

Policy Making at the Second Tier of Local Government in Europe

Debates about multi-level governance have led to a profound restructuring of regional and local government. The second level of local government is under review in most European countries, with the aim to strengthen the institutional capacity of municipalities or to develop appropriate institutional structures for governing fragmented urban areas.

This book provides a thematic and cross-national analysis of the key actors in local government that form the crucial components of effective and democratic policy making. Focussing on the second tier of local government, it examines new empirical data on councillors from this level of government in 15 European countries and integrates important variables such as party politics, notions of democracy, finance, multi-level settings. Divided into five parts, it addresses:

- Attitudes of county/provincial councillors towards administrative and territorial reforms.
- Their role perception and role behaviour.
- Their political orientation.
- Actor constellations and governance arrangements.
- Political socialization and recruitment, professionalization and career patterns of county/provincial councillors.

This book will be of interest to students and scholars of local government, urban studies, regional studies, political science, sociology and geography.

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in the on-going re-scaling of statehood?

Edited by Xavier Bertrana, Björn Egner and Hubert Heinelt

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Hubert Heinelt, Xavier
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Taylor & Francis
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 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

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First published 2016
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2016 selection and editorial material, Xavier Bertrana, Björn Egner and Hubert Heinelt; individual chapters, the contributors

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

[CIP data]

Taylor & Francis
Not for distribution

ISBN: 978-0-415-84348-5 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-67300-4 (ebk)

Typeset in Baskerville
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

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1 Introduction

Xavier Bertrana, Björn Egner and Hubert Heinelt

Aims, origin and main questions of the book

Instead of focusing on national sovereignty and government-centred governance, increasing interest is dedicated in political and scholarly debate since the 1990s on multi-level governance, which stresses the importance of the spatial dimension in public policy and governance in general as well as collective self-determination. In this context the effectiveness and the democratic quality of policy making in multi-level systems have occupied a prominent position on the political agenda and led in most European countries to a profound restructuring of regional and local government (for recent publications on this topic see Loughlin *et al.* 2011; Baldersheim and Rose 2010).

One of the main focuses of these reform processes is the second tier of local government, which has become the weakest link in the chain of the multi-level government systems in European countries. It is frequently squeezed between the powers of upper levels of governments and the municipalities. While in some European countries this level of local self-government, based on a multipurpose jurisdiction, has being upscaled or even abolished in the context of wider regionalisation processes, in others it has been completely revised either to become an proper institutional structure for governing fragmented urban areas by upscaling municipal powers or decentralising tasks of upper levels of government tasks (see, for example, OECD 2015). In fact, exceptions to this multi-level reform processes can be found in most of the Eastern European countries included in this book, where decentralisation took place quite recently and the second tier of local government has only experienced minor institutional changes. Nevertheless, where reforms took place in Eastern European countries the second tier of local government has played an important role in establishing democratic political structures at the subnational level and strengthening local autonomy. For that reason, reform processes at county level have affected the central state administration (or, in other words, the deconcentrated state administration) either to give the second tier more autonomy in relation to the central state (as happened in Croatia in 2001) or simply to abolish central state administration offices at county level (Czech Republic).

Northern European countries like Denmark, Sweden or the United Kingdom share a long tradition of continuous structural reforms of local government, which

continued during the last decade (for a historical overview, see the different country chapters in Baldersheim and Rose 2010 or Heinelt and Bertrana 2011). For example, in 2007 Denmark abolished counties, shifting most of its tasks to municipalities (which were amalgamated) and creating new government structures at the regional level responsible for health services (see Mouritzen 2011). In Sweden, there is an ongoing review of the second tier of local government towards amalgamation which should be complemented by the allocation of more functions of the deconcentrated central state administration at this level of government (see Bäck 2011). Finally, in England there is a continuous process towards the creation of the so-called unitary authorities merging former counties and districts.

Due to coercive top-down approach employed, these kinds of reforms in Nordic and North-middle European countries have been termed the ‘North European Strategy’ (Wollmann 2010). By contrast, the ‘South European Strategy’ has retained not only the historical small-size format of the municipalities by creating different kinds of intermunicipal bodies, but also created a highly stable second tier of local government (Bertrana and Heinelt 2013).

From this perspective, one of the most striking features of the reform processes on the local government system during the last decade in Southern European countries like France, Italy or Spain is their impact in the second tier of local government. In almost all of these cases the economic and financial crisis played a crucial role in the reforms deviating from the South European Strategy (see Bertrana and Heinelt 2013).

In France, the *départements* and the regions will be completely renewed if the Socialist government’s plans for reform succeed. The different levels of local government are experimenting in such an ambitious reform that it is difficult to synthesize it in a few lines. While municipalities will still be considered as the basic level of local government, sub-national levels of government above the municipalities are experiencing a significant reform of their electoral system, their powers and competences (with a probable abolishment of the general clause of competence) and their territorial structure. In January 2015, for example, different *métropoles* were created with both municipal and departmental competences. This applied to cities like Rennes, Bordeaux or Strasbourg. In January 2016 the metropolis of Paris and Marseille will be created and the former 22 regions will be replaced by 13 new regional units (see Gouvernement de la République Française 2015).

In Italy the Law on the Metropolitan Cities, Provinces, and Unions and Municipal Amalgamations transformed different provinces into 10 ‘metropolitan cities’ on 1 January 2015. They will also combine the competences of the former municipal and provincial levels of government. These ‘metropolitan cities’ are lead by a ‘metropolitan mayor’ who is the mayor of the biggest city and a council consisting of ‘metropolitan councillors’ elected amongst and by the municipal councillors and mayors. Furthermore, a transitory regime for the remaining provinces is planned before they are abolished after a Constitutional reform.

In Spain, the ‘Law on the Rationality and Sustainability of Local Administration’ has focused on the rescaling of municipal services to the provincial level to overcome the weaknesses of the fragmentation of the municipal level. However, at the same time, the actual implementation of this law is questionable if we take the weak

democratic legitimacy of provincial councils and the contested role of the Spanish provinces in the context of the *Estado de las Autonomías* into account (i.e. the particular political system of Spain with its strong ‘autonomous communities’/regional governments).

The planned reform of the Dutch provinces continues to be uncertain because the plans of the Dutch cabinet to reduce the number of provinces through mergers have failed – as in the recent case of the planned amalgamation of Utrecht, Flevoland and North Holland. Nevertheless, ideas about the abolition of city-regions, the amalgamation of municipalities (with a mixed approach between voluntary mergers and intermunicipal cooperation) and the development of new cooperative arrangements between municipalities and provinces in an experimental way are still defining an ongoing process of reform, which is altering the multi-level system of government in the Netherlands (for a general overview see OECD 2014 and 2015: 66–67).

Finally, since the regionalisation of the competences regarding the organisation of local government in Belgium (in 2001), the reform plans are divergent in the two main regions of the country. The implementation of the planned reforms is dependant on the strength of the different political parties (and their different views on the state structure) in both regions. After the 2014 regional elections, the Walloon government consolidated the provinces. That government remains important at the intermediate government level to support municipalities in partnership with the regional government. The Flemish government that came into power in 2014 plans a far-reaching functional reform to alter the multi-level system of government and the role of the provinces. From 2017 onwards Flemish provinces will be responsible for territory-related competences only (and no longer for person-related competences) while excluding all their supralocal initiatives in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants and their partnership in intermunicipal cooperation.

These examples show not only that the democratic quality and the effectiveness of the second tier of local government is increasingly contested in the ongoing rescaling of statehood, but also that reform processes are taking place even in countries where until now this level of local government has showed a high capacity to resist any attempt to impose far-reaching structural reforms.

How this rescaling of statehood has affected the second tier of local government in European countries has been shown in detail in Heinelt and Bertrana (2011; see also Bertrana and Heinelt 2013). However, gaps remain in knowledge about what is happening in daily practice at this level of government, how policy making is done and how the rescaling of statehood is perceived by those actors involved in policy making at the second tier of local government.

