importance (role perception). It shows that this deficit is particularly high for the tasks of defining the goals for the municipality and controlling municipal activity. These tasks score among the highest on importance, but actual contributions of councillors to these tasks are perceived by them as substantially lower. To a large extent this also holds true for the task of representing issues from local society. The deficit is substantially lower for two tasks: implementing the party program and supporting the executive. As has been already indicated in the paragraph above: relative to their low importance, councillors are able to contribute substantially to these two tasks. For the implementation of the party program we see that the role behaviour deficit varies with the party affiliation of councillors. It is relatively high for councillors who were elected as member of a national party (-.36), lower for councillors elected on a local list (-.24) and lowest for independent councillors (-.13). For the task of supporting the executive the deficit is absent for councillors who currently hold an executive office and around -.3 for other councillors. This is part of a general tendency that the deficit for all tasks is smaller for councillors who currently hold executive positions. However, the task of supporting the executive is the only one where the deficit disappears.

The deficit can also be analysed on a national level. For reasons of space we will not provide the full data on this analysis but we will suffice with the result that the deficits are relatively high in Israel and Sweden (an average score of -1.03 and -0.81 for all tasks) and particularly low in Croatia and France (-0.06 and -0.17). The correlations between role perceptions and the accompanying role behaviour on an individual level are presented in figure 4.8.

Figure 4.7: Difference between mean values for role perception and role behaviour
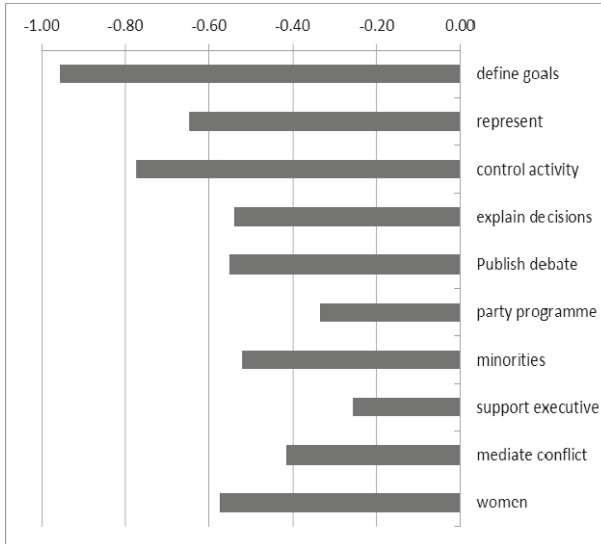
Both on a 0-4 scale.

From the figure it is obvious that for all tasks the role perception correlates with the behaviour. This is in line with what would be expected in a model where attitudes are among the factors that explain behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen 1980). However, correlations are in general stronger for the tasks that are perceived as less important. The correlation is relatively high for the task of implementing the party program. This correlation is not particularly strong for councillors elected as member of a national party (.44). On the contrary, the correlation for members of local parties is somewhat stronger (.53) and highest for independent candidates (.59). The overall highest correlation is for the representation of the views and interests of women. This correlation is high for both male and female councillors.

Figure 4.8: Correlations between role perception and role behaviour
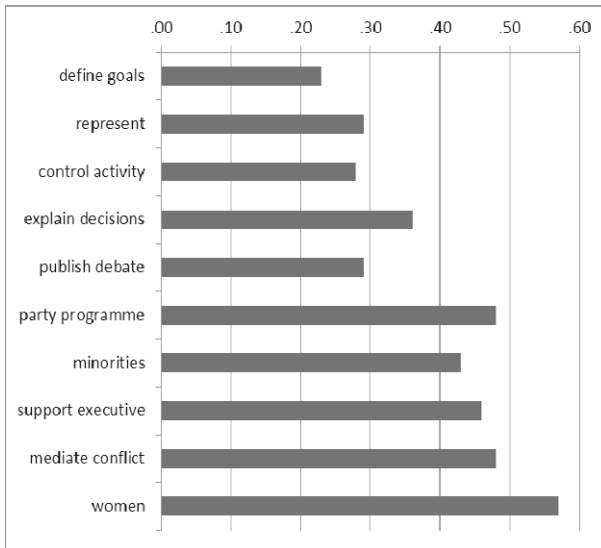
Kendall's Tau, all significant at 1% level.

4.5   Conclusions

The results from our analysis show that the tasks that are related to the core of the position of the councillor as intermediary between citizens and local policy, are very high on the agenda of the councillors in this research project. There is some variation between councillors from different countries, but less so on the tasks that are seen as most important. Among the local councillors the traditional, input based conception of their role is still dominant. However, we see considerable variation on the importance of implementing the party program. The tasks that are seen as somewhat less important show not only more variation between nations, but also show predictable variation related to the position of the councillors. Those holding a 'position' of party member, executive or female tend to perceive the representation of the views or interests connected to that position as more important.

In terms of the contribution of councillors to the different tasks we can conclude that the overall level of councillors' contribution is perceived by them as lower than the importance of these tasks. This results in something we label as a 'role behaviour deficit'. This deficit is relatively high for tasks that are seen as most important, which might be to some extent related to the fact that high

ambitions are more difficult to meet. In the comparative analysis we see a pattern that is more or less consistent with that on the role perceptions: councillors from different countries show more variation in contributions to the tasks that are seen as less important. The same pattern also exists when looking at the correlation between councillors' role perception and role behaviour: it is stronger for the less important tasks.

The next step in this analysis would be to try to explain more fully the differences in role perceptions, in role behaviour. This can be done on an individual and on a national level. At the national level the pattern that some countries are consistently scoring at the 'European mean', while others show larger variation, begs for further research. Some work in this field has already been started (Heinelt 2012; Denters and Klok 2012), but much of it still has to be explored.

References

Berg, R. and Rao, N. (2005) Transforming Local Political Leadership. Palgrave MacMillan: Houndsmills, Basingstoke.

Dearlove, J. (1973) The Politics of Policy in Local Government. Cambridge University Press: London.

Denters, B. (2005) 'Squandering away Thorbecke's legacy? Some considerations on recent reforms of Dutch local government' in: Reynaert H. (ed.) Revolution or Renovation? Reforming Local Politics in Europe, Vanden Broele: Brugge, 441-444.

Denters, B. and Klok, P.-J. (2012) 'Citizen Democracy and the Responsiveness of Councillors: The Effects of Democratic Institutionalisation on the Role Orientations and Role Behaviour of Councillors', *Local Government Studies*, DOI:10.1080/03003930.2012.670747.

Denters, B. and Rose, L. E. (2005) 'Towards local governance?' in Denters, S. A. H. and Rose, L. E. (eds) Comparing Local Governance: Trends and Developments. Palgrave MacMillan: Houndmills, Basingstoke, New York, 246-262.

Fishbein, M, and Ajzen, I. (1980) Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior. Edited by I. Ajzen. Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs.

de Groot, M. (2009) Democratic Effects of Institutional Reform in Local Government. The case of the Dutch Local Government Act 2002 (diss.), Enschede.

de Groot, M., Denters, B. and Klok, P-J. (2010) 'Strenghtening the Councillor as a Representative and Scrutiniser', *Local Government Studies* 36 (3), 401-423.

Haus, M. and Heinelt, H. 2004 'How to achieve governability at the local level? Theoretical and conceptual considerations on a complementarity of urban leadership and community involvement' in: Haus, M., Heinelt, H. Steward, M. (eds.) Urban governance and democracy. Leadership and community involvement. Routledge: London.

Heinelt, H. (2012a) 'Introduction: The Role Perception and Behaviour of Municipal Councillors in the Changing Context of Local Democracy', *Local Government Studies*, DOI:10.1080/03003930.2012.670745.

Heinelt, H. (2012b) 'Councillors' Notions of Democracy, and their Role Perception and Behaviour in the Changing Context of Local Democracy', *Local Government Studies*, DOI:10.1080/03003930.2012.670746.

Judge, D. (1999) Representation: theory and practice in Britain. Routledge: London.

Kersting, N. and Vetter, A. (eds.) (2003) Reforming Local Government in Europe: Closing the Gap between Democracy and Efficiency. Leske + Budrich, Opladen.

Klingemann, H. D., Hofferberth R. I. and Budge, I. (1993) Parties, Policies, and Democracy. Westview: Boulder.

Lupia, A. (2003) 'Delegation and its perils', in Strom, K. W. C. M. T. B. (ed.) Delegation, Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Manin, B. (1997) The Principles of Representative Government. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Merton, R. K. (1968) Social Theory and Social Structure. Free Press: New York.

Miller, W. E. and Stokes, D. E. (1963) 'Constituency Influence in Congress', *American Political Science Review* 57 (1), 45-56.

Pitkin, H. F. (1967) The Concept of Representation. University of California Press: Berkeley.

Thomassen, J. J. A. (1994) 'Empirical research into political representation: failing democracy or failing models?' in Jennings, M. K. and Mann, T. A. (eds.) Elections at Home and Abroad, Essays in Honor of Warren Miller. University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor.

Vabo, S. I. and Aars, J. (2012) 'New Public Management Reforms and Democratic Legitimacy: Notions of Democratic Legitimacy among West European Local Councillors', *Local Government Studies*, DOI:10.1080/03003930.2012.670749.

Vetter, A. (2009) 'Citizens Versus Parties: Explaining Institutional Change in German Local Government, 1989-2008', *Local Government Studies* 35 (1), 125-42.

5 Councillors and democracy: What do they think, and how can differences in their views be explained?

Hubert Heinelt

5.1 Introduction

Municipal councils are representative bodies and are thus a core institution of a particular understanding of democracy – namely representative or 'liberal' democracy.[1] This model of democracy stresses (i) the individual's right to participate in general elections and through this process, the aggregation of individual preferences to form guidelines for those in representative bodies or in government and (ii) the capacity to make those representative bodies accountable to the individual citizen through those elections. However, it is an open question as to whether or not councillors have an understanding of democracy according to this model – or one which deviates from and goes beyond this model by considering and valuing interrelations based on broader forms of participation, beyond participating in elections.

   To address this issue, one can argue that the councillors' notions of democracy are an expression of their basic beliefs about appropriate behaviour and subjective norms.[2] Such a perspective is explored in the literature on political theory (e.g. Habermas 1992: 349-353; Habermas 1996b; Pierre and Peters 2000: 137-141; Cohen 2007)[3] and most clearly articulated and explored by Benjamin Barber (1984). For Barber, 'liberal' democracy implies a 'thin democracy' because its view 'of human nature is founded on a radical premise no less startling for its familiarity: man is alone' (Barber 1984: 68). He continues 'liberal democratic politics is thus the logic of a certain form of radical individualism written

---

2   Furthermore, it can be argued (in line with Fishbein/Ajzen 1975 and Ajzen/Fishbein 1980) that councillors' role perceptions and behaviour depend on their notion of democracy as an expression of their basic beliefs and subjective norms. See Heinelt (2012a, 2012b) for a fuller discussion of this and related issues.
3   For early debates see Pateman 1970 and Pitkin 1967.

out to its last political conclusion. It is atomism wearing a social mask. That mask gives to liberal democracy its characteristic dependency on interest theory and rational-choice models and insulates it from more social understandings of human nature in the political setting' (Barber 1984: 68). This 'psychological frame' of the liberal model of democracy (as Barber 1984: 67 ff. phrased it) is complemented by a particular 'preconceptual' or 'inertial frame', that is something '[o]ne cannot 'get behind […]'' (Barber 1984: 27). The inertial frame of liberal democracy is based on one axiom. This 'axiom sets up materialismus. [It] posits that humans are material beings in all they are and in all they do' (Barber 1984: 32).

Following Barber, the alternative to 'thin' liberal democracy is 'strong democracy'. It 'is a distinctively modern form of participatory democracy' (Barber 1984: 117), and established clearly as different from, and alternative to the liberal model. Barber describes strong democracy as 'literally, […] self-government by citizens rather than representative government in the name of citizens. Active citizens govern themselves directly here, not necessarily at every level and in every instance, but frequently enough and in particular when basic policies are being decided' (Barber 1984: 151). From the perspective of this understanding of democracy 'human beings [are seen] with variable but malleable natures and with competing but overlapping interests [who] can contrive to live together communally not only to their mutual advantage but also to the advantage of their mutuality' (Barber 1984: 118). In this way, 'the social nature of human beings' (Barber 1984: 215) is highlighted by this understanding of democracy. Moreover, the social nature of human beings can be seen as the 'psychological' and 'inertial frame' of this understanding of democracy. To see humans as social beings implies that they are not simply interacting with each other, but that they are also able 'to create a public language that will help reformulate private interests in terms susceptible to public accommodation' (Barber 1984: 119) thereby transforming self-centred interests through political interaction. Seen in this way, the two notions of democracy are distinct due to their totally different axiomatic ideas of human nature.

However, it can be argued (see for instance Heinelt 2010) that in practice both concepts of democracy can complement each other to the benefit of collective self-determination. A vibrant and broader involvement of citizens and public deliberation in some phases of the policy process (such as the phases of problem definition and agenda setting, as well as implementation) can be seen as compatible with the exclusive power of elected representatives to take final decisions of common interest. Furthermore, it can be argued that it is crucial that fora for public deliberation are designed through and protected by the decisions of representative bodies. The same can be argued for entitlement to and facilita-

tion of broad citizen participation. Yet it has to be tested whether councillors' understandings of democracy do reflect either or both different axiomatic concepts, or their possible complementarity in practice.

However, it is an open question if (and how far) the understanding of democracy is affected by institutional structures which offer councillors particular options to perform a specific role, thereby making it attractive for certain actors to become a councillor in order to perform this specific role in line with their basic beliefs about appropriate behaviour and subjective norms. Such institutional structures, and particularly horizontal power relations between the mayor, the municipal administration and the council, are determined by local government systems which differ between countries (and sometimes within countries). In this respect the question is raised whether or not differences in the notion of democracy can be detected between countries with different local government systems.

The typology of Mouritzen and Svara (2002) has been chosen to answer this question because this typology is specifically focussed on the institutionally determined relations between the mayor, the council and other key actors in city hall (for other typologies of local government systems and their critics see the overview in Heinelt and Hlepas 2006).

However, one cannot assume that institutions (i.e. horizontal power relations as demonstrated by different local government systems) are the only variables at play, and there may be other variables able to explain differences in the understanding of democracy among councillors.

Drawing on Karl Mannheim's reflections on 'generations' (1964), age can matter insofar as specific *age-groups* have had not only particular experiences in historic-social contexts but have also interpreted these experiences collectively and developed a particular world outlook (including a particular view on human nature). These interpretations can have lasting effects when they are reproduced through communication within an age-group and in interaction with other age-groups who have had other experiences leading to a different world outlook. Such a perspective on age (or age-groups) can be especially relevant when notions of democracy are considered as an expression of basic beliefs about appropriate behaviour and subjective norms.

Furthermore, it seems reasonable to consider *political orientation* as a relevant personal characteristic for having different understandings of democracy when it is related to particular views of human nature ('psychological frames') complemented by a particular 'preconceptual' or 'inertial frame' – as outlined by Barber (1984) for the liberal model of democracy and the form of participatory democracy. Thus it can also be argued that councillors' notions of democ-

racy differ according to their *membership of particular political parties*, the latter being an expression of their political orientation.

Finally, based on the work of Barnes, Kaase et al. (1979) on 'conventional' and 'unconventional political participation' it seems reasonable to test if the *gender* of councillors matters because differences of 'political action' between men and women were detected by them (see Kaase and Marsh 1979: 173ff.): Women were overrepresented among the 'inactives'. However, this was mainly a result of the fact that they were not strongly involved in 'conventional political participation' as they were overrepresented in 'unconventional' political actions which characterised the protest movements of the late 1960 and 1970 in Western democracies.[4]

In a first step the councillors' understandings of democracy will be analysed in the following section (Section 2). Based on the results of this analysis, the question of how differences in the notions of democracy among councillors can be explained will be addressed (Section 3). Next (in Section 4) the findings will be briefly summarised, before drawing conclusions on the ways that councillors understand democracy.

5.2   Councillors' understandings of democracy: Representative democracy versus participatory governance

How do councillors understand and interpret democracy? To answer these questions, councillors were asked to respond to the following statements:[5]

- 'Apart from voting, citizens should not be given the opportunity to influence local government policies'.
- 'Political representatives should make what they think are the right decisions, independent of the current views of local people'.

---

4   A number of other variables were also tested which may have explained variations in councillors' notions of democracy but are not considered here because it has be proven that these variables do not matter. Neither the number of years in office nor the size of the municipality in which the councillors serve play a significant role with respect to the councillors' notion of democracy. The same applies for whether or not the councillor had been elected as a candidate of a list of a national party, of a local list or as an individual, or as independent candidate. Finally, being presently a member of a party (or not) and the education of councillors do not feature.

5   The question was: 'People have different ideas about how local democracy should function. Please indicate how important for local democracy you feel the following are?' The question could be answered with: 'not important at all' (0), 'of little importance' (1), 'of moderate importance' (2), 'of great importance' (3) and 'of utmost importance' (4).

▪   'The results of local elections should be the most important factor in determining municipal policies'

In cases where councillors support these 'ideas about how local democracy should function', it can be argued that they are oriented to the model of representative democracy or 'liberal democracy'. To identify a contrasting understanding of democracy, the agreement of councillors with the following statements was analysed:

▪   'Residents should participate actively and directly in making important local decisions'.
▪   'Residents should have the opportunity to make their views known before important local decisions are made by elected representatives'.
▪   'Political decisions should not only be taken by representative bodies but be negotiated together with the concerned local actors.'
▪   'Local referenda lead to high quality of public debate.'[6]

These statements do not coincide with typical notions of representative democracy. Instead, emphasis is given to a broader and more direct participatory understanding of democracy in which the individual's right to participate in general elections alone is not enough for democratic self-determination. Instead, for democratic self-determination it is crucial in this perspective to agree through public reasoning on the coordination of actions in a societally binding way. This implies also the definition of problems as well as the ways these problems should be solved in a way perceived collectively as appropriate through 'problem-solving discourses […] inside the framework of organized public spheres' (Habermas 1996a: 367).

Thus, the analysis of the agreement or disagreement of councillors with the statements above allows exploration of the question of whether or not councillors have an understanding of democracy according to the model of representative democracy or 'liberal democracy' – or one which differs from this model by considering interrelations between broader forms of participation (beyond participating in elections) and democracy. Such an alternative notion of democracy

---

6   The first two statements were also possible answers to the question: 'People have different ideas about how local democracy should function. Please indicate how important for local democracy you feel the following requirements are?' The two last statements were possible answers to the question: 'How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?' The Statement could be rated as: 'strongly disagree' (0), 'disagree' (1), 'neither agree nor disagree' (2), 'agree' (3) and 'strongly agree' (4).

Table 5.1: Ideas of councillors how local democracy should function

	not important at all (0)	of little importance (1)	of moderate importance (2)	of great importance (3)	of utmost importance (4)	mean	standard deviation	N
Apart from voting, citizens should not be given the opportunity to influence local government policies	27.1%	32.2%	24.6%	12.1%	3.9%	1.33	1.115	11,349
Political representatives should make what they think are the right decisions, independent of the current views of local people	8.8%	18.9%	30.3%	31.1%	10.9%	2.16	1.122	11,551
The results of local elections should be the most important factor in determining municipal policies	2.3%	7.7%	23.1%	43.4%	23.4%	2.78	.967	11,645
Residents should participate actively and directly in making important local decisions	1.2%	7.1%	25.1%	44.7%	21.9%	2.79	.906	11,674
Residents should have the opportunity to make their views known before important local decisions are made by elected representatives	.4%	2.9%	14.3%	52.0%	30.4%	3.09	.766	11,726
	strongly disagree (0)	disagree (1)	neither agree nor disagree (2)	agree (3)	strongly agree (4)	mean	standard deviation	N
Political decisions should not only be taken by representative bodies but be negotiated together with the concerned local actors	3.3%	13.8%	19.7%	47.3%	15.9%	2.59	1.017	11,659
Local referenda lead to high quality of public debate	4,4%	16.3%	32,9%	35,5%	10,8%	2.32	1.013	11,638

is related to participatory governance (Heinelt 2010) or democracy beyond the core of the governmental structures at the local level.

An overview about the responses of municipal councillors to the questions on democracy is presented in Table 5.1. As shown in this table the idea that *'residents should have the opportunity to make their views known before important local decisions are made by elected representatives'* has the highest support amongst councillors whereas the idea that *'political representatives should make what they think are the right decisions independent of the current views of local people'* has the lowest.

For each of these two sets of variables – indicating either an understanding of democracy in line with the model of representative democracy or the idea of participatory governance – an index has been constructed for the further analysis. In general, the index value for participatory governance (2.70) is higher than the one for representative democracy (2.09).[7]

Testing whether councillors' understanding of democracy does reflect either different axiomatic concepts or their possible complementarity in practice, the analysis shows that the two sets of variables are not connected (r=-.096) which means that councillors tend either to the model of representative democracy or to the idea of participatory governance.[8]

5.3 How to explain differences in the notion of democracy among councillors

It has been tested if the variation in the notion of democracy among councillors can be explained by institutional setting – such as local government system. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the typology of Mouritzen and Svara (2002) on institutionally determined horizontal power relations between councillors, the political leader (the mayor) and the leading bureaucrats of the municipal administration has been considered for this purpose (see Table 5.2).

For participatory democracy, the variances between the four local government types distinguished by Mouritzen and Svara are very small,[9] even though it might be expected that councillors from within a 'committee leader' or 'col-

---

7   The index values are calculated by using the values of the variables included in the index and range from 0.0 (lowest support, i.e. answers agreeing with 'not important at all' or 'strongly disagree') to 4.0 (highest support; i.e. , i.e. answers agreeing with 'of utmost importance' or 'strongly agree'; see footnotes 5 and 6).

8   Also a factor analysis has confirmed that the variables are grouped around two background dimensions along the distinction made in this chapter.

9   Even the difference between the highest mean (2.77 for strong mayor systems) and the lowest mean (2.52 for committee leader systems) does not vary significantly (Levene's test for equality of variances results in F=42.976 with p=.000.

lective' institutional arrangement rank participatory governance lower than councillors from the other types, because these types relying strongly on elected representatives: Elected politicians play a important role in the committee-leader form of local government system (i.e. in Sweden and some English municipalities) as the 'political leader [with or without the title of mayor; H.H.] may have responsibility for some executive functions but others will rest with collegiate bodies, that is, standing committees composed of elected politicians, and with the CEO [chief executive officer of the municipality; H.H.]' (Mouritzen and Svara 2002: 56). In the collective form of local government elected politicians also play an important role since in such a local government system the 'decision center is one collegiate body, the executive committee that is responsible for all executive functions. The executive committee consists of locally elected politicians and the mayor, who presides' (Mouritzen and Svara 2002: 56). This applies for Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the German federal state of Hesse, most English municipalities and the Czech Republic. Consequently, councillors from 'committee leader' type municipalities do rank representative democracy highly. However, councillors from collective type municipalities do not share this point of view. Instead, Table 5.2 shows a variance between councillors from the committee leader (2.15) and the collective type (2.01) which is significant.[10] This significant variance can hardly be explained by the institutional differences between these two types of local government.

Table 5.2: Notions of democracy among councillors by local government systems according to the typology of Mouritzen and Svara

		mean	standard deviation	N
participatory governance	strong mayor	2.7693	.60128	5,067
	committee-leader	2.5171	.72691	635
	collective	2.6631	.62890	4,668
	council-manager	2.5918	.60211	715
	mean	*2.6987*	*.62514*	*11,084*
representative democracy	strong mayor	2.1322	.71711	5,001
	committee-leader	2.1504	.71761	627
	collective	2.0149	.70515	4,597
	council-manager	2.2155	.65196	675
	mean	*2.0890*	*.71122*	*10,900*

Also, councillors from strong mayor systems support representative democracy significantly stronger than councillors from the collective type,[11] although in a local government system where the 'elected mayor controls the majority of the city council and is legally and in actuality in full charge of all executive func-

10   Levene's test for equality of variances results in F=.962 with p=.327.
11   Levene's test for equality of variances results in F=3.443 with p=.064

tions' (Mouritzen and Svara 2002: 55), the influence of (ordinary) councillors is limited, and one could expect that they do not concentrate on a role determined by the concept of representative democracy. Instead, it seems reasonable to suggest that they support the idea of enhancing the realm of democracy beyond the core of the local governmental structures through emphasising participatory governance because this could increase their limited power in relation to the mayor who controls the council as well as the municipal administration.

What does affect the councillors' notions of democracy, when the institutionally determined horizontal power relations do not matter?

Table 5.3: Notions of democracy among councillors by gender, age and left-right orientation

	participatory governance			representative democracy	
	means	standard deviation		means	standard deviation
Gender					
Male	2,66710	0,63140	Female	2,00300	0,71336
mean	*2,69790*	*0,62370*	*Total*	*2,08910*	*0,71391*
Female	2,77760	0,59603	Male	2,12160	0,71146
age categories (years)					
30-39	2,65820	0,63888	18-29	1,9379	0,72596
60-	2,69110	0,62352	40-49	1,9963	0,70941
mean	*2,69280*	*0,62402*	30-39	2,0033	0,70072
18-29	2,69490	0,62910	50-59	2,0674	0,71307
50-59	2,70090	0,62181	*Total*	*2,0804*	*0,71413*
40-49	2,70300	0,61794	60-	2,2212	0,70137
left-right orientation (0-10)					
7	2,5692	0,59795	1	1,9653	0,70604
9	2,5870	0,69696	3	1,9680	0,68397
8	2,5886	0,62934	2	1,9744	0,6817
6	2,6157	0,62731	0	2,0063	0,82045
4	2,6910	0,5972	6	2,0693	0,68278
3	2,6944	0,59886	4	2,0769	0,71136
mean	*2,6963*	*0,6239*	*Total*	*2,0870*	*0,71255*
5	2,7411	0,63273	7	2,1107	0,66478
2	2,7615	0,58484	5	2,1490	0,74468
10	2,7766	0,65782	8	2,1874	0,68116
1	2,8629	0,61406	9	2,3219	0,72565
0	3,0110	0,62059	10	2,4210	0,7604

As briefly outlined in the introduction against the background of the scholarly debate, 'generations' or age groups, gender and political orientation as well as the membership of particular parties could plausibly impact on councillors' attitudes to democracy. These factors are explored in Table 5.3. Testing characteristics like gender, age and political orientation[12] the following tendencies are revealed: (i) Female councillors support participatory governance more than male

---

12   Councillors were asked to respond to the following question: 'There is often talk about a left-right dimension in politics. Where would you place yourself on a left-right dimension?'

councillors, while male councillors are significantly more in favour of representative democracy than female councillors;[13] (ii) The older councillors are, the more they tend to have an understanding of democracy in line with the representative model, but age does not have an effect on support for participatory governance. The strongest support for representative democracy can be identified among councillors older than 60 years. By way of contrast, the lowest support for this form of democracy comes from the youngest councillors (i.e. those between 18 and 29 years); (iii) The more councillors place themselves to the right right in a left-right scale the more they tend to support the idea of representative democracy and object to that of participatory governance. These findings indicate that councillors' notions of democracy are affected by personal characteristics, specifically gender, age and political orientation.

The self-perception of councillors on a political left-right scale corresponds at least for members of some political parties. Members of ecology parties, and (former) communist parties are more in favour of participatory governance and do not follow the idea of liberal democracy, while the opposite applies to members of conservative parties.[14]

5.4   Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter has shown that councillors have different understandings of what democracy means and that these differences can be related clearly on the one hand to the models of *representative democracy* and on the other hand to a broader and direct participatory understanding of democracy. This latter form is linked to a model of democracy in which the individual's right to participate in general elections alone is perceived as not enough for democratic self-determination. Instead, democracy beyond the core of the governmental structures at the local level is emphasised – and in this sense can be understood as *participatory governance*.

As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, it can be argued that in practice both concepts of democracy can complement each other to the benefit of collective self-determination. However, the analysis has shown that the councillors' understandings of democracy do not connect these different concepts. Instead, councillors tend either to the model of representative democracy or to the idea of participatory governance.

---

13   Levene's test for equality of variances results in F=17.024 with p=.000 for participatory and in F=1.056 with p=.304 for representative democracy.
14   The classification of parties was based on the MANIFESTO categories. See Klingemann et al. 2006 and http://www.wzb.eu/zkd/dsl/pdf/Manifesto-Project.pdf.

   Country patterns between the different notions of democracy and the formal power relations between councillors, the mayor and the leading bureaucrats of the municipal administration do *not* indicate that the councillors' notions of democracy are determined by institutional conditions. Instead, their notion of democracy can be taken as an expression of their basic beliefs about appropriate behaviour and their subjective norms affected by gender, age, political orientation and personal characteristics. This findings on age – where older councillors are more likely than younger councillors to support representative democracy – confirms the relevance of 'generations', following Mannheim (1965). It also seems reasonable to argue that the 'Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society' (Inglehart 1990) linked to the social and political changes since the late 1960s has had an impact on councillors' notions of democracy – at least in relation to support for representative democracy among different age-groups. Furthermore, it was found that that (in line with the findings of the study carried out by Barnes, Kaase et al. 1979 on 'conventional' and 'unconventional political participation') female councillors are slightly more in favour of participatory democracy than male colleagues and male councillors are more in favour of representative democracy than female. Finally, the self-perception of councillors on a political left-right scale is plays a role as right-wing councillors are more in favour of representative democracy and against participatory governance. Accordingly, members of conservative parties are more in favour of liberal democracy and in opposite to participatory democracy, while the opposite applies to members of some left political parties.

References

Barber, B. (1984) Strong Democracy. Participatory Politics for a New Age. University of California Press: Berkley, Los Angeles, London.
Barnes, S. H., Kaase, M., Allerbeck, K. R., Farah, B. G., Heunks, F., Inglehart, R., Jennings, M. K., Klingemann, H.-D., Marsh, A. and Rosenmayr, L. (eds.) (1979) Political Action. Mass Participation in five Western Democracies. Sage: Beverly Hills/London.
Cohen, J. (2007) 'Deliberative democracy' in Rosenberg, S. R. (ed.) Deliberation, Participation and Democracy. Can the people govern? Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills, New York, 219-236.
Habermas, J. (1992) Faktizität und Geltung. Beiträge zur Diskurstheorie des Rechts und des demokratischen Rechtsstaats. Suhrkamp: Frankfurt am Main.
Habermas, J. (1996a) Between Facts and Norms. Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy. Blackwell Publishers: Cambridge.
Habermas, J. (1996b) Die Einbeziehung des Anderen: Studien zur politischen Theorie. Suhrkamp: Frankfurt am Main.

Heinelt, H. (2010) Governing Modern Societies. Towards participatory governance. Routledge: London and New York.

Heinelt, H. (2012a) 'Introduction: The Role Perception and Behaviour of Municipal Councillors in the Changing Context of Local Democracy', *Local Government Studies*, DOI:10.1080/03003930.2012.670745.

Heinelt, H. (2012b) 'Councillors' Notions of Democracy, and their Role Perception and Behaviour in the Changing Context of Local Democracy', *Local Government Studies*, DOI:10.1080/03003930.2012.670746.

Heinelt, H., Hlepas, N.-K. (2006) 'Typologies of local government systems' in Bäck, H., Heinelt, H. and Magnier, A. (eds.) The European Mayor: Political leaders in the changing context of local democracy. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 21-33.

Inglehart, R. (1990) Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Kaase, M., and Marsh, A. (1979) 'Distribution of Political Action' in Barnes, S. H., Kaase, M., Allerbeck, K. R., Farah, B. G., Heunks, F., Inglehart, R., Jennings, M. K., Klingemann, H.-D., Marsh, A. and Rosenmayr, L. (eds.) Political Action. Mass Participation in five Western Democracies. Sage: Beverly Hills/London, 167-201.

Klingemann, H.-D., Volkens, A., Bara, J. L., Budge, I. and McDonald, M. D. (2006) Mapping Policy Preferences II. Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments in Eastern Europe, European Union, and OECD 1990-2003. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Mannheim, K. (1965) 'Das Problem der Generationen', in Mannheim, K.: Wissenssoziologie. Luchterhand: Neuwied, 509-565.

Mouritzen, P. E. and Svara, J. H. (2002) Leadership at the Apex. Politicians and administrators in western local governments. Pittsburgh University Press: Pittsburgh.

Pateman, C. (1970) Participation and Democratic Theory. Cambridge University Press: London, New York.

Pitkin, H. F. (1967) The Concept of Representation. University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

Pierre, J. and Peters, B. G. (2000) Governance, Politics and the State. Macmillan: London.

6 Who do the local councillors of Europe represent?

David Karlsson

6.1 Introduction

The core of politics is to manage conflicts of interests between groups and individuals in society. For some conflicts, traditional political ideologies provide guidelines on how interests should be treated and prioritized. Labour and business interests are intertwined with the left-right dimension, women's rights are defined and defended by feminists, and conservative nationalists have very different views from liberal pluralists on rights of different ethnic and religious groups.

In a representative democracy, the citizens have bequeathed elected politicians the power and privilege to deal with these conflicts. However, there is no consensus on how the mandate of political representatives should be interpreted and no one right answer regarding which groups or interests a representative is supposed to prioritize. It is instead up to each representative to interpret his or her mandate. Hence, how such interpretations are conceived is crucial in order to understand how policy is made in political assemblies.

The aim of this chapter is to analyze how local councillors understand their mandates as elected representatives. We start by investigating whether councillors see themselves as mere spokespersons for their voters or their parties, or if they feel that the voters have trusted them with a free personal mandate to govern (*representation style*). We then continue to the question of whether councillors find it important to represent some social groups more than others, and which groups they might be (*representation focus*). Finally, the analysis will focus on whether local councillors find it more important to represent groups to which they themselves belong (*active social representation*).

6.2 Representation style

For an elected representative, it is possible to combine a number of principles when defining a political mandate. But sometimes principles collide and a fair question is which one is the most important in critical situations? In the MAELG-survey, the councillors were presented a hypothetical situation where a choice would have to be made. The question asked was: *If there is a conflict be-*

tween a member's own opinion, the opinion of the party group in the council and the opinion of the voters, how should, in your opinion, a member of the council vote. The three alternative answers were: 1) vote according to his/her *own conviction*, 2) vote according to the opinion of the *voters* or 3) vote according to the opinion of the *party group.*

This question alludes to typologies of representation style, the concept of which was developed in the US (Eulau et al. 1959; Wahlke et al. 1962) and it has since long been used in local government studies (e.g. Newton 1974; Kjær 2000; Gilljam et al. 2010). According to the typology, representatives who choose alternative 1 are called *trustees,* and those who prefer alternative 2 are called *delegates*. Trustees act on the premises that they have been given a free personal mandate by the voters in order to form policies drawing on their own judgment. Delegates, in contrast, 'keep their ears to the ground' in order to fulfill the wishes of the people who elected them. They are elected to be the instrument of others and a delegate's personal priorities are secondary. A third representation style is to follow the party line, and the representatives that choose to do so are here called *party soldiers.* This style was added to the other two in later research, and it is especially relevant in the European context (Holmberg 1974; Wallin et al. 1981). A party soldier does not have a free mandate, but it is the party and not the voters that have the last word.

These representation styles are all ideal type positions and many representatives will combine elements of all three in their role as representatives (e.g. 'the politico' style, Wahlke et al. 1962). However, the survey question presented the respondents with a critical choice and reveals towards which ideal type position councillors lean the most. For example, a trustee or a delegate could be very loyal to their party, but they do not view the party as the final source of legitimacy for their mandate, as does the party soldier.

We shall now turn to our data and find out which representation style that is most common in local democracy, and if the results vary between different countries (see table 6.1). The most common representation style is the trustee, and 57% of councillors in the sample identify with this role. The least favoured style is the delegate, the choice of only 15%. Approximately 28% of the councillors can be classified as party soldiers. However, the variation between countries is considerable. Trustee is the most common style in 12 of the 16 countries in the MAELG-survey. We find the highest proportion of trustees in Switzerland (77 percent) and in three other countries this style is favored by more than 70% of councillors (France, Germany and Israel). In four countries, Spain, Norway, Belgium and Sweden, party soldier is the most common representation style with around 50% or more. In six countries, Poland, Israel, France, Czech Republic, Italy, and Croatia, party soldiers are outnumbered not only by trus-

tees, but also by delegates. The highest proportions of delegate councillors are found in three Eastern European countries – Poland (31%), Croatia (29%) and Czech Republic (19%) – but in none of these countries is the delegate the most popular representation style.

Table 6.1: Representation style of local councillors: *trustees*, *delegates* and *party soldiers* in different countries (per cent)

	Trustees	Delegates	Party soldiers	Total
Spain	32	13	56	100
Norway	40	8	52	100
Belgium	40	9	51	100
Sweden	38	13	49	100
Austria	50	11	39	100
The Netherlands	61	8	31	100
Greece	53	18	30	100
United Kingdom	58	17	25	100
Germany	72	7	21	100
Croatia	52	29	19	100
Italy	63	19	18	100
Switzerland	77	9	14	100
Czech Republic	69	19	12	100
France	75	14	11	100
Israel	72	18	10	100
Poland	62	31	7	100
Country mean	57	15	28	100

The table presents how many of the councillors that in a critical situation in the council would vote 1) according to his/her own conviction [*trustees*], 2) according to the opinion of the voters [*delegates*] or 3) according to the opinion of the party group [*party soldiers*]. Countries are sorted by percentage of party soldiers.

However, the representation style of local councillors in the MAELG-survey is only to some extent explained to by nationality.[1] It is therefore necessary to go further and ask which other factors affect a councillor's choice of representation style. Is it perhaps age or gender? Does a councillor's position or seniority influence how they interpret their mandate? Are left-wing politicians more party loyal than others? And does city size have any effect? In table 6.2 we get the answers to these questions.[2]

---

1 An ANOVA-test based on the results in Table 1 revealed that nationality explains the councillors' choice of party soldier as representation style by 12% (Eta^2=0,12), and home country as explanatory power in relation to the other two representation styles are even weaker (Eta^2=0,09 for trustees and 0,03 for delegates).
2 In this and forthcoming analyses in the chapter, data is weighted as if all countries have the same number of councillors.

Table 6.2: Factors explaining choice of representation style (effects)

	Trustee	*Delegate*	*Party soldier*
Age	+	'+'	-
Gender: Female+	-		+
Member of Executive board	-	-	+
Seniority: years as councillors+		-	+
Left-right orientation: Right+	(+)		-
City size	-	-	+

The table presents which factors that have positive [+] or negative [-] effects (logistic regression coefficients) on councillors choice of representation style. A parenthesis signifies that a bivariate effect disappears in a multivariate regression model where all six independent variables are included. Citation marks signify that a suppressed effect appears in the multivariate analysis. Non-significant effects ($p < .05$) are omitted. The City size variable is logarithmized.

Due to the form of the question, the preferred representation style of a councillor is a choice of one style above the other two. A factor with a positive effect on one style should have corresponding negative effects in relation to one or both of the other two styles. Table 6.2 reveals that all factors included in the analysis (age, gender, being a member of the executive board, seniority, political orientation, and city size) have significant effects on the choice of party soldier as representation style, and when the effects on party soldier are negative, they are generally positive on trustees and delegates (and vice versa). The results of this analysis correspond with earlier research which found that the main division in representation style is between the party soldier style on the one hand and, on the other hand, a style where the mandate is not based on party affiliation (i.e. trustee or delegate; Converse and Pierce 1986; Gilljam et al. 2010).

In local government in the countries in this research, a party soldier is more likely to be found among senior councillors and members of executive boards. In this case seniority means experience as councillor and not age, since older councillors seem not to favor party soldier as representation style. The number of party soldiers is higher in the councils of larger municipalities. The role of the delegate is more common among inexperienced and older councillors, and they are rarer in executive boards. Younger councillors, female councillors, and members of the executive board dislike the role of trustee. Like delegates, trustees are more likely to be found in smaller municipalities

Interestingly, the left-right orientation of representatives only has weak effects in this analysis, with left wing councillors slightly more likely to be party soldiers. However, a closer analysis reveals that left-wing and right-wing councillors both have a higher tendency to be party soldiers, while councillors in the center to a higher degree tend to be trustees or delegates. The party soldier type is foremost an ideal among political radicals.

6.3   *Representation focus*

Representation style could be described as the mechanism trough which repre-
sentatives translate the will of the people. But representation style does not im-
ply whether the interest of some particular group in society deserves special at-
tention from the councillors. Instead, the particular groups or interests a council-
lor chose represent define his or her representation focus.

Pitkin (1967) identifies two major schools of thought relating to representa-
tion focus: One is the 'Burkian view' which claims that a representative – or the
parliament as a whole – should represent the interest of the whole nation, the
common good. Another is the 'liberal view' which proposes that different repre-
sentatives are spokespersons for different interests within the electorate. One
type of representation focus within the liberal tradition is active social represen-
tation, which occurs when a representative chooses to especially represent a so-
cial group to which he or she belongs. However, it is perfectly possible for a
representative to represent groups to which he or she does not belong. It is also
possible to include representation of more abstract entities such as organizations
or faiths within one's representation focus.

In the MAELG-questionnaire, councillors were given the opportunity to
grade how important they deemed it to represent ten different 'groups or inter-
ests' in the locality. In the same question the alternative 'the whole locality' was
also included as a possible representations focus. The premise here is that such a
response option would provide a 'Burkian' alternative to the representation of
special interests in the liberal tradition. Figure 6.1 illustrates how important
councillors find the different representation focus alternatives. About 95% of the
councillors think it is of great or utmost importance to represent the whole local-
ity. In figure 6.1 we can see that the mean value for this Burkian representation
focus is 3.6 on the scale from 0-4. However, there is obviously no contradiction
between representing 'the whole locality' on the one hand and also a number of
social groups on the other. On the contrary, a large majority of the councillors
combine these two representation ideals. The group most councillors are eager
to represent is the 'less resourceful citizens' (2.9 on the 0-4 scale). 'Workers' is
the second most important group (2.6). Thereafter follows 'the middle class',
'women', 'local business groups' and 'a geographic part of the locality' (all
scoring 2.3-2.5).

Figure 6.1: How important is it for local councillors to represent different groups and interests?
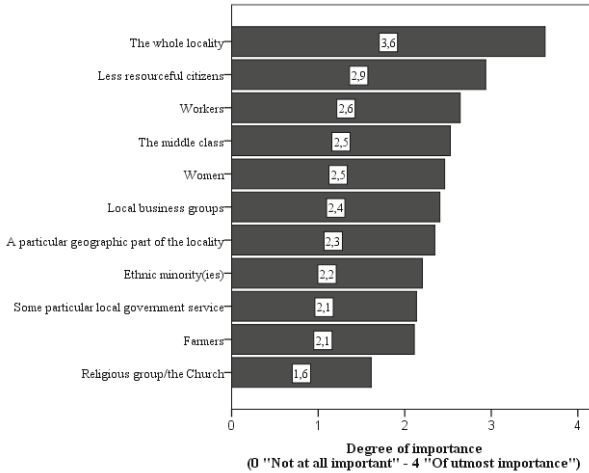
Mean values. The survey question was 'How important is it for you as a local councillor to represent the following groups or interests?' and the answers were given on a five-graded scale (0-4). The alternatives 'workers' and 'the middle class' did not appear in the German, Swiss and Austrian questionnaires. Alternatives are sorted in order of importance.

Groups that councillors find less important are 'ethnic minority(ies)' (2.2), 'some particular local government service' and farmers (both 2.1). The least favored group/interest is 'religious group/the Church' (1.6). The majority of councillors do not think it important to represent religious groups. But religious representation is not negligible, since 22% find this representation focus to be of great or utmost importance.

6.4   When does active social representation occur?

When group representation is discussed, a distinction can be made between *active representation*, i.e. to actively promote the interests of certain groups, and *descriptive representation* which alludes to representativeness and actual presence of members of different social groups (e.g. Pitkin 1967). Descriptive representation is thus a mathematical relation between the shares of group members in an assembly in relation to the group's share of the people, and groups can be either over- or under-represented. Active representation on the other hand is a practice built on role interpretation.

A key question is whether the presence of social groups in an assembly changes the policy outcomes in favor of this group through active representation, i.e. politics of presence (Phillips 1995). The relationship between descriptive representation and group presence on the one hand, and the activities of representatives and policy outcome on the other is a common theme in democracy research (e.g. Wängnerud 2009; Haider-Markel et al. 2000; Carnes 2012). Many studies have confirmed the occurrence of active social representation, but the results are not always clear-cut, and most studies have focused on the national level of politics.

In order to prove the existence of active social representation, a causal link between the social characteristic of representatives and their political priorities needs to be established. Active social representation can be distinguished from the representation of groups to which the representative does not belong. Such active group representation is the result of ideological beliefs, not a manifestation of group- or self-interest, i.e. not active social representation. For active social representation to occur it is the actual presence of a group in politics that is crucial. In figure 6.2, a general model illustrating the conditions for how descriptive social representation could lead to active social representation is presented.

Figure 6.2: Model for active social representation
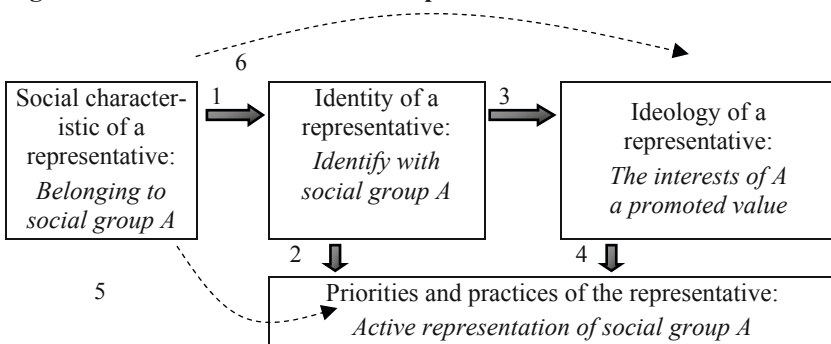
The model includes the assumption that the effect of a social characteristic on a representative's active social representation must be channeled through group identity and, possibly, through an ideological position. In the example of class representation, a representative must both acknowledge the existence of a class system (class awareness) and his or her own position in this system (class consciousness) (Giddens 1973 p.111), in order to translate a certain class position into actions that promote the interests of the class in question. A subjective iden-

tification with a class may figure as a salient aspect of class consciousness inso-far as it shapes the extent to which an individual's preferences include a concern for the well-being of other members of a class (Wright 2000: 196).

If a representative prioritizes the interest of a social group solely on the grounds that he or she consciously belongs to it, then we have a case of repre-sentation based on self- or group interest (arrow 1+2 in Figure 6.1). However, a group identity of a representative could translate into an ideological position that claims that benefitting the interests of the own group is a promoted value (arrow 3). If the representative makes priorities following such ideological beliefs, the active social representation based on self- or group interest is ennobled into a matter of principle (arrow 4).

Hypothetically, a social characteristic could correlate with active social representation of a certain group, without group identity as a causal link (arrows 5+6). It is also possible for representatives to identify with a group to which they, from an objective perspective, do not belong. For example, some politi-cians may have a strong bond with the working class while they on objective material grounds belong to the economic elite of society (Karlsson 2003). Svall-fors (1996: 102) warns that subjective identities could be the effect rather than the cause of certain ideological beliefs. Such subjective group identity ('false consciousness') could very well affect the ideology and thereby incite active representation, even if it cannot be classified as active social representation.