To close this gap of knowledge, a group of scholars from a number of European countries carried out a survey among councillors, political executives (i.e. presidents of provinces, *Landräte* etc.) and leading bureaucrats (executive officers/CEOs), i.e. the highest ranking appointed and not elected civil servant or employee at the second level of local government (provinces, counties, *départements*, *Landkreise*, etc.) in the years 2012 and 2013.¹ Results of this survey are published in this book. We have to admit that due to the small number of responses of political executives and leading bureaucrats at the second level of local government (see Table 1.1) most chapters of this book are focused on councillors.

Table 1.1 Countries in the data set, number of cases

Country	Name	No. of units ¹	Councilors			Presidents			CEOs		
			Total	Responses	Response rate	Weight	Total	Responses	Response rate	Total	Responses
Belgium	Province	10	747	336	45.0	0.287	10	7	70.0	10	8
Croatia	Županije	21	885	331	37.4	0.346	21	2	9.5	21	
Czech Republic	Kraje	13	662	85	12.8	1.007	13	6	46.2	13	11
England	County council	35	1,852	140	7.6	1.710	35			35	
France	Département	100	3,800	308	8.1	1.595	100	7	7.0	100	27
Germany	Landkreise	295	17,525	1,672	9.5	1.355	295	54	18.3	295	27
Greece	Periferia	13	713	233	32.7	0.396	13	9	69.2	13	7
Hungary	Megye	19	389	113	29.0	0.445	19	7	36.8	19	10
Italy	Provincia	103	3,246	131	4.0	3.204	103	73	70.9	103	27
Norway	Fylkeskommuner	18	728	226	31.0	0.416	18	7	38.9	18	9
Poland	Powiat	314	6,283	120	1.9	6.769	314	7	2.2	314	8
Romania	Județe	42	1,315	177	13.5	0.961	42	8	19.0	42	9
Spain ²	Provincias	38	999	188	18.8	0.687	38	16	42.1	38	25
Sweden	Landslag/region	20	1,733	1225	70.7	0.183	20			20	
Total		1,119	40,877	5,285	12.9		1,041	203	19.5	1,041	168
											16.1

Source: the authors of this volume

Notes: 1. Free-county cities or cities with county status have been excluded (for example, the *powiats gminne* in Poland or the *kreisfreie Städte* in Germany); 2. Spanish ‘special regime’ provinces were excluded of our research (see *Berrana et al.* 2011).

The main (interrelated) research questions addressed in this book in a comparative way are:

- What are the attitudes of councillors, political executives and leading bureaucrats at the second level of local government towards recent administrative and territorial reforms?
- What is their role perception, and what is their actual role behaviour?
- What is their notion of democracy and how does it affect their role perception, role behaviour and attitudes towards administrative and territorial reforms?
- What is the political orientation of key actors involved in policy making at this level of government? Do party politics (or party politicisation) play a role?
- How do key actors respond to newly emerging governance arrangements? More specifically: How do councillors, political executives and leading bureaucrats at the second level of local government interact among each other? And how do they interact with societal actors and actors from upper levels of government?
- What sorts of people become a councillor at the second level of local government? (What is their social background, political career and level of professionalization?)

The book edited by Heinelt and Bertrana (2011) provided the background for this survey (as the editors of this book as well as a number of authors who contributed country studies to it were part of the research group).

The following countries are covered by this survey (carried out by the partners listed): Belgium (Tony Valcke, Kristof Steyvers, Herwig Reynaert and Tom Verhelst), Croatia (Dubravka Jurlina Alibegović and Sunčana Slijepčević), Czech Republic (Dan Ryšavý and Daniel Čermák), England (David Sweeting, Colin Copus, and Thom Oliver), France (Eric Kerrouche), Germany (Hubert Heinelt, Björn Egnér and Max-Christopher Krapp), Greece (Nikos Hlepas), Hungary (Ilona Pálné and László Kákai), Italy (Carlo Baccetti and Annick Magnier), Norway (Jacob Aars, Bjarte Folkestad and Lawrence E. Rose), Poland (Pawel Swianiewicz), Romania (Cristina Stănuş and Daniel Pop), Spain (Jaume Magre, Carmen Navarro, Joan Manel Sánchez and Xavier Bertrana) and Sweden (Anders Lidström, Katarina Roos and Linn Antonsson).²

Content of the book

According to the aforementioned questions tackled by individual chapters the book is arranged in the following way.

The first part of the book is focused on counties in multi-level systems and attitudes of actors at this level of local government towards administrative and territorial reforms.

In Chapter 2, 'County councils in a multi-level position: formal powers and assumed autonomy' are reflected by Anders Lidström and Katarina Roos.

The Heinelt and Bertrana (2011) book made a first attempt to develop a specific analysis of the position of the second-tier local authority in a comparative perspective. However, a limitation in the analysis is that it is only based on ‘objective’ criteria. There is no room for the decision makers themselves to express their views about their county’s position. This chapter fills this gap of knowledge with an actor-centred analysis of the vertical position of the second-tier local authorities vis-à-vis other levels of government. A key question is to what extent objective criteria and subjective assessment correspond. One of the main findings is that the assumed relationships vis-à-vis the municipalities on the one hand and vis-à-vis upper levels of government on the other are uncorrelated. This suggests that downwards and upwards relationships reflect different logics. The link to the municipalities is more a governance-oriented exchange between equal partners whereas the relationship upwards is of a hierarchical type, where county councils are clearly understood to be subordinate authorities with little scope for making a difference. Aside from formally identified differences in the institutional setting of the second tier, councillors emphasise the existence of different modes of governance regarding downwards and upwards relationships. There is support for both the theory of limited rationality and the notion that the formal position and the assumptions of autonomy are two different phenomena. For this reason, as Lidström and Roos show, whenever possible formal measures should be complemented with subjective assessments in order to obtain a fuller picture of a unit’s vertical autonomy.

‘Perceptions of New Public Management reforms’ are addressed by Hubert Heinelt and Max-Christopher Krapp in Chapter 3. New Public Management (NPM) has been the major paradigm of administrative reforms since the 1980s. However, it is quite unclear what local government actors really think about the need for administrative reforms and the reform perspectives offered by NPM. Heinelt and Krapp try to give answers to this question in this chapter. Furthermore, they refer not only to results of the survey carried out in 2012 and 2013 with second-tier councillors but also to surveys with local government actors carried out over the last 20 years. This is done to tackle the question if changes in the perception of local government actors regarding the need for administrative reforms and NPM related reform perspectives can be identified. Finally, this leads to the question if the heydays of NPM have passed and what could be possibly expected ‘beyond NPM’.

In Chapter 4, Dubravka Jurlina Alibegovic and Suncana Slijepcevic look at ‘County councils: between revenue shortfalls and growing responsibilities’. In the last decades the process of decentralization has been present in most European countries. This chapter starts with a review about the scholarly and political debate about decentralisation and particularly the relevance of decentralisation for regional and local economic development. Based on this, the authors explore the role of the second tier of local government and attitudes of second-tier councillors towards a decentralisation process and their perception in fostering local economic development, keeping in mind that there is a gap between revenue shortfalls and growing responsibilities that has been further deepened by the global financial

crisis. The authors conclude that in the last few decades many European countries have been faced with the same situation that the share of the second level of local government revenue in terms of GDP stayed at relatively low levels. Central government keeps under its control main revenue sources. Transferred responsibilities to the second tier of local government in the countries analysed are different but generally, the responsibility of the second tier of local government for coordinating local development policy remains low. Because of limited financial resources for current responsibilities, the attitudes of county councillors towards new tasks and responsibilities are not homogenous across the countries analysed. Most county councillors across Europe think that their role in the coordination of local economic development should be more important. Therefore, additional attention is given to the analysis of county councillors' attitudes towards territorial reforms and the division of responsibilities for providing basic public services/goods between the private and the public sector in different European countries. The emphasis is on an advocacy role of county councillors in the promotion of regional development and overall well-being of the local community.

The second part of the book deals with the role perception and role behaviour of actors at the second tier of local government (particularly with councillors).

Cristina Stănuş approaches 'The political representation focuses of second-tier councillors in Europe' in Chapter 5. The main aim is to describe and explain the mix of representational focuses characteristic of elected officials at the second tier of local government in Europe. More precisely, the chapter sets out to answer three questions: (1) How does the notion of overlapping focuses of representation manifest itself at the second tier of local government in Europe? (2) To what extent is territorial representation being replaced/complemented by more flexible forms of political representation? And (3) what are the factors that account for variation (if any) in territorial representation focuses of second-tier elected officials in Europe? First, the analysis shows that territorial and functional representation coexist and complement each other at the second tier of local government. The main reason is that territorial representation tends towards more localised forms, but at the same time this trend is stronger in local government systems where councillors play important roles in policy making and, consequently, find themselves more integrated in local policy networks involving higher levels of functional representation. Second, the analysis partially explains variation in terms of territorial representation focuses across Europe by examining at a set of aggregate and individual level variables. At the cross-national level, the type of territorial representation is acquired by county councillors in Europe seems to depend significantly on the electoral formula and the type of local government system. Third, at the individual level, the future career plans of a councillor as well as whether he or she is a full-time politician (which is at least partially institutionally determined) or, to a lesser degree, his or her affiliation with a political party, help to shed some light on the acquisition of representational focuses. However, these elements provide only a partial explanation, since characteristics of national and local politics explained above seem to be more relevant to influence the role perception of elected officials at the second tier of local government.

Chapter 6, ‘Representational styles among regional and local councillors’ (by Jacob Aars, Bjarte Folkestad and Lawrence E. Rose) takes as its departure two potentially opposing demands on elected officials famously expressed by Edmund Burke. On one hand, elected representatives are expected to consult with their voters in order to express the views of their constituency. On the other, they are expected to formulate their own policy initiatives, independently of their voters’ opinions. The two demands entail different representational roles: whereas the first primarily implies a delegate role, the second implies a trustee role. At the time when Burke made his speech, however, political parties in the form that we know today did not exist. Representatives are now typically nominated by political parties and stand for election on the basis of a party platform. This chapter focuses on the party mandate as a form of role orientation. The authors pay special attention to the significance of contextual variation in representational styles associated with role orientations among elected representatives at two different levels in the political-administrative systems of 12 countries. It is suggested that county councillors operate in a context where they are less close to their constituents than are municipal councillors, and hence a party mandate role orientation is likely to be more prevalent among regional representatives. The authors find some support for this ‘levels effect’ proposition, but they also find differences in what are termed *representational role profiles* between the countries investigated, and that the representational role profiles for county and municipal councillors have noteworthy similarity. This suggests that there are also ‘system effects’ that influence the role orientations of councillors at both levels of local government of the political system in the twelve countries. It would seem, in short, that certain features within a country, whether these be structural, cultural or otherwise, generate similar representational styles across different levels of government.

Chapter 7, ‘Patterns of gender representation in councils at the second tier of local government: assessing the gender gap in an unexplored institutional setting’, by Carmen Navarro and Lluís Medir, starts with a straightforward review of the literature on political representation in general and of the representation of women in representative bodies in particular. Based on this review, the authors examine the composition of councils at the second tier of local government as well as the personal characteristics of female members of these councils and their distinctive attitudes and values. In this way they explore whether the main hypotheses and findings to be found in the literature on women’s political representation can be confirmed for second-tier local assemblies. The main findings are that differences in the share of women in councils at the second tier of local government can be explained by institutional together with cultural and socioeconomic variables. The most favourable context for women to become a county councillor can be characterised by proportional representation with closed party lists, large districts, generous welfare systems, high proportions of women in the labour force and a culture of gender equality. Furthermore, a practice of applying candidate quotas makes a difference. Finally, leftist parties tend more to nominate women to safe places on their lists.

Finally, in Chapter 8, *'Notions of democracy of councillors at the municipal and second tier of local government – and their role perception and behaviour'*, Hubert Heinelt starts with an analysis of responses of second-tier councillors that can be related to either a representative or a broader participatory understanding of democracy. In a second step the author tries to explain the pattern detected, which indicates different notions of democracy. As it turned out in a previous analysis of municipal councillors, formal horizontal power relations between councillors, the mayor and the leading bureaucrats of the municipal administration determined by different local government systems do not affect the councillors' notion of democracy. Instead, their notions of democracy can be related to personal characteristics only. It will be shown that this does not hold true for councillors at the second tier of local government: in addition to personal characteristics, their notion of democracy is also related to the institutional power relations they have to act in. The chapter follows an analysis of the role perception and role behaviour of councillors from both tiers of local government as well as their attitudes towards reforms at the local level to see whether or not councillors' notions of democracy can be related to their role perception, role behaviour and attitudes towards reforms as dependent variables. It has to be emphasised that the responses of councillors from both levels of local government to these topics are compared to see whether differences between municipal and second-tier councillors can be detected which could indicate that the greater spatial distance of second-tier councillors from lay people/citizens matters – and in this respect the geographical size of political units.

The third part of the book includes reflections on the political orientations of key actors, political parties and actor constellations at the second level of local government and political parties.

Chapter 9, on 'The importance of political parties in county government' (by Colin Copus, David Sweeting and Thom Oliver) examines the attitudes of councillors towards their political party. The authors set their contribution in the broader context of the decline of party in different countries in different ways in this study, such as declining membership and a lack of trust in parties and party politics. Using a party significance index and other variables the authors explore the importance of the councillors' own political party in this study. They find that party remains for many councillors of overriding concern, and party loyalty is a deeply ingrained custom across the sample. Moreover, national parties exert considerable control over local party groups. Therefore, while a decline in the importance of the councillors' own political party might be a feature of broader societal processes, parties retain a strong grip on their activities.

Chapter 10, 'Parties and ideology: how parties shape their manifestos to obtain votes' (by Björn Egner), addresses the debate in political science of how to measure ideological party positions. A large number of empirical analyses use ideology scores for parties as independent variables, e.g. for policy choice, fiscal performance, electoral campaign strategies. One possibility is rarely used by political scientists, hence it suggests enhanced validity and reliability: The measurement of party positions according to the self-assessment of party members. The survey on which the chapters of this book are based provides us with a self-assessment of

politicians of the second tier of local government, which are in touch with the ‘real’ problems of the local level, but are also potential career politicians for upper levels. Therefore, the assessment of the people who are taking part in politics at the second level of local government level is representative of what the ‘party infantry’ thinks where ‘their’ party is located on the traditional left-right dimension. The chapter discusses the assessment of party members about their party, their ideological self-assessment and links the survey data to the scores of the comparative manifesto project.

In Chapter 11, ‘Actors’ influence and horizontal power relations at the second tier of local government’, Panagiotis Getimis and Nikos Hlepas analyse empirical findings reflecting patterns of different horizontal power relations at the second tier, as they have been systematized by Mouritzen and Svava (2002) for the municipal level and then adapted for the second tier of local government by Heinelt and Bertrana (2011). Discrete positions in horizontal power relations are reflected in deviating perceptions of councillors, county presidents and CEOs concerning the influence of various actors at the second tier of local government. Executive leaders (administrative CEOs and county presidents) perform distinctive roles and focus more on specific actors. Nonetheless, the primacy of politics and governmental actors over county activities has been confirmed by all groups of respondents in all European countries. Business interests seem to be less influential at the county level than governance theories would anticipate. The authors also conduct an analysis of the frequency of contacts that the respondents declare to have to different actors, which has clearly shown that elected politicians with executive functions (presidents and CEOs) have more frequent contacts to wider sets of actors than ordinary councillors. The analysis reveals bonds of elected politicians to different actors. Empirical findings show a relationship between electoral support to politicians and frequency of their contacts in most cases. Finally, in some countries, a ‘circle of power reproduction’ is confirmed, starting with a high electoral support that begets a relatively high frequency of contacts, which leads to a perceived strong influence of some civic actors over county activities.

The final part of the book deals with political socialization and recruitment, professionalization and career pattern.