To summarise, in order to confirm the existence of genuine active social representation, a link must be established between objective group membership of representatives and their priorities and practices through group identity as a causal link. The MAELG-survey allows us to make analyses testing the occur-rence of genuine active social representation for several social groups, espe-cially concerning class representation.

6.5   Active class representation

Earlier studies have convincingly shown that active class representation occurs in national politics (Carnes 2012). In this section, we analyze to what degree ac-tive class representation occurs in local government, starting by comparing the councillors' priorities of class interests in different countries in table 6.3. In all but one country (Croatia), the less resourceful citizens are the most prioritized group. Greece, followed by Italy, Norway and Sweden are the countries where councillors find it most important to represent the less resourceful. In Czech Re-public and Switzerland this group scores the lowest priority values, relatively speaking.

Table 6.3: The importance of representing different class categories in different countries

Country	Less resourceful citizens	Workers	The middle class	Local business groups	Farmers
Greece	3.4	3.3	3.3	2.6	2.8
Italy	3.3	3.2	2.7	2.4	2.3
Norway	3.2	2.6	2.3	2.7	2.1
Sweden	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.9	2.4
France	3.1	2.5	2.6	2.8	1.9
Spain	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.3	1.8
Croatia	2.9	3.1	2.8	2.4	2.6
Austria	2.9	ND	ND	2.4	1.9
United Kingdom	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.4	2.0
Israel	2.8	2.4	2.4	2.0	1.8
The Netherlands	2.8	2.1	2.0	2.1	1.9
Poland	2.8	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.0
Belgium	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.2	2.1
Germany	2.6	ND	ND	2.3	1.9
Switzerland	2.5	ND	ND	2.4	1.5
Czech Republic	2.2	2.0	2.2	2.1	1.8
Country mean	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.0

The table presents mean values per country on the question presented in Figure 6.1. Observe that German, Austrian and Swiss councillors were not asked questions on representing the interests of 'workers' and 'the middle class'. Countries are sorted by values on less resourceful citizens. Mean values, 0-4.

The group that comes next, after the less resourceful citizens, varies from country to country. In Italy, Sweden, Spain, United Kingdom and Belgium, workers are the second prioritized group. In the Czech Republic, Greece and Israel, to represent the Middle class is seen as more important than workers, and in Norway, France, The Netherlands and Poland local business groups are the second ranked representation focus. Overall, farmers are ranked last of the class related groups, except in Greece and Croatia where they are seen as slightly more important than local business groups.

Traditionally the most central political dimension in European politics is the left-right divide (Lijphart 1999). Fundamental in this dimension is how workers and less resourceful citizens' interests are prioritized in comparison with the middle class and business interests. How representatives value the interests of different socio-economic groups is in theory closely aligned with left-right ideology. Figure 6.3 presents how councillors' left-right positions correspond with the willingness to represent different class interests.

Figure 6.3: Left-right dimension and class representation
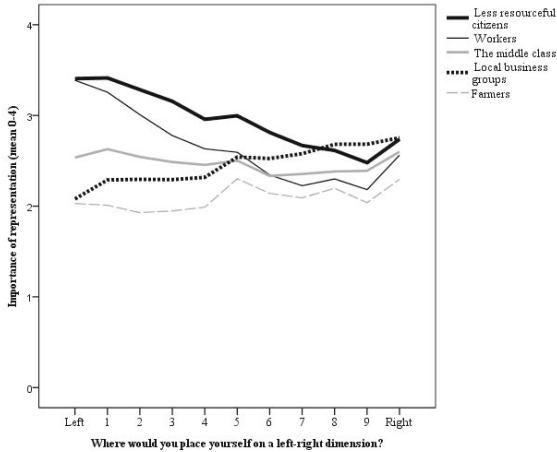
The figure displays mean values (scale: 0-4) for the importance of representation of five class categories (see figure 6.1 for survey question) depending on the left-position of the councillors.

Figure 6.3 confirms expectations that councillors to the left find it more important to represent workers and less resourceful citizens, while the strongest supporters of local business groups are found to the right. The correlations between left-right position and the willingness to represent the middle class and farmers are weak. Irrespective of councillors' left-right position, farmers is the least favored group. Two interesting patterns emerge in the results. Firstly, councillors to the left make major distinctions in the importance of representing different groups, but the further to the right we go, the importance level of all groups converges. Secondly, all five groups are in general seen as of at least of moderate importance to represent by both left- and right-wing councillors.

In the next step in order to investigate the occurrence of active class representation, table 6.4 presents the percentages of labourers, farmers and fishers, business managers and white collar workers among local councillors in different countries. The percentage of self-employed councillors indicates the presence of business owners. The table also presents the subjective class identification of the councillors. Among local councillors, those with a white collar occupation are in clear majority (62%). White collar councillors are especially dominant in Greece (82%), Switzerland (75%) and Italy (72%), while the lowest proportions are found in Sweden and Israel (both 49%).

Table 6.4: Class affiliation of local councillors in different countries, occupation (per cent) and subjective class identification

Country	Occupation category					Subjective class identification		
	La-bour-er	Farmer, fisher	Busi-ness mana-ger	White collar	Self-em-ployed	The work-ing classes	The middle classes	The upper classes
Sweden	25	6	12	49	19	3.0	3.1	1.2
Spain	9	0	10	69	16	3.3	3.2	0.6
Austria	9	3	9	55	19	ND	ND	ND
Belgium	8	3	8	69	22	1.8	3.2	1.3
Germany	5	3	16	58	25	ND	ND	ND
Czech Republic	5	1	13	60	28	2.2	3.1	1.0
Poland	5	3	14	59	17	2.0	2.9	1.7
Norway	4	5	18	53	13	2.3	3.0	0.6
France	4	1	10	65	11	1.1	3.1	1.1
The Netherlands	4	5	16	51	21	1.8	2.8	1.1
Israel	4	16	32	49	34	1.8	3.2	1.5
Croatia	3	3	16	61	16	3.1	3.1	0.9
Switzerland	3	1	14	75	21	ND	ND	ND
Greece	3	4	4	82	40	2.1	3.0	0.9
United Kingdom	2	3	29	54	24	2.0	2.9	0.5
Italy	0	1	9	72	30	2.2	2.9	1.1
Total	6	3	14	62	21	2.2	3.0	1.0
Country mean	6	3	14	61	22	2.2	3.0	1.0

Columns 1-4 present percentages of councillors who belonged to four occupation categories before his/her first mandate as councillor and/or belong to it today. The 'white collar' category comprises civil servants, engineers, teachers, liberal professions and clerks. Since a person over time can hold several occupations, the percentages could exceed 100%. Column 5 presents percentages of presently self-employed councillors (as opposed to employed and unemployed/student/retired). Columns 6-8 present mean values on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (to a high degree) as answers to the question 'To what extent do you feel that you belong to the following groups in society?'. The German, Austrian and Swiss questionnaires omitted the questions on class identity. Countries are sorted by percentage of labourers. Mean values, 0-4.

Six per cent of all councillors are, or have been, labourers, and Sweden has by far the highest numbers (25%) followed by Spain and Austria (both 9%). In The United Kingdom, only 2% of the councillors have been labourers and in Italy none of the more than 1000 respondents is or has been a labourer. Three per cent of all respondents are farmers or fishers, and the highest percentage of this occupation category is found in Israel (16%) while only one Spanish respondent belongs to this group. The second most common occupation category is business managers (14% of all respondents). Israel (32%) and United Kingdom (29%) have the highest numbers for this category, while Greece (4%) and Belgium (8%) have the lowest. 22 per cent of the councillors describe themselves as self-employed (rather than employed or not employed/student/retired). Most

self-employed councillors are found in Greece (40%) and Israel (34%) and the fewest in Norway (13%) and France (11%).

We will now turn to determining if class membership and class identity of the councillors have effects on their active representation of different groups. In table 6.5 the class characteristics from 6.4 are used as independent variables and the results show whether each factor has positive or negative effects on active representation of five class categories.

Table 6.5: Local Councillors' class affiliation, effects on representation focus

Councillors class affiliation		*Representation focus*				
		Less resourceful citizens	Workers	The middle class	Local business groups	Farmers
Occupation category today or during first mandate as councillor	Labourer	(+)	(+)	(+)		(+)
	White collar	(+)	(+)		(-)	(-)
	Farmer or fisher		(-)		(+)	+
	Business manager	-	-	-	(+)	
Occupation today	Self-employed	(-)	(-)	'+'	+	+
Subjective class identification	The working classes	+	+	+	+	+
	The middle classes	'+'	+	+	+	+
	The upper classes	(-)	-	+	+	
Position on left-right dimension (right+)		-	-	-	+	+

The table presents positive [+] or negative [-] effects (OLS regression coefficients) of councillors' class affiliation on their willingness to represent the five groups. A parenthesis signifies that a bivariate effect disappears in a multivariate regression model where all class indicators are included. Citation marks signify that a suppressed effect appears in the multivariate analysis. Non-significant effects are omitted. Response alternatives regarding the representation focuses 'workers' and 'middle class', and questions on subjective class identification was not part of the questionnaire in Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

The results of table 6.5 indicate that there are indeed statistically significant positive effects proving that labourers represent the working classes to a higher degree than others. White collar councillors represent the middle classes, farmers represent farmers and business managers and self-employed represent local business groups. Many councillors also represent groups to which they themselves do not belong. Subjectively identified working and middle class council-

lors seem to represent all groups to a higher degree. But the results also indicate that the bivariate effects of most 'objective' class characteristics disappear when controlled for class identity and left-right position. These are expected results if effects of class affiliation are linked through class identity. In the three models of figure 6.4, the causal relations between class affiliation, class identity, left-right ideology and active class representation is presented. The analyses were made using path analysis.

Figure 6.4: Class and active social representation - causal relations (path analysis)
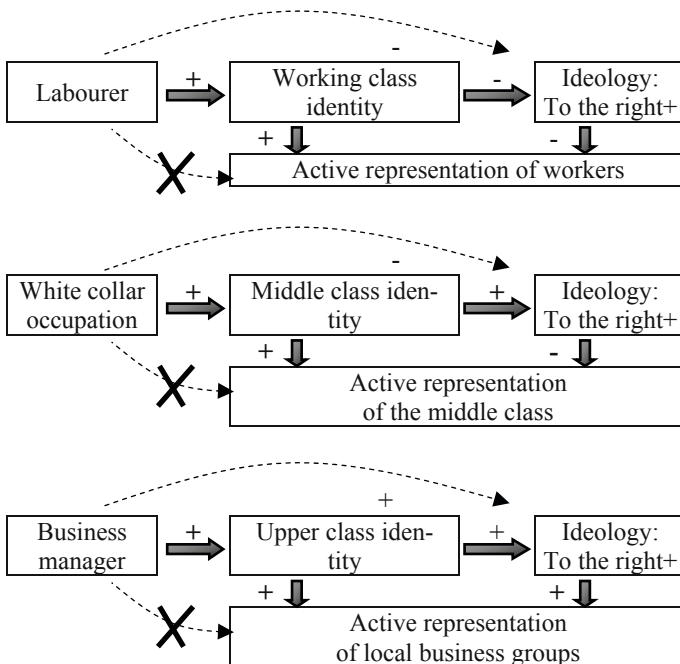
Comment: The figure present results of path analyses comprised by four regression models. The direction of the arrows are determined on theoretical grounds (Figure 6.2), and significant positive [+] and negative [-] effects (OLS regression coefficients) are displayed signify the causal relation between the variables. A crossed over arrow indicates no significant effect.

The analyses of figure 6.4 confirm that there is indeed a positive effect of being a labourer on having a working class identity, and working class identity has positive effects on active representation of workers. The same pattern repeats for white collar councillors through middle class identity on active representation of middle class interests, and business managers through upper class identity on active representation of local business groups. In all three cases there are no direct effects of being a labourer, a white collar worker or a business manager. Hence all three analyses confirm the occurrence of active class representation.

Being a labourer and having a working class identity also drive the councillor to the left, while being a business manager and identifying with the upper classes push councillors to the right. And the more to the right a councillor is, the more inclined he/she is to represent middle class and business interests. Middle class identity also drives councillors to the right while there is a direct effect of being white collar worker pushing councillors to the left. The active social representation of the middle classes is therefore much less clear-cut, probably due to the broadness of the category 'white collar workers'.

6.6   Identity, gender and sector party representation

After class politics and left-right ideology, identity politics is a contender for second place on the top list of political conflict lines in Europe (Lijphart 1999). In identity politics, the interests of ethnic and religious groups are an object of dispute, especially in multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies. Conflicts between different geographic parts of the locality are analogous to the larger national conflict lines, and sometimes just as heated.

In table 6.6, councillors' willingness to represent ethnic minorities, religious groups and geographical parts of the locality in different countries is presented. The table also shows the importance of representing the interests of women and some particular local government service. The representation of identity interests is clearly most prominent in Greece, since the country shows the highest priority values for all three identity categories in Table 6.6. Sweden and Spain also have high values for ethnicminorities, Italy and Croatia have relatively high values concerning religious groups, and village politics is especially strong in Spain and Israel. Polish councillors are the least interested in representing ethnic minorities; Swiss councillors prioritize religious interests the lowest while Norwegians have the lowest values on representing parts of the municipality. Following the Greek councillors, Swedish, Spanish and Italian councillors are the most eager to represent women, while councillors from the Netherlands and the Czech Republic prioritize women's interests the least. Sec-

tor party-interest ('the importance of representing some particular local government service') has the highest values in Norway and the lowest in The Netherlands.

Table 6.6: The importance of representing identity, gender and sector party groups/interests in European countries

Country	Ethnic minority(ies)	Religious group/ the Church	A particular geographic part of the locality	Women	Some particular local government service
Greece	2.9	2.1	2.9	3.1	2.6
Sweden	2.8	1.8	2.1	3.0	2.3
Spain	2.6	1.3	2.8	2.8	2.4
United Kingdom	2.5	1.8	2.7	2.5	1.9
Italy	2.4	2.1	2.1	2.8	2.2
Norway	2.3	1.7	1.8	2.4	2.7
Austria	2.3	1.5	2.7	2.7	2.0
Croatia	2.2	2.0	2.3	2.7	2.0
Belgium	2.1	1.3	2.1	2.2	1.8
Israel	2.0	1.7	2.8	2.3	1.6
Germany	1.9	1.7	2.4	2.1	1.7
France	1.9	1.2	2.5	2.4	2.4
Switzerland	1.9	1.1	2.0	2.1	1.6
The Netherlands	1.8	1.2	2.2	1.9	1.4
Czech Republic	1.7	1.3	2.1	2.0	2.1
Poland	1.3	1.8	2.5	2.1	2.4
Country mean	2.2	1.6	2.4	2.4	2.1

Comment: Survey question cited in table 6.4. Countries are sorted after values on ethnic minorities. Mean values, 0-4.

As mentioned above, the political left-right dimension is closely tied with class politics, but as figure 6.5 shows, there are also correlations between the left-right position of councillors and their representation of identity groups and women. The representation of women and and ethnic minorities is more common among councillors to the left while the representation of religious groups is stronger to the right. There are no correlations between left-right ideology and the willingness to represent a part of the locality or sector interests.

The MAELG-survey provides information on the gender and the country of origin of councillors. Immigrants are in most cases ethnic minorities in their new country, but there are also many European countries where non-immigrants identify as ethnic minorites and there are unfortunately no data from the survey on that kind of ethnic belonging, nor on religious affiliation, where in the municipality councillors live or if they have connections to specific local government sectors.

Figure 6.5: Left-right dimension and identity, gender and sector party representation
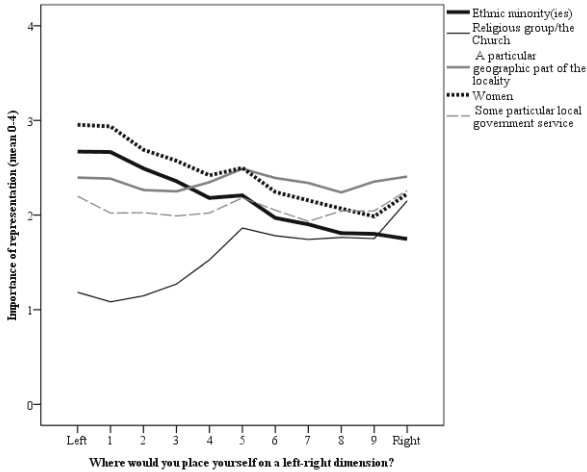
The figure displays mean values (scale: 0-4) for the importance of representation of five groups/interests (see Figure 6.1 for survey question) depending on the left-position of the council-lors.

However, questions on to what degree councillors feel that they belong to three identity groups (a religious group, the national people or an ethnic minority group) was included. The results from these three questions, as well ass the percentage of women and immigrants in different countries are presented in table 6.7. Among the MAELG-countries, Israel has by far the highest number of councillors born in another country (32%) followed by Switzerland (8%). In Poland only one per cent of the respondents are immigrants. France (45%) and Sweden (43%) have most women in the local councils, while Italy (14%) and Israel (13%) have the fewest.

The councillors who most strongly identify with the national people are found in Eastern Europe: Poland, Czech Republic and Croatia all have mean values of 3.8-3.9 on a 0-4 scale. The weakest idenfitication with the national people is found in Belgium and Spain (3.2-3.3).

Table 6.7: Local councillors' ethnicity and gender (per cent) and subjective identification with identity groups

Country	Social characteristics		Subjective group identification		
	Immigrants	Gender: Female	A religious group	The [national] people	An ethnic minority group
Israel	32	13	1.2	3.7	0.3
Switzerland	8	31	ND	ND	ND
France	7	45	0.8	3.5	0.2
Sweden	7	43	1.1	3.3	1.3
Croatia	7	26	2.2	3.8	0.4
United Kingdom	5	26	1.5	3.3	0.5
Austria	4	26	1.9	3.7	2.0
Norway	3	39	0.9	3.7	0.1
Germany	3	22	2.1	3.6	0.3
The Netherlands	3	27	1.3	3.5	0.3
Czech Republic	3	24	0.6	3.8	0.1
Belgium	3	28	0.9	3.2	0.3
Spain	2	33	1.1	3.3	0.4
Italy	2	14	1.6	3.5	0.4
Greece	2	17	1.1	3.6	0.4
Poland	1	19	3.1	3.9	0.4
Country mean	6	27	1.4	3.5	0.5

The first two columns present percentages of councillors who are immigrants (i.e. born in another country) and women. Columns 3-5 present mean values on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (to a high degree) as answers to the question 'To what extent do you feel that you belong to the following groups in society?' (question not included in the Swiss questionnaire). Countries are sorted by percentage of immigrants. Mean values, 0-4.

Turning to the question of which factors that explain social representation, table 6.8 presents the effects of different social characteristics on the representation of identity groups, women and some particular local government service. In this context, a municipal service is not a traditional social group. But in local politics there is sometimes a tendency for some polticians to side with certain part of the local authorities, either because they have a professional connection to this sector or because they have a specific political responsibility for it (Vabo, 2005). In the analysis of table 6.8, two variables are included which might be connected to sector party interests: public employment and the position as council committee president.

Women councillors most definitely say that they will represent women's interest more than their male colleagues do. On the other hand, women councillors seem more keen to represent the other four groups analyzed in table 6.8 as well, especially ethnic minorities and particular local government services. Publicly employed councillors and council committee presidents are groups that may have a stronger commitment to certain local government services, and the re-

sults indicate that councillors with these characteristics indeed do represent sector parties to a higher degree.

Table 6.8: Effects of local councillors' social characteristics on representation focus

		Ethnic minority(ies)	*Religious group/the Church*	*A particular geographic part of the locality*	*Women*	*Some particular local government service*
Social characteristics	Gender: Woman	+	'+'	(+)	+	+
	Born in another country	(+)			(+)	'-'
	Publicly employed	(+)	(-)		(+)	+
Group identification	The [national] people	(-)	+	+		+
	A religious group	-	+	+	(-)	+
	An ethnic minority group	+	+	+	+	+
Current position	President of a council committee				(-)	+
Left-right dimension (right+)		-	+		-	

The table presents positive [+] or negative [-] effects (OLS regression coefficients) of councillors social characteristics and identities on how important they think it is to represent five social groups (question formulation in Figure 6.1). A parenthesis signifies that a bivariate effect disappears in a multivariate regression model where all class indicators are included. Citation marks signify that a suppressed effect appears in the multivariate analysis. Non-significant effects are omitted. Group identification questions were not included in the Swiss questionnaire.

Turning to the identity groups, figure 6.6 presents the causal relations between social characteristics, identity, ideology and active representation. The results indicate the occurrence of active social representation by immigrant councillors on the behalf of ethnic minorities in Europe as a whole. But we should also recognize that in some countries immigrants do not identify more strongly with an ethnic minority then do the indigenous people. The councillors responded to the question on ethnic minority identification on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (to a high degree). By comparing mean values on this scale, it could be concluded that immigrant councillors identify with an ethnical minority only to a marginally higher degree in Austria, Italy and Greece, while in Israel and Spain immigrant councillors identify with ethnic minorities to a lesser degree than do coun-

cillors who are born in the country, though the difference is very small (-0.13 in Israel and -0.21 in Spain on the 0-4 scale).

Figure 6.6: Active identity representation – path analysis
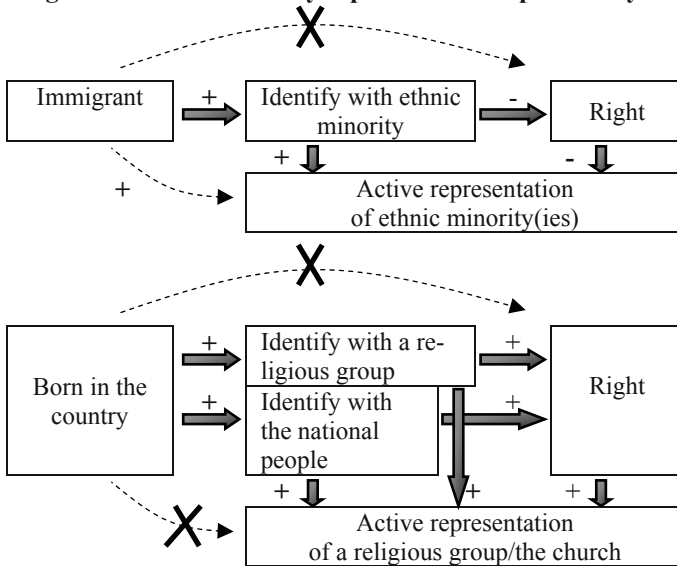
Comment: See figure 6.3 for explanation.

The largest difference is found in the United Kingdom, where immigrant councillors identify with an ethnic minority to a significantly higher degree than do other councillors (+1.47).

In public debate, ethnicity and religious affiliation are often mixed up, with immigrants sometimes perceived as religious activists in a secular society. But the results show that in general it is native councillors who have the strongest religious identity and who therefore actively represent religious groups to a higher degree. Councillors born in the country also tend to identify more with the national people, and both national and religious identity drives councillors to the right, further enhancing their willingness to represent religious interests.

6.7 Width of representation focus

We have so far analyzed to what extent local councillors represent different social groups, as well as if they represent some particular government service or a geographical part of the municipality. However, nothing prevents councillors

from representing more than one group or interest. In fact, the median councillor finds it of great or utmost importance to represent four of the ten groups and interests mentioned. Seven per cent of the councillors answered that it is important to represent all ten. The number of groups and interests a councillor find it important to represent (0-10) can be interpreted as their *width of representation focus*.

In previous analyses we have seen which factors that have effect on specific representation focus alternatives. Table 6.9 presents which factors that explain the width of local councillors representation focus. The table presents effects in both bivariate and multivariate analyses. Group identity is by definition necessary for active social representation to occur, and the results in table 6.9 show that the width of a councillor's group identification positively effects the width of his or her representation focus, i.e. the more groups councillors identify with the more groups they find it important to represent. In fact, the strength of any group identity (with the exception of the upper class) appears to be positively correlated with the total number of groups in representation focus.

The results also show that women and labourers have an especially wide representation focus. On average, older councillors have a wider representation focus, but when controlled for other factors the effect of age in itself turns out to be negative. The bivariate analyses indicate that councillors who have white collar jobs, or are business managers or self-employed have a more narrow representation focus, but these effects disappears in the multivariate regression model where all indicators are included. The fact that some bivariate effects of social characteristics and occupation disappear in a multivariate regression model should not be interpreted as the bivariate effects being spurious. Those factors are more likely antecedent variables in relation to group identification, left-right orientation and representation style. For example, upper class councillors are more to the right, and the results in table 6.9 show that councillors to the right generally have a wider representation focus than councillors to the right.

What then is the relationship between a councillor's choice of representation styles and focus? The correlations between representation style and the width of representation focus are weak but the results of table 6.9 show some statistically significant results: delegates have a wider and trustees have a more narrow representation focus. On average, a delegate finds it important to represent one group or interest more than a trustee does. Party soldiers fall in between as likely to represent some groups more and others less than delegates and trustees. In the MAELG-survey, the councillors were offered 'the whole locality' as an alternative representation focus along with the ten groups and interests previously mentioned. Theoretically, there is a contradiction between the 'Burkian

view' were councillors should represent the common interest of all and the 'liberal view' where councillors should represent different special interests.

Table 6.9: Effects on local councillors' width of representation focus

		Width of representation focus
Social characteristics	Age	'-'
	Gender: Female+	+
	Born in another country	(+)
Occupation	Labourer	+
	White collar	(-)
	Farmer or fisher	(+)
	Business manager	(-)
	Self-employed	(-)
Width of group identification		+
Left-right orientation: Right+		-
Representation style	Trustee	-
(Delegate =control group)	Party soldier	(+) '-'

The table presents positive [+] or negative [-] effects (OLS regression coefficients) on the dependent variable 'width of representation focus', i.e. the number of social groups and interests (0-10) a councillor find it important to represent (see Tables 6.3 and 6.6). Non-significant effects (p > .05) are omitted. (Brackets) signify that a bivariate effect disappears in a multivariate regression model where all indicators are included. 'Quotation marks' signify that a suppressed effect appears in the multivariate analysis. The independent variable 'width of group identification' is the number of class and ethnic/religious groups (0-6) a councillor identifies with (see tables 6.4 and 6.7). The left-right orientation question is presented in Figure 6.3 and the representation style question in Table 6.1.

However, the hypothesis that councillors who think it important to represent the whole locality should be less inclined to represent the special interests of certain social groups is decidedly rejected. In fact, there is a weak but significant *positive* correlation (r = +0.21) between how important a councillors deem it to represent the whole locality and how many social groups she or he represents.

6.8   Conclusions

The aim of this chapter has been to analyze how local councillors understand their mandates as elected representatives. Since the core of politics is to solve conflicts of interests between social groups, knowledge of how councillors translate their mandates into political priorities between groups and interests is crucial in order to explain how local policy is made.

The mechanism through which representatives translate their mandate in relation to the will of the people is *representation style*: trustees believe themselves to have a free personal mandate; while party soldiers and delegates be-

lieve their main duty when conflicts arise is to follow the will of their party or their voters respectively. Trustees are by far the most common representation style among local councillors (57%) followed by party soldiers (28%) and delegates (15%). The groups or interests which councillors find it important to especially represent are defined as their *representation focus*. Since it is possible to represent a number of groups at the same time, the width of the councillors' representation focus varies. On average, a local councillor represents four or more groups or interests. In the eyes of the councillors, there does not appear to be a conflict between representing certain special interests and to represent the whole locality at the same time.

The results have confirmed that the social characteristics of councillors are important in order to explain their representation style and focus. One particular mode of representation is active social representation, which occurs when councillors prioritize the interests of social groups to which they themselves belong. Active social representation is a key mechanism in the 'politics of presence' theory, i.e. the view that the presence of certain social groups in parliament benefits the group's interests in society. In this chapter, we have seen that active social representation occurs in local government among all social groups that the MAELG-survey has allowed us to analyze. The results have also indicated that some social groups – especially more privileged groups like white-collar men – are heavily over-represented in local assemblies (see table 6.4 and 6.7 above). Since active social representation is occurring, the under-representation of less privileged groups must be regarded as a significant obstacle for achieving political equality in municipal government.

References

Carnes, N. (forthcoming 2012) 'Does the Numerical Underrepresentation of the Working Class in Congress Matter?', *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 37 (1), 5-34.

Converse, P. and Pierce, R. (1986) Political Representation in France. Harvard University Press: London.

Eulau, H., Wahlke, J., Buchanan, W. and Ferguson, L. (1959) 'The Role of the Representative: Some empirical observation on the theory of Edumund Burke', *American Political Science Review* 53 (3), 742-756.

Giddens, A. (1973) The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies. Hutchinson: London.

Gilljam, M., Karlsson, D., and Sundell, A. (2010) 'Representationsprinciper i riksdag och kommuner [Representation Styles in Riksdag and Municipalities]' in Brothén, M. and Holmberg, S. (eds.) Folkets representanter. En bok om riksdagsledamöter och politisk representation i Sverige. University of Gothenburg, Göteborg.

Haider-Markel, D., Josylyn, M. R. and Kniss, C. (2000) 'Minority Group Interest and Political Representation: Gay Elected Officials in the Policy Process', *The Journal of Politics* 62 (2), 568-577.

Karlsson, D. (2003) En chimär av endräkt. Ideologiska dimensioner i kommunal kultur-
    politik [An Illusion of Consensu. Ideological Dimensions in Local Cultural Poli-
    tics]. University of Gothenburg: Göteborg.
Kjær, U. (2000) 'Representativeness and Local Politics in Denmark' in Rao, N. (ed.)
    Representation and Community in Western Democracies. Macmillan Press:
    Houndmills, 24-50.
Holmberg, S. (1974) 'Riksdagen representerar svenska folket' Empiriska studier i
    representativ demokrati [The Riksdag Represent The Swedish People. Emprical
    Studies in Representative Democracy]. Studentlitteratur: Lund.
Lijphart, A. (1999) Patterns of democracy. Gvernment forms and performance in thirty-
    six countries. Yale University Press: New Haven.
Newton, K. (1974) 'Role Orientations and Their Sources Among Elected Representatives
    in English Local Politics', *Journal of Politics* 36 (3), 615-636.
Phillips, A. (1995) The politics of presence. Clarendon Press: Oxford:
Pitkin, H. (1967) The Concept Of Representation. University of California Press:
    Berkeley, Los Angeles.
Svallfors, S. (1996) Välfärdsstatens moraliska ekonomi. Välfärdsiopinionen i 90-talets
    Sverige [The Moral Economy of the Welfare state. Welfare opinion in Sweden of
    the 1990s]. Borea: Umeå.
Vabo, S. I. (2005) 'Committee structure and political preferences: The case of Nor-
    wegian local government' *European Journal of Political Research* 44 (4), 563-592.
Wahlke, J., Eulau, H., Buchanan, W. and Ferguson, L. (1962) The Legislative System.
    Explorations in Legislative Behaviour. John Wiley and Sons: New York.
Wallin, G., Bäck, H. and Tabor, M. (1981) Kommunalpolitikerna. Rekrytering - Arbets-
    förhållanden - Funktioner [The Local Politicians. Recruitment - Working Condi-
    tions - Functions]. Kommundepartementet: Stockholm.
Wright, E. O. (2000) Class counts. Cambridge University Press: Port Chester.
Wängnerud, L. (2009) 'Women in Parliaments: Descriptive and Substantive Representa-
    tion', *The Annual Review of Political Science* 12, 51-69.

7 Councillors, participation, and local democracy

David Sweeting and Colin Copus

7.1   Introduction

This chapter explores the attitudes of councillors towards citizen participation in local government. It examines specific mechanisms of engagement for citizens within a system of local democracy that contains representative and participatory elements. As elected representatives, councillors are part of the fabric of representation, and therefore may well be naturally inclined to view with suspicion any moves which take local politics much beyond the formal processes of voting, elections, and decision-making in municipal chambers. It is worth noting, however, that, in Heinelt (this volume) many councillors did show favourable attitudes towards participation in local democracy. For example 81.8% agree that it is important citizens participate before decisions are made by representatives, and 65.0% were in favour of active and direct participation by citizens. But, citizen participation need only inform and not weaken and certainly not replace the role of the councillor as a final decision-maker.

The chapter opens by outlining the differences between participatory and representative democracy, and tensions between them. We present a typology of different mechanisms in order to guide the analysis. In the following section we present the survey results to analyse the support of councillors for different sorts of participation mechanism. Particular emphasis is placed on exploring the differences between councillors who are members of a party against those that are not party members; between those that belong to left wing, centre ground, and right wing parties; and between those that display different attitudes towards representation. Overall we find that councillors tend to display a luke-warm, unenthusiastic attitude towards many participation mechanisms, though this picture is nuanced by councillors in certain countries, and councillors of certain types, holding a more positive stance to some of the ways in which citizens can engage with local government.

7.2   *Representation and participation in local democracy*

There are two main variants of local democracy that are apparent in all European countries contained in this study: the traditional representative form, and the participatory form (Sweeting and Copus, 2011). The representative form is based on the election of representatives to some sort of decision-making chamber, with representatives in different ways representing citizens (Haus and Sweeting, 2006). The participatory form has increased considerably in importance in recent years, prompted by the 'deliberative turn' in democratic theory (Goodin, 2008). It is part of a long line of literature critical of the infrequent, confined, and limited nature of citizen input within representative democracy (see for example Pateman, 1970). Democratic theorists of this school 'encourage people to come together to discuss common problems and to agree to solutions', and 'talking together' is of particular value (Goodin, 2008: 2). The movement pushes 'micro-deliberative innovations' (Goodin, 2008: 2) such as deliberative opinion polling, various neighbourhood or decentralised fora, and citizens' juries. This 'turn' has been joined by the activities of many municipalities to experiment with 'democratic innovations' (Smith, 2005) and to embed participation in processes of municipal decision-making (Lowndes et al, 2001). Again, this can be connected to a much longer history of state-led participation schemes and to encouragement from central government that local government needs to be more participatory. What is clear now is that the participatory form of democracy is now firmly rooted, perhaps uncomfortably, alongside the representative form of local democracy.

Within the boundaries of liberal-democratic theory, these two conceptions of democracy correspond to the aggregative and deliberative forms of democratic decision-making set out by Cohen and Sabel (1997). The aggregative form is based on counting votes, allowing for the expression of conflicting and contradictory interests of group members (Cohen and Sabel, 1997: 320). This form places emphasis on reaching decisions, despite the existence of competing views. It accepts that not all decisions will have full support, but that there are sound reasons for accepting majority decisions, as everyone, via voting, has an equal chance of influencing them. Alternatively, the deliberative form is based, rather than on the acceptance of decisions based on majority views, on decisions that are 'supported by reasons acceptable to others' and via 'free public reasoning amongst equals' (Cohen and Sabel, 1997: 320). The idea in deliberation is that citizens attempt to convince others, or seek consensus, for decisions. Though Cohen and Sabel concede that agreement will not always be possible, this form of decision-making is clearly based on very different conceptions of the nature of democracy.

These forms of democracy – sitting alongside each other - imply very different roles for local councillors. In the aggregative form, their role lies in representing citizens' interests, and in making decisions in municipal chambers. There are differing ways to enact the concept of representation, whether as trustee, delegate, or party soldier. As trustee, an elected representative is free to use her own judgement, whereas delegates are bound by the opinion of those that represent them (Judge, 1999). Additionally, in party systems, it has been argued that the loyalty of the representative is transferred away from the electorate and towards the party of which that representative is a member (Copus, 2004: 20), and the representative acts in accordance with the wishes of the party – essentially becoming a party soldier. These three forms of representation – trustee, delegate and party soldier – imply different emphases in the act of representation. However, the overall role of councillors in the representative or aggregative system is clear in that they contribute in some way to the representation of citizens, with councillors involved in local decision-making via their role in the full council, on committees of different sorts, or as either executive or non-executive councillors - and often mediated via the operation of party groups.

In the deliberative form, the role of councillors is far less clear. This is not surprising as treatise urging participatory or deliberative democracy often arise from critiques of the representative process (e.g. Pateman, 1969). It has long been argued that representatives often manipulate participatory processes for their own purposes (Boaden et al, 1982). More recently, Copus (2004) has argued that deliberative processes in local democracy challenge the position of councillor as elite decision-maker, and threaten the private, party group based arenas of private deliberation to which councillors are used. This sort of analysis sits within the longstanding tension in the roles of councillors caused by the existence of both participatory and representative democracy (Lepine and Sullivan, 2010).

It is often argued that there are tensions between representative and participative democracy, hindering their effective functioning in a single decision-making system. For example, Sullivan et al. (2004: 248-9) argue that representative democracy rests on the advocacy of interests by councillors feeding into formal decision-making processes over a large area but within a restricted view of the 'political'. Alternatively, participatory democracy functions with a much broader conception of inclusion but within much smaller areas, emphasising the deliberation of individuals which may then lead into more concrete proposals for action. Tensions therefore arise around the relative weight that ought to be accorded to the representation of interests articulated by councillors, and the weight accorded to the views of those citizens that actually participate. There are also tensions related to scale, with strains between the articulation of sec-

toral/and or neighbourhood interests that may emerge from participation mechanisms, and the overarching and city-wide interests with which councillors are faced. Moreover, when a final decision has to be taken or policy agreed, then the elected representatives demand and command primacy when participation takes place in the context of a representative system.

Thus, many European countries, these tensions now take place within cities where local decision-making arenas are in over-arching terms representative in character, but which contain within them, to a greater or lesser extent, elements of citizen participation (Klausen et al, 2005). Added to this is the background of national party control of local politics, or at least the incursion of national parties into local government, depending on the country concerned. In many municipalities, a high proportion of councillors are elected to the council as national party members; for example after the 2011 local elections in England just over 92 per cent of all councillors (almost 17,000 councillors) came form one of the three main national parties: Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat. Assuming the existence of a chain of command where councillors play a key role in translating the demands of citizens into policy decisions which from the basis of action on the part of municipal bureaucracies (Denters, 2005: 423), the opinions of councillors on the ways that citizens ought to participate in decision-making processes, and their opinion of different forms of participation mechanism, is of critical importance.

As mentioned above, there are different sorts of councillor, who may be expected to show different sorts of attitude to participation. As Copus argued:

> "The extent to which councillors are willing to respond to citizen participation is influenced by their interpretation of the appropriate role of that participation within the representative processes. Moreover, it is influenced by how councillors balance the input of unelected citizens into political decision-making compared with their own input as elected representatives" (Copus, 2003:39).

One aspect of representation we are concerned with exploring is the differences between party member councillors and non-party member councillors. If party members' attitudes to representation are shaped by their membership of party, we can expect to see differences between party members and non-party members. There is likely to be stronger support for participatory mechanisms amongst non-party members, as party members loyalty is likely to be to the party group, with deliberation taking place in private within this forum. Non-party members, lacking either the tie to the party, or the existence of a party group, are therefore likely to be more open to participatory processes.

Second, as mentioned above, councillors can display different views with regard to their role as representative, as trustee, delegate, and party soldier. The

categorisation offers a further refinement to the views of party members and non-party member councillors, assessing the dilemmas of representation experienced by councillors in relation to their parties (if they have one), their constituents, and their own conscience. There is likely to be stronger support for participation amongst councillors who show a delegate attitude to representation than those who exhibit either party soldier or trustee attitudes, as participation is likely to be seen impinging on the role of councillor as independent decision-maker or servant of party in the latter cases (of course, councillors may see themselves as delegates of their party and not the voter).

Third, we are concerned to explore the impact of the political affiliation of councillors on their attitudes to participation. We want to know if political affiliation is a likely indicator of attitudes towards public participation in political decision-making and whether councillors on certain parts of the political spectrum are likely to be more or less inclined towards the virtues of public participation.

Another variable in the analysis (alongside the aspects related to councillors outlined above) is the form of participation mechanism in question. Different ways of considering how to delineate participation mechanisms from each other have been put forward. For example, Smith (2005) presents a framework of electoral innovations, consultation innovations, deliberative innovations, co-governance innovations, direct democracy innovations, and e-democracy innovations. Lowndes et al (2001) present a typology of consumerist methods, traditional methods, forums, consultative innovations, and deliberative innovations. Two problems are worth noting about such typologies. The first is that any individual mechanism can perform more than one function. For example, various forums can perform both consultative and deliberative tasks. Second, there may be huge variation in the way that different innovations function in different places. This difficulty is likely to be exacerbated as the terms used in this questionnaire are translated between different languages.

In order to capture some sense of difference and progression between the mechanisms that we discuss in this chapter, and drawing on the categorisations of Lowndes et al and Smith, we propose that it is helpful to distinguish between the mechanisms in this chapter in the following way, as shown in table 7.1:

Table 7.1: categories of participation methods

Category	Mechanisms
Consultative-traditional	petitions, party meetings, consultation with community groups, consultation with agencies
Consultative-consumerist	satisfaction surveys, complaints schemes
Consultative-deliberative	public meetings, citizens' juries
Co-governance	co-decision procedures; devolution to neighbourhood organisations
Direct democracy	advisory referendum; binding referendum

Using this categorisation we attempt to capture the differences between the sorts of mechanisms currently used. Some (consultative-traditional) have long been used for consultation with electors as part of a representative system, whereas others can be viewed as consulting citizens as service users and consumers (consultative-consumerist). Others aim to promote deliberation (consultative-deliberative), whereas some are aimed at eliciting decisions in some sort of board or chamber (co-governance). Finally, some use voting to make decisions (direct democracy). Clearly these categories are not mutually exclusive, and as well as some degree of overlap between the categories, some mechanisms could be placed in more than one category. Especially problematic is the 'public meeting', which can perform number of consultative or deliberative functions, depending on the way which it is constituted. We have placed it in the consultative-deliberative category here as many meetings will contain some element of deliberation (inviting dialogue, hearing and balancing different opinions), while bearing in mind that the actual practice of any individual meeting may be rather different.

In the typology there is progression from largely consultative mechanisms, through to involvement where participants have greater influence over decision-making, to where citizens control decision-making more fully. Therefore, one might expect that councillors would be less keen on mechanisms where they lose decision-making control. The results in this chapter show a rather more nuanced picture, with councillors' view of different mechanisms varying according to their country, their political orientation, their representative outlook, and their membership of party.

7.3   Results[1]

In this section we present the results from the survey in the following way. After briefly outlining the overall pattern of results, we then look at the response of councillors by country to the different sorts of participatory mechanisms available to citizens. We then assess the responses of councillors according to whether or not they are party members, and analyse the responses of councillors according to their type as a representative. We finish this section by picking out differences to participation according to sort of party they represent.

Overall, councillors appear to show a mixed attitude to participation methods. In order of support (either effectiveness or desirability), councillors surveyed for this research report support for the twelve mechanisms as follows: public meetings (57.9%); consultation with community group (57.0%); advisory referendum (51.5%); co-decision procedures (49.0%); binding referendum (48.4%); satisfaction surveys (48.6%); consultation with agency (43.3%); petition (43.0%); complaints schemes (41.1%); party meeting (40.7%) devolution to neighbourhood organisations (39.7%); and citizens' jury (32.8%). It is worth making the following points about these overall figures. First, none of the mechanisms receives overwhelming support from councillors, though seven of the twelve receive are regarded as effective or desirable by about half or more of the councillors surveyed. Second, these figures hide a wealth of differentiation between sorts of councillors, explored below. Third, though the country figures appear to demonstrate little relationship with the typology of mechanisms presented above, the results below do show how groups of councillors respond differently to different sorts of mechanisms in the typology. This is the case with representative orientation and left-right political outlook. These matters receive more detailed analysis below. First, we present the results according to country.

---

1   All results presented in the section are responses to one of two questions: How effective do you think the following are in letting councillors know public opinion? (petition, party meeting, consultation with community groups, consultation with agencies, satisfaction surveys, complaints schemes, public meetings, citizens' juries); and how desirable or undesirable do you consider the following? (co-decision procedures, where citizens can discuss and make binding decisions on certain local issues, devolution of responsibilities to neighbourhood organisations, advisory (non-binding) referendum, decisive (binding) referendum. Percentages are sums of effective and very effective or desirable or highly desirable as appropriate on a 5 point scale. Not all methods were included in the questionnaire in every country. Where a mechanism was omitted from a country survey, the corresponding cell in the table is blank.

Attitudes to participation by country

Table 7.2 shows the responses to the questionnaire on the mechanisms identified as 'consultative-traditional' (petitions, party meetings, consultation with community group, consultation with agency), broken down by the countries included the survey. Of these mechanisms, the most support is showed for the generic 'consultation with community groups', at 57%, with other means showing lower levels of support. Petitions are most popular in Poland and Greece, but with much lower levels of support in Germany, the Czech Republic, and Sweden. Overall there are lower levels of support for party meetings as a way of gauging public opinion (and this is also the case for party members – see table 5). It is particularly low in the Czech Republic (as with petitions) and in Israel, but higher in Croatia and Norway. For consultation with community groups, support is very high in Greece (over 80% support), the Netherlands, and Belgium, but low in Croatia (about (30%). For consultation with agencies, support is high in Greece and the Netherlands, but low in Switzerland, Croatia, and Italy.

Table 7.2: Consultative-traditional mechanisms

Country	Petition	Party meeting	Consultation with community group	Consultation with agency
Germany	29.6	23.9	55.1	-
Switzerland	48.3	39.1	37.3	25.5
Czech Republic	29.4	20.9	55.5	45.4
The Netherlands	-	43.9	75.5	77.9
Italy	47.7	42.2	47.8	24.4
Sweden	25.0	45.0	58.1	40.4
Croatia	37.9	65.6	30.2	26.7
Norway	60.6	60.8	52.1	39.1
Poland	81.4	38.8	79.8	68.7
Austria	35.5	40.1	44.4	21.4
Greece	76.2	46.5	85.4	83.3
UK	35.5	31.9	62.6	41.8
Belgium	30.2	49.8	70.3	59.8
France	41.3	25.1	63.2	40.3
Israel	35.4	27.0	63.4	45.8
Spain	60.9	45.2	65.4	46.5
Total	43.0	40.7	57.0	43.3

Across countries there are some patterns that emerge from the data presented in this way. Greece and Poland however, show high levels of support for all consultative-traditional mechanisms, except for party meetings, while there appears low across the board support in Germany, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, and Austria. Croatia and Norway are the only countries where support for the party meeting is higher than other mechanisms presented.

Table 7.3 shows support amongst councillors for both consultative-consumerist mechanisms (satisfaction surveys and complaints schemes) and consultative-deliberative mechanisms (public meetings and citizens' juries).

Table 7.3: Consultative-consumerist and consultative-deliberative mechanisms

Country	Consultative-consumerist		Consultative-deliberative	
	Satisfaction surveys	Complaints schemes	Public meetings	Citizens' juries
Germany	31.3	31.0	69.3	55.9
Switzerland	38.3	32.2	44.9	33.6
Czech Republic	44.0	29.2	46.1	-
The Netherlands	33.1	36.3	56.8	-
Italy	61.3	42.8	73.2	-
Sweden	40.3	38.9	44.1	28.1
Croatia	51.4	42.7	60.2	-
Norway	57.8	31.5	50.2	10.6
Poland	67.7	66.4	96.3	
Austria	49.6	43.8	76.0	55.2
Greece	71.0	70.7	77.9	75.8
UK	47.4	43.2	50.4	25.3
Belgium	47.8	48.1	59.3	-
France	69.6	56.9	77.5	29.4
Israel	69.2	73.5	46.9	31.0
Spain	68.8	60.3	48.6	26.8
Total	48.6	41.1	57.9	32.8

For the consumerist methods, overall there is more support for surveys than complaints schemes, but both have levels of support below 50% as a means of determining public opinion. Some countries show high levels of support for surveys – especially Greece, France, Israel, Spain, and Poland, whereas in others, support is much lower, such as in Germany and the Netherlands. For complaints schemes, support is high in Poland, Greece, and Israel, but low in Germany, the Czech Republic, and Norway. It is notable that in common with support for traditional methods, Greece and Poland (along with Israel) showed high levels of support for both of the consultative-consumerist methods. Also in common with findings for the traditional mechanisms, Germany showed low levels of support for these consumerist-style ways of public involvement. In the main more councillors in most countries say that satisfaction surveys are more effective in ascertaining public opinion than complaints schemes. However, in a handful of countries (the Netherlands, Belgium, and Israel) this is not the case.

For the consultative-deliberative type of mechanism, public meetings are considerably more popular amongst councillors than citizens' juries. In no country are citizens' juries supported more by councillors than public meetings, and support for them is particularly low in Norway (which at 10.6%, shows the lowest support for any mechanism in any country included in the survey). Also,

citizens' juries are the least supported of any mechanism amongst councillors surveyed, with less than one-third support overall. Nevertheless, in Germany, Austria, and Greece, more than half of all councillors say they are effective. In the main councillors tend to be more at ease with the more recognisable public meeting, which at 57.9% support, is the most popular of all the mechanisms in the survey. Perhaps in a similar way to the popular 'consultation with community groups', it offers a familiar, generic type of interaction to which councillors can attach their support which in no way effects them as decision-makers.. Across the two mechanisms, many Greek councillors, in line with their support for nearly every other method mentioned, support both public meetings and citizen's juries. Much more surprising is the high level of support for these methods amongst German councillors – who tend to be less certain of the merits of other methods. Austrian councillors also demonstrate similar levels of support for deliberative style mechanisms.

As mentioned above, there is a progression from consultative mechanisms, through deliberative mechanisms, to those which much more emphasis on participation as contributing to decision-making. Table 7.4 shows the attitudes of councillors to both 'co-governance' and 'direct democracy mechanisms.

For the co-governance mechanisms, the questionnaire included a longer description of the 'co-decision procedures', mechanism. Co-decision procedures were described as 'where citizens can discuss and make binding decisions on certain local issues'. Implicit (rather than explicit) in the description of 'devolution of responsibility to neighbourhood organisations' is some element of decision-making capacity, though like many other aspects of the questionnaire, details are left indistinct.

There tended to be higher support for co-decision procedures amongst councillors than for other methods, though still below half of all councillors (49.0%) found them desirable for use in municipal decision-making. There was very high support for co-decision procedures in individual countries - Germany, Croatia, Austria and Greece - and low support in Sweden, Norway, and the UK. For devolution of responsibility to neighbourhood organisations, there was lower support overall than for co-decision procedures (39.7%). This is a lower percentage than in response to the question 'decentralisation of local government is necessary to involve citizens in public affairs (57.6% support). There was high support in Croatia and Greece for devolution to neighbourhoods, but Switzerland, Norway, and Belgium all showed low levels of support for such devolution. Across both methods, and again in common with most other forms of participation, Greek councillors show high support for both these sorts of methods of decision-making. Croatian councillors also display high levels of support for both co-governance methods. Norwegian councillors, in line with

their scepticism for citizens' juries, show little enthusiasm for either of the co-governance procedures.

For the direct democracy category, including advisory and binding referendums, about half of all councillors support either method of decision-making, with overall the advisory category marginally more attractive to councillors than the binding category. These aggregate figures mask a variety of difference between the responses of councillors in different countries to the two methods. There are very high levels of support (over 70% in each case) for the advisory referendum in Greece, France, and Spain. The UK's councillors are least convinced of the benefits of the advisory referendum, with less than one in three of them supporting such polls. Low levels of support also are apparent in Germany and the Netherlands.

Table 7.4: Co-governance and direct democracy mechanisms

Country	Co-governance Co-decision procedures	Devolution of responsibility to neighbourhood organisations	Direct democracy Advisory referendum	Binding referendum
Germany	73.9	38.3	37.4	66.7
Switzerland	58.1	26.1	55.7	92.1
Czech Republic	61.0	53.6	58.9	56.1
The Netherlands	26.6	32.2	37.9	25.4
Italy	65.9	47.4	63.1	45.5
Sweden	32.2	40.6	48.4	33.7
Croatia	79.1	70.2	60.9	59.3
Norway	24.7	28.6	41.1	32.9
Poland	57.7	65.2	61.7	48.1
Austria	75.1	37.1	44.1	60.1
Greece	74.8	76.6	82.0	73.8
UK	32.0	45.4	32.7	25.2
Belgium	41.1	25.4	46.6	33.7
France	39.6	41.0	74.2	25.5
Israel	53.8	74.1	52.5	50.3
Spain	69.0	46.3	72.3	59.7
Total	49.0	39.7	51.5	48.4

For the binding referendum, high levels of support are found in Switzerland, Greece, and to a lesser extent Germany, with low levels of support in the UK, the Netherlands, and France. In Switzerland such polls are common but that frequency does not necessarily mean that political elites would favour this approach, although in this case it appears that they do.. Greek councillors show high levels of support for all methods or participation, and as such support for the binding referendum is in line with responses to other items. Germany is an interesting case as more councillors in that country support the idea of a binding referendum over that of an advisory referendum. Only two other countries do

the same: Switzerland and Austria. The Swiss case can be explained by the prevalence of referendums in that country. The German and Austrian cases are more curious. Given that in all other countries except Switzerland councillors conform to the expectation that they are reluctant to cede decision-making, it is difficult to explain why in those two countries that there is more support for binding referendums. Given that binding referendum transfer decision-making powers from elected representatives to every unelected citizen, it is perhaps surprising that we found any support for this mechanism and where that support is strong among councillors, it says much about an ingrained participative political culture.

Overall, perhaps the most striking aspect of the results categorised by country is the enthusiasm of Greek councillors for nearly all of the methods mentioned in the survey, with high levels of support for all forms of participation except for party meeting – though even here their support is above average. German councillors tend to show low levels of support for various consultative-traditional and consultative-consumerist methods, but above average support for varieties of deliberative, co-governance and direct methods of participation. Councillors in the UK, by contrast, exhibit little enthusiasm for several of the deliberative, co-governance, or direct democracy procedures. For the co-governance procedures, it is also striking that these methods are popular amongst Croatian councillors.

Results by party membership, representation, and political orientation

Table 7.5 shows the results broken down by whether respondents are members of a party or not. The most noteworthy aspect of the table is that in all cases, except where the questionnaire asked about party meetings, more councillors who are not members of a party support the participation mechanisms than those who are. This is the case across all categories, by between approximately five and fourteen percentage points. These results indicate that party members are to a limited extent, less open to participation initiatives, but the differences between the two groups are often small. Interestingly, while party members appear to show similar levels of support for binding and advisory referendums, non-party members are noticeably more likely to say that they support advisory referendums than binding referendums.

Clearly there are different sorts of representative styles between party and non-party members which impact on their attitudes to participation, which are to some extent reflected in their responses to the methods presented in this chapter. We explore representative role explored further by examining the responses to the participation methods by trustee, party soldier, and delegate.

Table 7.5: Party membership and participation mechanisms

	Non-party members	Party members
Consultative-traditional		
Petition	47.9	42.2
Party meeting	25.8	42.9
Consultation with community group	62.6	56.0
Consultation with agency	47.9	42.5
Consultative-consumerist		
Satisfaction surveys	58.1	47.3
Complaints schemes	50.2	39.8
Consultative-deliberative		
Public meetings	69.8	56.2
Citizens' juries	40.8	32.0
Co-governance		
Co-decision procedures	58.4	47.7
Devolution to neighbourhood organisations	49.2	38.3
Direct democracy		
Advisory referendum	61.4	50.0
Binding referendum	51.4	48.1

These orientations are accessed by responses to the question on when there are conflicting points of view between the party, the community, and the representative, and the community, whether the representative ought to vote according to her own conviction, follow the party line, or vote according to the community's wishes. Leaving aside the potential difficulties in there being and a representative actually knowing the single view of the community, the answers to this question do reveal interesting differences between councillors and their attitudes to participation. Table 7.6 shows the results cross-tabulating representative orientation with support for the participation mechanisms.

The most striking aspect of the table is that with only two exceptions, the representatives with a delegate orientation display the highest levels of support across the board for the different participation mechanisms. The exceptions are, first, the party meeting (where party soldiers have the highest percentage score) and citizens' juries (where they have only a slightly lower percentage than trustees). This finding would confirm that delegates, most willing to follow the views of their constituents, are more likely to be comfortable with forms of participation when compared to other sorts of representative. Nevertheless, even the delegates are not overwhelmingly supportive of the mechanisms surveyed – in only seven of the twelve mechanisms does support exceed 50%, though for the rest, it is always above 40%.

An equally, or arguably more informative finding is revealed by examining which sorts of representative support least the different mechanisms. Trustees demonstrate lowest levels of support for traditional and consultative-consumerist type methods (again with the exception of party meetings). When it

comes to consultative-deliberative, co-governance and direct democracy type
methods, party soldiers demonstrate lowest levels of support.

Table 7.6: Participation and representative orientation

	Trustee	Party soldier	Delegate
Traditional			
Petition	42.5	40.7	50.0
Party meeting	37.5	50.9	41.8
Consultation with community group	55.9	58.2	59.6
Consultation with agency	41.6	45.8	45.9
Consultative-consumerist			
Satisfaction surveys	47.2	48.8	55.0
Complaints schemes	40.2	40.8	46.0
Consultative-deliberative			
Public meetings	58.7	54.5	63.4
Citizens' juries	35.7	27.5	35.2
Co-governance			
Co-decision procedures	50.8	40.4	59.7
Devolution to neighbourhood organisations	40.5	34.7	47.1
Direct democracy			
Advisory referendum	52.6	45.7	59.4
Binding referendum	51.1	38.8	57.1

It was argued earlier that there is something of a progression from traditional
through various sorts of consultation, to co-governance and direct democracy.
These findings indicate that the trustee, using a form of representation based on
exercising his or her own judgement, is least inclined to consult with his or her
constituents, instead preferring their own reading of the issues. However, once
the function of decision-making starts to be impinged upon, the party soldier in-
stead is most likely to exhibit a more hostile attitude. Again, while in these are
differences of degree, and there is some support for the more potent decision-
making methods, is interesting to note that, except for the familiar public meet-
ing, all the deliberative, co-governance and direct democracy mechanisms re-
ceive less than 50% support of the party soldier councillors, with very low sup-
port for citizens' juries and devolution to neighbourhood organisations.

A similar pattern emerges when the left-right orientation is taken into ac-
count. The questionnaire asked councillors to place themselves on a left-right
continuum within the politics of their own country[2], and the results presented of
their support for participation methods presented in table 7.

---

2   This was an 11 point scale. Scores of 0-3 were considered left wing, 4-6 centre, and 7-10 right
     wing.

Table 7.7: Political orientation and participation

	Left	**Centre**	**Right**
Traditional			
Petition	44.8	43.6	39.5
Party meeting	40.9	38.4	43.1
Consultation with community group	61.0	56.7	51.8
Consultation with agency	41.9	45.2	42.6
Consultative-consumerist			
Satisfaction surveys	48.6	49.0	47.3
Complaints schemes	41.3	42.2	38.7
Consultative-deliberative			
Public meetings	60.2	58.4	54.4
Citizens' juries	37.0	34.7	25.0
Co-governance			
Co-decision procedures	57.9	47.7	38.3
Devolution to neighbourhood organisations	44.1	39.3	34.2
Direct democracy			
Advisory referendum	55.7	50.1	47.7
Binding referendum	51.8	46.9	45.8

For many mechanisms, the least support for them is offered by right wing councillors, and the most support offered by left leaning councillors. While no clear pattern emerges for traditional participation mechanisms, it is clearly apparent that a greater number of left wing councillors when compared to their right wing counterparts support deliberative, co-governance, and direct democracy mechanisms. Surprisingly, given the association with markets, right wing councillors (to a small extent) are less likely than other sorts of councillor to find desirable the consumerist methods of the satisfaction survey and the complaints scheme. Left wing councillors are also much more likely to support consultation with community groups than right wing councillors. In all, more than half of left wing councillors support five of the mechanisms surveyed, while more than half of right wing councillors support only two of the mechanisms.

7.4   Conclusions

While councillors display positive attitude to the idea of participation, the above analysis suggest that they tend to be much more circumspect when they are presented with actual participation mechanisms. That finding is not surprising given councillors position as elected representatives – they may see themselves as representative decision-makers first, primarily acting in the arenas elections and municipal chambers, and with a lesser interest in newer, and perhaps passing trends in other forms of democracy. A positive interpretation of this reading of the attitudes of councillors is that they are a constant in local democracy, offering a recognisable, established, and enduring way of enacting local democracy, based around parties, voting, and elections, and formed around the ideas of

representative democracy, with limited support for other forms. Though reforms may usher in and out other democratic trends, councillors will continue to support a form of democracy that rests on widely understood democratic principles. The second, more negative interpretation is that councillors are being left behind as the practice of local democracy moves on. Wedded to parties, and schooled in a form of democracy that is becoming increasingly under pressure, councillors continue to cling to an outdated and party dominated model of local democracy.

It may be that councillors are right to be unsure about what many regard as unrepresentative forms of participation that can easily be dominated by sectoral or parochial matters, or simply by those most able to articulate their wants in participatory arenas. The tensions between representative and participatory variants of local democracy referred to in the introduction to this article may be interpreted by councillors as a threat to their traditional role. While councillors are often portrayed as defending various outmoded or outdated elements of public affairs, it may be that what they are actually doing is resisting a move towards less democratic practice.

References

Boaden, N., Hampton, N., Goldsmith, M., and Stringer, P. (1982) Public participation in local services. Longman: London.

Cohen, J. and Sabel, C. (1997) 'Directly-Deliberative Polyarchy', *European Law Journal* 3 (4), 313-342.

Copus, C. (2003) 'Re-Engaging Citizens and Councils: The Importance of the Councillor to Enhanced Citizen Involvement', *Local Government Studies* 29 (2), 32-51.

Copus, C. (2004) Party politics and local government. Manchester University Press: Manchester.

Denters, B. (2005) 'Squnadering away Thorbecke's legacy? Some recent considerations on Dutch local government reforms', in Reynaert, H., Steyvers, K., Delwit, P., and Pilet, J.-B. (eds.) Revolution or Renovation? Reforming local politics in Europe, Vanden Broele: Brugge, 421-444.

Goodin, R. E. (2008) Innovating Democracy: Democratic Theory and Practice After the Deliberative Turn. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Haus, M. and Sweeting, D. (2006) 'Local democracy and political leadership: Drawing a map', *Political Studies* 54 (2), 267-288.

Judge, D. (1999) Representation. Theory and Practice in Britain. Routledge: London.

Klausen, J. E., Sweeting, D. and Howard, J. (2005) 'Community involvement and legitimation in urban governance: an empirical analysis' in Heinelt, H., Sweeting, D. and Getimis, P. (eds.) Legitimacy and Urban Governance: A cross-national comparative study. Routledge: Basingstoke, 191-208.

Lepine, E. and Sullivan, H. (2010) 'Realising the public person', *Local Government Studies* 36 (1), 91-107.

Lowndes, V., Pratchett, L. and Stoker, G. (2001) 'Trends In Public Participation: Part 1 – Local Government Perspectives', *Public Administration* 79 (1), 205-222.

Pateman, C. (1970) Participation and democratic theory. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Smith, G. (2005) Beyond the Ballot: 57 democratic innovations from around the world. The Power Inquiry: London.

Sullivan, H., Knops, A., Barnes, M., and Newman, J. (2004) 'Central-Local Relations in an Era of Multi-Level Governance: The Case of Public Participation Policy in England, 1997-2001', *Local Government Studies* 30 (2), 245-265.

Sweeting, D. and Copus, C. (2011) 'Whatever happened to local democracy?', *Policy & Politics* 40 (1), 20-37.

8 Municipal councillors as interest mediators: Roles, perceptions and enactment

Panagiotis Getimis and Nikolaos-K. Hlepas

8.1 Introduction

Municipal councillors are the largest group of directly elected politicians. They maintain bonds with a wide spectrum of actors within local society, and many are also active party members. In becoming members of a collective organ, namely the Municipal Council, councillors participate in ongoing processes of deliberation, bargaining and decision-making that occur inside and outside the council chamber. A proportion of councillors ('executive' councillors) hold executive posts and functions – both formal and informal – and are part of the municipal 'government' that forms a broad municipal leadership (John 2001; Getimis and Gregoriadou 2004: Getimis and Hlepas 2006). The majority of councillors ('ordinary' councillors) retain 'traditional' duties, such as representation, majority/minority rights, scrutiny, and collective decision-making.

This chapter will focus on the roles, perceptions and enactment of councillors as decision-makers of the locality. It will investigate whether particular groups of councillors (e.g. 'executive' councillors) tend to focus on mediation of specific interests, and whether differences in these aspects of the activities of councillors can be detected according to different context variables, such as city size or local government system. As members of the municipal council, all councillors participate in decision-making processes through voting. Some councillors follow the views of local society directly ('delegates'), others prioritize their role as members of political parties ('party soldiers'), while others vote according to their own convictions ('trustees'). We use the phrase 'voting attitude' to reflect these basic perceptions and attitudes of councillors, and investigate to what extent is has a bearing on their activities and approach to their role. The questions we address are:

1. To what degree do broader contextual factors (e.g. local government system, city size) and personal characteristics (e.g. political views, gender) influence role perception, assessment and enactment of interest mediation by councillors?

2. Does the consolidation of executive leadership (e.g. directly elected mayors, more powerful executive bodies) and the corresponding reduced influence of assemblies affect all councillors in the same way, or does a distinctive minority of councillors ('executive' councillors) perceive themselves and act as part of a separate executive body? Does the 'executive' role intensify relations with different interests – such as the municipal administration and party system, which are particularly important in municipal government?
3. Do councillors voting as trustees, delegates and party soldiers ('voting attitude') rely on different sources of electoral support (e.g. civil society or party) and how far does the latter predict voting attitude? Furthermore, is the perception of actors' influence over the council and role enactment connected to such decision making priorities?

This chapter consists of the following parts. In the next part the framework of basic concepts concerning the above research questions is presented. In the third part, the methods and selection of variables are explained. In the fourth part, empirical findings on interest mediation, and role perception and enactment are analyzed in view of different local government types in Europe, left-right orientation, gender, and city size. In the fifth part, the basic dichotomy between executive and ordinary councillors is assessed in view of the empirical findings, while in the sixth part voting attitude is combined with several other variables, exploring different aspects of interest mediation, followed by a concluding section.

8.2   Councillors in context

The consolidation and broadening of executive power in municipal activities (John 2001; Hambleton 2002; Getimis and Gregoriadou 2004) tends to limit traditional collective decision-making within the council. The declining authority of the municipal council may initiate a change in the role perception and the role behaviour of the councillors. Based on role theory and particularly on the motivational approach, political roles are determined by an interaction of institutional factors and individual preferences (Elgie 1995). Changing external circumstances therefore lead to the adoption of new behavioural patterns. In the present case, councillors experience a loss of power. The declining weight of councillors in decision making may be compensated by strategies to increase participation in executive functions on the one hand and, on the other, strategies to enhance their roles as intermediates of different types of interests. In order to

regain political influence, councillors can develop different power strategies – both within and outside the council.

In view of the wide range of municipal activities, interests and pressure groups addressing and influencing councillors can be grouped in many categories. Given the fact that the construction and articulation of interests and pressure groups is likely to differ significantly across the 16 countries in this project, empirical data of the MAELG project engages wide notions of interests that can influence councillors and municipal affairs (e.g. 'business', 'middle class' etc.). These notions can include both pressure groups (e.g. 'institutional', 'associational' etc., Almond and Powell 1966; Mavrogordatos 2001) and single interests or specific actors (e.g. journalists, party leaders, municipal CEOs single businesspeople etc.). Evaluation of empirical data can explore differences concerning perceptions, assessment and enactment of interest mediation across distinctive groups of councillors.

An assessment of interest mediation by councillors can also assess whether different local government systems are reflected in correspondingly divergent perceptions and roles of councillors across different countries. Numerous attempts have been made in order to classify 'families' or broader 'types' of local government systems in Europe (Goldsmith 2002; Hesse and Sharpe 1991; Mouritzen and Svara 2002; Bäck 2005; Heinelt and Hlepas 2006; Sellers and Lindström 2007). In our analysis we use on the 'classic' Hesse/Scharpe typology that includes three types: The *Northern and Middle European* type, the *Franco* type and, finally, the *Anglo* type. In the *Northern and Middle European* type, decentralisation is high from a legal point of view, and where local political elites sometimes enjoy a high status in the wider context of the political system (Scandinavia, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland). In the *Franco* type the Napoleonic model prevails, where local government is politically strong but financially and functionally weak (France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Greece). Finally, in the *Anglo* type, municipalities are politically weak but enjoy discretion over important public services (the UK).[1]

The traditional left/right cleavage is now considered to be less influential on policy options and political representation, given the fact that catch-all strategies and convergence of policy options (efficiency and competitiveness prerogatives) seem to prevail in all European countries (Katz and Mair 1995). Gender studies have highlighted importance of gender for role perception and enactment of political actors (Johansson 2006). Therefore, we explore whether

---

1   The MAELG survey included several countries (Croatia, Israel, Czech Republic and Poland) that cannot be integrated into the above categories, nor constitute a consolidated 'east European' type. These countries are omitted from analysis using this variable.

interest mediation of councillors is significantly influenced by left/right cleav-
ages and gender.

Constellations of interests are dependent on social and economic structures
of cities and relevant local actors (Stone 1995). These structures are also de-
pendent, in many cases, on the size of the municipality, which also has been
found to have an impact on partification and social characteristics of councillors
(Bäck 2004; Fallend et al. 2006; Getimis and Hlepas 2006). We therefore ex-
plore whether city size influences interest mediation by councillors.

Executive leadership includes political and managerial tasks (Hambleton
2002), and goes hand in hand with new forms of multi-actor and multilevel gov-
ernance promoting networking and participation (Haus and Heinelt 2005). Fur-
thermore, executive councillors either acquire distinctive posts (e.g. 'vice
mayor', or member of an 'executive board') or take on informal executive func-
tions (e.g. informally delegated powers of the mayor or another executive organ
concerning decision making, representation and policy implementation). Execu-
tive functions that can be exercised by a municipal councillor can be thought of
as referring to the following four main aspects: First, the representation (sym-
bolic or legal) of executive authority (e.g. through the delegation of duties by
the mayor to a councillor) (Leach and Wilson 2000); second, the accountability
of the councillor to the Municipal Council regarding specific executive duties
(e.g. as representative of the council in the board of a municipal enterprise)
or/and the Mayor (e.g. as his/her delegate); third, his/her active role as part of
municipality leadership (e.g. participation in collective decision making of the
executive board); and, finally, policy implementation (guidance of administra-
tive tasks and specific policy projects). These aspects constitute a broad notion
of executive functions, since they include not only formally institutionalized
posts (e.g. 'vice mayor'), but also informal delegation of or/and participation in
executive duties (e.g. a certain councillor who is the 'backstage' assistant or 'in-
visible hand' of the mayor).

On the other hand, the majority of councillors (ordinary, non-executive
councillors), do not hold such posts and focus on their roles as members of the
council and as political representatives (community responsiveness, deliberation
and scrutiny; Rao 2000). We explore whether there are differences between ex-
ecutive and ordinary councillors in terms of roles, perceptions, leadership styles
and enactment of councillors towards different interests and groups.

Role enactment of councillors is also related to their career path. There is a
broad spectrum of actors and institutions that influence political careers in dif-
ferent ways using different resources. Parties still play a dominant role concern-
ing the recruitment and careers of local politicians, and there are many other ac-
tors who are influential in local society (Fallend et al. 2006). Selection and sup-

port of councillors by parties or civil society actors could, amongst other things, influence decision making priorities, positioning, affiliation and loyalties of councillors. We assess whether a connection can be made between the selection and support of councillors to their roles as 'executive' or 'ordinary' councillors, and their voting behaviour.

Councillors participate in decision making within the council through voting. The corresponding attitude of the councillor reflects core perceptions on her/his own political role. Voting criteria of the councillor corresponds to prevailing loyalties. Within a changing political environment, one question to explore is whether councillors try to distance themselves from parties in order to broaden acceptance and scope of influence within local governance, or do they, on the contrary, try to lean upon party mechanisms in order to safeguard reliable channels of support and influence in times of political re-structuring and voter volatility.

8.3   Research methodology

The research methodology comprises quantitative data analysis and consideration of institutional factors in municipalities in the different countries of the project. Quantitative analysis includes consideration of selected variables from the MAELG questionnaire which are relevant for the topics of the research questions. Institutional aspects have been considered through the collection of descriptions of relevant institutional settings and executive functions corresponding to these settings in each one of the 16 countries participating in the MAELG project, collected by questionnaire from other members of the research project, and with reference to the broader literature on municipal government in Europe.

We focus on role perceptions, assessments and enactment of councillors as mediators and representatives of groups and interests. Awe explore to what extent the municipal councillor considers him/herself as representative of specific interests and groups (business, workers, middle class, less resourceful citizens), furthermore how far she/he is focuses on certain geographic parts of the locality, or the whole locality.[2] Assessment of the views of councillors concerning the influence of selected actors (local business, upper levels of governance, party leaders, journalists, 'myself', heads of departments, CEO)[3] highlights the con-

---

2   Q16: 'How important is it for you as a local councillor to represent the following groups or interests'. The selected variables were v108 (whole locality), v111 (workers), v112 (middle class), v113 (business), v117 (less resourceful citizens), v118 (particular geographic part of the locality).

3   Q5: 'On the basis of your experience as a local councillor in this city, and independently of the formal procedures, please indicate how influential each of the following actors are over the local authority activities'. The selected variables were v31 'myself', v32 'heads of depart-

text of municipal policy formulation. Also councillors' judgments concerning actors which are helpful as channels of influence (leaders of party groups, members of the executive body, heads of departments, businesspeople, upper levels of government) over the council is an important indicator of power constellations.[4] Further on, enactment of councillors as mediators will be detected on the basis of the frequency of their contacts with different individuals and groups (frequency of contacts).[5] An important aspect of role enactment is decision making in the Council that reflects voting criteria (own convictions-'trustee councillor', voters' preferences – 'delegate councillor', party loyalties – 'party soldier').[6] Evaluation of additional data concerning both role perception and role enactment allows judgements concerning the policy style of the exercise of power (authoritarian/cooperative) and of leadership predisposition (strategic/reproductive) to be made (Getimis and Hlepas 2006).[7]

---

ments in the municipality', v33 'the municipal CEO', v37 'journalists', v38 'local business', v44 'party leaders', v47 'region and upper levels of government'.

4   Q6: 'If a firm wants to enforce a project in the locality and expects that the council will not approve of the project, what actors would it have to win over to its side in order to influence the council?'. The selected variables were: v48 'the leaders of the party groups in the council', v51 'the members of the executive body', v52 'the heads of departments in the municipality', v54 'local businesspeople', v58 'journalists', v62 'region-upper levels of government'.

5   Q15: 'How frequently do you have contact with the following individuals or groups?: The selected variables were: v91 'members of the executive board', v96 'leaders of my own local party organization', v97 'municipality CEO', v103 'representatives of upper levels of government', v105 'private business representatives', v106 'journalists'

6   Q17: 'If there should be a conflict between a members' own opinion, the opinion of the party group in the council or the opinion of the voters, how should, in your opinion a member of the council vote?' (v199): 1. 'Vote according to his/her own conviction', 2. 'Vote according to the opinion of the party group', 3. 'Vote according to the opinion of the voters'.

7   The definition of policy style has been constructed through the combination (mean value) of different variables:
     'Cooperative': Q10 : 'In your experience as a councillor, how important are the following tasks for you?'. The variable was: v75 'mediating conflicts in the local society'. Q21: 'People have different ideas about how local democracy should function. Please indicate how important for local democracy you feel the following requirements are'. The variable was v159 'local politicians should try to generate consensus and shared values among local citizens/groups. Q24: 'In your experience as a councillor, how would you define your contribution regarding the following tasks'. The variable was v187 'mediating conflicts in the local society'
     'Authoritarian': Q10, v74 'reinforcing the executive'. Q21, v158 'political representatives should make what they think are the right decisions, independent of the current views of local people'. Q24, v74 'reinforcing the executive'
     'Strategic': Q10, v68 'defining the main goals of the municipal activity'. Q19: 'How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements: v149 'politicians should only define objectives and control outputs, and never intervene into the task fulfilment of local administration'. Q24, v180 'defining the main goals of the municipal activity'.

Councillors are selected and supported mainly by parties or/and civil society actors. This support could influence their career in the municipality (whether they obtain executive posts or not) and, furthermore, predict their decision making criteria that could, in turn, prioritize party or civil society interests. We assess whether a clear line can be drawn connecting the selection and support of councillors with their distinctive roles as executive or ordinary councillors and their own decision making priorities.[8]

Councillors holding posts of deputy mayor, members of the executive board, members of boards of municipal joint stock companies or foundations (implementing municipal policies), and the president or chair of the council (defining the agenda setting etc.), all exercise, in broad terms, executive duties.[9] These executive councillors act as part of the municipal 'government', and therefore have strong relations with the municipal administration and can be considered a part of municipal leadership.

Given the fact that these posts (e.g. the post of delegate mayor) do not necessarily exist in all European countries, the institutional questionnaire was circulated among the members of the MAELG team was used to detect the relevant institutional settings concerning executive posts for councillors in the 16 coun-

---

'Reproductive': Q10, v69 'controlling the municipal activity'. Q19, v150 'the need for changes and reorganisation of the local government sector has been greatly exaggerated'. Q24, v181 'controlling the municipal activity'.

More specifically, based on the questions that were posed in order to measure the dimension of the exercise of power, we dichotomized our population by defining the following cleavage point (this point is equal to the middle value of the scale, implying neither support nor hindrance): When the responses of a mayor sum up to a total below the middle point, then the mayor was characterized as cooperative. On the other hand, when the sum of the mayor's responses was above the middle point, then the mayor was characterized as authoritarian. Similarly, based on the second dimension, leadership predisposition , mayors were categorized in two opposite divisions, strategic and reproductive, according to their responses

8   The definition of selection and support by civil society or parties has been constructed through the combination (mean value) of different variables:
Civil society: Q8: ' Were you elected as a candidate' v65, 3. 'as an individual or independent candidate'. Q28: 'Are you presently a party member? ' v235 'No'. Q33: 'As a candidate in the last election, to what extent did you have the support of the following groups:' v249 'local prestigious persons', v251 'local business groups', v254 'the church'.
Party: Q8: v65, 1. 'of a list of a national party'. Q28: v235, 1. 'Yes'. Q33: v245 'national organs of your party', v246 'your party wing/fraction', v247 'your party at the local level'.
There is a clear distinction in answering Q8 and Q28 among 'party' and 'civil society'. Using Q33, a distinction was made by comparing scores in v249,v251, v254 with scores in v245, v246 and v247. When the total score in v249,v251 and v254 was higher, civil society support was considered as dominant, while when total score in v245, v246 and v247 was higher party support was dominant.

9   Q26: Councillors were coded as executive councillors if they indicated they currently were a member of the board of council-owned joint stock company or foundation; a member of the executive board, President of the Council, or Delegate of the Mayor.

tries participating in the project. According the answers received, in some countries, these executive posts either do not exist or they are not available for councillors (e.g. 'delegate mayors' in Netherlands, Sweden, Croatia and Belgium). However, according to the empirical findings, in some of these countries, there are councillors that say they act as 'delegate of the mayor' (e.g. in Croatia). These councillors informally undertake corresponding executive functions, even though the institutional post of 'delegate of the mayor' does not formally exist.

Furthermore, the institutional questionnaire detected whether all institutional posts that were considered to be 'executive' (e.g. member of board of a municipal joint stock company,) do practically imply executive functions. While in most of the countries, the executive function of all institutional posts that were considered to be 'executive' has been verified, in some others (e.g. Netherlands or Austria) it has been stated that some of these posts do not entail executive functions. For this reason, these specific posts (e.g. member of a board of a municipal company) in these specific countries (e.g. in Austria) were not included when forming the dataset of executive councillors.

Perceptions and attitudes of councillors can also deviate according to personal characteristics, such as gender (male/female) and political views (left/centre/right).[10] Furthermore, the size of the city could have an important impact on roles of councillors, given the fact that constellations of actors and interests as well as the resources of the municipality are likely to be much larger and more complex in big cities compared to small cities.[11]

Empirical data gathered by the MAELG survey offered values that often included an evaluative scale ('no influence', 'not important at all', 'totally disagree' etc., escalating to 'very high influence', 'of outmost importance', 'strongly agree' etc.). For many variables, mean values have been compared. In some cases, mean values did not significantly differ across different groups of councillors, but there was a strong deviation. For this reason percentages of high scores (e.g. of 'great' or 'outmost importance') in particular variables have been compared across certain groups of councillors (e.g. representation of certain groups or interests).

---

10   Q20 'There is often talk about a left-right dimension in politics. Where would you place yourself on a left-right dimension?': v153.

11   Three major categories of cities have been constructed: First, 'small' cities with less than 20.000 inhabitants. Second, 'medium' cities with 20-100.000 inhabitants. Third, 'big' cities with more than 100.000 inhabitants.

8.4   Interest mediation: Perception, Assessment and Enactment

Local government systems: Influence on interest mediation

Table 8.1 shows councillors' responses to a number of variables connected representation, influence over municipal services, their frequency of contact with other actors, and their voting attitude. There are some differences across the main groupings of local government systems in Europe that are noteworthy and can be connected to different institutional and historical aspects of the different local government systems.

Table 8.1: Local Government Systems and Interest Mediation

	Anglo	Franco	North-Middle
Interest mediation			
Less resourceful citizens	67.3	77.0	61.7
Workers	56.4	66.1	45.9
Middle-class	42.1	60.6	41.8
Actors' influence			
CEO	89.4	61.3	56.9
Heads of Department	77.3	45.9	48.9
Upper levels of government	50.6	28.0	29.3
Party leaders	29.3	20.6	25.7
Frequency of contacts			
Executive board	28.2	33.0	18.0
CEO	13.1	20.8	7.7
Voting attitude			
Delegate	17.2	17.7	10.6
Party soldier	25.0	23.3	28.3
Trustee	57.8	59.0	61.1

Percentages report the total of 'high' and 'very high'.

For example, there are differences in prioritizing certain groups and interests – councillors from the 'Franco' group countries focus on less resourceful citizens (77% high scores), on workers (66%) and on the middle class (61%), all to a greater extent than their counterparts in other country groups. These findings could reflect weakness of social welfare systems in Southern Europe (Sellers and Lindström 2007), as well as the influence of informal networks, obliging the councillors to pay attention to the needs and demands of a wider clientele.

Regarding councillor views of actors' influence over municipal activities, councillors from 'Anglo' countries are more likely to emphasize the importance of municipal administrative and managerial actors than councillors in other systems. Party leaders score lower than these actors in each country group. Upper levels of governance are particularly important as a channel of influence over

the council in the Anglo type (high scores: 51%). This difference may reflect much lower discretion for 'Anglo' countries in terms of finance and municipal spending as a percentage of GDP, at least compared to North and Middle European countries (Heinelt and Hlepas 2006: 28).

Concerning frequency of contacts within the municipal administration, 'Franco' councillors have more contact with members of the executive and CEOs than councillors from other country groups. In 'Franco' countries, politics and administration are traditionally not clearly separated, and furthermore South European councillors often intervene in administrative matters in order to satisfy their own clientele (Getimis and Gregoriadou 2004: 7). These scores reflect those characteristics of political processes in those country groups. Voting attitude is an important aspect of role enactment and while it does vary across local government systems, the most striking result is the dominance of trustee councillors across all systems. Well over half of councillors in all country groups indicate they are trustee councillors, using their own judgement when they are out of step with the party line of and with voters. The 'party soldier' type of councillor is somewhat more common in North- and Middle European countries (28%) than in 'Anglo' (25%) and in 'Franco' countries (23%). This reflects stronger party loyalties in northern and middle Europe, whereas they are weaker in Southern Europe. The younger democracies in some southern European countries (such as in Greece and Spain) and the unstable party landscape in Italy may also have a bearing on these results. The personal relations of 'Franco' councillors with their own clientele are reflected in the higher percentage of 'delegates' in 'Franco' countries (18%), compared to North and Middle European countries (11%).

Left-right cleavages

According to the empirical findings, representation of interests strongly differs according to councillors' own political views (see table 8.2). More precisely, left wing councillors are more likely to focus mainly on the representation of less resourceful citizens (for four in five of these councillors it is of 'great' or 'outmost' importance) and of workers (70.5%), while respective percentages among right wing councillors are considerably lower (57% for less resourceful citizens and 47.4% for workers). On the other side, representation of business interests is of 'great' or 'outmost' importance for well over half of right wing councillors, while only just over a third of left wing councillors declare the same. Correspondingly, right wing councillors contact more frequently actors of the business sector. Five per cent of this group contact business actors 'a few times a week', while only 1.9% of left wing councillors contact businesspeople

as frequently. These findings seem to reflect ideological predispositions and action orientations. Right wing councillors tend to support market led principles and cooperation with the business sector. On the other hand, left wing councillors tend to support re-distributive policies for the benefit of less resourceful citizens.

Table 8.2: Political orientation and Interest Mediation[12]

	Left	Centre	Right
Interest mediation			
Less resourceful citizens	80.6	67.9	57.0
Workers	70.5	56.2	47.4
Business	36.7	50.3	60.2
Frequency of contacts			
Business	1.9	3.6	5.0
Voting attitude			
Delegate	13.1	15.2	14.6
Party soldier	28.8	23.2	25.3
Trustee	58.0	61.6	60.1
Exercise of power			
Authoritarian	49.1	52.6	63.0
Cooperative	50.9	47.4	37.0

Percentages report the total of 'high' and 'very high'.

The voting attitude of councillors does not seem to be heavily influenced by political views. Centre, right and left wing councillors would rather act as 'trustees' (61.6%, 60.1%, 58% respectively). However, left wing councillors score comparatively higher as 'party soldiers' (28.8%, compared to 23.2% of centre and 25.3% of right wing councillors). Party loyalties are stronger among left wing councillors.

The exercise of power also differs according to political orientation. A large majority of right wing councillors is authoritarian (63%), while among centrist councillors the respective percentage is 52.6% and a minority of left wing councillors (49.1%) appear authoritarian. Right wing councillors are more likely to prefer hierarchical practices of the exercise of power.

---

12   The questionnaire asked councillors to place themselves on a left-right continuum within the politics of their own country in an 11 point scale. Scores of 0-3 were considered left wing, 4-6 centre, and 7-10 right wing.

A gendered mediation of interests

According to the empirical findings, female councillors score higher than their
male colleagues in all abovementioned categories of interest mediation and par-
ticularly concerning less resourceful citizens (76.4% of females compared to
66.4% of males) and workers (63.5% compared to 56.3%).

Table 8.3: Gender and Interest mediation

	Male	Female
Interest mediation		
Less resourceful citizens	66.4	76.4
Workers	56.2	63.5
Actors' influence		
Party leaders	23.3	25.3
Journalists	13.9	18.5
Myself	18.9	15.2
Channels of influence		
Party leaders	67.0	69.0
Business	32.2	46.1
Journalists	36.6	44.2
Voting attitude		
Delegate	13.9	15.3
Party soldier	25.1	27.6
Trustee	61	57.1
Leadership orientation		
Cooperative	44.1	48.3
Authoritarian	45.9	41.7
Strategic	42.8	45.8
Reproductive	47.2	44.2

Percentages report the total of 'high' and 'very high'.

Females seem, therefore, to focus more on their role as mediators of interests
compared to males and especially on weaker or under-privileged groups (less
resourceful and workers) (see table 8.3).

Concerning actors' influence over municipal activities, female councillors
give higher scores to all different kinds of actors (the biggest difference, com-
pared to males, refers to journalists). The only exception, where female council-
lors give lower scores compared to males refers to their own influence. Indeed,
while 18.9% of male councillors assess their own influence as 'very high' or
'high', among female councillors this score falls to 15.2%. Female councillors
estimate higher the influence of party leaders over municipal activities. Fur-
thermore female councillors seem to emphasize more the different channels of
influence over the council (especially of businesspeople and journalists), but, at

the same time, seem to have less frequent contacts with actors (except with party leaders), compared to their male colleagues.

Women show slightly stronger party loyalties (27.6% are 'party soldiers' compared to 25.1% of male councillors) and highlight a little less their own views as a voting criterion (57.1% are 'trustees' compared to 61% of male councillors). This fits with research that shows parties are more important for selection, career and action of female politicians (Johansson 2006: 113).

Finally, concerning exercise of power and leadership orientation, women seem to be somewhat more cooperative (48.3%) and strategic (45.8%) than their male colleagues (44.1% and 42.8%).

City Size

City size also influences the perception of councillors concerning the representation of certain interests (see table 8.4). Local business groups are clearly more important to represent for councillors in small municipalities (10,000 to 20,000 inhabitants). In these municipalities, 51.9% of councillors focus on this group ('great' or 'utmost' importance), while in big municipalities (>100,000 inhabitants) this percentage falls to 41.4%. It is clear that local business interests are deemed as more important in small municipalities, where close linkages exist and these businesses are essential for local development and employment. On the other hand, councillors in big municipalities are more interested in representation of geographical parts of the locality: 53.1% of them focus on geographical parts of the locality, compared to only 42.5% in small municipalities. It is clear that particular districts and neighbourhoods in complex urban structures constitute an important reference for political representation in municipal councils of big cities.

Concerning actors' influence over municipal activities, councillors of big cities estimate higher the influence of several actors compared to councillors of small cities. Party leaders (high scores: 30.6% in big cities compared to 19.4% in small cities) and municipal administrative and managerial positions (heads of departments 62.1%, CEO's 70.7%, compared to 46.4% and 58.5% respectively in small cities) seem particularly to be more influential in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Municipal administration is obviously more important in bigger cities, given the size, the responsibilities and the resources of bigger municipalities. Indeed, heads of departments and CEO's score much higher in bigger cities (62.1% compared to 46.4% and 70.7% compared to 58.5% in smaller cities) (see table 8.4). Party systems in bigger cities seem to be much more important generally (Bäck 2004), and also in relation to interest mediation through

councillors. Party leaders are more significant as channels of influence over the Council.

Table 8.4: City size and Interest Mediation

	City size 1 (10.000-20.000 inhabitants)	City size 2 (20.001-100.000 in-habitants)	City size 3 (more than 100.000 inhabitants)
Interest mediation			
Business	51.9	47.5	41.4
Whole locality	94.9	94.8	94.3
Geographic part	42.5	46.6	53.1
Actor's influence			
Party leaders	19.4	25.5	30.6
Heads of department	46.4	49.5	62.1
CEO	58.5	62.0	70.7
Channels of influence			
Party leaders	65.5	68.9	69.1
Frequency of contacts			
Party leaders	17.7	23.3	25.1
Voting attitude			
Delegate	14.5	14.1	14.1
Party soldier	21.9	27.2	32.1
Trustee	63.6	58.6	53.8

Percentages report the total of 'high' and 'very high'.

Furthermore their direct contacts to councillors are much more frequent in big cities (25.1% compared to 17.7% in small cities). City size is even more impor-tant when it comes to voting attitude: one third of councillors in big cities vote as 'party soldiers' (32.1%), while only one fifth of councillors in small cities adapt the same position (21.9%). On the other hand, there are more (63.6%) 'trustees' in small cities (less than 10,000 inhabitants), compared to big cities (53.8%).

8.5   Executive or Ordinary: Power influences, roles and attitudes

The position of elected councillors within the municipality can be distinguished between those councillors that undertake executive functions (formal or infor-mal) and/or posts, thus becoming a part of the municipal government, and those that don't. In total, according to empirical findings, out of 11,838 councillors, 869 (11.4%) match the definition of 'executive' councillor, while 6,730 (88.6%) are 'ordinary' councillors.

It should be pointed out that out of the councillors undertaking executive posts, 85.5% claim to be supported by parties, while 85.1% of ordinary council-

lors claim the same. It seems that party support does not strongly favour the nomination for executive posts. It is also possible that councillors taking on executive posts do not wish to expose themselves as party-dependent actors, since they are obliged to cooperate with different public and private actors, safeguarding their own acceptance and legitimacy.

Concerning representation of groups and interests, executive councillors seem to have a stronger affiliation to business interests, since 54.3% stated they represent them (compared to 46.1% of ordinary councillors). Executive councillors maintain somewhat stronger bonds to less resourceful citizens (76.5%), compared to ordinary councillors (68.8%) (see table 8.5). It seems that, being a part of the municipal government, executive councillors pay comparatively more attention both to development and to redistributive policies.

Executive councillors highlight the influence of municipal leadership (political and administrative). CEOs and Heads of Departments are considered by executive councillors to have higher influence over municipal activities (75.4% and 61%), compared to ordinary councillors (63.2% and 51.9% respectively). Upper levels of governance are more highlighted by executive councillors (35.6% state their high influence, compared to 31.9% of ordinary councillors) (see table 8.5). Concerning channels of influence over the Council, executive councillors place more emphasis on party leaders more than ordinary councillors (77.6% compared to 69.4%). These findings are not surprising, since nowadays executive leadership includes both managerial and political aspects (Hambleton: 2002, Getimis and Gregoriadou 2004).

Furthermore, it is clear that executive councillors are conscious of their distinctive role as part of the municipal leadership. While 42.7% of them claim that they have a strong influence over municipal activities, only 13.5% of ordinary councillors claim the same. Executive councillors contact members of the executive board three times more frequently than ordinary councillors (55.8% compared to 19.2%), while their direct contacts to municipal CEOs are also far more frequent (31.5% compared to 7.3%). Moreover, contacts to all kinds of actors are clearly more frequent for executive councillors, given their roles and duties (to upper levels of government 5.6% compared to 1.4%, to local business 6.4% compared to 1.2%, to journalists 19.6% compared to 6.1% and, finally, to party leaders 30.1% compared to 22.3%) (see table 8.5). Executive councillors focus more on the mobilization of a wide range of resources (political, administrative, socio-economic) in order to achieve higher efficiency of municipal action within the dynamics of local governance. Concerning the exercise of power (cooperative-authoritarian), it was expected that executive councillors, as part of the municipal government, would be comparatively more authoritarian than ordinary councillors who would rather tend to be cooperative, being part of a de-

liberative collective body. Indeed, empirical findings have shown that executive councillors are more authoritarian than ordinary councillors (57.2% compared to 48.9%), while ordinary councillors tend to be and more cooperative (51.0% ordinary councillors compared to 42.8% of the executives) (see table 8.5).

Table 8.5: Executive and ordinary councillors: interest mediation, actor influence, contacts, and exercise of power

	Executive	Ordinary
Interest mediation		
Business	54.3	46.1
Less resourceful citizens	76.5	69.8
Actor's influence		
CEO	75.4	63.2
Heads of Departments	61.0	51.9
Upper levels of government	35.6	31.9
Myself	42.7	13.5
Frequency of contacts		
Executive board	55.8	19.2
CEO	31.5	7.3
Upper levels of government	5.6	1.4
Private business	6.4	2.7
Journalists	19.6	6.1
Party leaders	30.1	22.3
Exercise of power		
Authoritarian	57.2	49.0
Cooperative	42.9	51.0

Percentages report the total of 'high' and 'very high'.