Chapter 12, ‘The political career of county councillors in Europe: examining the internal logic of professionalization and comparative country patterns’ (by Xavier Bertrana, Jaume Magre, Joan Manel Sánchez, Kristof Steyvers, Tony Valcke and Tom Verhelst), examines the political career of second-tier councillors. Using a theoretical framework that structures the empirical scrutiny of councillors’ careers in four different analytical dimensions (career focus, scope, locus and sequence) and operationalises them by applying specific items of the questionnaire to substantiate the ideal-typical features of the layman–professional continuum in each dimension, the authors explain the logic of professionalization in the councillor career both at the individual level and at the cross-national level. The analysis reveals clear signs of a professional career scope regarding seniority and future ambitions. In terms of career focus however, most councillors still

correspond to the typical layperson image of the citizen-politician. Furthermore, while the combined results from career locus and sequence seem to point to substantial degrees of professionalization as well, a closer look showed a largely separate local career system in which councillors often gain external experience at the municipal level before entering the county council. However, the expectation that the different indicators of professionalization within and between the four dimensions would reinforce one another at the individual level has only been confirmed to a very limited extent. There is only scarce evidence pointing towards a strong internal logic of professionalization in the political career development of second-tier councillors in Europe. However, systematic differences in vertical power relations of counties in various country settings seem to affect the degree of county councillor professionalization to a higher extent. A refined grouping of countries defined on the basis of Bertrana and Heinelt (2011) shows that in countries where the levels of municipal recruitment amongst the county councillors are higher also show a clearer tendency towards recruitment from the political executive of the municipalities or even the mayoralty, and hence to political professionalization. This pattern reinforces the idea of the second-tier level offering fertile ground for a career path in its own right in the context of an autonomous local political sphere where the different levels of local government interact as a relevant feature of political localism in some countries like France, Spain or the Czech Republic. By contrast, the decoupling of both levels of government in relation to the political career of these political elites seems to characterise the rest of Southern and Eastern European countries. Finally, the degree of integration of local government in the overall structures of the political systems of Belgium and Germany on the one hand, and Norway and Sweden on the other (in the sense of Bertrana and Heinelt 2011 or Sellers and Lidström 2007: 611–612) could explain the existence of career paths that are closely linked to the multi-level government system of these countries.

Chapter 13, 'Political professionalization of county councillors in Europe' (by Dan Ryšavý and Daniel Čermák), also deals with the degree of political professionalization of county councillors. The analysis is carried out in three main steps: (1) The authors develop a typology of county councillors' professionalization by using both responses to time invested into county affairs and full-time status. (2) They study whether the degree of political professionalization is related to differences between countries depending on their location (Eastern-Western Europe), type of political system (more or less decentralised) and the size of council or size of county. (3) Finally, they consider the relationship between the degrees of political professionalization and attitudinal variables. Ryšavý and Čermák identify four types of county councillors: *laymen*, *time investors* (those who spend a lot of time on county affairs without full-time status), *outward oriented full-time councillors* (those politicians with full-time status who spend a lot of time on political affairs that are not county related) and *full-time county councillors*. Then they develop different hypothesis to explain their distribution across countries by taking into account different variables at the national level and also how they are interrelated with the degree of professionalization at the individual level. For example, they

show that the chance of becoming a full-time county councillor grows not only with the increasing number of inhabitants, but also with the increasing number of municipalities in the counties. Conversely, they explain that the presence of a regional or state level of government increases the chances of county councillors remaining laymen. Finally, they show that countries where both councillors and the public perceive local government as increasingly threatened by fraud and corruption are those with higher numbers of time investors and a clear pattern of hidden professionalization. As can be observed, there are many factors behind the degree of political professionalization of second-tier councillors and some relevant differences between the countries included in the book. However, in most of them, if politics at the second tier of local government is a profession, it is a precarious one (Borchert 2003).

It is widely acknowledged that elected representatives have often benefited from a variety of stepping stones in their passage to power. Chapter 14, 'Family, ambition, local rootedness and party: a study of the activation and apprenticeships of the county councillor in Europe' (by Eric Kerrouche and Corentin Poyet) reflects comparatively on such stepping stones amongst second-tier councillors in Europe following previous research on municipal councillors (Verhelst and Kerrouche 2012). More specifically, it takes into account that family ties, ambition, the entrenchment in the locality and the political party are elements of activation and apprenticeship in the process of political recruitment. The chapter investigates whether some assets, such as the inclusion in the local community and the enrolment in a political party, are essential for entering a political career, while others are not but nevertheless quite helpful (e.g. family, motivations, social background, municipal size, ideology and function) or dependent upon the institutional provisions in place (e.g. quota, electoral system). Some of the main conclusions of the chapter are that (1) a successful political career is mainly determined by factors related to the social life of the politician (i.e. social networking capabilities either through the political parties or local organisations); (2) socialisation in a political life through familial ties is important but not a requirement; (3) the size of the county constitutes a good predictor to explain differences in activation and apprenticeship; and (4) individual factors also matter. Leftist councillors benefit more of their engagement in politics and trade unions. On the contrary, the socialisation of right-wing councillors appear to take place independently of the political scene and mainly in the economic sector.

Acknowledgement

We appreciate the immense work invested by Timo Alexander Richter (TU Darmstadt) in collecting the data from the involved national partners in a common data set. This included a number of time-consuming corrections which were necessary because some of the partners reversed scales of variables. Richter dedicated also a lot of work in bringing the chapters in a form required by the publisher.

Notes

- 1 Similar surveys of municipal councillors (see Egner, Sweeting and Klok, 2013; Heinelt 2014), mayors (see Bäck et al 2006) and municipal chief executive officers (see Mouritzen/Svara 2002 and Klausen/Magnier 1998) have been carried out by some of the same partners involved in the survey of councillors, the political executives and leading bureaucrats at the second level of local government. See for more details about these surveys Section 3.1 in the chapter written by Heinelt and Krapp in this book.
- 2 We are particularly grateful for the resources invested by those partners mentioned who could not (for whatever reason) contribute a chapter to this book.

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2 County councils in a multi-level position

Formal powers and assumed autonomy

Anders Lidström and Katarina Roos

Introduction

In most large and medium sized European countries, local government functions are divided between a municipal and a second tier (Heinelt and Bertrana 2011).¹ Among the European Union member states such units are currently present in 19 of 28 states (Loughlin *et al.* 2011). The largest state without a second tier is Bulgaria, with 7.6 million inhabitants. Croatia, with 4.3 million inhabitants, is the smallest member state with two tiers of local government. This suggests that one of the reasons for establishing such units is that the different local self-governing functions require different territorial scales in order to be carried out in an optimal way. Indeed, common functions of the second tier include responsibility for secondary education, health care and specialised social services which typically require larger populations. In addition, the second tier may also have supervising and coordinating functions vis-à-vis municipalities and other actors (Heinelt and Bertrana 2011; Lidström 2011).

The second tier of local government is located somewhere in the middle in modern systems of multi-level governance, and therefore is at the centre of inter-connections between levels of government – as well as networks involving both public and private interests (Pierre and Peters 2000). Gary Marks, one of the founders of the concept of multi-level governance, defined it as ‘a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers’ (Marks 1993: 392) and emphasised that ‘supranational, national, regional, and local governments are enmeshed in territorially overarching policy networks’ (Marks 1993: 402 f.). Second-tier local authorities are ideal cases for exploring the complexity of multi-level governance. They have relationships upwards towards the region (in certain countries), the state and the European Union; downwards towards municipalities, and sideways towards other public authorities at county level, private firms and the civil society. Indeed, the complexity of their position may provide both limits and opportunities as regards to the amount of self-government that they may have in practical terms. The focus of this chapter is on the autonomy of second-tier authorities in relation to other levels of government. Are they squeezed between demanding municipalities and scrutinising upper levels of government or do they have a real space for action? And how does this vary among countries in a European context?

There are many previous attempts to map and comparatively analyse the degree of self-government among local governments in different countries. These include more general studies of local government systems (Sellers and Lidström 2007) and decentralisation (Schneider 2003; Stegarescu 2005; Bolleyer and Thorlakson 2012) but there are also a few studies that specifically concern the position of the second tier (Hooghe *et al.* 2010; Heinelt and Bertrana 2011). Comparisons of self-government may concern the tasks, competences and capacities of a unit and the extent to which it is circumscribed by controls and supervision by other levels of government. Although often very ambitious and highly sophisticated, these studies suffer from mapping the formal divisions of powers and access to resources only and have not taken the experiences and views of the decision makers of these units into account. This is potentially a serious limitation as it may make these objective measures less appropriate as predictors of the policy choices made by these governments.

A consequence of this lack of previous research is that there is practically no knowledge available about to what extent the formal powers of a unit correspond to the assessments made by the leading actors. There might be a high degree of correspondence, which would suggest that the leading actors have good knowledge about the formal prerequisites, in a comparative sense, too. However, correspondence may instead be low, or even non-existent, which could indicate that subjective and objective measures capture different aspects of power and autonomy. Independently of the results of the analysis, the findings will be crucial for further research on local government autonomy.

This chapter aims to shed light on these matters by answering the following questions:

- How do elected second-tier councillors perceive the vertical autonomy of their own unit of government in relation to other levels of self-government?
- To what extent does this correspond to measurements of the formal position of these units?
- How can differences and similarities be accounted for?

These questions will be addressed first in an overview of relevant theories and later through an empirical analysis, based on a survey of county councillors and other types of data from 14 European countries.

Theoretical perspective

The starting point of this chapter is institutional theory that emphasises the importance of formal and informal norms for human behaviour (March and Olsen 1989; Scott 1995; Peters 2012; Lowndes and Roberts 2013). The perspective draws on normative institutionalism, stressing the logic of appropriateness as a guiding principle but also on sociological institutionalism with its emphasis on the cognitive basis of institutions and their role in creating meaning. Actors in institutions are expected to adjust their behaviour to comply with existing norms, sometimes

contrary to what would have been most rational for themselves. A logic of appropriateness is applied when new situations emerge. Although norms set limits, they do not determine behaviour. There is always room for actors to make their own interpretations and choices and it is always up to the actors themselves to decide whether they want to follow the norm or not.

Our institutional theory has a social constructivism trait in the sense that the norms exist as perceptions of actors and are not given from the outside. Instead, they are constructed and reconstructed in a social setting (Hall and Taylor 1996). In the short term, norms provide the limits to what is seen as appropriate behaviour in a given situation; but in the long run they may be renegotiated and modified, although there is a tendency towards path-dependency, i.e. that the already dominant norm has precedence over alternative norms. An important notion is also that norms reflect power struggles.

In the institutional perspective, a multi-level governance system should be regarded as a social construction that in the short run is seen as given and taken for granted, hence clarifying for the actors the range of appropriate actions that are available. Many aspects of the system are regulated by laws, some of which some may even have a constitutional status. These require a formal process in order to be changed. Other aspects may be more informal and rest on explicit or tacit agreements among the actors. An important aspect is also that the system provides a set of roles which are defined within social settings. Some of these may be formally regulated but all roles are accompanied by informal expectations that set limits on how they can be used.

This chapter has a focus on the position of the county council in a multi-level system, and in particular the extent of its vertical autonomy. Horizontal autonomy concerns the scope for action in relation to other units of the same kind, or the outside society, whereas vertical autonomy is about how other levels of government in the multi-level system limit or facilitate each other's actions (Clark 1984; King and Pierre 1990). The analysis also has a comparative perspective. It is assumed that assumptions about vertical autonomy may vary between different institutional settings. The major formal differences with regard to the position of the county council are between countries, but powers and functions may also be different within a particular country. In addition, it has to be taken into account that actors in the same institutional context can make different assessments.

Given this type of institutional theory, there may be different alternative relationships between the actors' assumptions of the vertical autonomy of a unit and its formal powers.

A first alternative is that there is high and almost complete correspondence between the formal position of a unit and how vertical autonomy is perceived. This may be the situation when the key actors, who make the assessments, are well informed not only about the formal prerequisites for their own decision-making unit, but they are also able to position this in relation to similar units in other countries. Indeed rationalist theories of decision making take for granted that actors have access to extensive and relevant knowledge so that they can make well-informed decisions. A consequence of this alternative is that it would be sufficient

to map the formal positions and the actors' assumptions about autonomy would then add little to the picture.

The second alternative would expect a certain but limited amount of correspondence between formal and assumed position. This may be the case when the decision makers are reasonably well informed about the formal conditions but then also use additional information in order to make their final assessments. This complies more with the notion of limited information in normative and sociological institutionalism (March and Olsen 1989). Contrary to what is sometimes assumed by rational choice theories, these versions of new institutionalism accept that human beings have a limited capacity to comprehensively analyse all the details on matters upon which they are acting. In particular sociological institutionalism, that emphasises cognitive frames and sense making, and it has a theory of action that recognises that actors follow routines, rules of thumb, automated schemas and scripts rather than an exact understanding of the various detailed aspects that may be relevant for their actions (Simon 1947; DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Weick 1995; Scott 1995).

We will expect actors to rely on overall assessments, rather than on a systematic evaluation of different aspects of the relationships with other levels. Actors will be expected to have a general picture of their own unit's strengths or weaknesses vis-à-vis other units. This way of understanding how actors make sense of their world assumes that the formal position is just one of several aspects that are being taken into account when the actors make their assessments of the vertical autonomy of their unit.

Finally, a third position would be that there is no link between formal position and assumed autonomy, or even that the direction may be the opposite of what is expected, i.e. despite a unit having a strong formal position, the actors would regard it to be weak, or vice versa. This would suggest that there is no rational connection between formal position and assumed autonomy, but rather that they represent two different and incompatible understandings of the position of a unit. The formal position and the assumptions are simply just different things that need to be understood on their own terms in order to obtain a more complete picture of the autonomy of a unit. This would require that the formal position and the actors' assessments are being taken into account separately.

These positions may be regarded as alternative hypotheses about the relationship between formal powers and assumed autonomy. The empirical analysis will be able to illuminate the extent to which each of these explanations are valid.

Independently of the results, it must also be emphasised that assumption of vertical autonomy is an individual trait, and therefore is also likely to vary between people. Previous research has shown that strong personal resources enhance an individual's sense of efficacy (Verba *et al.* 1995). Those with more individual resources could be expected to make a more positive assessment of the position of their county council. Such resources have traditionally included male gender, medium age and high level of education. However, they may also refer to one's political position, such as being an experienced politician, having a senior position

or exerting considerable influence over policy making. In the subsequent analysis, these individual traits will be taken into account.

Method, material and operationalisation

The main set of variables used in the analysis are measures of the formal powers of the county council on the one hand and actors' assessments of county council vertical autonomy in a multi-level setting on the other.

During the last few years two different measurements of formal powers of county councils have been developed, but on the basis of different principles. The first is a set of indicators developed by Heinelt and Bertrana (2011) specifically concerning second-tier local government. They borrow the dimensions of capacity and supervision from Sellers and Lidström's (2007) general comparative analyses of local self-government but adjust these to the specific conditions of the second tier of local government. Particularly relevant for our analysis, they set up separate criteria for the relationship vis-à-vis the municipal level and the upper levels of government. Therefore, they end up with four different indices – on capacity and supervision vis-à-vis the municipal level and on capacity and supervision vis-à-vis national government.²

The other measure of formal position is Hooghe *et al.*'s (2010) Regional Authority (RA) index which has indicators of the region's influence over their own citizens (self-rule) and their position in the national system (shared rule).³ Their data set consists of 42 countries and covers the time period from 1950 to 2006. Hence, they are able to capture the main regionalisation changes of the last few decades. Apart from covering the state level in federations and regions in strongly regionalised states such as Spain, they also provide separate data on the position of the second tier of local government in each country. The data on shared rule captures federal arrangements, therefore our analysis will be confined to their measure of self-rule. This is directly relevant as a measurement of county council self-government.

It could have been expected that the RA index and the four Heinelt and Bertrana (HB) indices, despite measuring formal powers of county councils in different ways, would end up with similar pictures of how formal powers vary between the different countries. However, a correlation analysis indicates that the RA index is positively correlated to one of the HB indices, negatively correlated to another and non-related to the remaining two. This suggests that there is not just one single uncontested measure of the formal powers. However, with several measurements we will be able to assess the extent to which each of them corresponds to the actors' assumptions of county council autonomy.