In view of institutional settings and political arrangements, the roles of executive councillors would tend to facilitate such differentiation, since executive posts are connected to power and decision making within municipal leadership structures. The aforementioned leadership profile of executive councillors reflects patterns which are similar to the patterns of the European Mayor (Getimis and Hlepas 2006:182). According to the 'POLLEADER' survey, 55.5% of European mayors tended to be authoritarian, while 44.5% tended to be cooperative.

Categories of voting attitude are also dependent on executive or ordinary roles (see table 8.6). Among the executive councillors, the group of 'party soldiers' is 41.8%, while the same group among ordinary councillors is 26.2%. Most of the ordinary councillors emphasise their independence, acting as 'trustees' (58.9%), while 'trustee' executives account for a lower percentage (46%). It is worth mentioning that, concerning party support in elections, no difference

was found between the group of executives and the group of ordinary councillors (both had a very high percentage of party support, 85%).

Table 8.6: Voting criteria for executive and ordinary councillors

	Executive	Ordinary
'Trustee': vote according to convictions	46.0	58.9
'Party Soldier': vote according to party group	41.8	26.2
'Delegate': vote according to voters	12.2	15.0

The fact that executives are more likely to act as 'party soldiers' compared to ordinary councillors – even though both groups have the same background of party support – can be connected to political power exercised by the executives, who seem to be obliged to act alongside party loyalties and networks in order to 'get things done' in their municipality.

8.6 Party soldiers, delegates and trustees: Electoral support and role enactment

Candidates for the post of municipal councillor need, to claim and receive support from various interests and groups. We distinguish between two categories of support - party or civil society support. According to empirical findings only 16.3% of the councillors declared that they have been supported by civil society, while the rest – 83.7% – explicitly stated that they had been supported by parties.[13]

Electoral support does not necessarily prescribe decision making priorities in the Council. A question arises as to whether voting attitude of councillors is related to support at election time (party or civil society). According to the empirical findings, councillors that have been supported by parties seem to be more dependent on party loyalties, compared to councillors that have been supported by civil society. Indeed, while only 12.1%, of the latter can be classified as 'party soldiers', this percentage is more than twice as high (28.8%) within the group of councillors that have been supported by parties (see table 8.7). Furthermore, table 8.8 shows that trustees and delegates tend to adapt a political orientation towards centre and right positions (65.8% trustees, 67.6% delegates), while 'party soldiers' tend to be centre and left (68.7%) (see table 8.8).

---

[13] Poland, is the only country where a majority of councillors state that they were selected and supported by civil society (68.3%).

Table 8.7: Voting attitude and support during elections

	Supported by party	Supported by civil society
'Trustee': vote according to convictions	57.0	70.3
'Party Soldier': vote according to party group	28.8	12.1
'Delegate': vote according to voters	14.2	17.6

It is clear that 'party soldiers' are comparatively more likely to hold executive posts and adopt centre and left political views. On the other hand, 'trustees' and 'delegates' are less likely to hold executive posts, while they tend to adopt centre and right political views. Councillors voting as 'delegates' admit that their own influence over municipal activities is weaker compared to 'party soldiers' (16.4% compared to 22.2%) and focus less on party and administrative influence. Furthermore, 'delegates' tend to be rather 'cooperative' (56.2%), concerning the exercise of power (see table 8.8).

Table 8.8: Voting behaviour and actor influence, political outlook, contacts, and exercise of power

	Delegate	Party soldiers	Trustees
Actor's influence			
Myself	16.4	22.2	16.3
Party leaders	26.7	28.3	21.3
Heads of Departments	47.9	55.9	49.2
CEO	59.5	68.5	61.3
Political view			
Left position	32.4	39.4	34.2
Centre position	37.1	31.3	35.8
Right position	30.5	29.3	30.0
Frequency of contacts			
Party leaders	21.3	29.9	17.9
Journalists	6.6	94.0	5.6
Executive board	22.2	33.9	22.6
Exercise of power			
Authoritarian	43.8	56.3	57.5
Cooperative	56.2	43.7	42.5

The assessment of party soldiers concerning influence over the council, highlights the role of party leaders ('high' scores: 28.3% compared to 21.3% of trustees) and the role of the municipal administration (CEOs 68.5% compared to 59.5% of delegates; heads of departments 55.9% compared to 47.9% of delegates). Party soldiers contact more frequently party leaders (29.9% compared to trustees 17.9%), journalists (9.4% compared to trustees 5.6%) and the members of the executive board (33.9% compared to delegates 22.2% and trustees

22.6%). Finally, party soldiers, concerning exercise of power, tend to be 'authoritarian' (56.3%), while trustees follow a similar pattern (57.5%) and delegates tend to be 'cooperative' (56.2%). These results seem to reflect the fact that 'party soldiers' and 'trustees' are less willing to follow the opinion of their own voters, compared to 'delegates' (see table 8.8).

8.7   Conclusions

Concerning the first research question, namely the influence of broader contextual (local government system, city size etc.) and personal characteristics (political views, gender, etc.) on role perception, assessment and enactment of interest mediation by the European councillor, the following conclusions can be stated. Across the main groupings of local government systems in Europe, interest mediation through councillors, in most issues, does not seem to significantly differ. However, the prioritization of interests still seems to strongly differ according to the councillors' own political views. Empirical findings seem to reflect ideological predispositions and action orientations: Right wing councillors tend to support market led principles and cooperation with the business sector. On the other hand, left wing councillors tend to support re-distributive policies, for the benefit of less resourceful citizens. Female councillors score higher than their male colleagues in all categories of interests' mediation, and especially on weaker or non-privileged groups (less resourceful and workers). Furthermore they seem to focus stronger on party loyalties. It is notable that female councillors give lower scores to their own influence in municipal affairs.

Local business groups are more important in small municipalities, where closer linkages exist and local businesses are essential for local development and employment. On the other hand, councillors in big municipalities are more interested in representation of geographical parts of the locality, since particular districts and neighbourhoods in complex urban structures constitute an important reference for political representation. Furthermore, municipal administration is obviously more significant in bigger cities, given the size, the responsibilities and the resources of bigger municipalities. Finally, the party system in bigger cities seems to be much more important, where one third of councillors in big cities vote as 'party soldiers', while only one fifth of councillors in small cities adapt the same voting pattern.

Concerning the second research question, the consolidation of executive leadership affects councillors in different ways. A minority of councillors, namely the executive councillors perceive themselves and act as part of a broad executive municipal leadership. 'Executive' roles, posts and functions (formal

and informal) intensify relations to different interests and, moreover, especially to the municipal administration and the party system.

Executive councillors highlight more the influence of municipal leadership (political and administrative) and regard themselves as part of it. Moreover, executive councillors contact all kinds of actors more often than other councillors, given their distinguished roles and duties. Executives are more likely to act as 'party soldiers' compared to 'ordinary' councillors (although both groups have the same background of party support), since they are obliged to act within party networks in order to 'get things done' in their municipality. Concerning the exercise of power, the profile of executive councillors reflects patterns which are clearly similar to those of the European Mayor: more authoritarian and less cooperative.

Concerning the third research question, councillors that have been supported by parties seem to be more dependent on party loyalties concerning their own voting, compared to councillors that have been supported by civil society. Party soldiers include a much higher percentage of executive councillors, while 'delegates' admit that their own influence over municipal activities is weaker, compared to 'party soldiers'. Concerning the exercise of power, 'delegates' tend to be rather 'cooperative', while 'party soldiers' and 'trustees' tend to be 'authoritarian'.

References

Almond, G. and Powell, B. (1966) Comparative Politics: A Development Approach. Little Brown: Boston.

Bäck, H. (2004) The partified City: Elite political culture in Sweden's two biggest cities, ECPR Joint Session of workshops, Uppsala.

Bäck, H. (2005) 'The institutional setting of local political leadership and community involvement' in Haus, M., Heinelt, H. and Stewart M. (eds.) Urban Governance and Democracy: Leadership and Community Involvement. Routledge: London, 65-101.

Elgie, R. (1995) Political Leadership in Liberal Democracies. Palgrave: Houndmills/ Basingstoke, Hampshire.

Fallend, F., Ignits, G. and Swianiewicz, P. (2006) 'Divided Loyalties? Mayors between party representation and local community interests' in Bäck, H., Heinelt, H. and Magnier, A. (eds.) The European Mayor. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 245-270

Getimis P. and Grigoriadou D. (2004) 'Changes in Urban Political Leadership: Leadership types and styles in the era of Urban Governance' in Haus, M., Heinelt, H. and Stewart, M. (eds.) Urban Governance and Democracy. Routledge: London, 168-189.

Getimis, P. and Hlepas, N.-K. (2006) 'Aspects of Leadership Styles: An Interaction of Context and Personalities' in Bäck, H., Heinelt, H., Magnier, A. (eds.): The Euro-

pean Mayor. Political Leaders in the Changing Context of Local Democracy. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 177-199.

Goldsmith, M. (2002) 'Central control over local government - a Western European comparison', *Local government studies* 28 (3), 91-112.

Hambleton, R. (2002) 'The New City Management' in Hambleton, R., Savitch, H. V. and Stewart, M. (eds.) Globalism and Local Democracy. Palgrave: Hampshire, 47-168.

Haus, M. and Heinelt H. (2005) 'How to achieve Governability at the local level? Theoretical and Conceptual Considerations on a Complementarity of Urban Leadership and Community Involvement', in: Haus, M., Heinelt H. and Stewart, M. (eds.) Urban Governance and Democracy. Routledge: London, 12-39

Heinelt, H. and Hlepas, N.-K. (2006) 'Typologies of Local Government Systems' in Bäck, H., Heinelt, H. and Magnier, A. (eds.) The European Mayor, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 21-42.

Hesse, J.J. and Sharpe, L. J. (1991) 'Conclusions', in Hesse, J.J. (ed.) Local government and urban affairs in an international perspective. Nomos: Baden-Baden, 603-621.

Johansson, V. (2006) 'Gendered roads to Mayorship in different Welfare States' in Bäck, H., Heinelt, H. and Magnier, A. (eds.) The European Mayor, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 99-121.

John, P. (2001) Local Governance in Europe. Sage: London.

Katz, R. and Mair, P. (1995) 'Changing models of party organisation and party democracy: The emergence of the cartel party', *Party Politics* 1 (1), 5-28.

Leach, S. and Wilson, D. (2000) Local Political Leadership. Policy Press: Bristol, Southampton.

Mavrogordatos, G. (2001) Pressure Groups and Democracy. Patakis: Athens (in Greek).

Mouritzen, E. and Svara, J. (2002) Leadership at the apex. University of Pittsburgh Press: Pittsburgh.

Rao, N. (2000) 'The changing context of representation' in Rao, N. (ed.) Representation and community in western democracies. Macmillan Press: London, 1-9.

Sellers, J. M. and Lidström, A. (2007) 'Decentralization, local government, and the welfare state', *Governance* 20 (4), 609-632.

Stone, C. (1995) 'Political Leadership in Urban Politics' in Judge, D., Stoker, G. and Wolman, H. (eds.) Theories of Urban Politics. Sage: London, 96-116.

9 European mayors and councillors: Similarities and differences

Dan Ryšavý

9.1 Introduction

Why compare European mayors and councillors?[1] It can be argued that the Mayor and the local council are the two most important organs of local government. Mayors are the most visible citizens that represent their towns outwardly. Their political significance usually stretches far beyond their formal competencies. Directly elected mayors, in particular, have strong and unchallenged legitimacy. Councils are usually endowed with the authority to decide on municipal budgets, local development plans, municipal property and to pass by-laws. This text, however, does not examine councils as collective entities. What it compares are selected characteristics of mayors on the one hand and councillors on the other, from cities with a population over ten thousand people. Two recent international projects (POLLEADER and MAELG) are the primary sources of data for this comparison.[2]

9.2 Councillors and mayors: Two rungs on one political ladder or laymen vs. professional?

There are many similarities and differences between councillors and mayors. From the perspective of a political career the offices of local councillor and mayor are two rungs on a political ladder in a representative democracy. Not all local politicians share the ambition to move as high as possible on this ladder and not everyone manages to progress upward. Some never go beyond the rung of the local councillor; others 'are promoted over' and launch their career directly as a mayor. As the POLLEADER project showed, European mayors serve variable periods as a councillor when they enter the mayoral office. Kjaer (2006, p. 78) stated that 'in most of the northern European countries, mayors have a

---

more lengthy career on the council prior to their election as mayor compared to the majority of southern and eastern European countries... In England and Ireland, mayors with no prior experience from the council are indeed rare, whereas in Germany, Italy and Hungary such lateral entrants make up more than half of the population of mayors.'

An increasingly large portion of mayors is elected directly by citizens. Magnier (2006: 354) calls the expansion of direct mayoral election 'one of the clearest European examples of isomorphism'. Over the last two decades such a reform has been introduced, for example, in Germany, Italy, Poland, Croatia, and in most of the Austrian *Länder*. There are also some towns and cities in England and Norway where mayors have been elected directly. These changes may reduce the importance of being a councillor in the eyes of those who have the ambition to run for the mayoral office, especially when the post of an ordinary councillor is perceived as being 'powerless'.

Some of differences between mayors and councillors may be found in their influence on local affairs. The position of the mayor cannot be ignored in countries with strong mayors, nor in systems where these *primus inter pares* share their influence with collective executive bodies (Mouritzen and Svara 2002). Additionally, European mayors in the POLLEADER survey agreed that councillors had the least influence among various actors in the town hall including mayor, councillors, executive board, and senior officers (Denters 2006: 278). Do councillors see their influence similarly or does their opinion differ from that of the mayors? The MAELG project offers answers to this and other similar questions.

The notion of a powerful mayor on the one hand and a group of powerless councillors on the other hand is an oversimplification. There are other municipal bodies and organs (committees etc.); clerks, political parties and other more or less formalised interest groups that also have a degree of influence. In this chapter we shall pay attention to executive boards in the countries where they are comprised, at least partially, of municipal councillors.[3] With increasing professionalisation of local government leadership (Guérin and Kerrouche 2008) new questions arise: How far can professionalisation go? Does it concern only mayors and executives, or also ordinary councillors? Are mayors typical local political professionals and ordinary councillors typical laymen? (see also Verhelst, Reynaert and Steyvers, this volume) One of the clearest indicators of professionalisation is the time spent performing the office, which signals whether a

---

3   A simple indicator has been used to select countries where the opinions and characteristics of ordinary councillors and executives will be compared. In ten out of sixteen countries more than one fifth of respondents stated that at the present time they were a member of an executive board.

given position can be performed by a lay person or whether it is really reserved for political professionals.

After outlining the methodology this chapter, drawing on the above discussion, compares European mayors and local councillors from four perspectives: influence over local authority activities, time spent performing mayoral/councillors' activities, experience and length of careers, and future political ambitions.

9.3   *Notes on comparability*

The possibility to compare characteristics, attitudes and opinions of mayors and councillors in municipalities of various European countries presented itself in the preparatory phase of the MAELG project as questions from the POLLEADER survey were included in the questionnaire. In some cases the questions were identical or very similar; in other cases the scales changed and questions were rephrased. The comparison cannot be automatic but is possible.

When making comparisons several factors must be taken into account. Approximately five years elapsed between the POLLEADER and MAELG surveys. In many cases this means that councillors were usually mailed the questionnaire in an election term following the one in which mayors responded to the survey. At the time of the MAELG survey these mayors may no longer have been in office. A quarter of them did not plan to stand for re-election (Kjaer 2006: 90); others did not necessarily defend their posts in the electoral competition, and others may have simply not been re-elected. Nevertheless in some countries the same people could have been respondents in both the surveys. For example in the Czech Republic indirectly elected mayors remain councillors, and the churn of councillors means that they are unlikely to all be replaced.

Differences in the target population and other circumstances led to a significantly lower questionnaire return rate in a number of countries participating in the MAELG project compared to the POLLEADER project. Furthermore, there is a question how representative the MAELG sample is because it is not always possible to control to what degree the structure of the set of received answers corresponds to the basic set of all councillors in cities with a population over ten thousand people. These matters must be taken into account when interpreting comparative findings.

9.4   *First comparison – the influence over local authority activities*

From the time of the famous and protracted conflict between the adherents of the elitist and pluralist approach to the study of local leaders starting with works

by Hunter (1953) and Dahl (1961), much attention has been devoted to the possibilities and limits of the various methods of mapping the division of power and influence in a community. Three dominant research traditions are usually identified (Scott 2004): the reputational approach (Hunter), the decision making approach (Dahl), and the structural or the positional approach (Mills 1956). Using all of the methods at the same time or combinations of them is recommended for methodological reasons (Walton 1966; Drewe 1967). However, in survey based research, the reputational method is the most easily applied for its simplicity. For example, chief executive officers' ratings of different actors influence on budget and economic development were measured in *The U.Di.T.E. Leadership Study* (Mouritzen and Svara 2002). Also in the seminal research project on local government in post-communist countries, *Local Democracy and Innovation*, mayors, chief administrators, and councillors in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia were interviewed to indicate how much influence different officials, bodies and groups had on decision-making in their municipality (Baldersheim et al. 2006: 201ff.).[4]

The simple version of the reputational method revolves around an individual respondent judging the level of influence of a certain individual, group of people, bodies, organizations etc. Such subjective influence the assessment of various groups in local authority activities were included both in the POLLEADER and MAELG surveys. From the battery of MAELG questions two variables were selected (the mayor and Myself). In countries with a significant proportion of members of executive boards we distinguish answers of ordinary and executive councillors. Figure 9.1 brings a comparison and orders the answers from individual countries according to growing differences between the average assessment of the mayors' influence on the one hand and self-assessment by individual councillors on the other (including members of executive board).

In all countries significant differences were identified in the assessment of mayors' influence on the one hand and councillors' influence on the other. While the average influence of a mayor was between the two highest values on the scale and the modal category was 'very high influence', the average influence attributed to individual ordinary councillors did not usually exceed the middle value on a five-point scale ('some influence'). Councillors from the Netherlands were an exception as the assessment of mayors' and councillors' influence there differs much less. A clearly greater influence was, however, also claimed by members of executive boards, especially in Belgium and the United Kingdom. The direct election of a mayor is a stronger determinant of an order of

---

4 See also outputs from Local Representatives Survey (2001) which was a part of the Indicators of Local Democratic Governance Project (ILDGP), (e.g. Soós et al. 2002).

countries in figure 9.1 than the presence of executives among councillors. Countries with a direct mayoral vote (Israel, Italy, Greece, Croatia and a larger part of the Austrian *Länder*) appear in the right side of Figure 9.1 where the difference in the average self-assessment of mayors' influence and that of individual councillors is the greatest.

Figure 9.1: Influence of mayors, executives and ordinary councillors over local authority activities
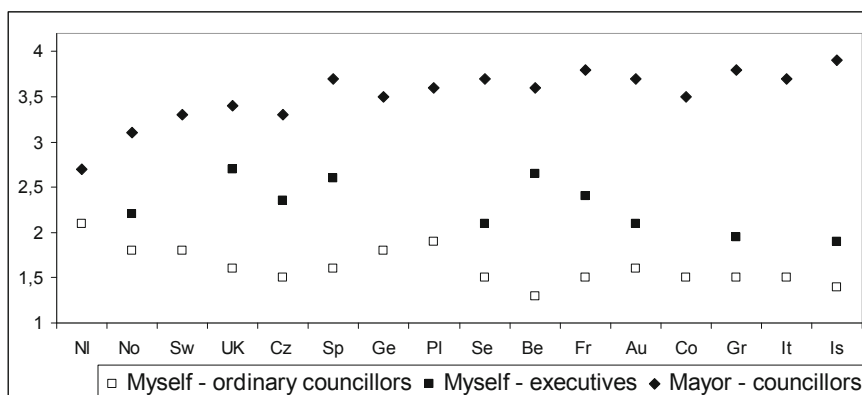
On the left side we can, on the contrary, find countries where direct vote has not been introduced (the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Spain) or concerns only a small portion of municipalities with a population over ten thousand (UK, Norway). Switzerland, in the left part of Figure 9.1 where mayors are mostly elected directly is an exception. The perceived influence of mayors can be here limited due to the tradition and the usage of the institution of referenda. The middle left position of Germany and Poland with directly elected mayors can be attributed to the newness of this reform arrangement in these countries.[5]

Also, the Mouritzen and Svara (2002) typology is relevant here. Countries with strong mayors are placed mostly in the right side of Figure 9.1 (e.g. Italy, Greece, Croatia, most of the Austrian *Länder*, France). Countries with collective or committee-leader form of local governments are situated to the left (e.g. the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, the Czech Republic). There are two excep-

---

5   Councillors would not necessarily have yet felt the full consequences of losing the opportunity to directly influence the mayoral election.

tions – Belgium and Sweden – with collective and committee-leader forms respectively in which difference between mayors' and councillors' influence is unexpectedly high. It can be argued that institutionally, Belgian mayors are among the weakest in Europe, but their political significance stretches far beyond formal competencies (Waynberg et al. 2011). Low declared influence of ordinary councillors in Sweden can be related to the large size of Swedish councils, and the existence of the full-time chairman of the executive committee who partly plays role of mayor (Mouritzen and Svara 2002: 60f.)

9.5   Second comparison – time spent performing selected activities of mayors and councillors

In their study, Guérin and Kerrouche (2008) used three indicators of professionalisation of local elected representatives in Europe. The first was the time spent in the exercise of office which 'shows how a leading role in local government replaces any normal professional activity' (Guérin and Kerrouche 2008: 191). Examples of countries which these authors list to attest to this process can be significantly expanded through a comparison of data from the MAELG and POLLEADER surveys.

Table 9.1: Comparison of selected entries of a survey among councillors (MAELG) and mayors (POLLEADER)

How much time do you spend in the following activities?	
MAELG (hours/month)	POLLEADER (hours/week)
Council and committee meetings	Meetings with council and executive board
Meetings with the party's council group	Political party meetings
Other party meetings and activities	
Public debates, meetings with citizens etc.	Meetings with citizens, groups, etc.
	Public debates and conferences outside the Town-Hall
Meetings with administrative staff	Meetings with administrative staff
Field visits to municipal institutions	Field visits (official and unofficial) in the city
Desk work preparing your activity in the Council	Individual preparation for the duties of Mayor

Note: In the POLLEADER survey the table does not include ceremonial activities and meetings with authorities from other cities and from the regional or national government. Together these categories represented from 13% to 24% of the average time mayors from some of the countries spent on all the selected activities.

In both projects there was a question regarding the time spent by councillors and mayors undertaking specific activities. The choice of activities was not identical but largely comparable, as table 9.1 shows.

Differences in formulation are not the only problematic aspect of the comparison. Also difficult is to judge the validity of the time estimates. The variability of the times given for individual activities usually ranged from zero or one hour to incredibly high values.[6] Therefore entry data was capped in the following way before the averages were calculated: In the case of mayors respondents were excluded from the calculations who stated more than 30 hours per week for a single item (i.e., approximately ¾ of the usual work time). In the case of councillors respondents were excluded who stated more than 80 hours per month for a single type of activity (i.e., approximately ½ of the working time). Averages in individual comparable items (Table 9.1) were added, and in order to achieve comparability of scales the average values for mayors were multiplied by a constant of 4.3, i.e., the average number of weeks per month. These summation indexes are shown in figure 9.2 which again compares (ordinary) councillors and mayors and, where possible, also executives.

Figure 9.2: Average time which mayors, executives and ordinary councillors spend on selected municipal activities (hours per month)
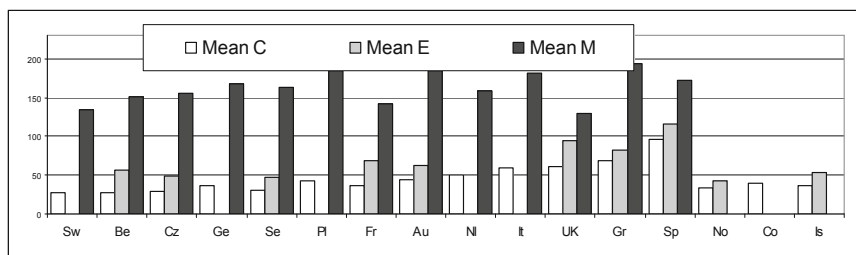
Source: MAELG, POLLEADER; Note: C – Councillors, E – Executives, M – Mayors (Sw – Switzerland, Se – Sweden)

Even when some items were excluded and extreme values were limited it is clear that the performance of the mayoral office is usually a full-time job. In the case of Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Spain and some other countries 'working full-time in local government has even become a legal requirement' (Guérin and Kerrouche 2008: 188). All Czech mayors in POLLEADER survey stated that they are exclusively mayors. The same was true for 86% of Swedish

---

6   The extreme variability was typical of the additional item 'other important activity' and therefore it was excluded from the summation indexes.

and 80% of Spanish mayors respectively.[7] Moreover, strong mayors (according to Mouritzen-Svara typology) usually declared in average more than 165 hours per month[8] and mayors from countries with collective or committee-leader form local governments declared on average less than 160 hours per month.

Differences in councillors' average declared workload in individual countries are greater than in case of mayors, and note especially the extreme case of Spain, where many councillors are full time and paid. Compared to ordinary councillors, executives spend significantly more time in their office although on average considerably less than mayors. The office of a member of an executive board can but does not have to involve a full-time job. And finally, even executive boards are usually internally differentiated in terms of time spent in office (e.g., deputy mayors versus other members of local executive). Aars et al. (2012) calculated an index measuring the councillors' level of activity that comprised time spent (on council meetings and preparations for such meetings) and position of councillor (mayor and/or member of executive board). The most professionalized councillors were found in Spain and in the UK. The smallest differences between mayors and executives average time spent on local government activities was in these two countries (see figure 9.2).

9.6   *Third comparison – experience and length of career in local politics*

According to Guérin and Kerrouche (2008), the length of career in local politics is another indicator of professionalisation. The office of Mayor requires the dedication of so much time that it usually demands the termination of the office holder's previous full time job. As a result it is unlikely that any mayor (as a typical professionalized local politician) will want to leave office at the first opportunity. On the other hand, councillors spend significantly less time performing their political office. Thus they do not have to deal with the dilemma 'either politics (as a profession) or a job (but without local politics)'.

Table 9.2 shows great differences in the average length of councillors' career in individual countries. The average German councillor stays in a council more than two times longer than his/her Croatian colleague. However, what needs to be taken into account is that concrete values are influenced by the fact of whether the survey was carried out shortly after elections (such as in Croatia) or in the middle or toward the end of an election term, which, moreover, is longer in some countries than in others (most often four years but five to six years in Germany, for example). In most of the countries median values of

---

7   However, 45% of Belgian and 49% of POLLEADER respondents from UK described their present profession as 'exclusively a mayor'.

8   Only French mayors with average of 142 hours per month were an exception.

council career length are five, six or eight years. It could be summarize that the usual political career of a local councillor in Europe lasts two or more election periods.[9]

Table 9.2: For how many years have you been a councillor in total?

Country	N	Mean	Std. D.	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Germany	879	11.7	9.1	9	.0	48
Sweden	1316	10.2	8.8	8	.0	51
Austria	393	10.0	7.8	8	.0	38
United Kingdom	676	9.9	8.6	8	1.0	51
Belgium	625	9.8	8.8	8	.0	40
Czech Republic	614	7.8	6.2	6	1.0	55
Norway	1109	7.6	7.6	5	.0	60
Greece	208	7.4	6.1	6	2.0	26
Italy	1165	6.6	6.0	4	.0	42
France	719	6.6	7.7	1	.0	44
Switzerland	1611	6.6	5.9	5	.0	47
Israel	147	6.6	6.2	5	.3	35
Spain	515	6.6	5.3	6	.0	28
The Netherlands	1107	6.2	6.2	5	1.0	45
Poland	319	5.7	5.1	5	.0	40
Croatia	217	5.1	3.2	4	.5	18

Source: MAELG

The average values hide different lengths of careers in individual countries. The most homogenous composition of councils in terms of the length of office was in Croatia (the coefficient of variation—the ratio of the standard deviation to the mean—given in % equalled 63%). Extreme variation coefficients were recorded among councillors in France (117%) and Norway (100%). The average length of office in France (6.6 years) also significantly contrasts with the median (1 year). Norwegian councillors typically showed greater range of the length of office (0 to 60 years). In these cases the timing of the survey among councillors also played some role if it followed shortly after elections. However, changes in the electoral system or national specificities may have had a more significant effect. The French case can be explained as an effect of the introduction of quotas for male/female candidates, which either moved out a number of existing councillors or did not allow male newcomers to enter (see e.g. Hoffmann-Martinot

---

9   Beginning usually in their 40s councillors during their two or three election periods create typically biased middle-aged councils (see e.g. Reynaert 2012). For older international comparison of length of tenure in politics/administration based on the data from the Democracy and Local Governance research program see e.g. Cusack (2003: 18).

2003). For this reason the difference between the average length of office of French male and female councillors was almost three years (7.9 years for men and 5.0 years for women). Even more considerable was the difference in medians (6 years for men and 1 year for women). In the case of Norway the high heterogeneity of councillors' seniority was probably a side effect of a relatively low willingness to stand for re-election (see Aars and Offerdal 1998).

Finally, membership of the executive can be another reason for of the different lengths of councillors' terms of office as it usually takes councillors some time to become a member of the executive.

Figure 9.3: Average numbers of years spent in bodies of local government by mayors and councillors in selected countries
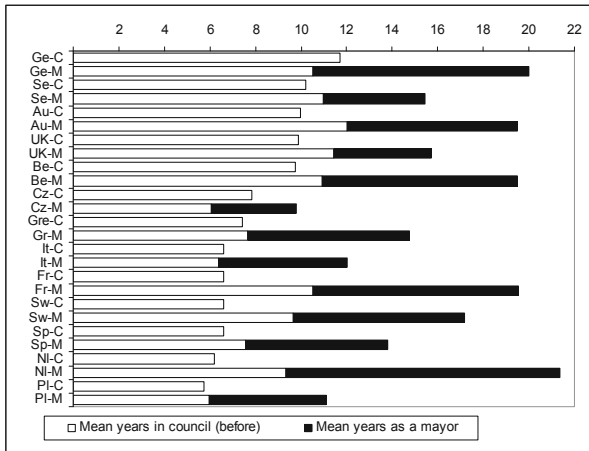
Source: MAELG, POLLEADER. Note: Ge-C – German Councillors, Ge-M – German Mayors

In half of the ten countries where it was possible to distinguish responses of ordinary councillors and executives (see figures 9.1 and 9.2) we can find statistically significant differences in the length of time served as councillor between these two groups. The greatest difference was recorded among Belgian councillors (8.5 years) and executives (14.5 years). Average length of career of councillors on one hand and executives on the other hand are also highly different in Austria (8.5 vs. 13.0 years) and Spain (5.4 vs. 8.3 years). Only in Greece did ordinary councillors show on average a slightly longer career as a councillor than

members of executive boards. The difference, however, was not statistically significant.[10]

For the comparison of mayors and councillors the portion of mayors was selected who had at least minimal experience in the position of a councillor upon their entry into office. It means that mayors were excluded who 'by-passed the position of councillor and were elected directly to the mayoralty' (Kjaer 2006: 78). For example, in the case of Italy and Germany more than half of the mayors were excluded. Figure 9.3 shows the average lengths of career in local politics which in the case of mayors consists of the average time spent in the council before coming to the mayoral office and the average length of seniority in the mayoral office. Country ranking is again based on the average number of years which councillors participating in the MAELG project spent in local politics.

In the Czech Republic the difference between the length of time spent in office between mayors and councillors is small even when the pre-mayoral experience in the council and the length of the mayoral office are taken into account.[11] The greatest difference was recorded between Dutch mayors and councillors where the average career of a mayor, including his pre-mayoral career in the council, is 3.5 times of the average length of councillors' experience.[12] These differences are primarily due to the length in the mayoral office. The figure 9.3 also shows there is not a clear link between the two compared values. As the average number of years in the council falls, the length of the mayoral office in local politics does not grow or fall. In any case, it wouldn't be a long career if there weren't the willingness to stand for re-election.

9.7   Fourth comparison – future ambitions

Willingness to stand for re-election is one of the preconditions of the theory of electoral accountability. According to this theory, 'accountability is assured because men (*sic*) want to gain and to continue in office and because these men (*sic*) recognize that the voting public determines who will hold office' (Prewitt 1970: 6). Prewitt mentioned an honourable tradition starting with Schumpeter's definition of democracy as method of producing (or evicting) of a government through a competitive struggle for the people's vote (Schumpeter 1947). Beside

---

10   Two-sided t-tests of the difference in the average length of office among councillors and executives were computed.

11   One reason is that the Communists (and also Christian Democrats) are characteristic of the highest average level of seniority but it is hard to find any communist mayor in towns with more than ten thousands inhabitants (see also Ryšavý and Šaradín 2010; Balík 2008).

12   The tradition of appointment of mayors by central government (see e.g. Hendriks and Schaap 2011) seems to cause this lengthy career.

the works of Schumpeter, Lipset, Downs and Dahl also mention the complementary perspective of Schlesinger's ambition theory of politics: 'the desire for election and, more important, for re-election becomes the electorate's restraint upon its public officials' (Schlesinger 1966: 2). However, Prewitt's own research in eighty-two cities of the San Francisco Bay Area revealed some weaknesses of the theory of electoral accountability. Election defeats of incumbents were relatively infrequent and the rather high frequency of voluntary retirement from elected office was observed.[13] It is not necessarily a concern for voters that motivates local politicians to stand for re-election but also their effort to continue their political career.

Moreover, for a small number of local politicians the position in the local government is the first step in a career leading up to the higher echelons of politics. However, many others don't have the ambition to go beyond the limits of their municipality. All these options are covered in the questionnaire with a question stemming from three types of ambitions (discrete, static and progressive), as differentiated by Schlesinger (1966: 10). Politicians with discrete ambitions choose to withdraw from public office. Those with static ambitions seek to make a long-run career out of a particular office. This means that they are prepared to stand for re-election. The politician with progressive ambitions 'aspires to attain an office more important than the one he now seeks or is holding' (Schlesinger 1966: 10). Also Prewitt asked councillors on their career plans and distinguished three groups: those intending to retire from office, those intending to seek another term and those intending to seek higher office (1970b: 176). Councillors in the MAELG project responded to this question as did mayors in the POLLEADER project a few years earlier (see Kjaer 2006: 89).

Compared to the question posed in the POLLEADER project, councillors could also choose between one of two possibilities related to a progressive career: 'I would like to continue my political career in a higher political office at the local level' or 'I would like to continue my political career in a higher political office at the regional or national level'. The form of progression to a higher position at the local level varies from country to country. It does not make sense to offer a similar alternative to mayors, as they already occupy the highest office in the municipality. However, the other options are not fully comparable, either. This is also why the results of the research among councillors differ from that of

---

13   Also current research on Czech councillors showed that especially in smaller municipalities the percentage of councillors not standing for re-election is higher than the proportion of councillors who stood for re-election but were defeated (Ryšavý and Bernard 2012). Offerdal et al. (1996) studied comparatively councillors' and mayors' willingness to stand for re-election in East-Central Europe countries within the framework of Local Democracy and Innovation project.

mayors, as described by Kjaer (2006). To defend the position of a mayor is not the same as defending the office of a councillor unless elections to local councils are not strictly personalized. The easiest comparison is the option of leaving politics, although mayors' lack of willingness to stand for re-election does not necessarily mean the end of their career as councillors.

Table 9.3 provides a comparison of the responses of councillors from individual countries to the question 'What are you planning to do at the end of the present mandate?' Each row distinguishes the options of leaving the council (discrete ambition), to continue in the same position (static ambition) and two types of progressive ambition – seeking higher office at local level (local progressive) and seeking office at regional or national level (non-local progressive). Countries are sorted according to the proportion of progressive ambition (sum of local and non-local) declared by councillors.

Table 9.3: Political ambitions of councillors (per cent)

Country	non-local progressive%	local progressive%	Static%	Discrete%	N
Italy	14	29	30	27	1,101
Belgium	6	27	42	25	553
Greece	7	21	54	19	232
Netherlands	5	20	43	32	1,185
France	6	18	45	31	636
Switzerland	13	10	53	24	1,553
Spain	14	8	55	23	473
Austria	6	15	62	18	399
Norway	10	8	42	40	1087
Czech Republic	8	9	56	28	599
Sweden	9	8	46	37	1,112
Poland	8	6	61	25	320
United Kingdom	5	7	68	20	640
Israel	2	8	53	37	131
Croatia	1	10	65	24	213
Germany	3	6	67	24	877

Source: MAELG, see also Aars et al. (2012: 76, table 5). Non local progressive: seeking higher office at higher government level; local progressive: seeking higher office at the local level; static: continuing as councillor; discrete: leaving council

In most cases more than half of all councillors stated that after the end of the existing term they would like to continue in the office of councillor. Countries with the lowest percentage of static ambition (Italy, Belgium) show the greatest percentage of those who would like to move one step up in local politics (more than ¼) and the greatest percentage of progressive ambitions as a whole (more

than 1/3). With few exceptions (such as Spain) the ratio of local and regional or national progressive ambitions is either equal or the effort to move up higher in one's own city predominates. The traditionally high percentage of Norwegian councillors who do not want to stand for re-election (Aars and Offerdal 1998) is similar to the pattern shown by councillors from Israel and Sweden (Aars et al. 2012).

Table 9.4: Comparison of political ambitions of mayors and councillors according to MAELG and POLLEADER surveys (per cent)

Country		Progressive	Static	Discrete
Italy	councillors	43	30	27
	mayors	35	42	23
Belgium	councillors	33	42	25
	mayors	12	69	19
Greece	councillors	28	54	19
	mayors	11	71	18
France	councillors	25	45	31
	mayors	39	47	14
Netherlands	councillors	24	43	32
	mayors	3	65	32
Switzerland	councillors	23	53	24
	mayors	13	49	38
Spain	councillors	22	55	23
	mayors	21	56	23
Austria	councillors	21	62	18
	mayors	3	82	15
Czech Republic	councillors	17	56	28
	mayors	36	36	28
Sweden	councillors	17	46	37
	mayors	12	67	21
United Kingdom	councillors	12	68	20
	mayors	9	68	23
Germany	councillors	9	67	24
	mayors	3	67	30

Source: MAELG, POLLEADER according to Kjaer (2006: 90, Table 7). Progressive: seeking higher office; static: continuing as councillor; discrete: leaving council

Prewitt (1970b) proposed two hypotheses related to progressive ambitions: a life-circumstances hypothesis (younger councillors are more ambitious) and an organizational hypothesis ('the more links a council has with other levels of government the more opportunities there will be for political ascent and the greater the number of politically ambitious councilmen', Prewitt 1970b: 186). In case of MAELG survey, councillors from the UK, Germany and Israel are amongst the oldest councillors on average and only a small proportion of them declared progressive ambitions. However, in other countries such as France and

the Netherlands it is not possible to detect a similar relationship. The organizational hypothesis seems to be valid in the case of Italy and Belgium because of existence of two governmental tiers between municipal councils and national government.

Table 9.4 compares of councillors' and mayors' future plans. In this table local and non-local ambitions were collated into one category. Only in the Czech Republic and France are mayors more 'progressively ambitious' than councillors.[14] Static ambitions are either equally distributed between mayors and councillors (the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, France) or mayors intend to stand for re-election more often than councillors. The exact opposite is true in the Czech Republic, where the proportion of mayors who declared static ambitions was the lowest. The aim to leave politics is either equally distributed between mayors and councillors (Greece, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Spain) or councillors more often declare that they don't want to continue to work in the local council (especially so in the case of France with the lowest share of mayors who do not intend to stay in politics). In this respect Switzerland and Germany are exceptions.

9.8   Differences inside and outside – are there typical career patterns for councillors?

In this chapter selected characteristics and opinions of councillors and mayors in more than a dozen European countries were compared. With the exception of a few findings (mayors have been in local politics for a longer period of time; they spent much more time performing their office than councillors; and they are attributed significantly greater influence in local authority activities) there is no single rule that applies to all countries. Differences between countries cannot be simply explained with one cause. Moreover, the comparison of countries should not divert our attention away from differences within countries – which for example can be easily hidden as a result of using averages.

A councillor's path can be the beginning and the end of an active part in local politics. For some it is a step before the career as a local government leader. A smaller portion of councillors says that in the future they do not want to limit themselves by the boundaries of their municipality. Possible councillor career systems can be studied to a limited degree analogously to Kjaer's study of mayoral careers (2006). Based on two dimensions constructed with four vari-

---

14   Kjaer (2006) explored different characteristics at the municipal and individual levels to answer the question why mayors in some countries seem to be more politically ambitious. However, the county variable retained the strongest explanatory power after controlling for size of municipality, political partisanship and socio-demographical variables.

ables he distinguished four clusters of countries and identifies their mayoral career systems as 'national careerism', 'local careerism', 'strong careerism' and 'weak careerism'. [15]

Figure 9.4: Sixteen European countries according to average seniority and proportion of progressive ambitions of local councillors (standardized)
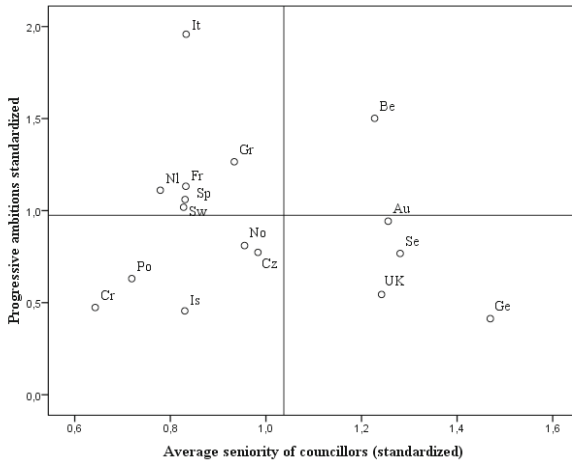
Note: Standardised average seniority of councillors is calculated as country average length of career in local politics in years divided by cross-country mean. Standardised progressive ambitions means country proportion of progressively ambitious councillors divided by cross-country mean of this variable.

Figure 9.4 shows individual countries in a two-dimensional space according to average seniority of their councillors (horizontal axis, see also table 9.2) and those councillors that declared progressive ambitions (vertical axis, see also table 9.3). Both of these country variables are standardized (divided by the cross-country average). This means that the concrete location of each country is not absolute. Adding or taking a country away could change the whole picture, especially in the case of countries close to the total average (value 1 after standardization).

---

15   'The first dimension is 'local career', which is an index created by summing pre-mayoral council experience and seniority in mayoral office. The second dimension is 'national career,' which is an index created by summing pre-mayoral experience as MP and the progressive ambitions of the mayors.' (Kjaer 2006: 94).

The group of countries in the upper left quarter can be approximately characterized by the expression 'moving quickly up'. This description is the most fitting for councillors in Italian towns. More than half of them have not been in the council for more than four years and yet 40% of them would like to move up to a higher office either in their town or at higher levels of the government. Councillors from Belgium are alone in the upper right quarter with Austrian councillors close to its bottom limit. Belgian councillors move 'slowly but surely' along the political ladder: a relatively large portion stated progressive ambitions but they need a longer period of time to carry them through. It is already clear from figure 9.3 that upon coming to the mayoral office Belgian mayors with experience from municipal council have spent approximately twice as much time in the council than their Italian counterparts.

Councillors from four countries in the bottom right quarter might be forgiven for asking themselves 'such a long path, why climb higher?' Kjaer (2006) identifies the mayoral career systems in all these countries as 'local careerism'. Among the five countries in the bottom left quarter are the three post-communist countries (Croatia, Poland, Czech Republic) and two countries outside the EU (Norway, Israel). The relatively low average scores in both the dimensions suggest the impression of uncertainty, and indecisiveness. It is as if councillors answered the question about their future with 'let's see'. This laconic statement can be further specified. In the case of Norway and Israel the wording might be 'let's see whether it might not be better to leave', in the case of Poland, Croatia and partially the Czech Republic the statement could be modified as 'let's see, ask next time/in four years' time. We're fine with what we have now.'

Closest to the middle defined by seniority on the one hand and a degree of progressive ambitions on the other hand are councillors from two countries – Norway and the Czech Republic. It is these dimensions, however, that also internally differentiate councillors in these two countries. It is true in both the countries that members of executive boards have significantly more often higher ambitions both at the local and regional or national levels. Moreover, Norwegian executives have a significantly longer career behind them.[16] In other words, members of executive boards in both these countries would find themselves in other quarters. This finding confirms what a heterogeneous group councillors in individual countries actually are.

Although we can find many differences in national subsets, it would be unwise to turn councillors' career systems into a straight jacket based on just a few variables. The councillor's mandate is a crossroad and often a beginning. It

---

16   In the case of the Czech Republic executives are significantly more often members of political parties, which opens an easier path toward higher echelons of politics.

is a place where it is difficult to estimate which direction the trajectory of a local politician will take.

9.9   Conclusions

Two analyses provided the most important inspiration for this chapter: 1) an article on the trend toward professionalisation in local elected representatives published by Guérin and Kerrouche (2008) and Kjaer's study on mayors' political careers (2006). Unsurprisingly, mayors declare themselves much more influential than individual councillors do. There are also highly significant differences between mayors and councillors in the time spent performing activities related to their positions in the local government as if the positions of an ordinary councillor and the mayor constituted two extremes on the layman-professional scale. However, there are many examples of middle positions especially in those countries where executive boards play an important role in local government. To deeply understand and gain a greater insight into the specific distribution of local representatives on the layman-professional scale, the national tradition and the impact of different reforms of local democracy and governance (such as the direct election of mayors) need to be studied.

In terms of political careers, the results of comparing mayors and councillors are more ambiguous. Mayors usually stay longer in different organs of local government than ordinary councillors. However, in some countries a considerable share of mayors enters to mayoral office without any previous experience as a local councillor. Also, there are many differences in future ambitions between councillors from different countries as well as between mayors and councillors in individual countries. Political parties, their role in local politics and party careers of local politicians probably play a very important role in councillors' decisions to terminate, to continue on, or to try to move up the political ladder. In this chapter, however, these 'party variables' were not included in the analysis (but see e.g. Aars et al. 2012).

The comparison of selected characteristics of local representatives presented here analytically separates mayors and councillors as two distinctive groups. However, mayors, like councillors, represent a concrete town, concrete citizens. The question not only for research but for each of them personally is how they perceive and play their role, what goals they consider important and what values orient their behaviour.

References

Aars, J. and Offerdal, A. (1998) 'Local Political Recruitment in Crisis? A Comparison of Finland and Norway', *Scandinavian Political Studies* 21 (3), 207-230.

Aars, J., Offerdal, A. and Rysavy, D. (2012) 'The Careers of European Local Councillors: A Cross-National Comparison', *Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government* 10 (1), 63-84.

Bäck, H., Heinelt, H. and Magnier, A. (eds.) 2006. The European mayor: Political leaders in the changing context of local democracy. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden.

Baldersheim, H., Bodnárová, B., Horváth, T. M. and Vajdová, Z. (2006) 'Functions of the Executives: Power, Leadership, and Management' in Baldersheim, H., Illner, M., Offerdal, A., Rose, L. and Swianiewicz, P. (eds.), Local Democracy and the Processes of Transformation in East-Central Europe. WestviewPress: Boulder, 197-224.

Balík, S. (2008) Česká komunální politika v obcích s rozšířenou působností. Koalice, voličské vzorce a politické strany na místní úrovni v letech 1994-2006. [Czech Local Politics in the Accredited Communes. Coalitions, Electoral Constellations and Political Parties Parties at Local Level in the Years 1994-2006]. Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury: Brno.

Cusack, T. R. (2003) A National Challenge at the Local Level: Citizens, Elites and Institutions in Reunited Germany. Ashgate: Aldershot.

Dahl, R. A. (1961) Who Governs? Yale University Press: New Haven.

Denters, B. (2006) 'Duo or Duel? The Relations between Mayors and Councils in Democratic Local Government' in Bäck, H., Heinelt, H. Magnier, A. (eds.) The European mayor: Political leaders in the changing context of local democracy. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 271-285.

Drewe, P. (1967) 'Techniken zur Identifizierung lokaler Eliten', *Köllner Zeirschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 19 (4), 721-735.

Guérin, É. & Kerrouche, É. (2008) 'From Amateurs to Professionals: The Changing Face of Local Elected Representatives in Europe', *Local Government Studies* 34 (2), 179-201.

Hendriks, F. and Schaap, L. (2011) 'The Netherlands: Subnational Democracy and the Reinvention of Tradition' in Loughlin, J., Hendriks, F., Lidström, A. (eds.) The Oxford Handbook of Local and Regional Democracy in Europe. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 96-122.

Hoffmann-Martinot, V. (2003) 'The French Republic, One Yet Divisible?' in Kersting, N. and Vetter, A. (eds.), Reforming Local Government in Europe. Leske + Budrich: Opladen, 157–182.

Hunter, F. (1953) Community Power Structure. University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill.

Kjaer, U. (2006) 'The Mayor's Political Career', in Bäck, H., Heinelt, H. and Magnier, A. (eds.) The European Mayor: Political Leaders in the Changing Context of Local Democracy. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 75-98.

Magnier, A. (2006) 'Strong Mayors? On Direct Election and Political Entrepreneurship' in Bäck, H., Heinelt, H. and Magnier, A. (eds.) The European Mayor: Political Leaders in the Changing Context of Local Democracy. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 353-376.

Mills, C. W. (1956) The Power Elite. Oxford University Press: New York.

Mouritzen, P. E. and Svara, J. H. (2002) Leadership at the Apex. University of Pittsburgh Press: Pittsburgh.

Offerdal, A., Hanšpach, D., Kowalczyk, A. and Patočka, J. (1996) 'The New Local Elites' in Baldersheim, H., Illner, M., Offerdal, A., Rose L. and Swianiewicz, P. (eds.) Local Democracy and the Processes of Transformation in East-Central Europe WestviewPress: Boulder, 79-121.

Prewitt, K. (1970a) 'Political Ambitions, Volunteerism, and Electoral Accountability', *American Political Science Review* 64 (1), 5-17.

Prewitt, K. (1970b) The Recruitment of Political Leaders: A Study of Citizen-Politicians. The Bobbs-Merril Company, Inc.: Indianapolis, New York.

Reynaert, H. (2012) 'The Social Base of Political Recruitment. A Comparative Study of Local Councillors in Europe', *Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government*, 10 (1), 19-36.

Ryšavý, D. and Bernard, J. (2012) 'Size and Local Democracy: the Case of Czech Municipal Representatives', *Local Government Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/03003930.2012.675329.

Ryšavý, D. and Šaradín, P. (2010) 'Political Party Members, Non-members and Independents in the Czech Municipal Assemblies', *Czech Sociological Review* 46 (5), 719-743 (in Czech).

Schlesinger, J. A. (1966) Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States. Rand McNally: Chicago.

Schumpeter, J. A. (1947) Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy. Harper & Row: New York.

Scott, J. (2004) 'Studying Power' in Nash, K. and Scott, A. (eds.) The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology, Blackwell Publishing: Malden, 82-91.

Soós, G., Tóka, G. and Wright, G. (eds.) (2002) The State of Local Democracy in Central Europe. Budapest: Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative, Open Society Institute. Online accessed 2012-June-7: http://lgi.osi.hu/publications_datasheet.php?id=100 .

Steyvers, K. and Verhelst, T. (2012) 'Between Layman and Professional? Political Recruitment and Career Development of Local Councillors in a Comparative Perspective', *Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government* 10 (1), 1-17.

Walton, J. (1966) 'Substance and Artifact: The Current Status of Research on Community Power Structure', *American Journal of Sociology* 71 (4), 430-438.

Waynberg, E., de Rynck, F., Steyvers K. and Pilet, J.-B. (2011) 'Belgium: A Tale of Regional Divergence?' in Loughlin, J., Hendriks, F. and Lidström, A. (eds.) The Oxford Handbook of Local and Regional Democracy in Europe. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 71-95.

10 The gender gap among local representatives: A potential for local development?

Dubravka Jurlina Alibegović, Sunčana Slijepčević and Josip Šipić

10.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the gender gap in the attitudes of local elected elites in the countries covered by the survey on municipal councillors within the international project *Municipal Assemblies in European Local Governments (MAELG)*. Some studies indicate that, although broadly the same issues are significant for both women and men, women's perspectives on issues still differ. As women need to be at least a large minority in municipal councils to have an impact on different policies, we use and compare the available statistics on women's participation in local councils in the countries included in the MAELG project to see whether the identified differences (if any) could result in different policy choices. This would give additional support to the idea that more equitable gender representation at the local level results in more diverse policy-making.

The main aim of this chapter is to undertake a cross country analysis and investigate the differences between male and female councillors regarding their views on priorities for local development. To measure local development in the countries analysed we developed a composite index of local development for the countries in the study. In this way, we aim to identify whether there is a correlation between women's participation rates in local councils, local councillors' views on local development, and the level of local development in the countries included in the study.

In recent decades, the issue of local development has become increasingly important. The purpose of local development is 'to build up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life' for its citizens (World Bank 2011). According to the World Bank, successful local economic development means that local government continually improves the investment climate and the business environment in order to enhance its competitiveness, create jobs and increase the incomes of its citizens. This incorporates different goals, such as (World Bank 2011):

▪ Ensuring that the local investment climate is attractive for local businesses;

- Supporting small and medium sized enterprises;
- Encouraging the creation of new enterprises;
- Attracting external investment;
- Investing in physical (hard) infrastructure;
- Investing in soft infrastructure (educational and workforce development, institutional support systems and regulatory issues);
- Supporting the growth of particular clusters of businesses;
- Targeting particular parts of the city for regeneration or growth (area based initiatives);
- Supporting informal and newly emerging businesses; and
- Targeting certain disadvantaged groups.

Local councillors in different countries may have a variety of opinions about the importance of local development goals and encourage actions and activities which will lead to the achievement of their priorities. Also, local councillors within the same country can have different priorities concerning local development. The importance of increasing women's participation in elected bodies at all levels of government is justified, amongst other things, with the argument that although broadly the same issues are significant for women and men, women's perspectives on issues differs from men's. Therefore, in this chapter we investigate whether female and male councillors in the countries included in the MAELG survey have different priorities concerning local development.

In the next section, we discuss the gender gap in access to and participation in (local) politics. In the third section, we measure local development in the countries included in the survey. Since there are several indicators of local development, we develop a composite index of local development to capture different aspects of local development and measure differences in local development of the countries analysed. In the fourth section, we analyse the survey data and draw conclusions on gender differences in the attitudes of local councillors concerning local development.

When analysing the results, our main aim is to establish whether female and male local councillors differ in preferences and local policy priorities and to establish whether they agree on what is important to improve to foster local economic development. We analyse whether more equitable gender representation at the local level would result in different policy choices and in which areas.

10.2   Literature overview

Recent decades have seen a worldwide trend towards gender equality. A number of international datasets[1] on women's political participation and representation show the same trend of rising gender equality. Inglehart and Norris (2003) link women's political participation to high human development by arguing that the gender gap in political participation often narrows in post-industrial societies in contrast to poorer developing nations. This would mean that women's political representation is more likely in more developed countries. The Nordic countries serve as a paradigm here, with the highest human development and the narrowest gender gap in political participation.[2]

There is a large body of literature that focuses on women's roles in formal politics at the national level (Bari 2005; European Commission 2008; Gelb and Palley 2008; Inter-Parliamentary Union 2010). The same cannot be said for research on women's participation in local governance. However, participation of women in local politics is important because decisions about different issues[3] that directly affect women, children, men and families are made in this arena. Therefore, it is important that women are well represented (Moghadam 2010: 285).

Furthermore, some argue that women in local politics enjoy greater access to the political system and that they are more likely to be politically active at the local level 'because eligibility criteria for the local level are less stringent, and local government is the closest to the women's sphere of life, and easier to combine with rearing children' (Evertzen 2001: 3). In a similar vein, Nyiri and Vengroff (2005: 83) say that locally elected bodies 'offer seats that are often less competitive, require less costly campaigns and are less likely to require relocation away from familial demands, all conditions which have traditionally inhibited women's involvement in electoral politics'.

Following this line of argument, it can be expected that the rates of female participation at municipal councils would be similar or even higher than those in national parliaments. This assumption is further supported by an analysis on women and men in decision making in Europe (European Commission after 2008) which finds that women have a stronger political voice at the regional

---

1   Such as the database of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), United Nation's (UN) statistical database, and the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Report.

2   It should be noted that significantly higher women's political participation in the Nordic countries is partly due to the fact that several have adopted quotas for women.

3   The specific list of decisions made at the local level depends on the level of decentralisation and obligations and functions of local governments in each country. There are huge differences in the level of decentralisation in the countries covered by the MAELG survey.

level than at the national one, with an average of 30% representation in regional assemblies. This is especially important since the UN recommends a benchmark of at least 30% female representation as 'research shows that women need to be at least a large minority to have an impact, and women's issues receive more support when women attain a 'critical mass' (Moghadam 2010: 283).

As the proportion of women in national parliaments and municipal councils grows it is more likely that they will reflect the social characteristics of women in the electorate. Some studies indicate that, although broadly the same issues are significant for both women and men, women's perspectives still differ. To discuss the impact of women representatives one should distinguish between women's issues and women's perspectives. Women's issues are those that mainly affect women, while women's perspectives 'are women's views on all political concerns' (Lovenduski 1997: 708). Inglehart and Norris (2003) argue that in many societies women have different political preferences than men, and women tend to support parties of the left. Their analysis finds that for the role of the government women favour active government intervention in social protection while men tend to gravitate towards the neo-liberal perspective, especially in more advanced industrial countries and those of Central and Eastern Europe.

Hughes (2008) indicates that a growing body of literature points to the fact that women legislators generally articulate different policy priorities, introduce different bills and vote differently than their male counterparts. Furthermore, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2008: 34) states that the views of politicians included in its research suggest that women have concerns that are different to men's. These include social issues (childcare, equal pay, parental leave and pensions), physical concerns (reproductive rights, physical safety and gender-based violence) and development concerns (human development, poverty alleviation and service delivery). This research also highlights that women are more likely to take into account in their work the needs and rights of women, children, the elderly, the disabled, minorities and the disadvantaged, and are also more likely to advocate measures in the areas of health and reproduction, childcare, education, welfare and the environment.

There is a lack of research analysing the ways in which female and male representatives in local councils differ and how those differences get translated into policy choices. Moghadam (2010: 300) argues that it is especially true in the domain of local politics, and that in a number of European countries that female legislators prioritise social welfare and the social dimension of 'hard issues'. Furthermore, in their study on the gender gap in local leadership in Central and Eastern Europe Nyiri and Vengroff (2005: 116) note that their findings are consistent with those for the general population and with trends in the gender gap worldwide as women see a greater role for the state in the economy and

in the provision of help and support to citizens. Johansson (2006) analyses the recruitment of women to the position of municipal mayors, linking variations in the frequency of female mayors to variations in the welfare state systems.

Although the literature does not show a clear relationship between the rate of women's participation in decision making bodies and the level of economic development, a country's level of development can be correlated with the gender gap in political participation as more developed countries often exhibit higher rates of women in decision making bodies. Table 10.1 suggests that the majority of developed countries are characterized by a relatively high women's participation rate in national parliaments

Table 10.1: Human Development Index (2010 Rankings) and Women in Parliaments

Countries with Very High Human Development and Women's participation rate in national parliament (%)	Countries with High Human Development and Women's participation rate in national parliament (%)
Norway – 39.6%	Croatia – 23.5%
The Netherlands – 42.0%	
Sweden – 46.4%	
Germany – 32.8%	
Switzerland – 29.0%	
France – 18.9%	
Israel – 18.3%	
Belgium – 38.0%	
Spain – 36.6%	
Greece – 17.3%	
Italy – 21.3%	
Austria – 27.9%	
United Kingdom – 19.5%	
Czech Republic – 15.5%	
Poland – 20.0%	

Note: This table contains data only for the countries covered by the MAELG survey. The data refer to the year 2010. Source: Human Development Reports and Inter-Parliamentary Union (2010).

In the next section, we measure the level of local development and democracy. In addition, we analyse the relationship between the current level of local development and democracy measured by our own index – the composite index of local development – and women's participation rates in local councils by countries. This is an important step in this research because we are trying to analyse whether there is a correlation between women's participation rates in local councils, local councillors' opinions about local development goals, and the level of local development in the countries analysed.

10.3   Local development and democracy

Indicators of local development and democracy

Economic theory distinguishes economic growth and development. Although growth – as an improvement or a failure – is an important element in the economic development process, the local economic development process implies that the welfare of local residents also improves (Blair 1995; Blair and Carroll 2009). Different authors have analysed various theories that relate to local economic development (Bingham and Mier 1993; Wolman and Spitzley 1996; Reese and Fasenfest 1997). Increasingly, local economic development is seen as a major local government responsibility. Since there are considerable differences between local areas, consequently there is no one best local strategy for successful local economic development (Bartik 2004).

Researchers use various methods to assess the level of local economic development, and use different measures. The majority of authors agree that economic development should align with increases in economic welfare (Partridge and Rickman 2003; Kane and Sand 1988). The question is which of the measures should be chosen. One of the most commonly used indicators of welfare improvement is an increase in per capita income (adjusted for inflation). An important measure for local development is the creation of new jobs and/or the reduction of the unemployment rate in the local area. Nevertheless, these two indicators alone are not sufficient to measure local economic development in a municipality.

Although there is a relatively large literature that studies local economic development, including measures of local economic development, there is a lack of literature that establishes the results of various local public policies that contribute most to local development. There is also a lack of studies that show evidence and concrete results of research on citizen satisfaction with local public services. Based on the results of research conducted by Roch and Poister (2006), higher subjective assessments of service quality made by citizens are positively related to their satisfaction and this is critical to understanding accountability in democratic governance. Following the results of the research in the field of public service quality improvement in the United States conducted by Holzer, Charbonneau and Kim (2009), the practice of public service quality improvement is important for practitioners at the local level. They can obtain useful tools for defining quality criteria in the public sector. There are several methods for public service quality improvements at the local level. The first method simply relates to citizens' expectations. Citizens expect more effective public services and they would always like to see improvements in public service delivery

in their local community. The creation of a set of outcome indicators for the measurement of strategic goal achievement in public service delivery is a second method for public service quality improvements. The third method is the establishment of standards for public service delivery. Similar studies have been conducted in other countries. For example Rogge and Verschelde (2012) explored citizen satisfaction with police services in Belgium; Montalvo (2009) presented results of the Americas Barometer survey on the 2008 database on citizen satisfaction with municipal services carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) in 23 nations in the Western hemisphere; Hazman and Maniam (2008) investigated citizen satisfaction with local government service delivery in Malaysia.

The results of these studies indicate the importance of using citizen opinions on various issues related to local development and quality of life in the local community. Besides 'pure' economic indicators, local development should also be measured with improvements in the quality of life. Improvements in the quality of life for local residents, such as better educational, sports and cultural services, transportation, environmental protection and communal services, are important indicators of local economic development.[4] This is the reason why economists use several different indicators to determine local development.

In the next section we establish the composite index of local development which aims to measure the actual level of local development in the countries analysed.

Measuring local economic development in the selected countries

In this section we measure the level of local development in 15 countries[5] using a composite index of local development composed of two parts. The first part consists of seven local development indicators: demographic, social, economic, educational, environmental, transport and cultural indicators. The second part of the index consists of democracy indicators: share of local budget revenues and expenditures in general government revenues and expenditures and in relation to GDP[6] (see table 10.2).

---

4   For example, local indicators of quality of life have been established at the Pikes Peak Region in the United States, http://www.uccs.edu/Documents/ccps/qol.pdf.; local quality of life indicators – supporting local communities to become sustainable have been established by the Audit Commission in the United Kingdom as a guide to local monitoring to complement the indicators in the UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy, http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/ SiteCollectionDocuments/AuditCommissionReports/National Studies/QofL2005.pdf.

5   Because of insufficient data, Israel is not included in this part of the analysis.

6   We analyse only one aspect of democracy - namely, how power is shared among different tiers of government. This means that countries with a higher share of local government budg-

Table 10.2: Structure of composite index of local development

Indicator	Name of variable	Source
Local development		
Demographic	Average household size in Urban Audit Cities	Eurostat
Social	Available hospital beds in Urban Audit Cities - per 1,000 inhabitants	
	Average living area in Urban Audit Cities - m^2 per person	
Economic	Unemployment rate in Urban Audit Cities - %	
Educational	Proportion of population aged 18-64 qualified at tertiary level (ISCED 5-6) living in Urban Audit Cities - %	
Environmental	Collected solid waste in Urban Audit Cities - tons per inhabitant and year	
Transport	Registered cars in Urban Audit Cities - number of cars per 1,000 inhabitants	
Cultural	Cinema seats in Urban Audit Cities - seats per 1,000 inhabitants	
Democracy		
Share of local budget revenues/expenditures	Share of local budget revenues/expenditures in general government revenues/expenditures	IMF
	Share of local budget revenues/expenditures in relation to gross domestic product (GDP)	

Source: Authors' systematisation.

The composite index of local development was calculated on the basis of sub-national statistics collected by the Urban Audit database[7] that was developed within Eurostat city statistics.[8] These databases consist of a wide variety of data for regions and cities across Europe.

The composite index of local development for 15 European countries covered by the MAELG survey was calculated by using a weighted procedure, where weights represent an equal portion (10%) of all local development indicators, except the unemployment rate and democracy index. For these two indicators weights were 20% because they have a stronger impact on the economic situation in a particular country. Higher unemployment in a municipality or a city has a strong negative impact on current and future local development.

---

ets in total general consolidated budget or GDP are those that are more decentralised and have more powerful sub-national government. Clarification of the relationship between responsibilities of decentralized governments and practices in the assignment of functions to sub-national authorities can be found in the literature on the spending power of local governments. See Musgrave (1959), Bahl and Linn (1992), Ter-Minassian (1997) and Ahmad and Brosio (2006).

7   The Urban Audit data collection provides information and comparable measurements on the different aspects of the quality of urban life in European cities, http://www.urbanaudit.org/.

8   http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/introduction.

We used the share of local budget revenues and expenditures in the consolidated general government budget and the share of local government revenues and expenditures in GDP as indicators of democracy as a significant change in the level of fiscal decentralization measured by these items gives greater power to the sub-national level of government.[9] In this case, local councillors could have greater influence on local development policies. Based on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) database,[10] there are differences between countries regarding the current level of fiscal decentralization. By giving a larger weight to this indicator in the composite local development index we intended to make a clear difference between centralized and decentralized countries, since in the more decentralized countries local authorities exercise greater influence on decisions affecting (positively or negatively) local development.

Results of the level of local development in countries covered by the MAELG survey, measured by composite index of local development, are presented in table 10.3. We divided the analysed countries into 4 groups measured by the composite index of local development. The first group (index under 50) consists of two countries – Croatia and Poland. Greece, United Kingdom and Spain form the group of countries with a medium level of local development (index between 50 and 60). The Netherlands and Norway demonstrate a higher level of local development (index between 60 and 70). Germany, Czech Republic, Belgium, Austria, France, Sweden, Italy and Switzerland have the highest value of local development index (above 70).

In this chapter we do not intend to examine in detail political and other issues that affect the quality of life in a local community and have an influence on local economic development.[11] We try to elaborate the influence of locally elected councillors in the countries covered by the MAELG survey on local development issues.

Specifically, we want to see if there is any correlation between the level of local development and women's participation in local councils. The starting point for our expectations is in the theory that economic development is increasingly seen as a major responsibility of local authorities. Also, following the argument that women have greater and easier access to the political system at the local level, and are more likely to be active in local politics, we expect the coun-

---

9   The level of democracy can be measured with other indicators as well. We decided to use the indicators that are methodologically correct and publicly available for all countries covered by the MAELG survey.

10   http://www.imfstatistics.org/imf/.

11   There are many factors influencing local development. For further details see e.g. Blakely and Green Leight (2002).

tries covered by the MAELG survey to exhibit similar or even higher rates of female participation in municipal councils as compared to national parliaments.

Table 10.3: Composite index of local development

Countries grouped by the level of composite index of local development	Composite index of local development
Under 50	
Croatia	41.86
Poland	49.92
Between 50-60	
Greece	51.60
United Kingdom	55.32
Spain	59.99
Between 60-70	
The Netherlands	67.16
Norway	68.74
Above 70	
Germany	71.40
Czech Republic	74.68
Belgium	74.83
Austria	74.85
France	74.90
Sweden	75.52
Italy	85.48
Switzerland	86.42

Source: Authors' calculation based on Eurostat; Council of European Municipalities and Regions and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) data for the year 2008.

To analyse women's participation in local politics and the level of their potential influence on local policy in the municipality, we compare the available statistics on the participation of women in local councils in the countries included in the MAELG project. Data on women's participation rates in local councils are based on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). For those countries where the data were not available from this source, we used Council of European Municipalities and Regions data. Data for Greece and Austria were not available in both sources. Contrary to our expectations, all 16 countries analysed are characterised by relatively low women's participation in local councils. In most of the countries between 20% and 30% of local councillors are women. This implies that if the results of the survey show that there is gender gap in local councillors' opinions about local development goals, then women have smaller impact on economic policy in the city.

For all countries covered by the MAELG survey, the relatively small participation of women in local councils is linked with the overall level of local development (table 10.4).

Table 10.4: Women's participation rate in local councils by countries grouped by the level of local development

Countries grouped by the level of composite index of local development	Women's participation rate in local councils (%)
Under 50	
Croatia	22
Poland	21
Between 50-60	
Greece	n.a.
United Kingdom	29
Spain	31
Between 60-70	
The Netherlands	26
Norway	38
Above 70	
Germany	24
Czech Republic	25
Belgium	34
Austria	n.a.
France	35
Sweden	45
Italy	17
Switzerland	27

Source: Authors' calculation based on Eurostat; Council of European Municipalities and Regions and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) data for the year 2008.

It should be noted that there are significant differences in the current level of local development as well as in the current women's participation rates in local councils in the countries analysed. However, there is no straightforward correlation[12] between the level of local development and women's participation rate in local councils in the observed groups of countries.[13] There are examples of countries with high composite index of local development (for example, Italy) with a very low women's participation rate. On the other hand, Sweden is an example of a country with a high level of local development and a high level of female participation in the local political arena. Spain belongs to the group of countries with a moderate level of local development, but, at the same time, women's participation in local councils in Spain is higher (31%) in comparison to the average for the countries analysed (26%).

---

12   Since the empirical p value exceeds the theoretical value ($p = 0.543 > 0.05$), the hypothesis must be rejected, which means that the Pearson correlation coefficient $r = 0,186$ is not significant with a significance level of 5 percent. There is not a statistically significant relationship between composite index of local development and women's participation rate in local councils, $r(13) = 0.186$, $p > 0.05$.

13   This can be attributed to different cultural, political and economic factors.

Since in almost all countries analysed women are, or are close to being a 'critical mass', the next section will analyse whether there are differences between female and male councillors' attitudes regarding the importance of local development goals.

10.4   Analysis of the gender gap in local councillors' views on local development goals

Methodology

In this section we analyse the views of local councillors regarding different priorities and activities that should be undertaken to foster development in their respective municipalities. Since our main aim is to investigate whether women and men differ in preferences and policy priorities across the countries covered by the MAELG survey, we analyse the data on the attitudes of local representatives towards sixteen different goals of local development included in the survey. These are:

- Attracting economic activities to the city;
- Developing a highly qualified workforce;
- Regenerating or rebuilding the city-centre;
- Improving infrastructure and services for transport;
- Improving the aesthetics of the city;
- Developing leisure and cultural services;
- Improving housing;
- Defending the cohesion of local society;
- Emphasising diversity and tolerance in local society;
- Improving the level of services and well-being in the city;
- Reducing pollution;
- Improving the external image of the city;
- Attracting new residents;
- Attracting wealthier residents;
- Improving the position of women in local society; and
- Fighting against exclusion and poverty.

In the survey, local councillors were asked to rate the importance of each goal on a scale of 0 (it is not an important goal for local authority) to 4 (it is a very

important goal for local authorities). All these goals are essential for achieving local development.[14]

In order to capture similarities and differences between male and female councillors' attitudes towards different goals of local economic policy, we analysed the results of the survey in two steps. In the first step, we analysed overall responses of local councillors divided by gender and explore differences between female and male local councillors in relation to local development objectives. In a second step, we measured the significance of differences in the views of women and men local councillors. To measure the existence of such difference in opinions, we used the analysis of variance (ANOVA). ANOVA is used to determine the equality or differences between two (or more) means.[15] The grouping variable used in ANOVA was local councillors' gender.

Results

In this part of the chapter we present the results of the analysis of the gender gap in local councillors' attitudes regarding different goals which are important for local development. We present only summary tables and main conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis of data from the survey.[16]

Table 10.5 shows responses to the questionnaire from local councillors in all countries analysed. Both women and men local councillors find that the two most important goals for the development of their city are to attract economic activities to the city and to improve infrastructure and services for transport. However, looking overall, the largest differences in women and men councillors responses can be seen in goals which are related to social issues (reducing pov-

---

14 Although there is a large body of literature analysing the goals and activities important for achieving local development, there is a clear consensus about the main goals of local authorities in fostering local development. More about this can be seen in World Bank (2011), Blakely and Green Leight (2002), Blair (1995), as well as in Jurlina Alibegović and Slijepčević (2010).

15 The analysis of variance (ANOVA) is often used to test whether there is a difference between the arithmetic means of two or more sets of variables. The aim is to examine the relationship between patterns of variation with the variation of the samples. The ANOVA test is based on a comparison of the variance due to the inter-group variability (Mean Square Effect) with the intra-group variability (Mean Square Error). This is accomplished by analysing the variance, that is, by partitioning the total variance into the component that is attributed to true random error (and the components that are attributed to differences between means). These latter variance components are then tested for statistical significance, and, if significant, we reject the null hypothesis of no differences between means and accept the alternative hypothesis that the means (in the population) are different from each other.

16 Detailed descriptive statistics and results of ANOVA can be obtained from the authors upon request.

erty, rights of women), environmental issues (reducing pollution) and develop-
ment concerns (service delivery and well-being in the city, cultural services).

Table 10.5: Overall rating of local economic development goals

Goal	Total	Women	Men
		% of local councillors that find that goal is of great and utmost importance	
Attracting economic activities to the city	86.4	86.0	86.6
Developing a highly qualified workforce	78.0	77.4	78.3
Regenerating or rebuilding the city-centre	63.9	62.3	64.4
Improving infrastructure and services for transport	83.9	85.5	83.3
Improving the aesthetics of the city	66.8	66.4	66.8
Developing leisure and cultural services	70.6	75.9	68.4
Improving housing offer	71.6	77.1	69.3
Defending the cohesion of local society	61.6	62.6	61.1
Emphasising diversity and tolerance in local society	66.2	75.3	62.3
Improving the level of services and well-being in the city	78.9	82.1	77.6
Reducing pollution	75.5	80.3	73.5
Improving the external image of the city	70.8	73.4	69,6
Attracting new residents	55.2	62.4	52.2
Attracting wealthier residents	41.3	44.8	40.0
Improving the position of women in local society	47.3	62.4	40.8
Fighting against exclusion and poverty	71.2	75.9	69.2

Note: Percentages are sums of great and utmost importance on a 5 point scale. Where local council-
lors did not answer these questions, data were omitted from analysis. Source: Authors' analysis
based on the survey.

We analysed two main topics. First, in which countries do female and male local
councillors have different views on the role of local authorities in local devel-
opment. Second, we want to specify the goals of local development on which
female and male local councillors have different views.

In the first stage we analysed 16 different goals and wanted to identify in
which countries there is a difference in opinion between female and male local
councillors and whether this difference is related to a large number of goals.
Therefore, we divided the local development goals into 3 groups according to
how frequently women and men as local councillors in each country find a cer-
tain goal more or less important for local development. The results show that in
nine countries women and men rarely disagree about the importance of local
development goals (table 10.6). In Austria, Italy, Croatia, Czech Republic, Po-
land, Greece, Belgium, Israel and Spain women and men as local councillors

disagree about the importance of less than one third of the local development goals.[17]

In Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom female and male local councillors frequently have different views on the importance of six to ten local development goals. In Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and France women and men councillors have differing views on the importance of almost all local development goals (more than two thirds).

Table 10.6: Extent of gender gap in local councillors' opinions about local development goals

Difference in opinion	Number of goals	Countries with a gender gap in local councillors' opinions
Infrequent	1-5	AT, CZ, HR, BE, GR, IL, IT, PL, ES
Frequent	6-10	DE, NL, UK
Very frequent	11-16	FR, NO, CH, SE

Notes: 1. Difference is measured with ANOVA, displaying a 5% level of significance. 2. DE-Germany, CH-Switzerland, CZ-Czech Republic, NL-Netherlands, IT-Italy, SE-Sweden, HR-Croatia, NO-Norway, PL-Poland, AT-Austria, GR-Greece, UK-United Kingdom, BE-Belgium, FR-France, IL-Israel, ES-Spain. Source: Authors' analysis based on the survey.

In the second stage of the analysis we explore whether there is a discrepancy in local councillors' views in the countries analysed. From this information we can deduce whether there is a gender gap in local councillors' opinions about local development and how wide it is.

Results presented in table 10.7 show that female and male local councillors differ in opinions about the importance of improving the position of women in local society in all countries analysed, except in Poland. Also, in over 50% of the analysed countries female and male local councillors have different views on the importance of the following issues: emphasising diversity and tolerance in local society, and reducing pollution and fighting against exclusion and poverty. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a gender gap in councillors' views on the role and importance of the city in carrying out social policy and environmental policy. Overall rating of local development goals (table 10.5) showed that, on average, local councillors find that the five most important priorities concerning local development are: to attract economic activity to the city;

---

17   A more detailed table with the marked difference in the attitudes of male and female councillors towards a specific goal in each analysed country can be found in table 10.8 at the end of this chapter.

Table 10.7: Countries in which female and male local councillors have different opinions about a specific goal

Goals/Country	DE	CH	CZ	NL	IT	SE	HR	NO	PL	AT	GR	UK	BE	FR	IL	ES
Attracting economic activities to the city	X	X			X			X								
Developing a highly qualified workforce		X			X			X					X			
Regenerating or rebuilding the city-centre								X								
Improving infrastructure and services for transport	X					X		X				X		X		
Improving the aesthetics of the city		X				X								X		
Developing leisure and cultural services				X				X						X		X
Improving housing		X				X		X				X	X	X		
Defending the cohesion of local society								X				X				
Emphasising diversity and tolerance in local society	X	X	X	X		X		X		X		X				
Improving the level of services and well-being in the city	X	X		X		X		X				X				
Reducing pollution	X	X	X	X		X		X		X		X		X		
Improving the external image of the city			X	X				X			X	X		X	X	
Attracting new residents			X	X		X		X						X		
Attracting wealthier residents		X		X				X	X							
Improving the position of women in local society	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fighting against exclusion and poverty	X	X		X		X		X		X		X		X		

Notes: 1. Difference is measured with ANOVA, displaying a 5% level of significance. 2. DE-Germany, CH-Switzerland, CZ-Czech Republic, NL-Netherlands, IT-Italy, SE-Sweden, HR-Croatia, NO-Norway, PL-Poland, AT-Austria, GR-Greece, UK-United Kingdom, BE-Belgium, FR-France, IL-Israel, ES-Spain. Source: Authors' analysis based on the survey.

to improve infrastructure and services for transport; to improve the level of services and well-being in the city; to develop a highly qualified workforce and to reduce pollution.

Therefore, it can be concluded that female and male local councillors do not completely agree about order of importance of local development goals for their city, but there is large level of consensus about priorities.

Also, the largest difference in women and men local councillors' opinions is regarding the importance of improving the position of women in local society and increasing tolerance in local society. These two goals are seen as less crucial for local development by both women and men local councillors, but female councillors still find those goals more important than their male counterparts.

If we consider these results in relation to the level of local development in the countries included in the study[18], several conclusions can be made. The level of local development in the countries included in the study differs widely. However, there is no clear relation between the current level of local development and the differences in local councillors' opinions about the goals of local development. There are examples of countries with a low level of development where male and female councillors have similar views on local development priorities. These are: Croatia, Poland, Greece and Spain. However, Italy is an example of a country with a very high level of local development and a small gender gap in local councillors' views on local development goals. This means that there is no clear relationship between the gender gap in local councillors' attitudes towards local development goals and the current level of local development in the country. This leads us to the conclusion that the agreement on development goals within local councils is not a prerequisite for successful development at the local level. This conclusion can be partly explained with the fact that the countries analysed have different levels of decentralisation and therefore local councillors do not have the same level of influence on the activities and development in local society. In the countries with a higher level of decentralisation, local councillors have greater influence on the activities in the city and its development. Also, this can be explained with a different gender structure in local councils in different countries. Lower participation of women in local councils could lead to their lower influence on decision making in local society.

---

[18]   Israel could not be analysed because there are no comparable local development indicators for this country.

10.5   Conclusions

Local economic development is increasingly seen as a major local government responsibility. For this reason the literature on local development places considerable importance on local policies that are directed to local development. The literature review indicates the lack of research that is exclusively engaged in the assessment of local public policies that are traditionally supported by female local councillors, such as social issues (childcare, equal pay, parental leave and pensions), physical concerns (reproductive rights, physical safety and gender-based violence) and development concerns (human development, poverty alleviation and service delivery).

In addition, this chapter provides some evidence that female and male local councillors differ in several preferences and local policy priorities and they do not completely agree regarding the extent to which it is important to foster local economic development. The analysis of the survey data suggests that there are some differences between women and men in local councils regarding their views on various aspects of economic policy. However, female and male councillors generally agree that it is necessary to attract economic activities to the city, improve infrastructure and services for mobility, and to develop a highly qualified workforce to foster local development. These have been identified as the most important goals for local development in all countries. Also, both female and male councillors in all countries agree that the least important goals for local development are attracting a wealthier population to the city and improving the position of women in local society. Although these goals have been identified as the least important for economic development at the local level, local councils recognise that promoting these issues is also important for the development of local society. There is no country where some of the goals are seen as not important at all for development. This means that local councillors recognise priorities which have also been stated as important goals of local economic development by international institutions.

However, female and male local councillors do not agree about the level of importance of some local development goals. In countries where they have different views on the importance of generally recognised priority for local development, usually men rate this priority higher than women. This is the case in Italy, Switzerland and Belgium. This means that in these countries male local councillors find that it is more important for local development to attract economic activities to the city, which is recognized as the most important local development goal, than the female local councillors. On the other hand, the most of other local development goals female local councillors rate higher than the male local councillors. This could be specially noticed when analysing goals

that are part of social policy. These results support the idea that more equitable gender representation results in more diverse policy-making that would in the medium- and long-run could have a positive influence on the level of local development.

While the majority of developed countries are characterized by higher women's participation rate in national parliaments, the situation is completely different at the local level. It can be concluded that there is no clear relationship between the level of local development achieved in the countries analysed and the gender gap in local councillors' opinions about priorities. There are many countries that achieve a level of local development above 70% (measured by the composite index of local development) where female and male local councillors agree about the most important priorities for the development of local society. Also, there are examples of countries with a high level of development and disagreement between women and men as local councillors about the importance of different local development goals. However, this mismatch is a consequence of the continuing low participation of women in local councils and their lower influence on decision making. An increase in the participation of women in local councils (for example 30% has been recognised by international institutions as the 'critical mass' for influencing the decision making process) would encourage those activities that women in local councils find more important than men. More equitable gender representation at the local level results in more diverse policy-making and can generate local development. In the long run, this could lead to an increase in the level of local development in the selected countries.

References

Ahmad, E. and Brosio, G. (2006) Handbook of Fiscal Federalism. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, Northampton.

Bahl, R. W. and Linn, J. F. (1992) Urban Public Financing in Developing Countries. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Bari, F. (2005) Women's Political Participation: Issues and Challenges, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), Expert Group Meeting 'Enhancing Participation of Women in Development through an Enabling Environment for Achieving Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women', Bangkok, Thailand, 8-11 November, http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/enabling-environment 2005/docs/EGM-WPD-EE-2005-EP.12%20%20draft%20F.pdf. Retrieved 2005-10-29.

Bartik, T. J. (2004) 'Economic Development' in Aronson, J. R. and Schwartz, E. (eds.) Management Policies in Local Government Finance. International City/County Management Association: Washington D. C., 355-390.

Bingham, R. D. and Mier, R. (eds.) (1993) Theories of Local EconomicDevelopment: Perspectives from Across the Disciplines. SAGE Publications: Newbury Park, California, London, New Delhi.

Blair, J.P. (1995) Local Economic Development. Analysis and Practice. SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi.

Blair, J. P. and Carroll, M. C. (2009) Local Economic Development: Analysis, Practices, and Globalization. SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi.

Blakely, E. J. and Green Leigh, N. (2002) Planning Local Economic Development. Theory and Practice. SAGE Publications: Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore.

Council of European Municipalities and Regions (2009/2010) EU sub-national governments: 2008 key figures. 2009/2010 Edition. Council of European Municipalities and Regions: Paris.

European Commission (2008) Women and men in decision-making 2007: Analysis of the situation and trends. Luxembourg: European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

Eurostat: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/city_urban/data_cities/tables_sub1.

Evertzen, A. (2001) Gender and Local Governance. Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV): The Hague.

Gelb, J. and Palley, M. L. (2008) Women & Politics around the World: A Comparative History and Survey. ABC-CLIO, Inc.: Santa Barbara.

Greenwood, D. 'Local Indicators of Quality of Life: A Preliminary Look at the Pikes Peak Region', http://www.uccs.edu/Documents/ccps/qol.pdf .

Hazman, S. A. and Maniam, K. (2008) 'From Customer Satisfaction to Citizen Satisfaction: Rethinking Local Government Service Delivery in Malaysia', *Asian Social Science* 4 (11), 87-92.

Holzer, M., Charbonneau, E. and Kim, Y. (2009) 'Mapping the terrain of public service quality improvement: twenty-five years of trends and practices in the United States', *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 75 (3), 403-418.

Hughes, M. (2008) Politics at the Intersection: A Cross-National Analysis of Minority Women's Legislative Representation. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of Sociology, The Ohio State University. Quoted in Moghadam 2010: 295.

Human Development Reports (HDR) (2010): http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/ .

Inglehart, R. and Norris, P. (2003) Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

International Monetary Fund (IMF): http://www.imf.org .

Inter-Parliamentary Union (2010) *Women in Politics 2010*: http://www.ipu.org/english/surveys.htm#MAP2010 .

Inter-Parliamentary Union (2008) Equality in Politics: A Survey of Women and Men in Parliaments. Inter-Parliamentary Union: Geneva.

Johansson, V. (2006) 'Gendered Roads to Mayorship in Different Welfare States' in Baeck, H., Heinelt, H. and Magnier, A. (eds.) The European Mayor. Political Leaders in the Changing Context of Local Democracy. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 99-121.

Jurlina Alibegović, D. and Slijepčević, S. (2010) 'Uloga vijećnika gradskih vijeća u upravljanju i razvoju gradova u Hrvatskoj', *Hrvatska javna uprava* 10 (2), 399-426.

Kane, M. and Sand, P. (1988) Economic Development: What Works at the Local Level. National League of Cities: Washington D.C.

Lovenduski, J. (1997) 'Gender Politics: A Break-through for Women?', *Parliamentary Affairs* 50 (4), 708-719.

Moghadam, V. M. (2010) 'Gender, Politics, and Women's Empowerment' in Leicht, K. T. and Jenkins, J. C. (eds.) Handbook of Politics: State and Society in Global Perspective. Springer: New York, 279-303.

Montalvo, D. (2009) Citizen Satisfaction with Municipal Services, Americas Barometer Insights No.14, http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/I0814en.pdf .

Musgrave, R. (1959) The Theory of Public Finance. McGrow Hill: New York.

Nyiri, Z. and Richard V. (2005) 'The Gender Gap in Local Political Leaderships in Central and Eastern Europe' in Soós, G. and Zentai, V. (eds.) Faces of Local Democracy: Comparative Papers from Central and Eastern Europe, Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative. Open Society Institute: Budapest, 79-121.

Partridge, M. D. and Rickman, D. S. (2003) 'Do We Know Economic Development When We See It?', *The Review of Regional Studies* 33 (1), 17-39.

Reese, L. A. and Fasenfest, D. (1997) 'What Works Best?: Values and the Evaluation of Local Economic Development Policy', *Economic Development Quarterly* 11 (3), 195-207.

Roch, C. H. and Poister, T. H. (2006) 'Citizens, Accountability, and Service Satisfaction: The Influence of Expectations', *Urban Affairs Review* 41 (3), 296-308.

Rogge, N. and Verschelde, M. (2012) A composite index of citizen satisfaction with local police services. HUB Research Papers 2012/13, Economics & Management, https://lirias.hubrussel.be/bitstream/123456789/6195/1/12HRP13.pdf .

Ter-Minassian, T. (1997) Fiscal Federalism in Theory and in Practice. International Monetary Fund: Washington D.C.

The Audit Commission UK, Local quality of life indicators – supporting local communities to become sustainable, http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/SiteCollection Documents/AuditCommissionReports/NationalStudies/QofL2005.pdf .

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), (2010) http://w3.unece.org/pxweb/dialog/varval.asp?ma=004_GEPDMuniCoun_r&path= ../database/STAT/30-GE/05-PublicAnddecision/&lang=1&ti=Members+of+munici pal+councils+or+other+local+area+governing+bodies+by+Sex,+Measurement,+Co untry+and+Year .

Wolman, H. and Spitzley, D. (1996) 'The Politics of Local Economic Development', *Economic Development Quarterly* 10 (2), 115-150.

World Bank (2011): 'What is Local Economic Development', http://web.worldbank.org/ WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTURBANDEVELOPMENT/EXTLED/0,,cont entMDK:20185186~menuPK:399161~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:3 41139,00.html .

Table 10.8: Results of measuring the gender gap in local councillors' opinion about different goals of local development

Goals/Country	DE	CH	CZ	NL	IT	SE	CR	NO	PL	AT	GR	UK	BE	FR	IL	ES
Attracting economic activities to the city	–	m	–	–	m	–	–	f	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Developing a highly qualified workforce	–	m	–	–	m	–	–	f	–	–	–	–	m	–	–	–
Regenerating or rebuilding the city-centre	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	f	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Improving infrastructure and services for transport	f	–	–	–	–	f	–	f	–	–	–	f	–	f	–	–
Improving the aesthetics of the city	–	f	–	–	–	f	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	f	–	f
Developing leisure and cultural services	–	f	–	f	–	f	–	f	–	–	–	f	f	f	–	–
Improving housing	–	f	–	–	–	f	–	f	–	–	–	f	–	f	–	–
Defending the cohesion of local society	–	–	f	–	–	f	–	f	–	f	–	f	–	f	–	–
Emphasising diversity and tolerance in local society	f	f	f	f	–	f	–	f	–	–	–	f	–	–	–	–
Improving the level of services and well-being in the city	f	f	–	f	–	f	–	f	–	f	–	f	–	f	–	–
Reducing pollution	f	f	f	f	–	f	–	f	–	–	f	f	–	f	–	–
Improving the external image of the city	–	–	f	f	–	f	–	f	–	–	–	–	–	f	–	–
Attracting new residents	–	–	–	f	–	–	–	f	f	–	–	–	–	f	–	–
Attracting wealthier residents	–	m	–	f	f	f	f	f	–	f	f	f	f	f	f	f
Improving the position of women in local society	f	f	f	f	f	–	f	f	–	f	f	f	f	f	f	f
Fighting against exclusion and poverty	f	f	–	–	–	f	–	–	–	f	–	f	–	–	–	–
Other goals	f	–	–	–	–	–	–	f	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Notes: 1. DE–Germany, CH–Switzerland, CZ–Czech Republic, NL–Netherlands, IT–Italy, SE–Sweden, CR–Croatia, NO–Norway, PL–Poland, AT–Austria, GR–Greece, UK–United Kingdom, BE–Belgium, FR–France, IL–Israel, ES–Spain. 2. Difference in opinion is measured with ANOVA, displaying a 5% level of significance. 3. '–' means that there are no differences between the opinion of women and men in the local councils regarding the analysed goal; f – means that women find the particular goal more important than men; m – means that men find the particular goal more important than women. Source: Authors' analysis based on the survey.

11 Coordinating community governance? Local councillors in different governance network arrangements

Larissa Plüss and Daniel Kübler

11.1 Urban Governance Networks

In modern European cities, councillors are but one actor amongst many. They increasingly act within a web of multiple local players who exert influence on the policy process in various forms. Political leadership and steering are not only undertaken by public actors such as the municipal government, the administration or the council. In our globalised world, private actors are becoming increasingly important in the municipal decision-making process – new forms of governance are emerging (see e.g. Bekkers et al. 2007; Denters and Rose 2005; Klok and Denters 2005; Pierre 2000; Vetter and Kersting 2003). Due to the growing influence of private players, cities are increasingly steered by a multitude of public, semi-public and private actors linked in governance network arrangements. According to Sørensen and Torfing (2007a: 9) such a governance network is defined as: 1. a relatively stable horizontal articulation of interdependent, but operationally autonomous actors; 2. who interact through negotiations; 3. which take place within a regulative, normative, cognitive and imaginary framework; 4. that is self-regulating within limits set by external agencies; and 5. which contributes to the production of public purpose. So, the term 'urban governance network' describes policy-making and implementation through a web of relationships between local government and different private actors (see Klijn and Skelcher 2007: 587). As a result of this shift towards more horizontal governing structures, it is more difficult for elected politicians to exercise sovereign rule – governance needs to be performed differently (Sørensen 2006: 98). But what is the new role of local councillors within network governance?

According to Stoker (2004, 2005), the most powerful and effective role for local government is that of a network coordinator. Stoker suggests a theoretic model of *networked community governance* where local governments act as coordinators in order to steer complex local processes. Elected politicians should thereby foster social inclusion, create spaces for citizen participation and contribute to a strong civil society. The over-arching goal of networked community

governance is 'meeting the community needs as defined by the community' (Stoker 2011: 17). While elected representatives take on some form of steering function in networked community governance, the dynamic in the systems stems from the everyday makers of politics among citizens themselves (Bang 2003). Other authors refer to this organizational role of local government as *metagovernance*. According to Sørensen and Torfing (2009: 245), metagovernance means 'higher-order governance transcending the concrete forms of governance through which social and economic life is shaped, regulated and transformed'. It involves 'the management of complexity and plurality' and is done through 'the organisation of self-organisation' (Jessop 1998: 42). Metagovernance is exercised in various ways: for instance through the framing of self-governing networks, by supporting and interacting with self-governing actors or through direct participation in processes of self-governance (Sørensen 2006: 101f). By adopting a metagoverning role, local politicians can contribute to achieve 'democratic anchorage' in governance networks (Sørensen and Torfing 2005).