The measurement of assumed autonomy is generated from the survey on second-tier councillors. The elected councillors, rather than any other representative for the county council, were selected as respondents. They have an overarching responsibility for county council matters and make the final decisions in all key issues. A set of questions was included in the questionnaire aiming at capturing the councillors' perceptions of the relationship between the county council on the one hand and the municipalities, regional government (where present), the national

government and the European Union on the other. For each relationship, two statements were posed, one about the influence of the county councils over the other level, and another about the influence of the other level over the county council. For example, in relation to the municipalities, the statements were:

- ‘My county has much influence on the municipal level.’
- ‘Municipalities have much influence on my county.’

There were five alternative answers to each statement: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree. Alternatively, the respondents could indicate that the question was not relevant. Rather than providing details of the relationship between the county council and other levels of government, the respondents were expected to provide a general assessment of their own unit’s strength vis-à-vis other levels of government.

Each question was coded from -2 to +2, the positive value indicating that the respondent thought that the county council had a strong position vis-à-vis the other level of government. How the responses were dispersed on each question is presented in Table 2.1.

The results displayed in Table 2.1 correspond to what may be expected in terms of how the different levels of government are hierarchically related to each other. The county council is seen as subordinate in relation to all upper levels of government, whereas the relationship with the municipalities is seen as more reciprocal. A closer analysis of the relationship between the different measures suggests that the views on the relationship with higher levels of government are highly intercorrelated. Therefore, and in order to simplify the analysis, it will be limited to two sets of relationships – the county council vis-à-vis the national

Table 2.1 Survey questions about the relationship between the county council and other levels of government

	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither disagree nor agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>n</i>
My county has much influence on . . .				
the municipal level	16	30	54	5,025
the regional government	52	33	16	3,019
the national government	69	24	7	4,745
EU decision making	81	15	4	4,653
<i>[Level of government] have/has much influence on my county</i>				
Municipalities	24	33	44	5,021
Regional government	20	40	40	2,946
National government	19	40	41	4,967
EU decision making has	20	41	39	4,930

Source: Second Tier Survey

Note: *n* = number of observations. ‘Disagree’ = categories ‘Disagree’ and ‘Strongly disagree’, ‘Agree’ = categories ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly agree’.

Table 2.2 Indices of county council assumed autonomy in relation to the municipal and national levels

<i>Assumed autonomy of county council in relation to . . .</i>		<i>Valid per cent</i>	<i>n</i>
the municipal level	strong	29	1,449
	neither weak nor strong	60	3,042
	weak	11	552
	total	100	5,043
	missing		445
the national level	strong	3	164
	neither weak nor strong	33	1,637
	weak	64	3,219
	total	100	5,020
	missing		468

Source: Second Tier Survey

Note: Strong represents the values between +1 and +2; neither weak nor strong, the values between -0.5 and +0.5; weak, the values between -2 and -1.

government and vis-à-vis the municipalities. This also facilitates comparisons with the HB index, which distinguishes between the relationship with upper levels and the municipalities.

The pair of questions for each level of government is added to an index – one for the relationship to the municipalities and another for the relationship to national government.

Each index varies from -2 to +2. Summarised versions of the indices, distinguishing those with negative, neutral and positive values, are presented in Table 2.2.

The table clearly illustrates the mixed picture with regard to county council autonomy in relation to the municipalities. Although most councillors are indifferent, there is a significant proportion that sees it as either strong or weak. It is also obvious that the main variation in relation to the national level concerns whether the county councils are seen as weak in relation to the state, which is claimed by almost two-thirds, or if the councillors are indifferent.⁴

There are considerable differences between countries. Figure 2.1 summarises the views among the councillors on county council autonomy vis-à-vis the municipal level for each country. The autonomy of the county councils is seen as strongest in Croatia and Greece and weakest in Poland and Spain. However, the differences do not follow any particular pattern with regard to geographical position, state type or type of local government system (Hesse and Sharpe 1991; Loughlin et al 2011).

As indicated in Table 2.2, the main variation in assumed autonomy in relation to the national level is between those that regard it to be weak and those that are indifferent. Very few see the position of the county council as strong in relation to national government. However, whether councillors regard the autonomy to be weak or are just indifferent varies considerably between countries, which is summarised in Figure 2.2. The position is seen to be weakest in Hungary and Sweden

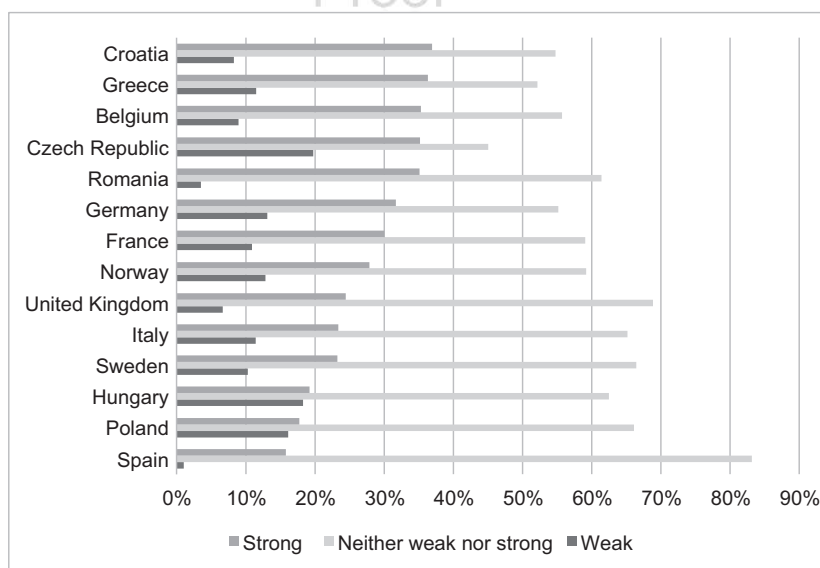


Figure 2.1 Assumed autonomy of the county council in relation to the municipal level

Source: Second Tier Survey

Note: Percentage of councillors in each country who regard the council to have strong autonomy, weak autonomy and who are indifferent in relation to the municipal level

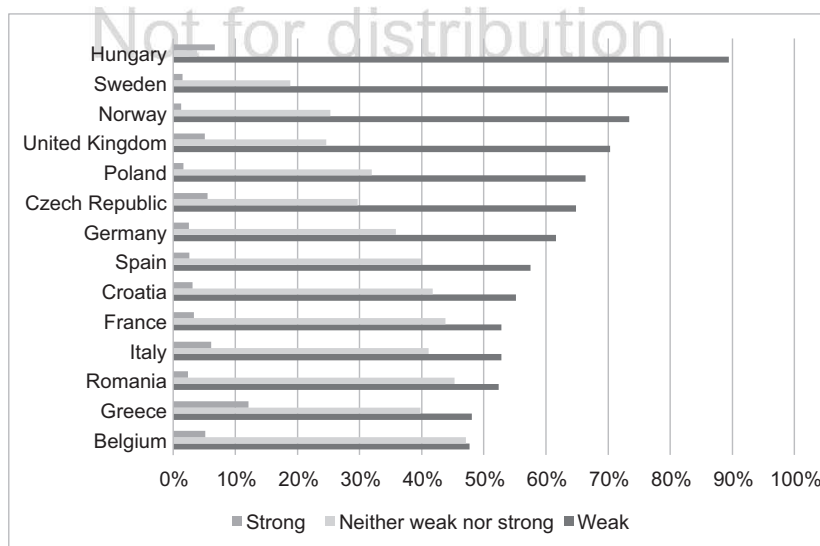


Figure 2.2 Assumed autonomy of the county council in relation to the national level

Source: Second Tier Survey

Note: Percentage of councillors in each country who regard the council to have strong autonomy, weak autonomy and who are indifferent in relation to the municipal level

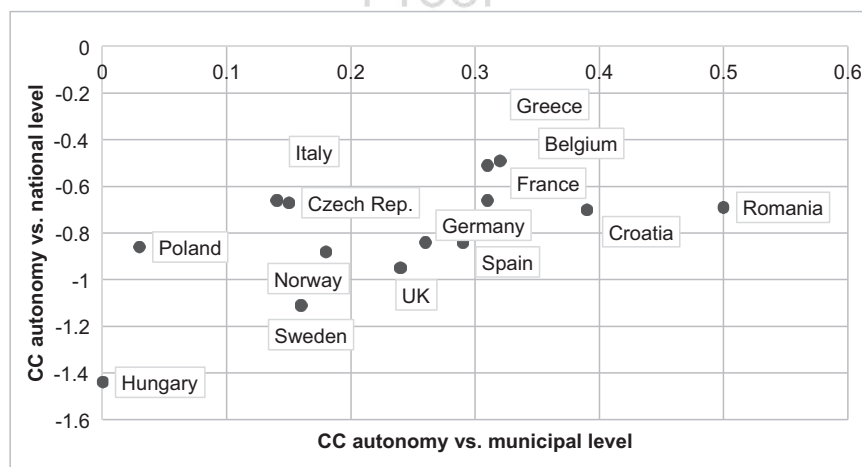


Figure 2.3 Assumed autonomy of the county council (CC) in relation to the national and municipal levels (country averages)

Source: Second Tier Survey

and least weak in Greece and Belgium. In the same way as for autonomy vis-à-vis the municipal level, there is no obvious pattern in terms of geography, state type or type of local government system.