Scholars of the second generation of network governance research[1], including Klijn and Skelcher (2007), Skelcher (2005) as well as Sørensen and Torfing (2005), have specified normative regulations and focused on metagovernance in order to render networks inclusive and accountable. However, Davies (2007: 779) argues that these authors 'underestimate the challenge of democratic inclusion'. Despite community involvement and democratic anchorage, governance networks still suffer from a democratic deficit due to selective inclusion. According to Davies (ibid.: 780) community activists are therefore better advised to consider exiting those partnerships. Formal or informal groups within civil society may be more effective in challenging power if they stay out of networked community governance (see e.g. Davies 2007; Barnett 2011). So, community empowerment may depend less on enhanced network democracy than on strong *independent community organisation* capable of acting coercively in order to be heard. The role of local councillors would then be limited to traditional governing tasks in a more hierarchical system – the ties between public and civic actors would be less close.

---

1   The research on network governance emerged in the early 1990s and was primarily preoccupied with describing and analysing the formation and the functioning of this new non-hierarchical form of governance (Sørensen and Torfing 2007a: 14). With the beginning of the new millennium, then unanswered questions were taken up by a second generation of governance network researchers (Pierre 2000). These questions focus on the conditions of governance success or failure, on the potentials and risks of metagovernance and on the democratic performance of network governance (Sørensen and Torfing 2007a: 14). So, the research agenda of the new millennium aims at assessing the normative and political impact of governance networks and at improving their performance (see e.g. Benz and Papadopoulos 2006; Klijn and Skelcher 2007; Sørensen and Torfing 2007b).

Regarding cooperation between public and private players in cities, there is a wide range of literature investigating the collaboration between public actors and the business elite – in so called *urban regimes*. Urban regime theory draws on the assumption that governing capacity is not captured only through the electoral process but is created by bringing together capable coalition partners (see Stone 1989, 1993). So, an urban regime describes cooperation between state actors and private players – mostly from the local business community – allocating resources in order to implement a common policy agenda (Mossberger and Stoker 2001: 829). In this chapter, we however focus on governance networks including persons or groups from civil society. Business actors will not be considered in particular. Drawing on the contributions of Sørensen and Torfing (2005, 2007a, 2009) regarding network governance and on Stoker's (2004, 2005) model of networked community governance, we try to capture different governance network arrangements between public and civic actors in European cities and to investigate the role of the local councillors therein. Do European local councillors adopt the suggested new role as coordinators in community governance? Do they shape the partnerships with civic actors as metagovernors and interact frequently with relevant players from the civil society? Or do civic actors exercise influence outside of existing networks and without close relations to the local government? And do we find different conditions in the countries under scrutiny?

Although local actors and institutions play a decisive role regarding the resulting type of network governance, the national context is a relevant factor that should not be underestimated. According to Sellers (2005: 421) 'even in the era of growing internationalization, one of the most crucial features of urban governance and politics lies in their nested relation to a host of institutions and other processes at national and other, broader levels'. In a profound analysis of two very similar cities in Germany and the U.S., Sellers (2002) demonstrates the pivotal influence of the national infrastructure on the strategies of the local leaders and the policy outcomes in different fields. In past decades, comparative research mostly focused either exclusively on national units or on local practices without considering the national context. However, there have been different approaches to link the local and the national level (see e.g. Hesse and Sharpe 1991; Page and Goldsmith 1987; Sellers and Lidström 2007; Wollmann 2000; Wolman and Goldsmith 1992). To account properly for the national infrastructure, it is necessary to include governmental, political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions (see Sellers 2005: 425). These dimensions serve as sources of institution building within localities and of local identities, values, and interests (ibid.: 426). They comprise various elements such as the party system, types of fiscal redistribution, the tax system, mechanisms of the welfare state and lo-

cal government systems. Thereby, the national infrastructure affects local politics directly or indirectly by influencing the preferences of local leaders, business actors or the local population. The decisive impact of the national infrastructure on city politics and policies leads to different *national models of urban governance*. Although urban governance arrangements may vary considerably within a country, the common national context creates a significant similarity. To elaborate these national models of urban governance, the survey on the European councillors offers several possibilities. In the following, we draw on the questions concerning the influence of different local actors and the communication patterns of city councillors to identify the different national types of urban governance.

11.2   Councillors in Local Politics: Influence, Power, and Interactions

Influence of Different Actors over Local Authority Activities

To grasp the relevance of actors in urban governance arrangements and to illustrate the composition of different governance networks, we first examine the perceived influence of various local actors. The municipal councillors surveyed were asked to assess how influential different groups and actors are over local authority activities. Figure 11.1 shows the average influence across all participating countries.[2]

The figure clearly indicates the continuing importance of public actors in European municipalities. According to municipal councillors, the mayor, the executive board and the administration are still the most influential actors in local politics. Although business and civic actors are presumably gaining influence in the increasingly globalised and urbanized world, municipal governments are still considerably more influential than other local actors. Leading members of the council such as the president of the council and the presidents of the council committees also possess substantial power. Ordinary councillors appear in about the middle of the graph. Figure 11.2 examines further these councillors and shows their average influence by country.

---

2   Most items exhibit more than 11,000 observations which is close to the total number of participating councillors. A smaller number of observations is only present in the items 'The president of the council' (7,822 observations) and 'Quarter decentralised institutional bodies' (8,793 observations). Some items are missing in national data sets. The item 'The president of the council' is missing in the data sets of the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, the item 'Municipal chief executive officer' is missing in the record of Croatia and the item 'The executive board' is missing in the data set of Poland.

Figure 11.1: Average influence of different actors[3] over the local authority activities
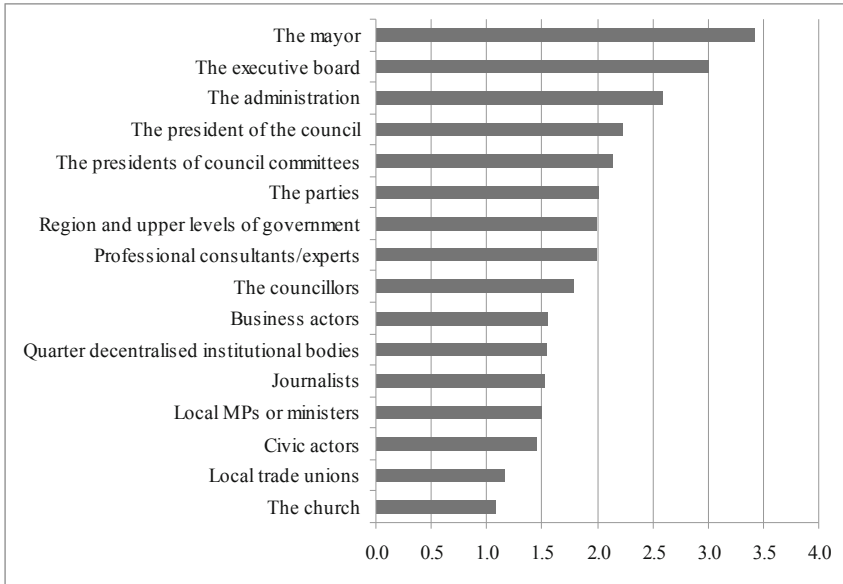
Question 5: 'On the basis of your experience as a local councillor in this city, and independently of the formal procedures, please indicate how influential each of the following actors is over the local authority activities.' Scale: 0-4.

On a scale from zero to four, the perceived influence of municipal councillors varies from 2.2 in the Netherlands and in Spain to 1.4 in Italy and Israel. However, this range is not very wide. In every participating country, ordinary councillors occupy an average position regarding influence in local politics. Furthermore, there is no apparent pattern concerning geographic location, the type of local government system or the party system.

---

3   Some actors have been merged into groups. The items 'The heads of departments in the municipality' and 'The municipal chief executive officer' have been merged into the group 'The administration', the items 'Party leaders', 'The party groups in the council' and 'Party organisations' have been merged into 'The parties', the items 'Single councillors' and 'Myself' have been merged into the group 'The councillors', the items 'Local businessmen' and 'National and international firms' have been merged into 'Business actors' and the items 'Local (voluntary) associations' and 'Local single issue groups' have been merged into the group 'Civic actors'.

Figure 11.2: Average influence of municipal councillors by country
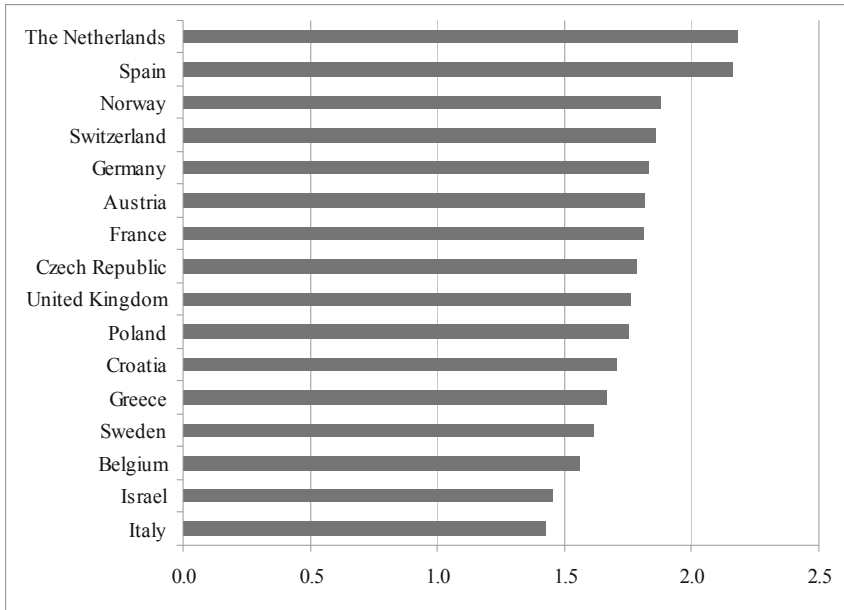
Question 5: 'On the basis of your experience as a local councillor in this city, and independently of the formal procedures, please indicate how influential each of the following actors is over the local authority activities.' Scale: 0-4.

In a first approach to illustrate national models of urban governance, figure 11.3 graphs the perceived influence of public and civic actors per country. The item 'public actors' consists of the mayor, the executive board and the administration. According to municipal councillors, these actors are most relevant in local politics and unchallenged in every country. The variable 'civic actors' comprises local (voluntary) associations and local single issue groups. Across the countries under scrutiny, there is little visible variance regarding the relevance of public and civic actors. State actors possess substantially more power than actors from civil society. In every country, civic actors are only estimated around half as important as state actors. Public actors possess highest influence in Belgium, Croatia, Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom, while civic actors such as local associations and single issue groups are particularly influential in France, Norway, Spain and the Netherlands. The gap between these two sets of actors is especially wide in Sweden, Belgium, the Czech Republic and the

United Kingdom – this could be conceived as an indicator for a state-centered democracy with low inclusion of activist from civil society.

Figure 11.3: Average influence of public and civic actors per country
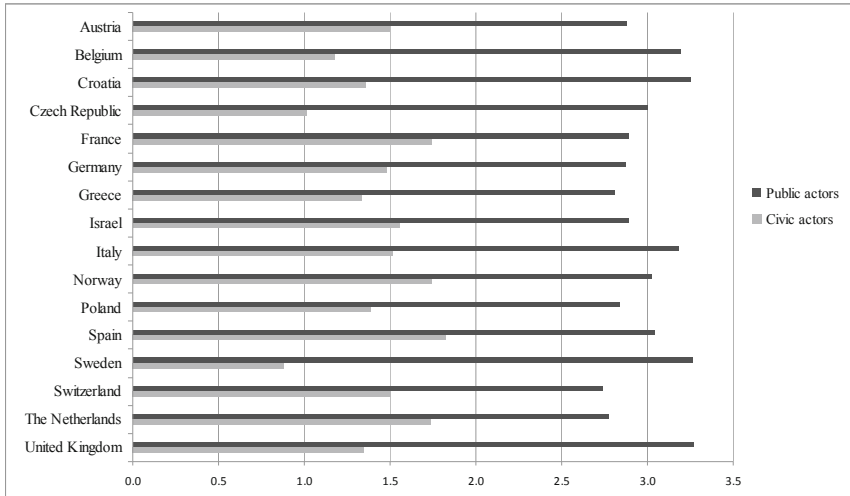
Question 5: 'On the basis of your experience as a local councillor in this city, and independently of the formal procedures, please indicate how influential each of the following actors is over the local authority activities.' Scale: 0-4.

Most of these countries belong to the 'welfare-state model' according to Gold-smith (1992: 395), where emphasis is given on efficient service delivery and local politicians are expected to be good managers. It is therefore not the primary duty of politicians to promote the interest of the local community.

In general however, the relative and total differences across the participating countries are rather small. So, this first variable does not allow for manifold interpretations regarding existing governance network arrangements. We should therefore consider additional variables to track down national models of urban governance and to reliably localize the role of municipal councillors.

11.3 Influence of Different Actors on the Municipal Council

As a second step, we explore the influence different local actors exert on the municipal council. The councillors surveyed were asked the following question: 'If a firm wanted to develop a project in the locality and expected that the council would not approve of the project, which actors would it have to win over to

its side in order to influence the council?' Figure 11.4 illustrates the aggregated responses – the total influence of different local actors on the council across all participating countries.[4]

Figure 11.4: Average influence of different actors[5] on the council
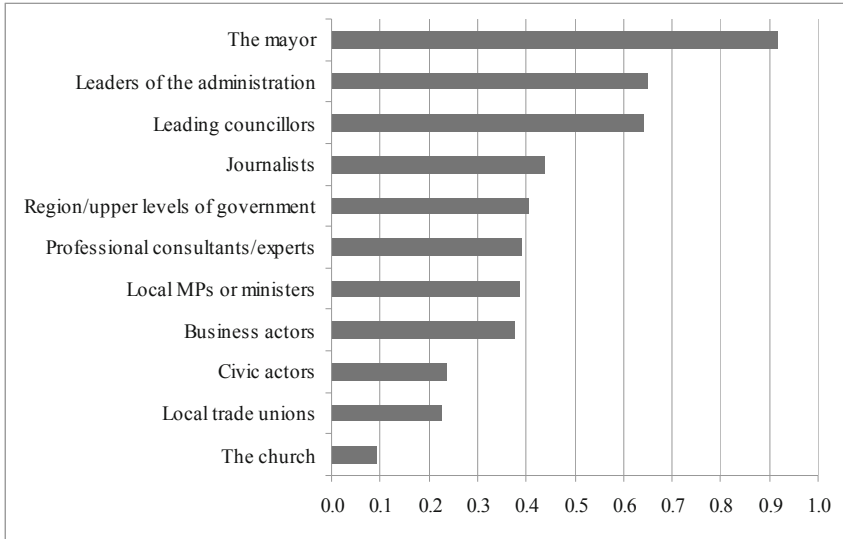
Question 6: 'If a firm wants to enforce a project in the locality and expects that the council will not approve of the project, what actors would it have to win over to its side in order to influence the council?' Scale: 0-1.

The ranking of local actors according to their influence on the council produces a similar graph as in the previous variable. Relevant public actors such as the mayor, leaders of the administration and leading councillors are most important in persuading the municipal council to endorse a new project. Again, private ac-

---

4   All items exhibit between 9,500 and 10,300 observations. In the Dutch data set, this question is completely missing. In the Polish and Israeli data sets, the item 'The Members of the executive body' is missing.

5   Some actors have been merged into groups. The items 'The members of the executive body' and 'The heads of departments in the municipality' have been merged into the group 'Leaders of the administration', the items 'The leaders of the party groups in the council' and 'The leader of one or more committees' have been added up to 'Leading councillors', the items 'Local businessmen, shop-owners, etc.' and 'Local chambers of commerce' have been added up to 'Business actors' and the items 'Local (voluntary) associations' and 'Local single issue groups' have been merged into the group 'Civic actors'.

tors are regarded as less influential. However, the range between the different persons and institutions is substantially wider. And surprisingly, the councillors surveyed categorize the persuasive power of journalists as rather high – in contrast to their general influence on local politics.

Figure 11.5 illustrates the persuasive power of relevant local actors by country. Included are public actors – comprising the three state actors with the highest influence on the council: the mayor, leaders of the administration and leading councillors – as well as civic actors.

Figure 11.5: Average influence of public and civic actors on the council per country
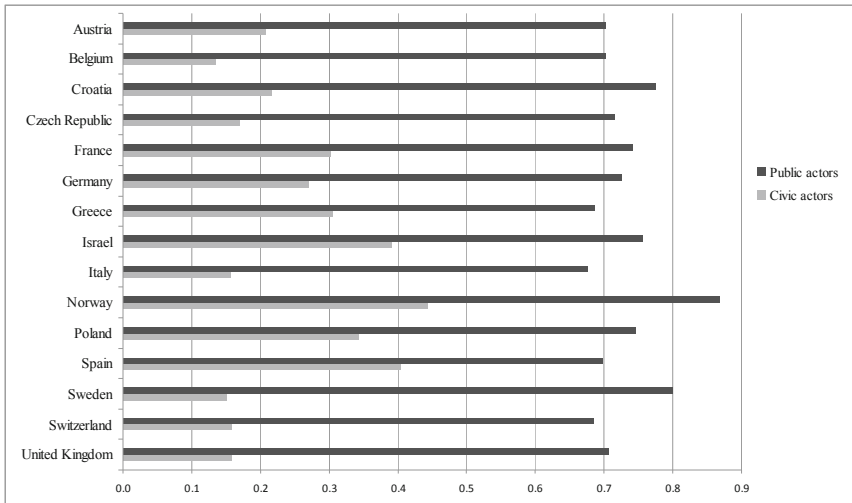
Question 6: 'If a firm wants to enforce a project in the locality and expects that the council will not approve of the project, what actors would it have to win over to its side in order to influence the council?' Scale: 0-1.

In comparison with the previous question measuring the general influence in local politics, the country comparison of this question is not as uniform. We can detect substantial differences between the participating countries. However, public actors still possess most influence in every country and are clearly regarded as much more relevant than actors from civil society. State actors are particularly powerful in Croatia, Norway and Sweden while civic actors possess highest influence on the council in Israel, Norway and Spain. The distance between public and civic actors is largest in Sweden, Belgium, Croatia, the United Kingdom and the Czech Republic. Obviously, the collected data reveal some

consistency since almost the same countries showed a large gap between state and civic actors in the previous question. We can argue here as well that countries belonging to the 'welfare-state model' (Goldsmith 1992: 395) placing stronger emphasis on the effective local delivery of public goods, on professional local officials, and attaching less importance to a comprehensive inclusion of civil society.

However, whether the influence of civic actors is exercised outside or within network arrangements is not yet clear. As an indicator for the network structure, we examine in the following section the communication patterns of municipal councillors. Thereby, we investigate the councillors' interactions with other actors in local politics.

Interactions with Different Actors in Local Politics

The third variable refers to the communication behaviour of local councillors. The councillors surveyed were asked the following question: 'How frequently do you have contact with the following individuals or groups?' Studying the councillors' interactions with different relevant actors should indicate the composition of network arrangements. Furthermore, we can track the role behaviour of local councillors: Do they stick to their traditionally defined role as sovereign controllers of the public administration or have they adopted a new role as meta-governors? Figure 11.6 illustrates the aggregated responses – the total frequency of contact with different local actors across all participating countries.[6]

It is not surprising that councillors have frequent interactions with members of their own party, members of the executive board, the leaders of their party organisation, the mayor as well as other party groups and councillors – mostly about a few times a month. It is however remarkable that councillors contact individual citizens very often in their role. This item ranks second. In general, councillors seem to try to stay in close contact with the civil society. Is this matter of fact already an indicator for new role behaviour? Prior to drawing conclusions, we take a look across the countries surveyed.

---

6   All items have more than 11,000 observations with the exemption of the item 'The president of the council' with only 7,364 observations. This variable is missing in the data sets of the Czech Republic, France, Israel, the Netherlands and Norway. In the Polish data set, the item 'Members of the executive board' is missing and the variable 'The municipality chief executive officer' is not recorded in the Croatian data set.

Figure 11.6: Average frequency of contact w. different local actors[7]
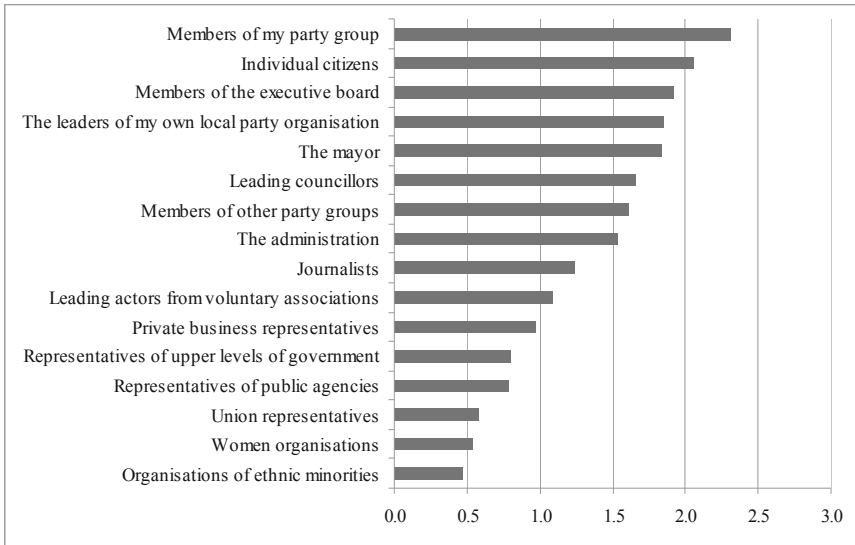
Figure 11.7 illustrates the frequency of contact with relevant local actors by country. Included are parties as well as different civic actors. The item 'parties' consists of the two high-ranked items 'members of my party group' and 'the leaders of my own local party', while the item 'civic actors' includes 'leading actors from voluntary associations', 'women organisations', 'organisations of ethnic minorities' and 'individual citizens'. In every country surveyed – except for Poland – municipal councillors interact frequently with their own party and a lot more regularly than with actors from civil society. An important component of councillors' ties with their own party is the emergence and the professionalisation of local parties. Since local parties in Poland are not of particular importance compared to other European countries and the party membership among councillors is comparably low, the result shown above is not a surprise. But in

---

7   Some actors have been merged into groups. The items 'Committee leaders' and 'The president of the council' have been merged into the group 'Leading councillors' and the items 'The municipality chief executive officer' and 'Civil servants in the municipality' have been merged into 'The administration'.

8   The scale is as follows: 0 = '(almost) never'; 1 = 'a few times a year'; 2 = 'a few times a month'; 3 = 'a few times of week'.

general, the figure demonstrates that the aggregation of preferences and interests in local politics mainly proceeds via parties. Interests and concerns are only rarely transmitted via activists or associations from civil society. Compared to other European countries, Spanish councillors have most frequent contact with their party as well as with actors from civil society.

Figure 11.7: Average frequency of contact with own party and civic actors per country
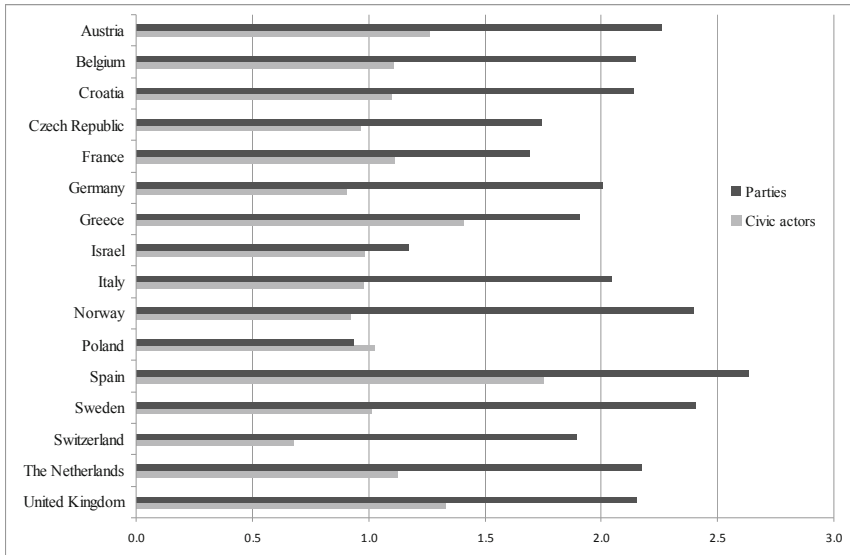
Question 15: 'How frequently do you have contact with the following individuals or groups?' Scale: 0-3.

In this case, both patterns of interest aggregation play an important part in the councillors' behaviour. Representatives in Spanish cities interact with civic actors nearly monthly while local representatives in Switzerland meet actors from civil society less than only a few times a year. The political system could provide an explanation for this observation: Swiss direct democracy already offers its citizens extensive opportunities for participation. Civic organisations do therefore not exclusively depend on close relations with their representatives. In every other European country, the contacts between councillors and civic actors are similarly frequent and take place around a few times a year. The gap between the two items is largest in Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Germany. In these countries, interest aggregation tied to parties is much more important for

councillors than representing the interests expressed by civic actors. Local parties occupy a dominant position and exert crucial influence on the decisions taken in the council.

Having investigated the influence of different local players as well as their ties with municipal councillors, we now connect these variables to identify different local network models in the countries surveyed and trace the councillors' role behaviour. In doing so, we can establish if the national models of local governance correspond to the community governance model where councillors act as coordinators or if civic actors operate outside of public-private network compositions.

11.4   European Local Councillors in Different Governance Networks

In a final step, we synthesise political influence and relationships to illustrate the participating countries' governance models and to locate the councillors' position within these arrangements. Have local representatives switched to a role behaviour which focuses increasingly on metagovernance? And are civic organisations actually dependent on good relations with public actors or do they gain stronger influence by exiting those partnerships as Davies (2007) suggests? Figure 11.8 displays the distribution of European countries according to the political influence of civic actors and their contacts with local councillors. So, the horizontal axis in figure 11.8 captures the ties between councillors and civil society drawing on the average frequency of contact with civic actors from figures 11.6 and 11.7. The vertical axis measures the political influence of civil society actors over local authority activities described in figures 11.1 and 11.3. The resulting graph is divided into four quadrants that represent four different governance models: independent community organisation, networked community governance, weak community organisation, and failed community governance. The separation lines between the four quadrants are drawn based on a cluster analysis[9] partitioning the values of the involved countries and resulting in three comprehensive clusters.

Obviously, there are a number of countries where the average political influence of civic actors is comparably high while the ties with their local representatives are comparatively weak. Relevant actors from civil society are apparently capable of making themselves heard and putting their issues on the political agenda without close ties with politicians. These community activists assert their claims mostly outside of existing communication channels with local councillors. Elected politicians have not adopted a role as coordinators of com-

---

9   The applied cluster model is a centroid model and bases on the k-means algorithm.

munity governance; they are not in the position of steering self-governing networks and contributing to a stronger civil society (see Jessop 1998; Stoker 2011). This model of local governance could be labelled as *independent community organisation* since civil organisations exercise political influence without being involved in public-private network structures. Most participating countries fall into this category.

Figure 11.8: Distribution of countries according to the influence of civil society and contacts with local councillors
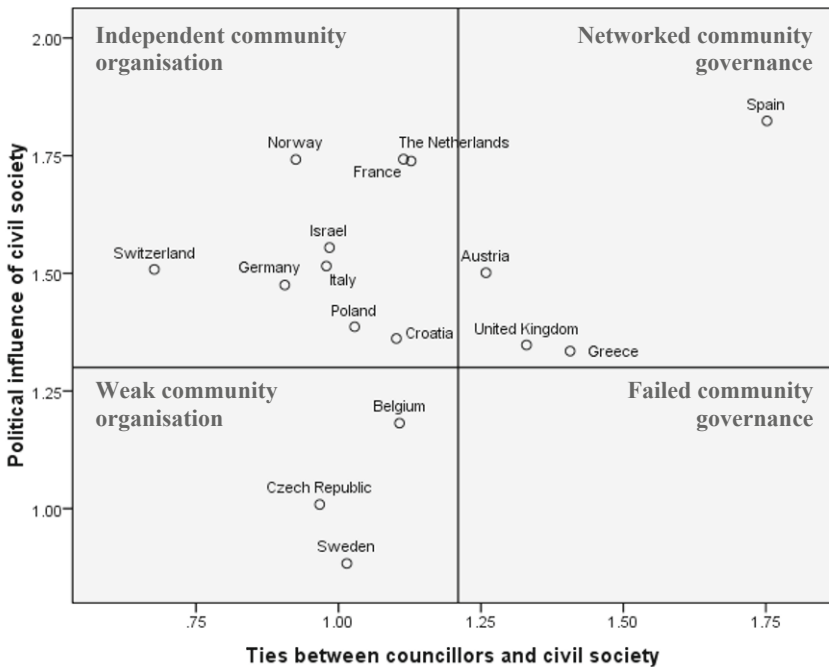
On the other hand, we find a few countries where the political influence of civic actors equals the frequency of interactions with local councillors. Comparatively, civic organisations are of a certain importance and the ties with local representatives are close. Community activists in the countries concerned obviously express themselves within network arrangements including public actors. And the councillors' roles correspond more to an organising task fostering social inclusion and citizen participation. Drawing on Stoker's theoretical framework (2004, 2005), this model resembles *networked community governance*. Elected

councillors take over the function of metagovernors and support community involvement in governance networks.

In some countries in the research, we find on average low civic influence and little interaction between public and civic actors. This constellation corresponds to the model of *weak community organisation*. Local politicians are not able or willing to establish contacts and shape partnerships with private actors while civic organisations do not exert powerful influence – whether within or outside of network arrangements. Preferences are transmitted rather via local party organisations instead of via civic actors. Drawing on the variables analysed, there are no indicators for the much-debated shift from hierarchical decision-making processes towards more horizontal governing structures.

Finally, we encounter a forth model which could be labelled *failed community governance*. It involves close relationships between councillors and community activists as well as low political influence of civil society. While local representatives try to foster citizen participation and rely on a participatory approach, civic associations do not make use of these contacts. They remain in a weak position and are not able to put their concerns on the political agenda. As this set-up is a rather improbable scenario, there is no actual case that falls into this category.

11.5 Conclusion

What is the role of municipal councillors in modern local governance? Have they adopted new role behaviour by 'metagoverning' emerging networks? Did European councillors take on some form of steering function within partnerships between public and civic actors? Or do they stick to their traditional tasks in council and keep the frequency of contacts with civil society low?

In this chapter, we investigated the political influence of relevant local actors and the communication patterns of municipal councillors to identify different governance networks and the councillors' role therein. The results show that – according to the councillors surveyed – public actors still occupy a dominant position in local politics. The councillors' influence ranks approximately in the middle of the scale. Thereby, the differences between the participating countries are rather small. Regarding interactions in local politics, councillors frequently communicate with members of their own party as well as with various public actors such as the administration, the mayor, the executive board or other members of the council. Interestingly, the second most contacted actors are individual citizens. The items concerning councillors' interaction patterns vary more strongly between countries, but the ranking of the individual local actors remains the same. Combining the two variables enables us to classify the coun-

tries into four national models of urban governance. Thereby, most participating countries fall into the category of 'independent community organisation', where councillors have not adopted a new role as coordinators of community governance but activists of civil society are capable of putting their issues on the political agenda by themselves.

In most cities and most countries, the role of municipal councillors seems to remain unchanged. Apparently, local politicians often stick to their traditional representative role by aggregating preferences via their parties and controlling the activities of the municipal administration. Although the influence of private players is rising in local politics, coordinating community governance is not regarded as an essential competence in the councillors' repertoire.

References

Bang, H. (ed.) (2003) Governance as Social and Political Communication. Manchester University Press: Manchester.

Barnett, N. (2011) 'Local Government at the Nexus?', *Local Government Studies* 37 (3), 275-290.

Bekkers, V., Dijkstra, G., Edwards, A. and Fenger, M. (2007) 'Governance and the Democratic Deficit: An Evaluation' in Bekkers, V., Dijkstra, G., Edwards, A. and Fenger, M. (eds.) Governance and the Democratic Deficit. Ashgate: Aldershot, 295-312.

Benz, A. and Papadopoulos, Y. (eds.) (2006) Governance and Democracy. Routledge: London.

Davies, J. S. (2007) 'The Limits of Partnership: An Exit-Action Strategy for Local Democratic Inclusion', *Political Studies* 55 (4), 779-800.

Denters, B. and Rose, L. E. (2005) 'Towards Local Governance?' in Denters, B. and Rose, L. E. (eds.) Comparing Local Governance. Trends and Developments. Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills, 246-262.

Goldsmith, M. (1992) 'Local Government', *Urban Studies* 29 (3/4), 393-410.

Hesse, J. J. and Sharpe, L. J. (1991) 'Local Government in International Perspective: Some Comparative Observations', in Hesse, J. J. (ed.) Local Government and Urban Affairs in International Perspective. Nomos: Baden-Baden, 603-621.

Jessop, B. (1998): The Rise of Governance and the Risk of Failure: The Case of Economic Development. Basil Blackwell: Oxford.

Klijn, E.-H. and Skelcher, C. (2007) 'Democracy and Governance Networks: Compatible or not?', *Public Administration* 85 (3), 587-608.

Klok, P.-J. and Denters, B. (2005) 'Urban leadership and community involvement: an institutional analysis', in Haus, M., Heinelt, H. and Stewart, M. (eds.) Urban Governance und Democracy. Leadership and community involvement. Routledge: London, 40-64.

Mossberger, K. and Stoker, G. (2001) 'The evolution of urban regime theory. The challenge of conceptualization', *Urban Affairs Review* 36 (6), 810-835.

Page, E. and Goldsmith, M. (1987) Central and Local Government Relations: A Comparative Analysis of West European Unitary States. Sage: London.

Pierre, J. (2000) 'Introduction: Understanding Governance' in Pierre, J. (ed.): Debating Governance. Authority, Steering and Democracy. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1-10.

Sellers, J. M. and Lidström, A. (2007) 'Decentralisation, Local Government, and the Welfare State', *Governance* 20 (4), 609-632.

Sellers, J. M. (2005) 'Re-Placing the Nation – An Agenda for Comparative Urban Politics', *Urban Affairs Review* 40 (4), 419-445.

Sellers, J. M. (2002) 'The Nation-State and Urban Governance – Toward Multilevel Analysis', *Urban Affairs Review* 37 (5), 611-641.

Skelcher, C. (2005) 'Jurisdictional Integrity, Polycentrism, and the Design of Democratic Governance', *Governance* 18 (1), 89-110.

Sørensen, E. (2006): 'Metagovernance. The Changing Role of Politicians in Processes of Democratic Governance', *American Review of Public Administration* 36 (1), 98-114.

Sørensen, E. and Torfing, J. (2005) 'The Democratic Anchorage of Governance Networks', *Scandinavian Political Studies* 28 (3), 195-218.

Sørensen, E. and Torfing, J. (2007a) 'Introduction: Governance Network Research: Towards a Second Generation' in Sørensen, E. and Torfing, J. (eds.) Theories of Democratic Network Governance. Palgrave-Macmillan: Basingstoke, 1-21.

Sørensen, E. and Torfing, J. (eds.) (2007b) Theories of Democratic Network Governance. Palgrave-Macmillan: Basingstoke.

Sørensen, E. and Torfing, J. (2009) 'Making Governance Networks Effective and Democratic through Metagovernance', *Public Administration* 87 (2), 234-258.

Stoker, G. (2004): Transforming Local Governance. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.

Stoker, G. (2005) 'New Localism, Participation and Community Governance', Paper presented to the UN 6th Global Forum on Reinventing Government, 24-27 May, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

Stoker, G. (2011): 'Was Local Governance such a Good Idea? A Global Comparative Perspective', *Public Administration* 89 (1), 15-31.

Stone, C. (1989) Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988. University Press of Kansas, Lawrence.

Stone, C. (1993) 'Urban regimes and the capacity to govern: A political economy approach', *Journal of Urban Affairs* 15 (1), 1-28.

Vetter, A. and Kersting, N. (2003) 'Reforming local government. Heading for efficiency and democracy', in Kersting, N. and Vetter, A. (eds.) Reforming Local Government in Europe. Closing the Gap between Democracy and Efficiency. Leske + Budrich: Opladen, 333-349.

Wollmann, H. (2000) 'Local Government Systems: From historic divergence towards convergence? Great Britain, France, and Germany as (comparative) cases in point', *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 18 (1), 33-55.

Wolman, H. and Goldsmith, M. (1992) Urban Politics and Policy: A Comparative Approach. Blackwell: London.

12 Local councillors and administrative reforms

Max-Christopher Krapp, Werner Pleschberger and Björn Egner

12.1 Introduction

Local government reform is a continuing process both in Europe and beyond. Not only are European countries experiencing an ongoing political and academic debate about the most suitable approach to local government reform; in many countries such reforms have been implemented some time ago. As Wright (1997: 8) pointed out fifteen years ago, 'public sector reform is in fashion and no self-respecting government can afford to ignore it'. This was not only true for the 1990s, but is still true today. The NPM (New Public Management) paradigm has taken the role of the leading concept for administrative modernisation in numerous European countries and has triggered many real reform initiatives (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004). It is beyond dispute that local government is targeted by its 'parent systems' in higher levels of government with NPM inspired reforms.

From a critical perspective, the idea of reform targeting municipal administration is an old-fashioned idea dating back in history, which is resold under the NPM label. NPM is occasionally used as a collection of reform tools rather than a consistent reform concept. Some country studies give evidence that local actors are more sensitive towards the request for administrative reform by comparison with the representatives of the higher levels of government (Hammerschmid and Mayer 2005 for Austria), but by no means stress all the 'hard' NPM-elements or put them into practice. Local actors may also historically have picked up the NPM-agenda before the national or the regional level. The representatives of local government sectors – researchers, private management consultants, higher local civil servants and political representatives of local authorities – have generated a type of 'advocacy coalition' (Sabatier 1988) and have pushed the local administrative reform processes. In particular, management consultants and their surveys often give the impression that administrative modernisation advances consistently and progressively, and is mainly demonstrated by mentioning singular best-practice cases.

The key goals discussed within the NPM frame are changes in the institutional settings of local government (horizontal power relations), and fostering of the involvement of societal actors - or inter-active policy-making. Further very

distinctive strands of the NPM-inspired discourse are efficiency (aimed at reducing costs and improving productivity) and competition (aimed at improving the customer orientation of local service delivery). However, as the concept varies at the national level, the strategies and activities are diversified on the local level as well (see Wollmann 2008 for Sweden and Germany, Pleschberger 2003 for Austria).

In the pre-NPM-era local authorities gained some experiences with the 'privatization' of local service production (e.g. organizational spin-off, outsourcing of services to private companies etc.), which nowadays is a common feature of local service provision. The NPM-inspired reform strategies in historic view again intensified these developments and have generated many new modernization projects, which in many cases have been experimental in nature (e.g. balanced scorecards, performance comparisons etc.).

A comparison of the conceptual and best-practice oriented 'modernization fireworks' of the NPM-era and the 'real' reform practice according to many findings has produced rather conservative reforms, and/or that their effects are moderate and often contradictory (Pleschberger 2003; Kuhlmann 2009: 251). The effective implementation and the impacts regarding administrative modernization measures are repeatedly assessed rather uncritically among the supporters and are understood as demonstrating a need for new reform initiatives. Furthermore, the actual practical experience of local councillors concerning reforms most notably exhibits a multitude of forms, changes and results. The differences in implementation, which need to be considered in a sophisticated manner, are embedded in the diverse institutional national context, in which the NPM-reforms are executed.

Considering the convergence and divergence of NPM-developments in Europe, we suggest that among local councillors there is a broad, relatively stable, and reasoned reform consensus that is distributed across European states. We argue that administrative reform is 'internalized' cognitively and individually as well as socially by groups of local councillors, which results in mutual consolidation and enforcement. But it would be wrong to overestimate the general attitudes of local councillors towards modernization, because they operate in the 'concrete' political sphere normally as interventionist trouble-shooters (Orr and Vince 2009: 666) and as 'agents' trying to maximise given utility functions under given constraints.

They may believe that beneficial gains of modernization projects in their community best take effect in the long run with few up front financial costs. Furthermore, for councillors, NPM-reforms pose the very fundamental question of the future profile of the functions of local councillors, in a very specific manner. Programmatically, administrative modernization implies a new understand-

ing of the communal council, which differs markedly from the established model of administrative 'detail government' by local politics. Actions conforming to NPM – amongst other things – offer strategic target control by local politics through the local council and the evaluation of target attainment through a relatively autonomously acting administration.

Effectively implemented strategies and projects of administrative modernization have a further genuinely political effect: they induce a real loss in the actual power of local councillors in the short term. In other words: within political science an interesting question is if and to what extent local councillors are willing to take part in a process of change, which reduces their power and strives for a fundamentally different share of power between political and administrative officials compared to the traditional model of local democratic government, which 'positions managers as visionary leaders, with important strategic and technical skills' (Orr and Vince 2009: 666) upon which local councillors may depend.

In this chapter, we analyse how local councillors perceive administrative reforms at the local level and discuss the degree of their acceptance from several explanatory perspectives. More specifically, the responses towards four statements within the framework of the MAELG survey are be explored:

- 'Politicians should only define objectives and control outputs, and never intervene into the task fulfilment of local administration.'
- 'Competition between service providers facilitates citizen choice in public services.'
- 'There are few benefits from contracting out or privatising services in the municipality.'
- 'Public-private Partnerships are more effective in solving problems than public administration and representative bodies.'

The first statement introduces the separation between administrators and politicians. This includes the separation of professional administration concerned with the implementation of policy from political processes of the setting of policy goals. This idea of clarifying the tasks of politics and administration includes the requirement to formulate objectives of the city and to define corresponding public tasks (outputs or products in terms of NPM). NPM, though allowing discretion in the context of administrative actions, also directs focus onto the control of the agents through different mechanisms. Politicians expect better performance by local administrative agencies. To achieve better performance, they pass responsibilities to them, as well as the resources necessary to meet public objectives. Furthermore, structures to monitor the achievements are required,

which refers to the necessity to install a system of operating figures, performance measurement, or other such mechanism to evaluate performance. For councillors, this implies self-restraint, because they are requested to reduce their activities to the level of public objectives and thus to change their deep-rooted tendency to intervene in many singular and very specific affairs in local administrative decision making, and to stay out from the day-today issues. As Pandey and Moynihan (2006: 11) point out: 'No group of political actors is more important to the operation of public agencies than elected officials. Through a variety of formal hierarchical as well as informal mechanisms, elected officials have the opportunity and ability to penetrate deeply into the inner workings of public organizations.' Local administrations should now alternatively work in a more business-like fashion, based on the assumption that there should not be significant differences between the management practices in the private and public sector, wherein the private sector corresponds with effectiveness and efficiency of service production.

The second statement points to the approach to develop mechanisms of competition between parts of the public sector. This should achieve better and more cost-effective results, through which residents could benefit. Competition can be shaped as 'non-market competition, including benchmarking activities, performance comparisons, and internal 'quasi-markets'' or as 'market competition, consisting of public/public, public/private or private/private competitors, including also cross-border-competition of different public providers' (Reichard 2002: 64). The formulation of the statement in the questionnaire is focused on the second version of competition and thereby poses an ambitious conception. An example of this sort of market competition can be provided by the voucher system introduced in the Swedish primary school sector in 1992, where parents have the right to choose between public and private sector providers (Green-Pedersen 2002: 281).

Contracting out and the privatisation of services as expression of a 'lean state' were particularly promoted in the 1990s (cf. Homburg et al. 2007: 6). The dominant perspective was the excessive size of the state, which had – in the eyes of the critics - to be resolved by a shift of task fulfilment from the public sector to the private sector. Task review should differentiate between the genuine duties of the state and other activities, which might be better realised by private service providers. Privatisation aimed to shape public service production towards the market in different ways, ranging from for instance pure privatisation by outsourcing, to managed competition of service provision between internal public and external public private providers by competitive tender – which can be described as alternative service delivery (Andrews and Moynihan 2002) inspired by the doctrinal components of privatisation or quasi-privatisation.

Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), which are highlighted in the last statement, were created and can be understood as an alternative to pure privatisation strategies. In these arrangements public and private actors cooperate over a long-term period to realise a common goal. The formal and informal arrangements and organizations are based on the delegation of functions from the governmental territorial hierarchy. As the co-operation depends on the mutual recognition and cooptation of the public and private 'partners', there is always some risk that the public partner loses considerable responsibility for the public goal in exchange for only limited gains (Peters 1997). Criticism of PPPs highlight three major points. First, it is questionable that PPPs do in fact generate more efficient service delivery. Second, the question has been raised if PPPs have an impact on genuine political processes such as the uneven bargaining positions of the public and the private side or 'structural mismatch of knowledge' (Stephenson 1991: 119). Third, it has been argued that PPPs may not ultimately benefit citizens, but may perpetuate skewed distributions in a political entity. For example, a certain PPP only delivers its service for a special spatial area or a special group, creating injustice regarding service access (cf. Stephenson 1991).

12.2   Attitudes of local councillors to NPM reforms

The responses of local councillors to the statements vary considerably (Table 12.1). Competition is the least disputed element of NPM discussed here, with more than 57% of all respondents stating that 'competition between service providers facilitates citizen choice in public services'.

Table 12.1: Aggregated overview of attitudes

Statement	N	0	1	2	3	4	Mean	Std. dev.
Never intervene into task fulfilment	11,655	5.4	26.1	19.3	35.0	14.2	2.26	1.151
Competition	11,593	3.5	14.1	24.9	41.7	15.8	2.52	1.028
Few benefits from contracting out	11,616	7.6	25.8	26.0	26.5	14.1	2.14	1.272
Public-Private Partnership	11,628	5.7	20.3	33.9	29.4	10.7	2.19	1.057

Weighted for countries, table cells indicate share of valid answers. 0=strongly disagree; 1=disagree; 2= neither agree nor disagree; 3= agree; 4= strongly agree.

The other three statements fail to attract a majority of 'agree' responses. The separation of politics and administration, the desirability of reforms for contracting out and establishing Public Private Partnership are more controversial.

Table 12.2: Aggregated overview of attitudes by countries

	Never intervene in task fulfilment			Competition			Few benefits from contracting out			Public Private Partnerships		
	mean	N	Std. dev.	mean	N	Std. dev.	mean	N	Std. dev.	mean	N	Std. dev.
Austria	2.43	475	1.001	2.46	480	.912	2.50	462	1.034	3.18	498	.896
Belgium	2.10	660	1.122	2.06	653	1.028	2.16	660	1.096	1.95	1,380	1.122
Croatia	2.58	491	.963	2.99	493	.758	2.15	478	.921	2.47	494	1.225
Czech Rep.	2.34	843	1.013	2.98	845	.744	1.94	843	1.005	1.90	994	1.026
France	1.86	1,368	1.104	2.40	1,344	.810	2.40	1,360	1.093	2.07	660	.977
Germany	2.25	956	1.105	2.46	943	.861	2.32	957	1.089	2.32	957	1.089
Greece	2.86	262	1.022	2.74	258	.954	2.47	263	1.036	1.94	471	1.013
Israel	2.67	146	1.122	3.32	147	.805	2.04	144	1.187	2.18	136	.954
Italy	2.46	1,147	1.099	2.78	1,159	.927	2.16	1,141	1.119	2.36	736	.922
Netherlands	2.58	750	1.081	2.11	734	1.024	1.93	749	1.038	2.16	844	.911
Norway	1.96	722	1.188	2.36	723	1.342	2.12	724	1.462	2.61	493	.944
Poland	2.90	489	1.257	3.49	492	.732	1.68	493	1.309	2.29	723	1.133
Spain	2.21	468	1.130	2.42	462	.932	1.93	465	1.142	2.54	147	.950
Sweden	2.70	492	1.184	2.58	495	1.392	1.83	494	1.564	2.22	1,145	.977
Switzerland	2.16	1,001	1.089	2.30	983	.972	2.44	1,000	1.201	1.84	951	.985
UK	1.91	1,386	1.176	2.28	1,382	1.051	1.90	1,386	1.104	2.48	259	1.098
Total	2.26	11,655	1.151	2.52	11,593	1.028	2.14	11,616	1.172	2.15	10,888	1.106

Additionally it can be shown that there is to some extent variation in the aggregated attitudes between countries (Table 12.2). The national context entails different structures of local government, which can indicate reform needs and reform obstacles, and also bring into focus national reform discourses and story lines, which could influence individual attitudes. Clear patterns of attitudes by countries cannot be readily identified in this overview.

We assume that the attitudes to several reform aspects are not totally independent, but councillors evaluate them as single concepts. This is explored by testing the correlations between those single variables (Table 12.3). Half the correlations are low. When the statement which concerns the relationship of actors *within* the municipal apparatus is involved, there is no major connection between councillors' statements. But if the three statements pointing to the 'external' part of NPM are analysed, they show correlations coefficients with a middle degree (r=-.349, .445 and -.364 respectively).

Table 12.3: Correlations between attitudes

	Competition	Few benefits from contracting out and privatization	Public-Private Partnerships
Never intervene into task fulfilment	.125** N=11,508	.011 N=11,557	.127** N=11,539
Competition		-.349** N=11,478	.445** N=11,524
Few benefits from contracting out and privatization			-.364** N=11,524

Pearson's r, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.

This shows that the response of councillors varies. Some reforms aspects are more acceptable than others and thereby have to be explained differently. Consequently we will analyse those elements separately and try to identify the force of different explanatory factors.

12.3 Explanatory variables and operationalisation

The analysis of attitudes towards reform can draw on and be illuminated by previous studies focused on the German context (cp. Krapp 2012; Egner et al. 2012), where significant explanatory variables could be identified. These factors refer to a) individual aspects such as the perception of the necessity for reform, the individual ideological disposition or notion of democracy, and to b) context specific aspects as the city size, the local government type as well as the na-

tional background. Their relevance towards the different reform aspects can be outlined as follows.

First of all, the *necessity for reform* should be conceptualised as an explanatory variable. Thereby the individual assessment of the need of reforms should be used instead of 'objective' criteria, because the dominant perception of the status quo should be more relevant for the analysis of attitudes than pure figures such as for example the local budget, revenues, number of unemployed. If specific key data of a city are of individual importance for the view of the existing context, this should be captured by the subjective perception of the respondents. Thus it could be argued that politicians who perceive the status quo as problematic could be more open-minded towards new ways of organizing local service delivery.[1] The analysis will show if this construction of the necessity for reform can be a significant factor and how relevant this general perspective is compared to other determinants.

Placement on a left-right scale is a broadly applied method to catch the *ideological disposition* of individual actors. It allows a valuation of basic orientations which can be hierarchically connected to concepts of economic, social and political orders (cp. Converse 1964; Hibbs 1977; Castles/Mair 1984; Schmidt 1996). It can be assumed that councillors who have placed themselves on the left, have a more critical perspective towards more competition, contracting out and privatisations as well as PPPs. Because of their essential beliefs and normative orientations towards economic and social aspects they understand public employment as a sphere of well situated working places deserving protection. Furthermore councillors on the left may be more sceptical towards the proclamations of better results of service delivery through economic actors.

The *notions of democracy* of local actors can be differentiated between representative and participatory categories (Heinelt 2012; Haus/Sweeting 2006) While a representative understanding focuses on the central act of voting as most important determination of politics, a more participatory notion of democracy refers to the active and direct inclusion of residents. Those categories are not to be seen as 'mutually exclusive or incompatible', they rather 'co-exist to a greater or lesser extent alongside each other' (Haus and Sweeting 2006: 153). Councillors with a strong participatory notion are possibly more positive towards cooperative forms of service fulfilment through PPPs, while contracting out and privatising of tasks may be perceived as a reduction of the scope of democratic decision-making. To test the relevance of a participatory notion the results of a factor analysis were included. Several statements regarding aspects of decision-making were assessed by the respondents and transformed to a new

---

1   The wording of the statement the respondents had to assess was: 'The need for changes and reorganisation of the local government sector has been greatly exaggerated.'

variable linked to either representative or participatory notions of democracy (cp. Heinelt 2012: 4f.).[2]

As a context specific variable *city size* is important for the perspective of actors. With growing city size the local administration is in general growing as well, including more local activities and services. Smaller cities are marked by less complex and comprehensive tasks. In other words the size of a city determines the 'portfolio' of activities and thereby can influence councillors' views regarding aspects of service fulfilment (such as the feasibility of private involvement). Following Brecht's law (Brecht 1932), we use the natural logarithm of the number of inhabitants as independent variable.

The disparity between *former Communist states* and states with a longer tradition of a market economy is crucial in considering questions related to service delivery. The path breaking developments in former communist states may have evoked a systematic shift of the aggregated attitudes of the respondents. As Skelcher (2005: 350) puts it, '[…] the impetus of economic liberalization in the transitional states of eastern Europe has resulted in extensive use of contacting-out [sic] to reform public services and stimulate private activity.' It can be assumed that under the context of relatively new experiences with private companies the analysis uncovers more optimistic views.

Furthermore the variables *age*, *gender* and *education* are be explored, since they are standard control variables in statistical models trying to explain individual behaviour or notions.

12.4   Analysis and Results

To identify possible determinants for councillors' assessments of the four dimensions of new public management, we conducted a series of OLS regressions, where we used the variables mentioned in the previous section as independent variables and the councillors' assessments about elements of NPM as dependent variables. For each dependent variable, a model was set up with all independents. After that, independent variables with the highest values of p, i.e.

---

2   The statements referring to a participatory notion were: 'Residents should participate actively and directly in making important local decisions', 'Residents should have the opportunity to make their views known before important local decisions are made by elected representatives', 'Political decisions should not be taken only by representative bodies, but should be negotiated with concerned local actors' and 'Local referenda lead to high standard of public debate'. Statements referring to a representative notion were: 'Apart from voting, citizens should not be given the opportunity to influence local government policies', 'Political representatives should make what they think are the right decisions, independent of the current views of local people' and 'The results of local elections should be the most important factor in determining municipal policies.'

the ones with the lowest statistical significance, were removed incrementally. Thus, for each dependent variable, a 'best' model was constructed, leaving only significant variables inside the model, giving four models in all. Those models are depicted in Table 12.4.

Table 12.4: Model overview

Model	I	II	III	IV
N	10,050	9,787	10,060	9,803
R^2	.047	.215	.222	.155
R^2 corr.	.046	.214	.222	.154
P	.000	.000	.000	.000
greatly exaggerated	.137***	-.066***	.203***	-.050***
ideological right		.346***	-.387***	.359***
participatory	.056***	.217***	.061***	.139***
municipality size	-.041***	-.022*	-.078***	-.022*
post-communist	.080***	.181***	-.049***	.069***
Age	.095***	.039***		.030***
Female	-.037***	-.034***		
Education			-.055***	.039***

Table reports the standardised regression coefficients in order to show the importance of the different independent variables in the model. Model I: Relationship between politics and administration. Model II: Competition. Model III: Contracting out and privatisation. Model IV: Public-Private Partnerships. Weighting applied to cases balancing the share of councillors from within countries in the overall sample according to different response rates from countries. * for p<0.05; ** for p<0.01; *** for p<0.001.

The first general result is that the models yield a good model fit in terms of individual data which are used to explain human behaviour. Three of the four models well exceed R^2=0.1, and the best model even comes close to explaining a quarter of the variation on the dependent variable.

Model I shows that the main determinant for a councillor's assessment about the separation of politics and administration is their general notion about public administration reform. Those who hold a rather critical notion about public administration reform ('The need for changes […] has been greatly exaggerated') in fact do highlight the separation element, which seems inconsistent. All the other determinants are comparably low in influence, though they show a statistically significant impact. Councillors who support participatory democracy tend to support the separation of spheres – perhaps because they understand the self-restraint of councillors as a favourable term to realise a well-regulated form of participatory democracy. Councillors from small municipalities tend to have a sceptical view towards the separation of spheres, perhaps because in small municipalities, separation seems unrealistic due to the small scale of political and administrative apparatus. On the contrary, older and male councillors tend

to support the separation of politics and administration. Councillors from post-communist countries tend to favour the separation of politics and administration; this is the second most influential variable in this model. Generally, the first model has the poorest determination coefficient and does not give a good explanation of the councillors' notions on the separation element.

Model II, about the councillors' assessment of competition, yields a better result in terms of the determination coefficient and the weighting of the determinants in the model. The main driving force concerning this question is the ideology position of the councillors, where there is a strong connection between a tendency to the political right and the expectation that competition between service providers facilitates citizen choice. Competition is perceived as an appropriate measure, particularly in post-communist countries. As in Model I, councillors' notions about participatory democracy also plays a certain role, while municipality size, age and gender are very much similar to Model I, both in respect of the direction of the effect and the relative size of the effect within the model. Also the overall attitude towards NPM plays a role: The more a councillor feels that the necessity for reform is exaggerated, the more s/he tends to have a negative view on competition.

Model IV is similar to Model II in most respects. A councillor's assessment about the problem-solving capacity of Public-Private Partnerships is strongly influenced by the councillor's ideological position. Councillors of the ideological right tend to be more convinced that PPPs are better than public administration when it comes to problem-solving. Again, being a supporter of participatory democracy correlates with a positive notion toward this NPM element, which may be associated with PPPs integrating private actors in service delivery. Again, those who oppose NPM and think that reforms are exaggerated tend to see PPPs more negatively. The size of the municipality is again significant, but shows only a small coefficient. Councillors from post-communist countries show a more support for PPP as a problem-solving strategy. Also, two personal attributes are significant factors, but also only produce a small coefficient, namely age (the older, the more supportive towards PPPs) and educational level (the better educated, the more supportive).

Turning to model III, one has to keep in mind that the original question concerning the item was *negative* in terms of formulation. The statement reads 'There are few benefits from contracting out or privatising services in the municipality'. Therefore, using the same independent variables, we would expect the signs of the coefficients to change. In fact, four of them do and two of them do not. By way of explanation, first of all, it is striking that ideology again is the main explanatory variable of the councillor's assessment for the item. Right-leaning councillors are more likely to reject the statement and thus supporting

contracting out and privatisation, as could be expected. The more general notion about reforms is also, as expected, significant with councillors who state that the need for reforms is exaggerated unsupportive of contracting out and privatisation. Councillors from post-communist countries are again in the supporter column, and those councillors who are better educated also reject the statement. As expected the positive statement towards participatory democracy produces a positive effect, which means that they tend to reject contracting out or privatising services. Regarding the size of the municipality it turns out that the effect is negative, so that councillors in large cities tend to see privatisation in a more positive manner.

Generally, it can be said that three of the four items (competition, contracting out/privatisation and public-private partnerships) assessed by the councillors can to a certain extent be explained by three main determinants, namely their perception of the overall necessity for administrative reforms, their position on the left-right ideology scale, and their overall tendency towards a participatory kind of democracy. For some dimensions, additional variables do play a role, i.e. the number of inhabitants as a proxy for the size of the administration, belonging to a post-communist country where public sector reforms are perceived as necessary and personal attributes such as age, gender and educational level of the councillors that took part in the survey.

12.5   Conclusion

Critics of the traditional model of administration stress its managerial deficits, including the strong connection to formal rules, which has, in their view, produced ineffective and inefficient delivery of public services. But the dynamics of NPM proliferation in the last two decades have not only been the reaction towards a model of administration which has been perceived as traditional and bureaucratic. It was also a process fostered by elites in politics, administration and consulting companies and some even doubt that the process was necessary when looking at some benchmark countries (cf. Moynihan 2006).

In the last two decades, many approaches and examples can be found which intended to implement change in local government. These intentions were mostly supported by upper levels of government with financial resources and expertise, though with varying success. The achievements of reform do vary dramatically: At least, it can be observed that real, structural, market-oriented efforts like genuine privatisation (as inspired by liberal ideas) have remained relatively rare, while technological elements of NPM often have adapted to the particular situation.

We suspect that many local councillors have direct experience with the implementation of NPM schemes, partly due to the broad international discourse and partly due to practical experience in their own municipality. The councillors' attitudes towards NPM are influenced by their individual 'reform spirit' and are – more or less – based on experience. Independent from the perceived rhetorical and actual dynamics of reform, NPM at the local level is not a new phenomenon.

Equally, the 'political' factor in NPM has a different meaning in comparison with the traditional model of public administration, where the political sphere provided tasks in detail which were then implemented by the administration (Osborne 2006). Together with NPM, elected local politicians suffer from the loss of functions. They are confined to strategic definition of goals which implies the retreat from political governance in detail. For the short term, local councils face a severe loss of power without the expectation that this loss can be compensated by increased influence in goal definition in the long run.

Altogether, the NPM-related attitudes of local politicians are not homogenous, which can be related to different preferences for the single reform elements captured by this study. Only low expectations are expressed concerning key elements of NPM reform like contracting out and public-private partnerships. Agreement is stronger for elements like competition between service providers in order to strengthen the freedom of choice of citizens. The claim for non-interference in administrative implementation of tasks set by political decisions is also assessed ambivalently.

Regarding the explanation of the reform attitudes, the relevance of three particular determinants can be confirmed in this study: First, councillors who perceive a general need for reform and thereby disclose a less status quo-oriented perspective are more open minded towards these reforms, with the exception of the separation of political and administrative spheres. This factor is of particularly importance for the estimation of contracting out and privatisation, which can be seen as the most extensive reform approach. Second, the attitudes towards competition, contracting out and PPPs are strongly influenced by the ideological disposition of local councillors and thereby reveal the high politicisation of these reform approaches. This is especially remarkable for the approach of PPPs, which has been introduced as an alternative to pure strategies of privatisation. Third, the relevance of notions of democracy for the explanation of reform attitudes had been verified and seems to be a separate topic for further research.

Furthermore, the analysis has shown that the attitudes towards the relationships between politics and administration are not only divided, they are also hard to explain. This points to (still) relevant conflicts of political culture at the

local level. Local councils should take the role of the decision makers about general local goals (and as controller of implementation). This role was postulated by the proponents of the NPM model, even though the discourse about the 'separation of spheres' was not as strong as the debates about economic or managerial inspired elements of NPM. Local councils are always in danger of 'dropping back' into their old role as 'case workers' and 'administrators', who are overly concerned with detailed questions of local administrative matters. Additionally, councils may also contribute to the politicisation of the administrative process by intervening as 'government from above' (Hansen 2001, 2005). Caused by the difficulty of this new role orientation attitudes of councillors seem to be rather fuzzy and points to a lack of desirable and feasible reform approaches.

References

Andrews, M. and Moynihan, D. (2002) 'Why Reforms do not always have to work to succeed: A tale of two managed competition initiatives', *Public Performance & Management Review* 25 (3), 282-297.

Brecht, A. (1932): Internationaler Vergleich der öffentlichen Ausgaben. Teubner: Leipzig, Berlin.

Castles, F. G. and Mair, P. (1984) 'Left-Right Political Scales: Some 'Expert' Judgements', *European Journal of Political Research* 12 (1), 73-88.

Converse, P. E. (1964) 'The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics' in Apter, D. E. (ed.) Ideology and Discontent. The Free Press of Glencoe: New York, 206-261.

Egner, B., Krapp, M.-C. and Heinelt, H. (2012) Das deutsche Gemeinderatsmitglied. Problemsichten – Einstellungen – Rollenverständnis. Springer VS: Wiesbaden.

Green-Pedersen, C. 2002 'New Public Management Reforms of the Danish and Swedish Welfare States: The Role of Different Social Democratic Responses', *Governance* 15 (2), 271-294.

Hammerschmid, G. and Meyer, R. E. (2005) 'New Public Management in Austria: Local Variation on a Global Theme', *Public Administration* 83 (3), 709-733.

Hansen, K. (2001) 'Local Councillors: between Local 'Government' and Local 'Governance', *Public Administration* 79 (1), 105-123

Hansen, K. (2005) 'Representative Government and Network Governance – In Need of 'Co-Governance': Lessons from Local Decision Making on Public Schools in Denmark', *Scandinavian Political Studies* 28 (3), 219-237

Haus, M. and Sweeting, D. (2006) 'Mayors, Citizens and Local Democracy', in: Bäck, H., Heinelt, H. and Magnier, A. (eds.) The European Mayors. Political Leaders in the Changing Context of Local Democracy. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 151-175.

Heinelt, H. (2012) 'Councillors' Notions of Democracy, and their Role Perception and Behaviour in the Changing Context of Local Democracy', *Local Government Studies*, DOI:10.1080/03003930.2012.670746.

Hibbs, D. A. (1977) 'Political Parties and Macroeconomic Policy', *American Political Science Review* 23 (4), 1467-1488.

Homburg, V., Pollitt, C. and van Thiel, S. (2007) 'Introduction', in Pollitt, C., van Thiel, S. and Homburg, V. (eds.) New Public Management in Europe. Adaptation and Alternatives. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1-9.

Krapp, M.-C. (2012) 'Wettbewerb, Privatisierung und Public Private Partnerships als Auswege aus der Krise? Formen kommunaler Aufgabenerfüllung aus der Sicht deutscher Ratsmitglieder', in Haus, M. and Kuhlmann, S. (eds.) Lokale Politik(-forschung) zwischen Krise und Erneuerung. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden (forthcoming).

Kuhlmann, S. (2009) Politik- und Verwaltungsreform in Kontinentaleuropa. Subnationaler Institutionenwandel im deutsch-französischen Vergleich. Nomos: Baden-Baden.

Moynihan, D. P. (2006) 'Managing for Results in State Government: Evaluating a Decade of Reform', *Public Administration Review* 66 (1), 77-89.

Orr, K. and Vince, R. (2009) 'Traditions of local government', *Public Administration* 87 (3), 655–677.

Osborne, S. P. (2006) 'The New Public Governance', *Public Management Review* 8 (3), 377-387.

Pandey, S. K. and Moynihan, D. P. (2006) Bureaucratic Red Tape and Organizational Performance: Testing the Moderating Role of Culture and Political Support, Working Paper Series La Follette School Working Paper No. 2005-026.

Peters, B. G. (1997) 'With a little help from our friends: Public-Private-Partnerships as Institutions and Instruments', in: Pierre, J. (ed.) Partnerships in Urban Governance. European and American Experience. MacMillanPress: Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 11-33

Pleschberger, W. (2003) 'Cities and Municipalities in the Austrian Political System since the 1990s. New developments between 'efficiency' and 'democracy', in Kersting, N. and Vetter, A. (eds.) Reforming Local Government in Europe. Closing the Gap between Democracy and Efficiency. Leske + Budrich: Opladen, 113-135.

Pollitt, C. and Bouckaert, G. (2004) Public Management Reform – A comparative Analysis. Oxford University Press: New York.

Reichard, C. (2002) 'Marketization of Public Services in Germany', *International Public Management Review* 3 (2), 63-79.

Sabatier, P. A. (1988) 'An Advocacy Coalition Framework of Policy Change and the Role of Policy-Oriented Learning therin', *Policy Sciences* 21 (2-3), 129-168.

Schmidt, M. G. (1996) 'When Parties Matter. A Review of the Possibilities and Limits of Partisan Influence on Public Policy', *European Journal of Political Research* 30 (2), 155-183.

Skelcher, C. (2005) 'Public-Private Partnerships and Hybridity', in Ferlie, E., Lynn, L. E. and Pollitt, C. (eds.) The Oxford Handbook of Public Management. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 347-370.

Stephenson, M. O. (1991) 'Whither the Public-Private Partnership. A Critical Overview', *Urban Affairs Review* 27 (1), 109-127.

Wollmann, H. (2008) 'Reformen in Kommunalpolitik und -verwaltung. England, Schweden, Frankreich und Deutschland im Vergleich' in Heinelt, H. and Vetter, A.

(eds.) Lokale Politikforschung heute. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 197-226.

Wright, V. (1997) 'The paradox of administrative reform', in Kickert, W. J. (ed.) Public Management and Administrative Reform in Western Europe. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, 7-13.

13 Municipal priorities in urban planning and local development

Panagiotis Getimis and Annick Magnier

13.1 Introduction

The approval of the main documents and policies related to local spatial planning is around Europe a core competence of municipal assemblies. This area of policy ranks among those attracting considerable reform in recent decades, under the impact of European integration and of cultural changes in planning (Faludi 2007; Nadin and Stead 2008). The changing international planning culture increasingly refers to the principles of communicative planning. It calls for improved integration between policies, corresponding frequently with the development of alternative planning processes, entailing the development of strategic plans. Also, it calls for an enlargement in the sets of actors, both private and public, involved in the decision-making processes around planning and local development. This enlargement is the case even in those European countries where the tradition of comprehensive planning (or *aménagement du territoire*) already supposed strong thematic integration. The formalization of 'spatial planning' as a new European policy area, from the first draft of the European Spatial Development Scheme, is associated with a transformation of planning practice. As a consequence of this transformation, questions arise as to the extent of council influence in this area, which we address through exploration of councillors' views on planning and development, and their perceptions of the influence of different actors in these areas.

Particularly, we are interested in exploring how the changes in planning practice impact on the position of the municipality in planning and development. We explore the extent to which the objectives and practices of spatial planning around Europe are becoming increasingly similar; whether the emergence of a new form of planning (focusing less on government but more on governance) challenges the role of the institutions local representative democracy; the extent to which assemblies are seen as less influential; and whether mayors remain a central influence in governance processes in this area. Also, we explore the extent of expert influence in this area, and consider the impacts of these changes on local agendas.

There are many factors that influence national and local planning and development practices (Newman and Thornley 1996). Using factors such as local traditions, the location of powers, the roles of different actors, the main reference concerning the different interpretations of spatial planning around Europe is the *European Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems* (CEC 1997). It distinguishes four traditions of spatial planning (CEC 1997: 36f.), and while not all countries map easily onto any one tradition, it is helpful in picking out broad features of different systems.

First, there is the regional economic planning tradition in which 'spatial planning has a very broad meaning, relating to the pursuit of wide social and economic objectives, especially in relation to disparities in wealth, employment, and social conditions between different regions' (CEC 1997: 36). Central government is a key player in this tradition. France and Portugal display characteristics of this approach, where the planning system is not a regulatory tool, but rather a strategic public coordination mode of governance. Second, the 'comprehensive integrated approach' seeks to provide horizontal and vertical integration of policies across sectors and jurisdictions. The Netherlands and Nordic countries display aspects of this approach. This type is characterised by the 'systematic and formal hierarchy of plans from national to local level, which coordinate public sector activities across different sectors, but focus more specifically on spatial co-ordination than economic development' (CEC 1997: 36f.). Third, land use management, characterising the UK, has a narrower focus on changes to land use, where local authorities play a key role, perhaps under the oversight of central government. Finally, urbanism tends to focus on issues such as architecture and design in the public realm, and is characteristic of several Mediterranean country systems such as Greece, Italy, and Spain. The lack of strategic planning, of negotiation and bargaining culture and substantial participation planning procedures are features of this so-called 'Mediterranean Syndrome' (La Spina and Sciortino 1993).

These traditions suggest that planning and development decisions have been taken in different ways, emphasising different matters and involving different sorts of actors. Nevertheless, there is likely to be convergence in the priorities of local actors in planning decisions, partly as a result of trends of Europeanization, but also as a result of broader trends in the ways in which cities and local areas respond to the external environment (Albrechts 2001, 2004; Giannakourou 2005).

The issue of policy priorities in local policies was explored through the previous survey of European mayors (Magnier, Navarro and Russo 2006). The over-riding concern of most mayors in that survey was attracting economic activities – it was the most quoted item among possible agenda priorities for two-

thirds of mayors. According to the evidence on the 'mayoral agenda' gathered in that research project, mayors aim to 'encourage [the] promotion of inward investment by attracting new firms to settle in their area or by fostering the enlargement of existing businesses... the localisation of productive activities is [the] dominant ambition of European mayors' (Magnier, Navarro, and Russo 2006: 204). This finding was taken as evidence of the shift towards urban entrepreneurialism and away from managerialism (Harvey 1989). It was argued that 'the increase in entrepreneurial forms of mayoral action... signifies a growing sense of responsibility among public leaders for the level of employment and wealth allowed in the locality... this phenomenon now holds across national boundaries' (Magnier, Navarro and Russo 2006: 204). Outside that finding however, there was less uniformity. It was found that 'apart from the dominant concern with economic development, the agendas put forward by European mayors at the outset of the new millennium do not display great homogeneity' (Magnier, Navarro, and Russo 2006: 204).

In the next section we present the results of the survey on issues pertaining to the priorities of local councillors, their influence over different aspects of the planning and development process, their views on the importance of other actors, before drawing conclusions on the nature of planning in municipalities offered by these data.

13.2   *Physical planning: Priorities and national agendas*

Four to five years after the survey of mayors, local councillors offer a similar picture of the priorities on the local agenda where local economic development again emerges as the most important theme.[1] Figure 13.1 shows the extent of support amongst councillors for a number of different priorities. Economic development is not quite as dominant a factor as in the survey of mayors: we observe that in the whole sample other items also attract high levels of 'of utmost importance' for councillors: policies concerning transport, pollution, and social exclusion are all also considered as high priorities by councillors. Changes in the economy, which do not allow any great expectations to attract new businesses to localities, the growing awareness of environmental problems and of the impact of the crisis on the households' possibilities of life, probably may in any way justify the differences in the patterns of local priorities obtained in the two successive inquiries of mayors and councillors.

---

1   Not all questions were asked in all countries, but countries are included where the relevant questions were included.

Figure 13.1: Priorities of local councillors

Priorities in the locality according to the councillors
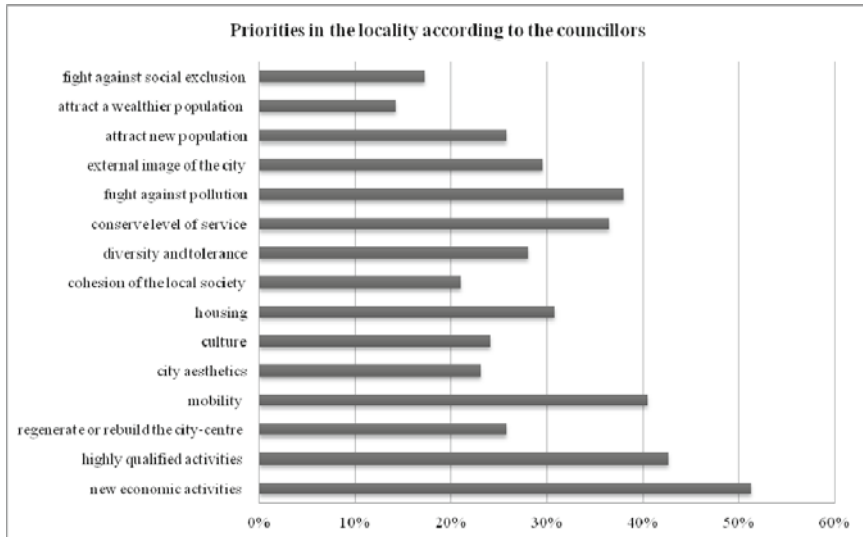
% 'of utmost importance' for each item.

Behind this overall picture, and the predominant preoccupation for economic development, are hidden large differences. Our perspective leads us to focus on differences between countries, and the possible relations between national cultures of spatial planning and the role of the council.

One of the most significant observations allowed under this profile concerns the often contrasting positions taken in relation to the local agenda, as interpreted by councillors, on one hand in relation to social exclusion and poverty, and on the other to those themes relevant for economic local development (see figure 13.2).

The struggle against social exclusion and poverty is emphasized in the Netherlands, Croatia, and Italy, but it is not nearly so prominent in France and the Czech Republic. Local economic development is particularly emphasized as a priority by German and Czech councillors. Such differences reflect different strategic orientations in facing global risks. The data show that in those countries where the local economic development is more often considered as a main duty of the municipality, the importance of reducing inequalities is not so significant and that in a number of countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and France, attention to the two problems appears quite divergent.

The tension towards local economic development, as the basis of much strategic spatial planning, appears conclusively in some countries, (but only in some countries), to push the attention for the 'have nots' into a secondary position in the agenda.

Figure 13.2: Social exclusion and economic development
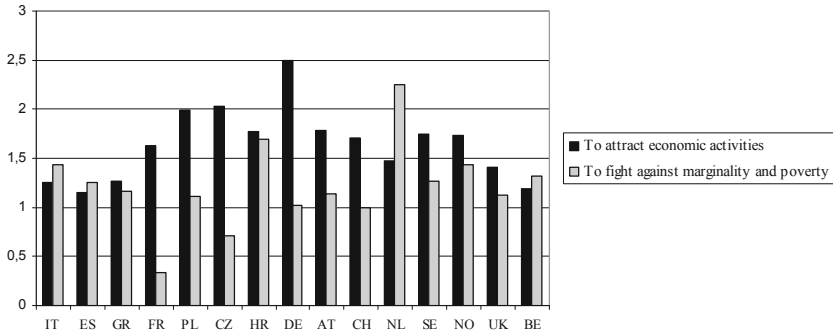
Index was calculated by the ratio of the share of 'utmost importance' for the respective goal divided by the number of all 'utmost important' assessments per country. Countries in this figure and the following are ordered according to the typology of planning systems (CEC 1997): Urbanism: IT: Italy, ES: Spain, GR: Greece, FR: France; comprehensive integrated approach: DE: Germany, AT: Austria, CH: Switzerland, NL: the Netherlands, SE: Sweden, NO: Norway; land use management: UK, United Kingdom, BE: Belgium.

Looking more in detail to the core themes of spatial planning, the data illustrate the general shift in spatial planning, from the organisation of territorial expansion to territorial 're-structuration', in first instance through the re-design of mobility networks and patterns of accessibility. Figure 13.3 shows the importance councillors attach to reducing pollution and improving mobility. The frequent quotation of the reduction of pollution and of the development of services and infrastructures for transport as first priorities for local action is also a sign of a dominant definition of social problems focusing on wide-spread vulnerability more often than on specific urban challenges

In many countries pollution is identified as a main issue to face, but is notably low in some countries see e.g. France and in Spain. The comparison between the weight given to his objective and to the development of transport facilities in the different national contexts shows that only in a few cases the focus on mobility improvement does not correspond to a similar focus on pollution control: it is the case in United Kingdom, in France, in Netherlands, and particu-

larly in Spain, where the search for more accessibility appears quite detached from the search for more sustainability.

Figure 13.3: Mobility and sustainability
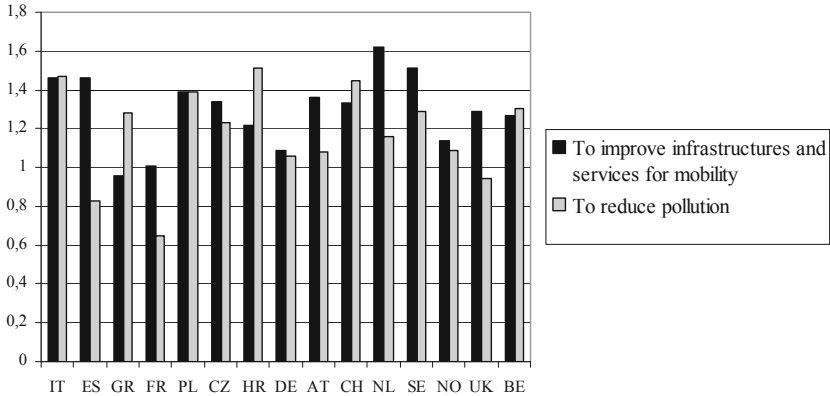
Index was calculated by the ratio of the share of 'utmost importance' for the respective goal divided by the number of all 'utmost important' assessments per country.

The cultural shift in planning was certainly necessary to adapt planning praxis to the change in city form and in demographic trends. That is to say that councillors in relation to the new urban sprawl and its structural and physical dimensions do not consider with equal interest the social consequences of ex-urbanisation and even of urban explosion which are frequent around Europe. The dynamics of socio-demographic transformation and geographic mobility lead furthermore to a re-emergence of the housing question not often considered in the local councillors' agenda. In a large majority of countries, housing ranks below the average of priorities, as figure four shows. To develop the housing is very often a priority for Dutch local authorities, but often does not raise interest for German and Croatian councillors. The issue is frequently quoted as a local priority in Belgium, and it is a priority among many other countries such as in Spain, the Czech Republic, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The aesthetic quality of the city is an element of 'presentation' towards the external world, in a developmental perspective, but may be also conceived as a crucial component of the quality of life. Contrary to the conventional discourse on the growing fascination of local elites for architectural marks and make-up,

we observe (see figure 13.5) that such themes vanish in the interpretations of the local agenda, proposed by the councillors, quite totally in some countries.

Figure 13.4: Regeneration, transport, and housing
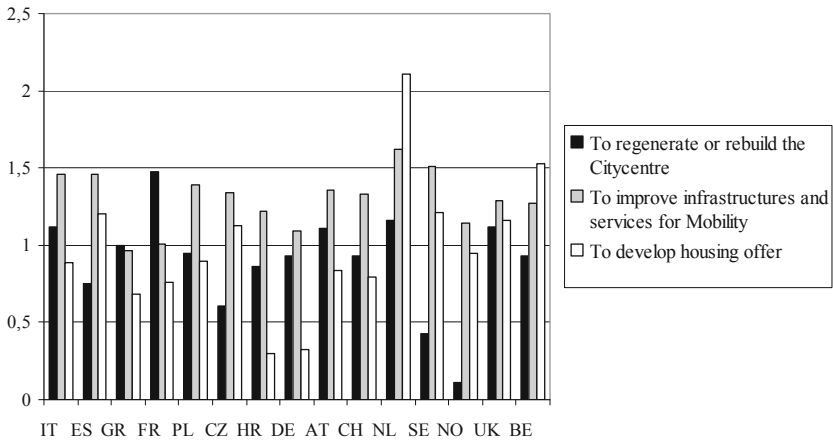
Index was calculated by the ratio of the share of 'utmost importance' for the respective goal divided by the number of all 'utmost important' assessments per country.

Figure 13.5: City aesthetics and regeneration
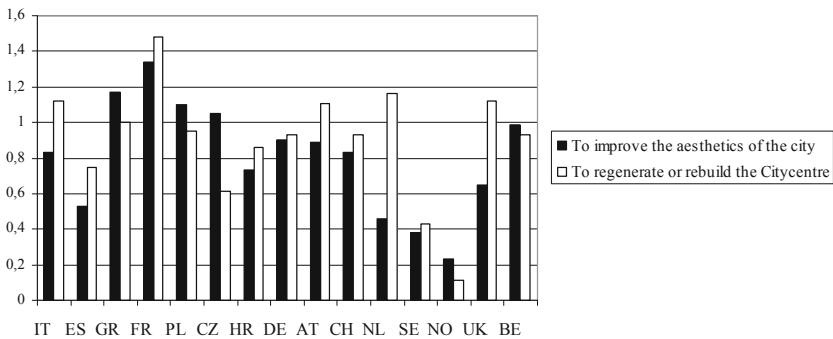
Index was calculated by the ratio of the share of 'utmost importance' for the respective goal divided by the number of all 'utmost important' assessments per country.

City-centre regeneration similarly is not a widespread priority. This finding is in significant contradiction with those theses supporting urban policies favouring the maintenance of the city façade constituted by the city centre. Only in Italy, Austria, Netherlands, Belgium and in France, does this objective gather a proportion of the sample as of 'utmost importance' that is higher than the average of such responses on all the possible objectives proposed to the councillors: and in all this cases, except in France, the difference is very small. The preoccupation for the aesthetics of the city and for city centre regeneration come out of very specific priorities of the French local agenda, echoing the traditional focus of spatial planning in the cultural context of urbanism.

Conversely, in many other cases, these two items (regeneration of city centres and improving aesthetics) are not closely related: in the UK and the Netherlands city centre regeneration emerges independently from improving aesthetics, suggesting a more functional or social interpretation of such interventions.

Therefore, we find that, even considering only few elements of physical planning, there are substantially different modal contents in the different European countries: in sum, the previous figures suggest the existence of national local agendas for spatial planning.

13.3   Assemblies in conventional and alternative spatial planning

The broad orientations of local agendas, though differentiated, give evidence to some recognisable common trends; the distance between the maps of governance in urban policies as they are depicted by local councillors raises new hypotheses on the impact of those cultural changes.

Spatial planning includes the tasks on which, together with the definition of administrative procedures and with financial programming and control, they consider the assembly to have greater influence when compared with other areas (see figure 13.6). 'Strategic planning' has presumably been interpreted in different ways in the different contexts: even in countries where strategic planning is practised by a minority of local authorities, few councillors marked the question as 'not relevant': their answers nevertheless allow understanding which strategic dimension they confer to the different documents they approve. In all matters relevant for spatial planning, councils score, according to councillors, at a level of effectiveness higher than in administrative and organisational matters.

Some correspondence between types of spatial planning tradition and influence in this decisional area seem to persist. Referring to this typology, we may see that, concerning urban planning, councillors (with the noticeable exception of Spain) attribute a weaker position to the council in Southern countries and in Belgium (urbanism tradition) (see figure 13.7).

Figure 13.6: Spatial planning as a core competence of the councils
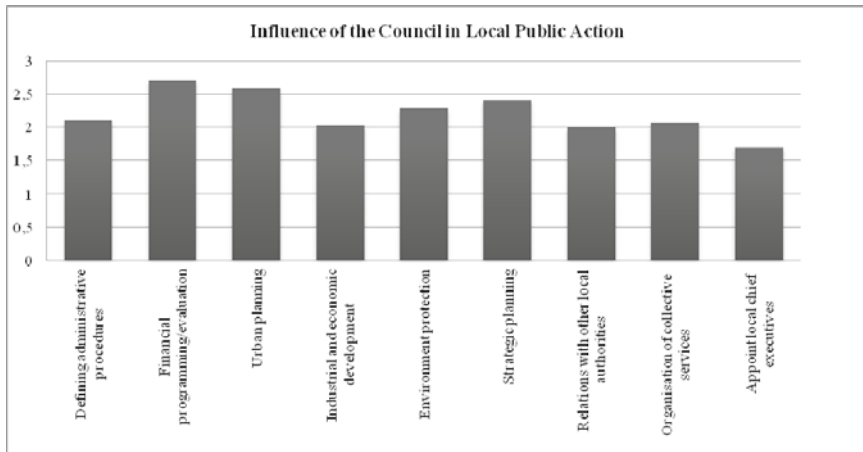
'How much influence does the council in your municipality have concerning the following tasks?' Average answers on scale 0-4.

From these data emerges nevertheless principally the centrality of the council in spatial planning matters in a heterogeneous group (from the point of view of many of the typologies until now proposed) of Central–Eastern Europe countries, plus Norway.

Under this profile a large group of countries of 'comprehensive-integrated planning systems' seem to have recently appeared, in contrast with more traditional distinctions (Farinos-Dasi 2007). Under other aspects, in particular the degree of thematic integration of the planning activities, we shall see that such a distinction appears more questionable.

The degree of similarity between the paths of decision in different policy areas may be used as an indication of the degree of integration between policies and corresponding programming. More precisely, a similarity in those paths is a necessary, if not a sufficient, condition for concluding that there is a high degree of integration between thematically different areas of programming activity, and between the programmes and the control of their actualisation.

Figure 13.7: The Assembly influence in urban planning
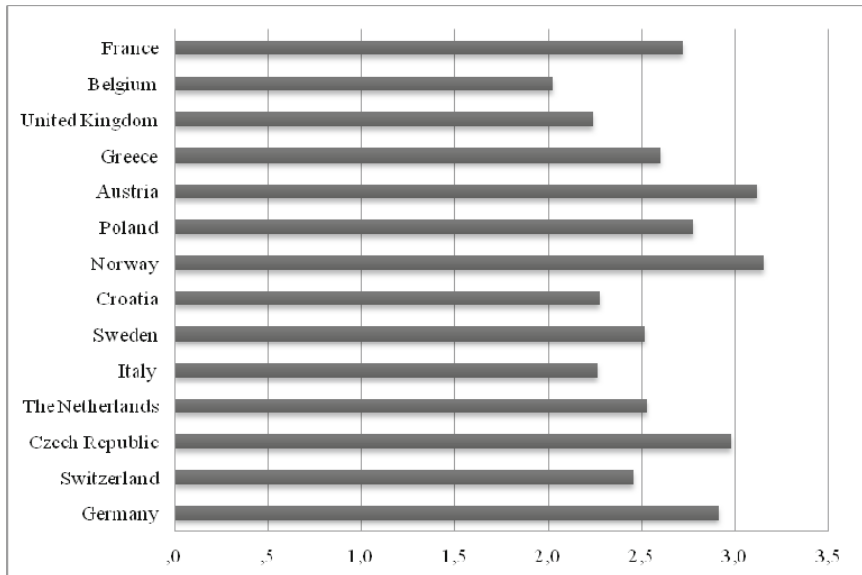
'How much influence does the Council in your municipality have over the following tasks?' Mean
answers on scale 0-4.

Integrated planning, measured on this basis, does not appear to be a common
feature of all the countries generally located in the group traditionally consid-
ered as characteristic of 'comprehensive planning' (see figures 13.8 and 13.9).

In Norway, councillors consider themselves to be much more influential in
urban planning than in other policy areas (e.g. environmental matters and local
industrial development). The same distance, particularly between the local de-
velopment perspective and physical planning seems to be typical of German and
Czech systems, and Spain and Switzerland, while a more integrated approach
appears in Belgium, Sweden, and Croatia.

The context of urban transformation - both institutional and informal - has
erased many of the classical differences between systems, justifying the aca-
demic search for new typologies. It is difficult on the other hand to consider that
these changes lead to a reinforcement of the comprehensive model: looking at
the role of the council, there is on the contrary the distance between a formal
planning process, in which the council offers its contribution and the reality of
urban transformation (its productive capacity, its environmental quality), which

seems to become the more common denominator of the European planning system.

Figure 13.8: Back from comprehensive planning?: Environmental protection and urban planning
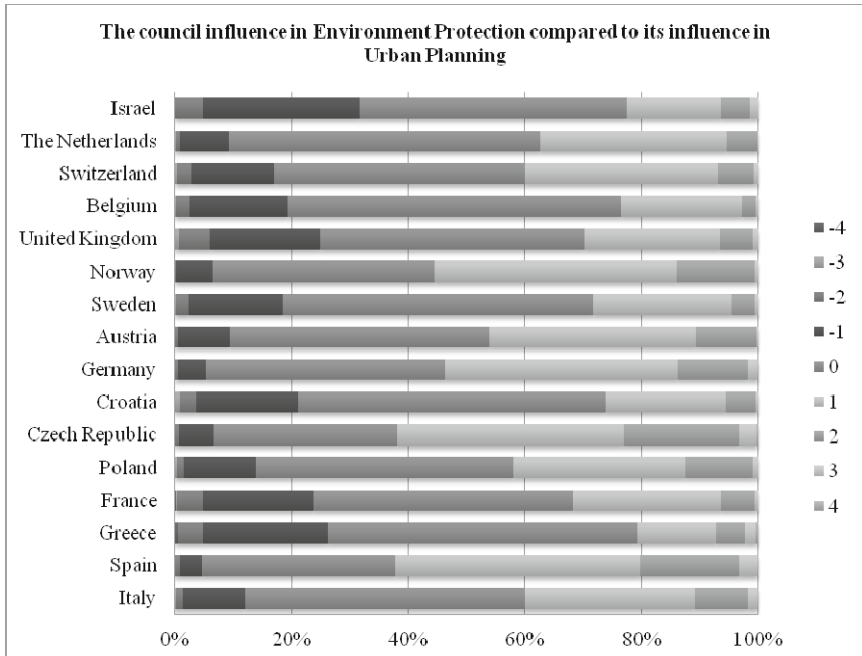
Index calculated by subtracting the average influence attributed to the council in Environmental protection from the average influence attributed to the council in Urban planning.

Similarly, the comparison between the path in strategic and in conventional planning is an indication of the sense conferred to the trend towards 'strategic' planning: is it parallel to a more classical planning process (competing with it and reducing the capacity of the Assembly as a decision-maker) or a new way of interpreting spatial planning, especially in those countries of the 'urbanism' tradition?

Figure 13.9: Back from comprehensive planning?: Industrial development and urban planning
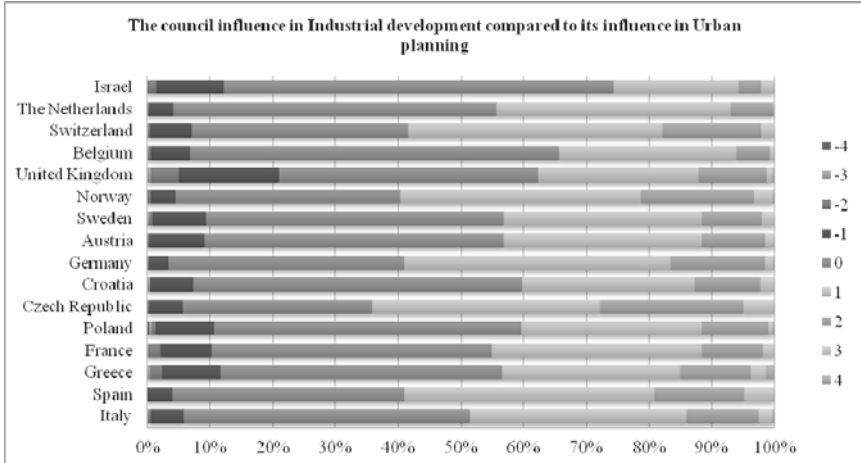
Index calculated by subtracting the average influence attributed to the council in Industrial development from the average influence attributed to the council in Urban planning.

The differences in the average values (see figure 13.10) concerning the influence of the Assembly in strategic planning and in urban planning are less pronounced than when compared to local development and urban planning, but four countries emerge as cases in which councillors very often state that they are not really included in the strategic planning process: Italy, Spain, Czech Republic and Norway. In the Netherlands councillors say that they are often more involved in strategic planning than in urban planning.