Nevertheless, as illustrated in Figure 2.3, the rank order of the national averages of the two subjective measures are interrelated. In countries where councillors regard their councils as having limited autonomy vis-à-vis the municipalities, they are also particularly pessimistic about the autonomy in relation to national government. The overall assumed autonomy of the county councils is weakest in Hungary and Sweden and strongest in Croatia and Romania.

Formal powers and assumed autonomy

After having discussed the main features of the measuring and operationalisation of formal powers and assumed autonomy, we will now turn to the main task of the chapter: the analysis of the relationship between them. With regard to the municipal level, this will be done on the basis of multi-level regression analysis, in which a set of individual level characteristics such as sex, age, level of education and experience as a politician, are controlled for, but the variation at country and county level is also being taken into account. Unfortunately, this is not productive with regard to assumed autonomy in relation to the national level. The variable that measures this relationship is severely skewed, which means that the generated results are not robust. As we have seen, there are very few councillors who agree that the county council has strong autonomy vis-à-vis the national level.

The findings from the multi-level regression models with assumed autonomy of county councils in relation to municipalities as the dependent variable are summarised in Table 2.3. As previously mentioned, the dependent variable is an index that ranges from -2 to +2. A positive value means that the respondent thinks that

Table 2.3 Multi-level regression models with assumed autonomy of the county council in relation to the municipal level as dependent variable (three-level model; Iterative Generalized Least Squares estimates)

Fixed effects	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	0.242	0.130	0.079	0.126
Individual-level predictors				
Female (vs. male)		0.003	-0.003	0.009
Age				
19-29 (Ref.)		0.177**	0.148	0.169**
30-49		0.222***	0.250***	0.214***
50-69		0.220***	0.314***	0.215**
70-				
Education				
Elementary/secondary school (Ref.)		-0.032	-0.026	-0.036
University/college or equivalent				
Full-time councillor		-0.060**	-0.033	-0.061**
Number of years as councillor				
1-2 (Ref.)		-0.011	-0.017	-0.010
3-9		-0.014	-0.014	-0.010
10-				
Self-assessed influence		-0.010	-0.007	-0.011
Higher-level predictors				
HB second tier capacities vs municipalities			-0.161**	
HB second tier supervision over municipalities			0.235***	
RA index second tier self-rule				0.058***
Randomised effects				
Ω_e	0.487***	0.462***	0.453***	0.462***
Ω_μ	0.019***	0.012***	0.006	0.012**
Ω_v	0.010*	0.007	0.002	0.003
ICC Level 1	0.944	0.960	0.983	0.969
ICC Level 2	0.037	0.025	0.013	0.025
ICC Level 3	0.019	0.015	0.004	0.006
Model fit				
Deviance	10,822.411	6,387.753	4,865.023	6,282.198
Number of observations				
n_i	5,034	3,057	2,362	3,057
n_j	583	339	288	339
n_k	14	13	9	13

Note: *. significance at the 90% level, **. significance at the 95% level, ***. significance at the 99% level. Ω_e = Variance Level 1 (individuals), Ω_μ = Variance Level 2 (county councils), Ω_v = Variance Level 3 (countries). ICC = Intra Class Correlation Statistic.

the autonomy of the county council is strong in relation to the municipal level, and a negative value represents the opposite. In between are those who do not take a clear position and who are indifferent.

Model 1 is an empty model, with no predictors included. The grand mean, which is the overall average across counties and countries is 0.242 on the index. The variation between different countries as well as between counties is significant. The Intra Class Correlation Statistic (ICC) gives a measure of the proportion of the total variation in assumed autonomy, which adheres to the different level of analysis. Most of the total variation, about 94 per cent, is found between different groups of individuals. The rest of the variation is divided between the county level (about 3.7 per cent) and the country level (1.9 per cent). The variation in assumed autonomy in relation to the municipal level is significant on all three levels of analysis, even though the variation between countries is significant only at the 90 per cent level. Thus, if we seek to explain the variation in assumed autonomy, we need to be prepared to explore explanations at all three levels of analysis.

Comparing the different models is really not appropriate as these have been generated from analyses with varying numbers of observations. However, the reduction in the Deviance statistic ($-2 \times \text{loglikelihood}$) that is used as an overall model fit, is substantial, as predictors on the level of the individual are included in Model 2 as compared to the empty model. The tendency to make positive statements about the autonomy of the county council in relation to the municipal level increases with ascending age. It seems that experience and engagement, measured as the time that councillors in general devote to their political work, have the opposite effect on assumed autonomy. Councillors who are engaged full-time are less optimistic about the autonomy of the council than those that combine their role as politician with other tasks. Another predictor which is not included in Model 2, but which has been evaluated, is number of hours per week which the councillor devotes to work associated with the council.⁵ The more hours that the councillors in general spend on such tasks, the more pessimistic they are about the possibility of the council exerting influence over municipalities. Number of years in office does not have any significant effect, partly because it is correlated to full-time engagement. Efficacy is another potentially interesting variable. It is measured as the subjective assessment of the ability of the individual councillor to affect decision making in the council. This predictor does, however, not have a significant effect on the outcome. The regular control variables such as sex and education are not significantly related to perceptions of autonomy in relation to the municipal level.

The main purpose of the analysis is to investigate whether the formal position of the county council matters as an explanation for assumed autonomy. As previously discussed, two different measures of formal position are included in the analyses: Heinelt and Bertrana (2011) indices, labelled *HB capacity* and *HB supervision* and Hooghe *et al.*'s (2010) RA index on the second tier. They cannot all be included in the same model as HB capacity and RA index are too strongly correlated. Hence, the predictors are analysed in two separate models – Model 3 with

HB capacity and HB supervision, and Model 4 with the self-rule measure of the RA index.

In the theory section, three hypotheses about alternative outcomes of the relationship between formal position and assumed autonomy were identified. The first predicted that they would be positively and almost fully corresponding, the second that there would be a positive but limited connection and the third that they would be non-related or even negatively related. The regression analyses presented in Models 3 and 4 provide mixed results. The HB index representing supervision over municipalities and the RA index are both positively related, but not to the extent predicted by the first hypothesis. Rather, it would lend support to the second hypothesis, expecting a positive but weak relationship between formal position and assumed autonomy. However, the other HB index representing the formal capacities of the county councils is negatively related to assumptions of autonomy. Indeed, a closer look at the measure of formal capacities indicates that councillors representing county councils with constitutional protection, strong democratic legitimacy, considerable resources and a strong power of taxation power regard the county council to have less autonomy than those representing county councils with weaker capacity. At first sight, this does not make sense, but it would support our third hypothesis that formal powers and assumed autonomy are two very different phenomena. Clearly, the results are very mixed.

The variation between councillors in different countries, which was observed in the empty model, is reduced towards zero when the individual level predictors are controlled for in Model 1. However, the variation between individuals from different councils remains positive and significant. When the HB indices are included in Model 3, the only variation that remains significant is between groups of individuals. Formal position thus reduces the variation between councils in a substantial manner so that it is no longer significant. In the model where the RA index is included, there still remains a significant variation between counties. Hence, it seems the HB indices are better predictors.