Figure 13.10: Back from comprehensive planning?: Strategic planning and urban planning
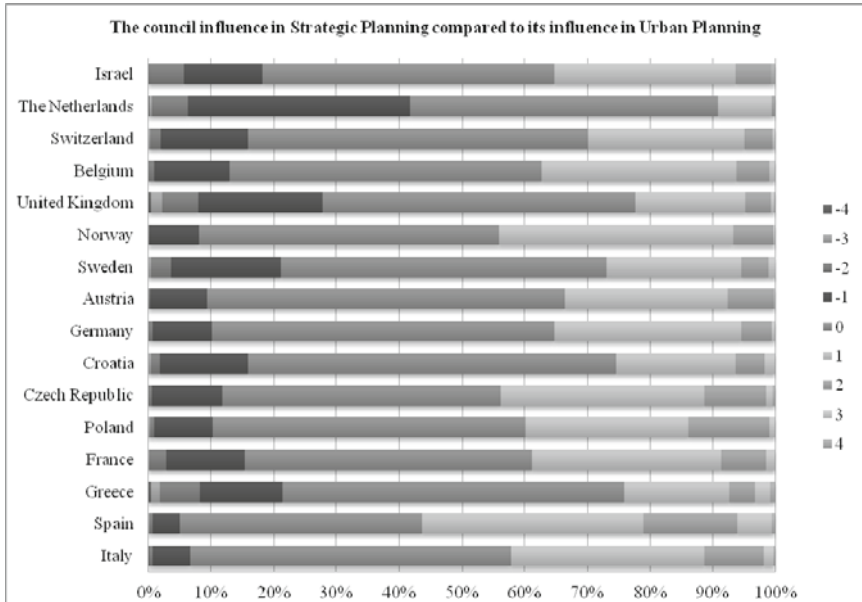
Index calculated by subtracting the average influence attributed to the council in Strategic planning from the average influence attributed to the council in Urban planning.

13.4   The influence of other actors

Some of the largest differences, and most significant for a picture of local democracy, do not appear nevertheless in the evaluation of the influence of the single actors, but are evident in comparison with other actors (see figure 13.11). Councillors were asked if a firm wanted to develop a project in the locality and expected that the council would not approve of it, which actors would it have to gain the support of in order to influence the council? This question concerns in particular the structure of the public sphere and the capacities of different interests to sustain or oppose effectively a project.

In general, councillors consider themselves, and other elected officials in the municipality as the key actors whose support is required. This is the case in all countries except the UK. Turning to the picture of spatial planning culture and practices, the map of urban governance we obtain from the answers to these

questions has two major implications concerning the degree of technicality of
the processes and the extent of subsidiarity.

Figure 13.11: The recourse against councils
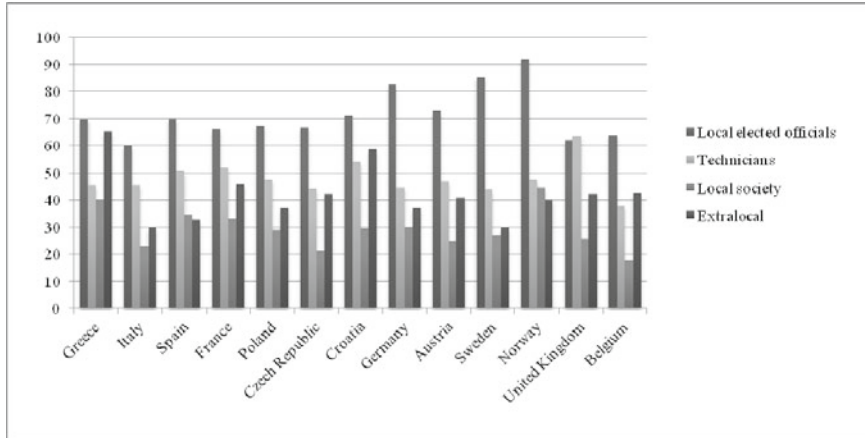
Some interpretations of the 'strategic shift' in spatial planning underline the
threat of a decline of democracy at the benefit of technocrats and especially con-
sultants as the main builders of the plan (in narrow and exclusive co-operation
with the mayor). Our data do not confirm generally such a hypothesis. Techni-
cians in the whole sample are not quoted as a recourse against council resis-
tance, with exceptions in the United Kingdom and in Greece. In these countries
external consultants appear more often as a recourse against Council resistance.
Even in those countries, nevertheless, the main recourses for the entrepreneur
against a resistant Assembly remain located either inside the Council itself, or,
more often, in the Mayor and his team.

   On the other side, the presence of upper tiers of government among the re-
sponses on the question of possible recourses does not validate the hypothesis
that the building of European spatial planning is currently leading to a diffusion
of the French model of 'regional' 'structural' planning (that is to say central-
ized) in a large part of Europe, especially in Southern countries.

   Greece and Germany show values superior to France for the indications of
upper levels of government and as possible recourses in the case of a reluctant
council. These values (except in these two national cases) are nevertheless not
very high. The (slightly varying) effectiveness granted to national or regional
figures in case of conflict rarely echoes the traditional typologies of centre-

periphery relationship; but the hypothesis of centralisation favoured by spatial planning and local development schemes conclusively fits mainly for Greece. On the whole, the figures more generally suggest, more than a re-centralization, a broad movement towards glocalization in defining and managing local development, and illustrate how the rhetoric of governance may accompany the often autocratic 'government' of mayors.

13.5   Conclusions

Observing planning from the specific perspective of local councillors, MAELG data offer a rich and unusual picture of European spatial planning local practices. It seems possible to conclude that decisions in planning and local development are taken around Europe in an increasingly homogeneous way: the contrasts between the four types of planning cultures distinguished classically are fading. But such an important change is a consequence not of the diffusion of the comprehensive-integrated model, but seems on the contrary a result of some new incoherence of the comprehensive planning model. Large differences in the power of the council in the different components of spatial planning (local development policies, urban planning, and environmental decisions) are found in countries considered as the references in the comprehensive tradition. Such differences suggest that, in the re-definition of the power structure which involved all European countries, some matters belonging to the large area of spatial planning were the object of a major re-centralisation. The comprehensive planning model under such pressures has been losing purchase in those countries where it was classically more realised, precisely while it was inspiring large waves of reforms in other European regions.

The numerous observations allowed by these data suggest in the main that under many aspects the 'new planning', behind the 'communicative' discourse and the normative stress on citizens' participation, contribute to a curtailing of 'representative democracy', through the decline in influence of many elected officials (especially assemblies) leaving mayors – or equivalent - alone in dealing with private partners, or supported only by consultants or technicians. The possible recourses against a decision of the council in local development matters are considered as numerous and effective, and they are mainly located out of the council. Councillors are not acutely aware of this trend (they continue to grant themselves a significant influence in spatial planning matters), but they stress the 'almightyness' of mayors. But the councillors do not generally, except in some national contexts, credit much influence to technicians: the idea that such contestation of the traditional representative scheme would correspond to a

technocratic revival, and consequently to leave more influence to external consultants and internal experts is not generally confirmed.

The overall impression stresses strong national differences, more than in the structure of power, obviously submitted to extremely local variations, but on the agenda. With 'urban policy', the local élite means different aggregations of projects and priorities from one country to another. It is probably on this dimension that the local agenda and, consequently the planning cultures, reflecting national decisions and non-decisions, assumes its more evident 'national' determinacy. Consequently, we may observe that the hypothesis that the new trends in planning, focusing on local development, under the mark of expansive glocalism, should lead to a decline of interest for social justice inside the community, is neatly confirmed in some European countries where the guarantee against universal risks is more stressed in local agenda than the struggle against inequalities - but not in all of them.

Under the sign of strong national differences in priorities, the new planning, in its process and in its agenda, does not correspond nevertheless to a new form of centralisation: if the ideal-type of 'comprehensive' planning seems to inspire theory more than praxis, the trend of change is not more favourable to the French 'socio-economic regional planning' approach, which according to some observers was to spread-out, obviously more immediately in the area of the 'urbanism' tradition. Spatial planning and local development are featured by councillors as a 'local' policy, culturally sensitive to national traditions.

References

Albrechts, L. (2001) 'In pursuit of new approaches to strategic spatial planning. A European perspective', *International Planning Studies* 6 (3), 293-310.

Albrechts, L. (2004) 'Strategic (spatial)planning re-examined', *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* 31 (5), 743-755.

Commission of the European Communities (1997) The EU compendium of spatial planning systems and policies, Regional development studies 28. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities: Luxembourg.

Faludi, A. (2002), 'Positioning European spatial planning', *European Planning Studies* 10 (7), 897-909.

Faludi, A. (2004) 'Spatial planning traditions in Europe: their role in the ESDP process', *International Planning Studies* 9 (2-3), 155-172.

Giannakourou, G. (2005) 'Transforming spatial planning policy in Mediterranean countries: Europeanization and domestic change', *European Planning Studies* 13 (2), 319-331.

Harvey, D. (1989) 'From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism', *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71 (1), 3-17.

Magnier, A., Navarro, C. and Russo, P. (2006) 'Urban Systems as Growth Machines?', in Bäck, H., Heinelt, H. and Magnier, A. (eds.) The European Mayor. Political Leaders in the Changing Context of Local Democracy. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 201-220.

Nadin, V. and Stead, D. (2008) 'European Spatial Planning Systems, Social Models and Learning', *disP – The Planning Review* 172 (1), 35-47.

Newman, P. and Thornley, A. (1996) Urban planning in Europe: international competition, national systems and planning projects. Routledge: London.

La Spina, A. and Sciortino, G. (1993) 'Common agenda, southern rules: European integration and environmental change in the Mediterranean states' in Liefferink, J. D., Lowe, P. H. and Mol, A. P. J. (eds.) European Integration and Environmental Policy. Belhaven Press: London and New York, 217-236.

14 Local councillors in comparative perspective: Drawing conclusions

Björn Egner, David Sweeting and Pieter-Jan Klok

The chapters of this book contain the first results of our common research project. They show a rich picture of many aspects of local councillors in 16 countries. It is not the intention of the group that this is the final output from the project. On the contrary: these analyses should be only a first step in the use of this valuable dataset. Further analysis and publications are under way and are foreseen in the future.[1]

Clearly there is much diversity between councillors included this study. However, it is already possible to draw some general conclusions. In this chapter we provide overall conclusions combining the results from the different chapters relating particularly to councillors and parties, citizens, the executive, governance reform, gender, and ideology, and in doing so return to some of the issues and broader processes raised in the first chapter. This analysis is based on empirical investigation of councillors in municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants – and therefore these conclusions generalise to that specific group of councillors, rather than all councillors in the countries included in this research.

The councillor and their party

A major conclusion permeating several chapters is that the political party still plays a significant role in the work of local councillors. Although on a national level party membership of citizens might be in decline, for those who are elected in the council their party is still very much 'alive and kicking'. An overwhelming majority of councillors is member of a political party and parties play an important role in the election of councillors: Verhelst et al. in chapter two show the party is important in providing elective support and even in providing a motive for running in the election in the first place. However, the relations between the councillor and the party are by no means one sided: A majority of councillors presently have, or have had a position in their local party. So councillors do not only depend on their party, they also play an important role in

---

1   Indeed we invite interested colleagues to explore the dataset. A copy can be requested from Björn Egner at begner@pg.tu-darmstadt.de .

their party. As Razin illustrates in chapter three, party leaders usually seek support of the party group in the council and the party group has much influence over the decisions of the local party. The relations between the councillor and the local party can thus be seen as characterised by symbiotic interdependency.

Thus it may come as no surprise that implementing the party programme is perceived as an important task by many councillors (especially by those who are member of a national party). However, Klok and Denters (chapter four) demonstrate that this task is seen as somewhat less important than the traditional representative tasks. When we turn to the contribution that councillors bring to these tasks, it shows that implementing the party programme scores among the top of the different tasks, indicating that party politics is more important in terms of what councillors actually do, than in terms of their role perceptions. This is matched by the fact that local councillors have the most frequent contact with the members of their party group and the leaders of their local party rank fourth in their frequency of contact (Plüss and Kübler, chapter eleven). The significance of the party for the role orientation of councillors is also illustrated by Karlsson in chapter six by the fact that almost 30% can be characterised as 'party soldiers'. Although they are outnumbered by those who can be seen as 'delegates', there are four countries where the party soldiers form the largest group with approximately half of councillors (Spain, Belgium, Norway and Sweden). On the other hand party soldiers are very rare (approximately 10%) in the Czech Republic, France, Israel and Poland.

Comparing the different countries we find a consistent pattern where party politics is very important in some countries and much less in others. On all the indicators mentioned above Sweden, Norway, and in most cases Spain score high. On the other side of the spectrum we find France, Israel and particularly Poland, where political parties play only a minor role in the everyday practice of local councillors.

The councillor and the citizen

What are the implications of the role of the political parties for the relation between the councillor and the citizen? Are councillors' loyalties with their party or with the constituents? The evidence that can be gathered from our chapters points toward different directions in answering this question.

When councillors are asked for their general notions about democracy, Heinelt finds support for a participatory model, giving citizens an active role in democratic 'self-determination', is higher than support for a narrowly defined representative or 'liberal' notion of democracy, where only elected politicians decide what should happen. This finding would indicate that councillors are

moving in line with the more general trend noted in the opening chapter where citizens demand greater access to decision-making processes outside the electoral model. However, when it comes to specific participation mechanisms, Sweeting and Copus show none of these mechanisms receives overwhelming support. This support is to some extent influenced by the role that the party plays: members of parties show less support than non-members and councillors who are party soldiers show particularly low support for mechanisms that provide citizens with binding influence on decisions. Even for delegate councillors, who are most likely to support mechanisms for citizen participation, support does not exceed 65%. Therefore, while citizens may demand greater involvement, and councillors may appear to be in favour of granting it, they may be unwilling to veer very far from the liberal model in practice.

When looking for the distribution of councillors' orientations, Karlsson (chapter 6) finds that the trustee is most common (57%), followed by the party soldier (28%) and the delegate (15%). For the influence of the citizen this implies 'mixed news'. Not many councillors see themselves as just transferring the opinions of the citizens, but on the other hand the party preferences are also not decisive for many councillors. Most councillors see themselves as playing a pivotal role in the translation of citizens' preferences into municipal decisions. This is in line with the findings from Klok and Denters in chapter four that representing requests and issues from local society and subsequently defining the goals of the municipality are the tasks that are seen as most important by councillors. Explaining decisions of the council to citizens and publicising debate before decisions are taken, are seen as important tasks, but score somewhat lower. However, they are seen as more important than implementing the party programme. When it comes to actual role behaviour, representational activities score high as well, but they are matched by activities concerning the party. In terms of frequency of contact, Plüss and Kübler (chapter eleven) demonstrate members of the party group score highest, but individual citizens are second on the list.

A preliminary conclusion is that the role of political parties does not result in neglect of the relations with citizens. Both parties and citizens are important for councillors, not as absolute masters that determine the decisions to be taken, but as crucial points of reference that are both seriously taken into account.

According to Karlsson in chapter six, when councillors are asked about their representational focus, an overwhelming majority answers that they represent the whole locality. This indicates that councillors favour a general conception of representing all interests (the 'general' interest) over particular interests. This does not mean that particular interests are not important. The interests of 'less resourceful citizens' are also seen as relatively important, with little differ-

ence among other specific groups. The growing secularisation of society is reflected by the fact that the interests of religious groups are seen as the least important to represent. For urbanisation – one of the broader trends mentioned in the opening chapter – the city-wide representational focus is important. If urbanisation does entail greater diversity of population, and the majority of councillors indicate that they do not tend to focus on particular groups, then city-wide, common, and general interests still take precedence, despite increasing societal diversity. While councillors do express a desire represent the interests of less resourceful citizens, this lack of resources may not be a product of greater social diversity, but may instead relate to broader trends relating to inequality and the way that economic benefits in cities are shared out.

The representational focus of local councillors is also reflected in the priority that they attach to different policy domains. Getimis and Magnier (in chapter thirteen) show that policy domains that are seen as particularly important are linked to the economic development of the cities: attracting new economic and high-tech activities, improving infrastructures and services for transport. This is in line with the economic logic of globalisation outlined in chapter one, where municipalities are increasingly expected to place economic development concerns alongside their roles in service provision. However, reducing the accompanying pollution and increasing well-being in the city are also seen as very important. Significantly, increasing levels of service provision is also important for councillors. This shows that, in responding to the increased demands from citizens mentioned in chapter one, they look to improve both matters inside and outside direct municipal control.

Among the lowest priorities we find the domains of attracting a wealthier population, defending the traditional cohesion of the city, and, somewhat in contrast to a desire to a desire to represent less resourceful citizens, fighting against social inclusion and poverty. Combining these results on representational focus we can conclude that although 'less resourceful citizens' are seen as an important group, their problems are not so much addressed through a redistributive agenda on poverty, but through a more general economic development agenda.

The councillor and the executive

As noted in the opening chapter, embodied in the conception of the role of councillors as an intermediate one, transmitting representational power from citizens (through party-based elections), to governmental decisions is the idea that councillors should have an impact on what is decided in local government town halls. The representational model of democracy will only remain viable if this second leg of the electoral chain of command functions well.

There is no doubt that councillors perceive this 'internal' task as very important. Defining the main goals of the municipality and controlling municipal activity rank first and third in importance, as Klok and Denters demonstrate in chapter four. Together with representing local requests they form the very heart of the role orientations of local councillors, with limited variation between different countries. When asked about their contribution to these tasks (role behaviour), councillors still indicate a substantial contribution, but the scores are on average considerably lower. The role behaviour deficit (the difference between orientation and parallel behaviour) is the largest for defining goals and controlling municipal activity. This deficit is not so much the result of limited activity (councillors have frequent contact with members of the executive board and with the mayor), but as they rank themselves as not very influential compared to other actors in town hall (see Plüss and Kübler in chapter eleven). Councillors rank themselves as only ninth in a comparative ranking of the influence of different actors on local authorities' activities. The mayor, the executive board and the administration are regarded as the most influential actors. This is in line with a comparison with data presented by Ryšavý from the mayoral research in chapter nine: in all countries mayors indicate higher scores for their influence than councillors, with executive councillors in an intermediate position. To some extent this limited influence will be the result of the part-time character of the councillors' job. Contrary to mayors, whose job is usually a full-time one, ordinary councillors spend considerably less hours on doing their job, with executive councillors occupying an intermediate position. Although we see important elements of professionalisation in both the recruitment and career developments of councillors, there are still many aspects in which councillors can be labelled as matching the profile of a 'layman' (Verhelst et.al., chapter two).

The executive councillor

As has been indicated above, some councillors occupy a position that can be seen as part of the executive function, which has an influence on their power position (they see themselves as more powerful than ordinary councillors) and on the time they spend on their tasks (they spend more time). The additional time that they spend on their tasks is also reflected in the fact that they spend more time than ordinary councillors on contacts with different actors inside and outside town hall (Getimis and Hlepas, chapter 8). Their increased power position is in line with the finding that their role behavioural deficit (the difference between the importance of a task and their contribution on that task), is lower than for ordinary councillors (Klok and Denters, chapter four). Their position also matters in terms of the higher importance they attach to the specific task of sup-

porting the executive. They are more often party soldiers, and less frequently trustees or delegates (Karlsson, chapter six) and their leadership style is more often authoritarian and less frequently cooperative (Getimis and Hlepas, chapter 8). Overall, the executive councillor has a more central position in local governance (both inside and outside town hall) than his ordinary counterpart, which is in line with his institutional position as an executive.

The councillor and administrative and governance reform

It was noted in chapter one that in relation to a more demanding citizenry, councillors' attitudes to New Public Management reforms is important, as this sort of reform is often presented as a way of improving services. Above we indicated that councillors are not overwhelmingly supportive of democratic reforms that respond to citizen demands for a stronger position in decision-making in municipal activities. When looking at support for administrative reform, a still less enthusiastic attitude seems to be present – some limited commitment at a general level, but with considerable unease. Competition between service providers is seen by a majority of councillors as facilitating choice for citizens, but other statements reflecting the need for and the benefits of New Public Management reforms fail to attract a majority (Krapp et al, chapter twelve). Moreover, the agreement with the statement reflecting the internal aspect of administrative reform (councillors should only define objectives and control outputs, and never intervene into task fulfilment of the local administration) does not correlate strongly with those on statements reflecting the external aspect (contracting out and Public Private Partnerships). Thus there is no cohesive orientation of councillors on administrative reform. The claim of those propagating administrative reform, that what councillors might lose on short term influence on municipal activities is more than compensated by what they will win in strategic control, is not accepted as very convincing by those councillors themselves.

A comparable picture appears when looking at the possible implications of a change from government to governance on the local level (another trend noted in chapter one). Support for Public Private Partnerships can not only be seen as support for administrative reform, it can also be seen as an indication for the growing influence of and orientation towards private actors as important partners in local governance. When councillors are asked to state which actors are influential in local authority decision-making, Plüss and Kübler in chapter eleven indicate that public actors are considerably more influential than private actors. The same holds for the influence of public and private actors on the decisions by the council. This picture of public dominance is matched with the contact patterns that councillors develop. They do have frequent contact with indi-

vidual citizens, but contacts with organised private interests are considerably less frequent than with public actors. Local councillors are very far from taking up their 'new role' as coordinators of local governance. This is matched by the results from Klok and Denters (chapter four) that 'mediating conflicts in local society' is seen as the second least important task by councillors.

Overseeing the orientations of local councillors in the fields of democratic, administrative and governance reform, we can generalise the conclusion drawn by Sweeting and Copus on democratic reform to the other two fields of reform: their primary concern is their traditional, recongnisable role of contributing in different ways to decision-making in municipal government. They show less conviction to moves away from that model, whether that be in terms of more citizen participation, or their attitude to administrative reform, or their view of governance. Whether this makes councillors necessary defenders of a widely understood governmental process, or actors that are trailing in the wake of other forces, clinging to an outdated model of government is debatable.

The gender factor

It comes as no surprise that the local councillors are predominantly male. In most countries, between 70% and 80% of the councillors are male, with a more even share of women in the Scandinavian countries and France (Verhelst et al., chapter 2). The fact that women are underrepresented in local councils becomes particularly relevant as gender is related to differences in opinions on political issues. The results we find here are mixed. There are many issues where little or no difference exist between the sexes, for instance they both assign a high priority to local (economic) development (Jurlina Alibegović et al., chapter ten). On issues regarding social and environmental policy the differences are considerable and point consistently in the direction that women consider the policy goals on these issues more important than men. This is in line with the findings from Karlsson and Getimis and Hlepas (in chapters six and eight respectively) that women attach higher importance to representing specific groups in their municipality. The gender differences are not equally strong in all countries. They are particularly strong in the Scandinavian countries and in France and Switzerland (Jurlina Alibegović et al. chapter ten). There is however one issue where men and women consistently differ and that is on the importance of representing issues regarding the position of women in local politics (see Jurlina Alibegović et al., chapter ten; Klok and Denters, chapter four; and Karlsson, chapter six). It may come as no surprise that women attach higher priority to this task than men.

Regarding their own position in local governance women regard themselves as somewhat less central than men. They see themselves as less powerful

than men and consider themselves less often as trustees and more often as party
soldiers (Getimis and Hlepas, chapter eight). In chapter five Heinelt shows their
notions of democracy are more often than for men in line with participatory de-
mocracy and less often in line with the liberal representative model. This seems
consistent with the finding from Getimis and Hlepas in chapter eight that they
more often prefer cooperative styles of leadership and less often authoritarian
styles.

The influence of ideological orientation

In line with the ideological position of different parties in European countries,
local councillors can also be characterised as having an ideological position on a
left/right scale. Does this ideological disposition influence their opinions and
behaviour? One of the issues where such influence can be expected is the repre-
sentation of (the interests of) specific groups in local society. As can be ex-
pected, councillors with a disposition towards the right give higher priority in
representing business groups, whereas councillors orientated towards the left
give higher priority to representing workers and less resourceful citizens, as
Karlsson shows in chapter six. Councillors with a left orientation also see repre-
senting minorities as a more important task (Klok and Denters, chapter four).
Considering administrative reforms, councillors with a disposition towards the
right are more convinced of the benefits of reforms that use market or business
models in local governance such as competition, public-private partnerships and
contracting out (Krapp, et al, chapter twelve). They are however less in favour
of reforms that increase citizen participation. Sweeting and Copus in chapter
seven show that on most of these reforms councillors with an orientation to-
wards the left are more positive. This is in line with the finding of Heinelt in
chapter five that councillors with an orientation towards the right are more often
adherents of the liberal representative model of democracy and also can be more
often labelled as trustees (Karlsson, chapter six; Getimis and Hlepas, chapter
eight). Councillors orientated towards the left are more often characterised as
party soldiers. They are also more often in favour of a cooperative style of lead-
ership, whereas their counterparts on the right are more in favour of an authori-
tarian style of leadership.

    As can be concluded from the results described above, the ideological
left/right dimension is still a valid indicator for the understanding of local coun-
cillor orientations and behaviour.

About the authors

Dubravka Jurlina Alibegović is Senior Research Associate and Head of Department for Regional Economics, Sustainability and Governance at the Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Croatia.

Colin Copus is Professor of Local Politics in the Department of Public Policy at De Montfort University and Director of the Local Governance Research Unit.

Bas Denters is Full Professor for Public Administration at the Institute for Innovation and Governance studies (IGS) and programme director of the IGS Innovation of Governance Research Programme.

Björn Egner is Senior Researcher at the Institute for Political Science at Technische Universität Darmstadt, Germany. He is the head of the research group for Methodology in Political Science and Philosophy of Science.

Panagiotis Getimis is Full Professor at the Panteion University of Political and Social Sciences, Faculty of Economics and Regional Development.

Hubert Heinelt is Full Professor for Political Science at the Institute for Political Science at Technische Universität Darmstadt, Germany. He is chairing the research group for Public Administration, Public Policy and Local Politics.

Nikos Hlepas is Associate Professor at the National and Kapodistrian Univeristy of Athens, Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration. He is the Chairman of the National Centre of Public Administration and Self-Government of Greece.

David Karlsson is Senior Lecturer in Public Administration at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Pieter-Jan Klok is Assistant Professor for Policy Science at the Department of Public Administration in the School of Management and Governance of the University of Twente, The Netherlands.

Max-Christopher Krapp is Researcher at the Institute for Political Science at Technische Universität Darmstadt, Germany. He is a member of the research group for Public Administration, Public Policy and Local Politics.

Daniel Kübler is Associate Professor for Research on Democracy and Public Governance at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Zurich and Head of the Department for Democracy Research at the Centre for Democracy Studies in Aarau.

Annick Magnier is Jean Monnet Chair in the University of Florence. Her main research interests and teaching activity have been concentrating in the fields of comparative local politics and sociology of urban planning.

Werner Pleschberger is Associate Professor in the Department of Economics and Social Sciences at University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences in Vienna.

Larissa Plüss is Research Fellow and PhD Candidate at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Zurich.

Eran Razin is Associate Professor at the Department of Geography, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. He is the Director of the Institute of Urban and Regional Studies in the Hebrew University.

Herwig Reynaert is Professor at the Department of Political Science at Ghent University where he teaches local and Belgian politics. He is chairman of the Centre for Local Politics and chairman of the Urban Policy Research Centre.

Dan Rysavy is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Sociology and Adult Education at Philosophical Faculty Palacky University Olomouc, Czech Republic.

Josip Šipić is a PhD candidate in Comparative Politics at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, Croatia and Asociate Rsearcher at the Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Croatia.

Sunčana Slijepčević is Research Associate at the Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Croatia.

Kristof Steyvers is Lecturer/Assistant Professor at the Centre for Local Politics of the Department of Political Science of Ghent University.

David Sweeting is Senior Lecturer in Urban Studies in the Centre for Urban and Public Policy Research at the University of Bristol.

Tom Verhelst is PhD-student at the Centre for Local Politics at Ghent University, Belgium.

Index

Annex: Documentation of the questionnaire

A Questions about the council and actors in local democracy

1 How much influence does the Council in your municipality have over the following tasks?

		Very high influence	High influence	Some influence	Little influence	No influence	Not an activity for the municipality
1	Defining administrative procedures	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
2	Financial programming/evaluation	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
3	Urban planning	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
4	Industrial and economic development	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
5	Environmental protection	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
6	Strategic planning	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
7	Relations with other local authorities	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
8	Organisation of collective services	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
9	Appointment of local chief executives	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐

2 Who in your municipality mainly serves the following functions - committees or the full council?

		Only comittees	Mostly comittees	Both, to equal extent	Mostly the council	Only the council	Neither of them
10	To represent the interests of local people	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
11	To enable the participation of people other than politicians in deliberations	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
12	To allow in-depth discussion of particular issues	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
13	To represent the interests of parties	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
14	To oversee the work of a department	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
15	To make strategic policy decisions	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
16	To make day-to-day management decisions	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
17	To allow politicians to develop specialisms	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
18	To propose or develop new policies	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐

3 Please indicate the political balance of your council:

20	1☐	A single party with an overall majority	19	*Please state which party:* ……………………
21	2☐	A single party without an overall majority		*Please state which party:* ……………………
22	3☐	A coalition		*Please describe:* …………………………
23	4☐	Other		*Please describe:* …………………………

4 If your municipality is governed by a coalition, how would you characterise the agreement?

24	There is a distribution of posts	1☐ Yes 0☐ No
25	There is agreement on policies	1☐ Yes 0☐ No

5	**On the basis of your experience as a local councillor in your municipality, and independently of the formal procedures, please indicate how influential each of the following actors is over local authority activities.**	Very high influence	High influence	Some influence	Little influence	No influence	Not relevant
26	The Mayor	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
27	The President of the Council	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
28	The Presidents of Council Committees	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
29	The Executive board	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
30	Single councillors	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
31	Myself	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
32	The Heads of Departments in the Municipality	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
33	The Municipal Chief Executive Officer	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
34	Professional Consultants/Experts	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
35	Local MPs or Ministers	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
36	Local trade unions	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
37	Journalists	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
38	Local businesspeople	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
39	National and international firms	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
40	The Church	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
41	Local (voluntary) associations	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
42	Local single issue groups	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
43	Neighbourhood or decentralised bodies	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
44	Party leaders	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
45	The party groups in the council	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
46	Party organisations	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
47	Regional and upper levels of government	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐

6	**If a firm wanted to develop a project in the locality and expected that the council would not approve of it, which actors would it have to gain the support of in order to influence the council?**	Yes	No
48	The leaders of the party groups in the council	1☐	0☐
49	The leader of one or more committees	1☐	0☐
50	The Mayor	1☐	0☐
51	The Members of the executive body	1☐	0☐
52	The Heads of Departments in the Municipality	1☐	0☐
53	Professional Consultants/ Experts	1☐	0☐
54	Local businesspeople, shop-owners, etc.	1☐	0☐
55	Local Chambers of commerce	1☐	0☐
56	Local MPs or Ministers	1☐	0☐
57	Local trade unions	1☐	0☐
58	Journalists	1☐	0☐
59	The Church	1☐	0☐
60	Local (voluntary) associations	1☐	0☐
61	Local single issue groups	1☐	0☐
62	Regional/Upper levels of Government	1☐	0☐
63	Other	1☐	0☐

B Questions about your role as councillor

7	**For how many years have you been a councillor in total?**
64	For ……………. years

8   **Were you elected as a candidate**

65   1 ☐   of a national party. *Please state which party:* ………………………………………   66
        2 ☐   of a local party
        3 ☐   as an individual or independent candidate

---

9   **How did you become a candidate the first time you were nominated?**

67   1 ☐   I proposed myself
        2 ☐   I was asked by others

---

10   **In your experience as a councillor, <u>how important</u> are the following tasks for you as a councillor:**

	Very great	Great	Mode-rate	Little	None
68 Defining the main goals of the municipality	4 ☐	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐
69 Controlling municipal activity	4 ☐	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐
70 Representing the requests and issues emerging from local society	4 ☐	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐
71 Publicising debate on local issues before decisions are taken	4 ☐	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐
72 Explaining decisions of the council to the citizens	4 ☐	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐
73 Implementing the programme of my political party/ movement	4 ☐	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐
74 Supporting the executive	4 ☐	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐
75 Mediating conflicts in local society	4 ☐	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐
76 Promoting the views and interests of minorities in local society	4 ☐	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐
77 Promoting the views and interests of women in local society	4 ☐	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐	0 ☐

---

11   **Do you get a satisfactory amount of information from the municipal administration to perform your job as a councillor?**

Completely satisfactory	Mostly satisfactory	Neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory	Mainly unsatisfactory	Completely unsatisfactory
78 5 ☐	4 ☐	3 ☐	2 ☐	1 ☐

---

12   **Do you receive an allowance as a councillor?**

79   Yes 1 ☐   No   0 ☐

---

13   **Considering your responsibilities, do you think your allowance as a councillor is adequate or not?**

80   Not Adequate 1 ☐   2 ☐   3 ☐   4 ☐   5 ☐   6 ☐   7 ☐   Adequate

---

14   **How much time per month do you spend on the following activities?**

	Average number of hours per month
81 Council and committee meetings	……………………
82 Meetings with the party's council group	……………………
83 Other party meetings and activities	……………………
84 Public debates, meetings with citizens et c	……………………
85 Meetings with administrative staff	……………………
86 Field visits to municipal institutions	……………………
87 Desk work preparing your activity in the Council	……………………
88 Other important activity as councillor,	……………………
89 please specify ……………………………………	

15	How frequently do you have contact with the following individuals or groups?	A few times a week	A few times a month	A few times a year	(Almost) never
90	The mayor	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
91	Members of the executive board	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
92	Committee Leaders	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
93	The President of the council	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
94	Members of my party group	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
95	Members of other party groups	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
96	The leaders of my own local party organisation	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
97	The Municipality Chief Executive Officer	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
98	Civil servants in the municipality	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
99	Union representatives	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
100	Leading actors from voluntary associations	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
101	Women's organisations	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
102	Organisations of ethnic minorities	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
103	Representatives of upper levels of government	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
104	Representatives of public agencies at the local level	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
105	Private business representatives	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
106	Journalists	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
107	Individual citizens in your role as a councillor	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

16	How important is it for you as a local councillor to represent the following groups or interests?	Of utmost importance	Of great importance	Of moderate importance	Of little importance	Not important at all
108	The whole locality	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
109	Ethnic minority(ies)	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
110	Women	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
111	Workers	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
112	The middle class	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
113	Local business groups	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
114	Farmers	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
115	Religious groups/the Church	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
116	Some particular local government service	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
117	Less resourceful citizens	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
118	A particular geographic part of the locality	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

17	If there should be a conflict between a member's own opinion, the opinion of the party group in the council or the opinion of the voters, how should, in your opinion, a member of the council vote?

119 1☐ Vote according to his/her own conviction
2☐ Vote according to the opinion of the party group
3☐ Vote according to the opinion of the voters

C Questions about your views on local democracy and local policy

18	How important are in your opinion the following goals for your local authority	Of ut-most im-portance	Of great import-ance	Of mod-erate im-portance	Of little import-ance	Not im-portant at all
120	To attract economic activities to the city	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
121	To develop high-tech activities	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
122	To regenerate or rebuild the city-centre	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
123	To improve infrastructures and services for transport	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
124	To improve the aesthetics of the city	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
125	To develop leisure and cultural services	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
126	To develop housing	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
127	To defend the traditional cohesion of local society	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
128	To emphasise diversity and tolerance in the local society	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
129	To improve the level of services and well-being in the city	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
130	To reduce pollution	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
131	To improve the external image of the city	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
132	To attract new population	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
133	To attract a wealthier population	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
134	To improve the position of women in local society	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
135	To fight against social exclusion and poverty	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
136	Other	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
137	please specify…………………………………..					

19	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Strong-ly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor dis-agree	Dis-agree	Strong-ly dis-agree
138	Political parties are the most suitable arena for citizen par-ticipation	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
139	An important task of a councillor is to defend the interests of under-represented groups	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
140	Local referenda lead to high quality of public debate	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
141	Competition between service providers facilitates citizen choice in public services	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
142	Decentralisation of local government is necessary to in-volve citizens in public affairs	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
143	Public-private partnerships are more effective in solving problems than public administration and representative bodies	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
144	Political decisions should not only be taken by representa-tive bodies but be negotiated together with the concerned local actors	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
145	Female representatives can better than men look out for women's interests	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
146	Local bureaucrats should as far as possible stick to politi-cally defined goals.	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
147	Women councillors often cooperate in the council, irrespec-tive of party membership	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
148	The integrity of the leading councillors is high and it is not possible to get a favourable decision by offering benefits to the councillors.	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
149	Politicians should only define objectives and control out-puts, and never intervene into the task fulfilment of local administration.	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

150	The need for changes and reorganisation of the local government sector has been greatly exaggerated.	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
151	There are few benefits from contracting out or privatising services in the municipality	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
152	Male and female councillors put forward different questions in local politics	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

20   **There is often talk about a left-right dimension in [Swedish] politics. Where would you place yourself on a left-right dimension?**

	Left										Right
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
153	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21   **People have different ideas about how local democracy should function. Please indicate how important for local democracy you feel the following requirements are:**

		Of utmost importance	Of great importance	Of moderate importance	Of little importance	Not important at all
154	Residents should participate actively and directly in making important local decisions.	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
155	Residents should have the opportunity to make their views known before important local decisions are made by elected representatives.	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
156	Apart from voting, citizens should not be given the opportunity to influence local government policies	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
157	Council decisions should reflect a majority opinion among the residents.	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
158	Political representatives should make what they think are the right decisions, independent of the current views of local people.	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
159	Local politicians should try to generate consensus and shared values among local citizens/groups.	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
160	The results of local elections should be the most important factor in determining municipal policies	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

22   **How effective are the following instruments in letting local politicians know public opinion irrespective of whether such reforms have been introduced in your own country or municipality?**

		Very effective	Effective	Moderately effective	Not sufficiently effective	Not effective
161	Voting	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
162	Party meetings	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
163	Petitions	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
164	Citizens juries	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
165	Public meetings	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
166	Satisfaction surveys	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
167	Complaints schemes	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
168	Referenda	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
169	Consultation with local agencies	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
170	Consultation with community groups	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

23	**How effective do you consider the use made by the council and the councillors of the instruments available to them?**	Very effective	Effective	Moderately effective	Not sufficiently effective	Not effective
171	Questions	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
172	Interpellation	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
173	Motion (e.g. declaration of agreement with decision of Municipality)	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
174	Resolution	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
175	Placing items on agenda	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
176	Right to inquiry	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
177	Right to information	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
178	Scrutiny	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
179	Local referenda	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

24	**In your experience as a councillor, how would you define <u>your contribution</u> regarding the following tasks?**	Very great	Great	Moderate	Little	None
180	Defining the main goals of the municipality	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
181	Controlling municipal activity	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
182	Representing the requests and issues emerging from local society	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
183	Publicising the debate on local issues before decisions are taken	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
184	Explaining decisions of the council to the citizens	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
185	Implementing the programme of my political party/ movement	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
186	Supporting the executive	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
187	Mediating conflicts in the local society	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
188	Promoting the views and interests of minorities in local society	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
189	Promoting the views and interests of women in local society	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

25	**Below are a number of reforms that have been introduced in municipalities in different European countries. Irrespective of whether such reforms have been introduced in your own country or municipality, how desirable or undesirable do you consider the following reforms:**	Highly desirable	Desirable	Neither desirable nor undesirable	Undesirable	Highly undesirable
190	An advisory (non-binding) referendum	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
191	A decisive (binding) referendum	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
192	Frequent surveys to monitor local public opinion	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
193	Direct elections of mayors	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
194	Co-decision procedures, where –citizens can discuss and make binding decisions on certain local issues.	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
195	Devolution of responsibilities to neighbourhood organizations	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
196	Citizen consultation procedure, where citizens are informed about and can support or criticize municipal proposals	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
197	Transferring the powers of scrutiny over municipal services to user boards	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
198	Reducing the number of members of the Council	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

D Questions concerning your political career and your party

26	Do you presently hold any of the following elective or executive offices? Have you previously held any of these offices?			
		Yes, today	Not now, but before	No, Never
199	Member of Parliament	2☐	1☐	0☐
200	Minister	2☐	1☐	0☐
201	Councillor in another municipality	2☐	1☐	0☐
202	Mayor in another municipality	2☐	1☐	0☐
203	Member of regional (or provincial) executive board	2☐	1☐	0☐
204	Member of parish council	2☐	1☐	0☐
205	Member of board of council-owned joint stock company or foundation	2☐	1☐	0☐
206	Member of a council committee	2☐	1☐	0☐
207	President of a council committee	2☐	1☐	0☐
208	Member of the executive board	2☐	1☐	0☐
209	President of the council	2☐	1☐	0☐
210	Delegate of the mayor	2☐	1☐	0☐
211	Regional councillor	2☐	1☐	0☐
212	Provincial councillor	2☐	1☐	0☐
213	Member of a co-operative body of Local Authorities	2☐	1☐	0☐

27		Are you, or have you previously been, a member or held a position in the following types of organisations?					
			At present		Not now, but before		Never been a member
			Elected or appointed position	Only member	Elected or appointed position	Only member	
214	215	Trade union	2☐	1☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
216	217	Business/professional association	2☐	1☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
218	219	Humanitarian organisation	2☐	1☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
220	221	Sport/athletic organisation	2☐	1☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
222	223	Women's organisation	2☐	1☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
224	225	Environmental organisation	2☐	1☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
226	227	Ethnic minority organisation	2☐	1☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
228	229	Religious organisation	2☐	1☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
230	231	Neighbourhood organisation	2☐	1☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
232	233	Other organisation – please specify: …………………..	2☐	1☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
234							

28	Are you presently a party member?
235	0☐ No 1☐ Yes, Please specify which party: ………………………… 236

29	When did you first become a party member:
237	**Year:** ……….. Please specify which party ……………………... 238
	0 ☐ **I have never belonged to any party**

30	**Do you presently have, or have you previously had, a position (board member etc) in your party's organisation (beside the party's council group)?**				
		Yes, presently	Yes, previously	No, never	Not applicable. My party does not have such an organisation or I'm not a member of a party
239	In the local party organisation	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
240	Upper level party organisations	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

31	**What is your opinion on the following statements about your party?**						
		Agree totally	Partly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Partly disagree	Disagree totally	Not applicable
241	The local party organisation has much influence over the decisions of the party's council group	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
242	The party's council group has much influence over the decisions of the local party	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐
243	The leader of the party group usually informs and seeks the support of the party group when decisions are taken	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐	99☐

32	**Have you got a seat in the council due to the preferential voting system, i.e. although you have not been placed in higher positions of your party or local list?**
244	1☐ Yes 0☐ No

33	**As a candidate in the last election, to what extent did you have the support of the following groups:**					
		Very great	Great	Some	Little	Not at all
245	National organ(s) of your party	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
246	Your party wing/fraction	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
247	Your party at the local level	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
248	National politician(s)	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
249	Local prestigious person(s)	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
250	Trade union(s)	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
251	Local business group(s)	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
252	Women's organisation(s)	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
253	Local media	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
254	The church	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
255	Local (voluntary) association(s)	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
256	Ethnic group(s)	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

34	**When you first accepted to become a candidate, how important were the following reasons? Please indicate the importance of each motive.**					
		Of utmost importance	Of great importance	Of moderate importance	Of little importance	Not important at all
257	General interest in politics	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
258	Possibility to highlight the needs of the group I represent	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
259	It is a chance to learn how the political system functions	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
260	As a councillor I can do a good job for the party I represent	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
261	It is an opportunity to control the administration	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
262	The allowances tempted me to become a councillor	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

263	As a councillor I have the opportunity to make social contacts	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
264	As a councillor I will be held in high esteem	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
265	It is an opportunity to enter into a political career	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
266	As a councillor I have the opportunity to influence specific issues	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
267	It is a citizen duty to engage oneself in municipal affairs	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
268	Other reasons (specify)	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
269	…………………………					

---

35 **For the time being, what are you planning to do at the end of the present mandate?**
Please select one of the following alternatives

270   1☐   I would like to continue as a councillor
         2☐   I would like to continue my political career in a higher political office at the local level
         3☐   I would like to continue my political career in a higher political office at the regional or national level
         4☐   I would like to quit politics

---

36 **If you want to quit politics, could you please state why?**

		Yes	No
271	I want to concentrate on my profession	1☐	0☐
272	I want to work for a voluntary organisation	1☐	0☐
273	I have done my citizen duty	1☐	0☐
274	I think political work is too time-consuming in relation to family or occupation	1☐	0☐
275	I lack influence (of myself, my party or municipalities in general)	1☐	0☐
276	I am too old	1☐	0☐
277	I will move from the municipality	1☐	0☐

E Questions about your background

---

37 **How old are you?**

278   ……………………years

---

38 **Are you male or female?**

279   1☐ **Male**   2☐ **Female**

---

39 **For how many years have you lived in your municipality?**

280   ……………………years

---

40 **What is your highest completed education?**

281   1☐   Elementary school
         2☐   Secondary school or equivalent
         3☐   University / college or equivalent.

---

41 **In the two last generations, were any of your close relatives elected for a political function?**

282   1☐ Yes   0☐ **No**

42 **To which occupational category did you belong before your first mandate as a councillor? And to which occupational category do you belong today?**

		Before	Now
283	Professional politician (or the like, e.g. cabinet or party function)	1☐	1☐
284	Civil servant	2☐	2☐
	Business manager	3☐	3☐
	Teacher	4☐	4☐
	Liberal profession (e.g. lawyer, doctor)	5☐	5☐
	Engineer (or the like, e.g. computer specialist, technician)	6☐	6☐
	Clerk	7☐	7☐
	Shopkeeper (or the like, e.g. salesman)	8☐	8☐
	Labourer	9☐	9☐
	Farmer or fisher	10☐	10☐
	Student	11☐	11☐
	Retired	12☐	12☐
	Househusband/wife	13☐	13☐
	Other, please specify……………………………………………………	14☐	14☐

43 **In your present occupation are you**

285   1☐ An employee   2☐ Self-employed   3☐ Unemployed/student/retired

44 **If you are an employee – Are you employed by a public sector organisation or by a private firm?**

Public sector	Private firm/Voluntary organisation	Employed in both public and private sector	Neither/Not employed
286 3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

45 **How much time do you spend on the following activities per week?**

287	Paid employment	…………………….hours/week
288	Unpaid care and household work	…………………….hours/week

46 **Where were you and your parents born?**

		[Sweden]	Another country	Specify which country:
289	I was born in:	1☐	2☐	290………………………………
291	My mother was born in:	1☐	2☐	292………………………………
293	My father was born in:	1☐	2☐	294………………………………

47 **To what extent do you feel that you belong to the following groups in society?**

		To a high degree	To some degree	Neither high nor low degree	To a low degree	Not at all
295	The working classes	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
296	The middle classes	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
297	The upper classes	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
298	The [Swedish] people	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
299	A religious group	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐
300	An ethnic minority group	4☐	3☐	2☐	1☐	0☐

48 **How many persons live in your household?**

301
302 …………persons older than 12 years and **………..** under-aged children (under the age of 12)

49	**Do you have any help with handling the household /care work, except from your husband/wife/partner?**		
		Yes	No
303	Relatives (for ex grandparents)	1☐	0☐
304	Nanny/au pair or equivalent	1☐	0☐
305	Service Company	1☐	0☐

50	**Do you, apart from your own children, have any care responsibilities for other persons due to illness, age, handicap or else?**
306	1☐ Yes 0☐ No

51	**Thank you for taking time to answer the questionnaire. If you have any more comments about the questionnaire or the issues raised in it, please feel free to write them down:**
307	………
	………
	………
	………
	………
	………
	………

Thank you!