As previously mentioned, we cannot make the corresponding analysis of the relationship with the national level, as the number of councillors who regard the county council to have strong autonomy vis-à-vis this level is very small. An empty model was fitted (but not presented here): although the variation between the different levels is significant, the measure is too skewed to produce robust results. As an alternative, we will examine the bivariate relationships between country averages of the formal and assumption-based measurements. Figures 2.4 and 2.5 illustrate these relationships with regard to one of the HB indices and the RA index.

Both figures provide fairly scattered pictures and it seems difficult to identify any distinctive linear relationship between the two variables. One reason is that there is very limited variation between countries in assumed autonomy in relation to the national government. This would support our third hypothesis, emphasising that formal powers and assumptions about autonomy are different and unrelated phenomena.

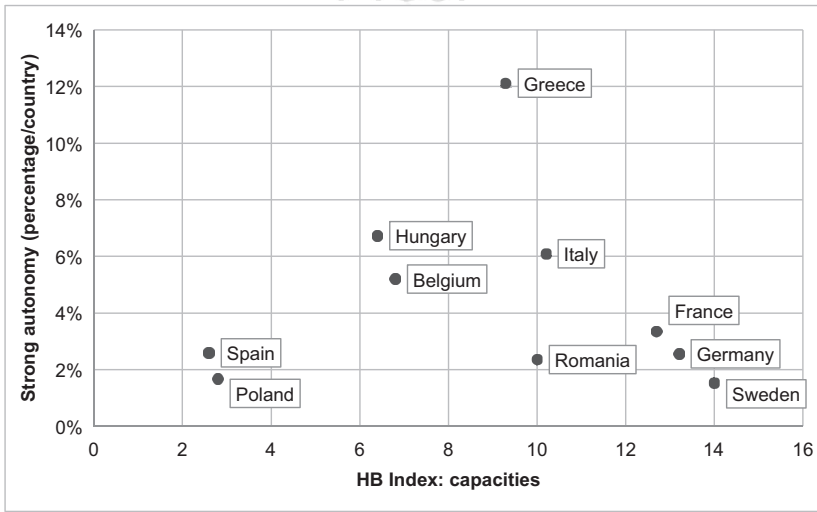


Figure 2.4 Assumed autonomy of the county council in relation to the national level (country averages for strong autonomy) and HB capacity

Source: Second Tier Survey

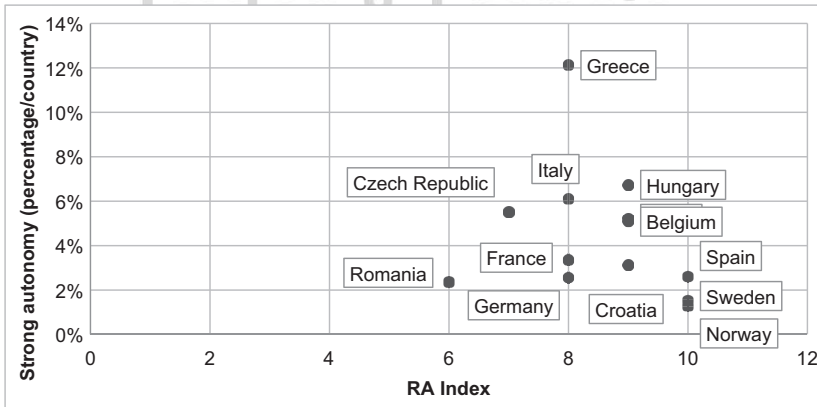


Figure 2.5 Assumed autonomy of the county council in relation to the national level (country averages for strong autonomy) and RA index

Source: Second Tier Survey

Conclusions

Second-tier councillors are located in the middle of their systems of multi-level governance and have relations both downwards to the municipalities and upwards toward national government – and, where relevant, to the regional tier and the European Union. Hence, they are ideally positioned for an exploration of how key

political decision makers assess the amount of autonomy they have when making decisions. The purpose of this chapter has been to map the assumptions of second-tier councillors about the vertical autonomy of their own unit of government in relation to other levels of self-government in a number of European countries, and to introduce and test theoretical assumptions about the extent to which this corresponds to measures of formal powers.

A first conclusion is that the assumed relationships vis-à-vis the municipalities on the one hand and vis-à-vis upper levels of government on the other are uncorrelated. This suggests that downwards and upwards relationships reflect different logics. The link to the municipalities is more a governance-oriented exchange between equal partners, whereas the relationship upwards is of a hierarchical type wherein county councils are clearly understood to be subordinate authorities with little scope for making a difference.

In the theory section, three alternative hypotheses were identified. The first predicted a near full correspondence between formal position and assumptions, based on expectations of decision making rationality. The second, which was informed by normative and sociological institutionalism, expected a certain degree of correspondence but also that the actors took other complementary information into account when making their assessments. The third hypothesis predicted that there would be no or even a negative relationship between formal position and assumptions, as these measures would be based on different logics.

The results from the analysis provide a mixed picture. With regard to the three hypotheses, there is clearly no support for the rationalist expectations of the first hypothesis. Actors' assumptions are not mere reflections of the formal position of the county councils. However, the more limited type of rationality, expressed in the second hypothesis, has empirical support but only in relation to the municipalities. Two different measures of the formal position – HB supervision and the RA index both correspond to the assumptions of the actors. However, the negative significant relationship between HB capacities and the councillors' assumptions is disturbing and makes the conclusion less clear-cut.

Although based on bivariate analyses only, the relationship with the national government seems to be more in line with the third hypothesis. There is no relationship between variation in formal powers and the assumptions of the councillors about the position of the county councils vis-à-vis national government. This would suggest that there are different logics underlying the formal measures and the actors' assumptions. Independently of formally identified differences, the councillors emphasise that their councils are strongly subordinate to national government.

To summarise, there is support for both the theory of limited rationality and the notion that the formal position and the assumptions of autonomy are two different phenomena. The rationalist position that the assumptions are just reflections of the formal powers of a unit has been rejected. This has important implications for further research on local self-government and autonomy. Whenever possible, formal measures should be complemented with subjective assessments in order to obtain a fuller picture of a unit's vertical autonomy.

Notes

- 1 *Second-tier local authorities* and *county councils* will be used as generic labels for directly elected units of self-government above the municipal level, but within a state.
- 2 The *capacities* of the second tier of local government *in relation to municipalities* (high values = strong position of second tier) are measured by (a) the constitutional protection of the second tier of local government, (b) the democratic legitimacy of the second tier in comparison to municipalities, (c) the expenditure of the second tier as a percentage of local expenditure and (d) locally raised tax revenue by the second tier as a percentage of the total of locally raised tax revenue, and the *supervision of municipalities* by the second tier of local government (high values = strong position of the second tier) by (a) the competence of the second tier of local government to coordinate municipalities hierarchically (b) the dependency of municipalities on the resources of the second tier of local government and (c) the forms of supervision and control over the municipalities.
The *capacities* of the second tier of local government *in relation to upper levels of government* (high values = strong position of the second tier) is measured by (a) the constitutional protection of the second tier of local government, (b) its expenditure as per centage of public expenditure and (c) locally raised tax as a per centage of the total revenue of the second tier of local government, and the *supervision of the second tier of local government by upper levels of government* (high values = weak position of the second tier) by (a) the appointment of the second tier executive as well as of (b) the high ranking officers at the second tier by upper levels of government, (c) earmarked grants as per centage of the revenue of the second tier, (d) tax autonomy of the second tier, (e) fiscal supervision of and control and (f) forms of supervision and control over the second tier.
- 3 Hooghe *et al.*'s Regional Authority index (specifically concerning second-tier local government refers to (a) *self-rule*, i.e. the authority exercised by a second tier of local government over those who live in the region in respect of *institutional depth* (autonomy), *policy scope* (range of functions), *fiscal autonomy* (independent taxation of population) and *representation* (independent legislature and executive); and (b) *shared rule*, i.e. the authority exercised by a second tier of local government or its representatives in the country as a whole (i.e. federal arrangements) with respect to *law making*, *executive control*, *fiscal control* and *constitutional reform*.
- 4 It needs to be stressed that the index, which measures the councillors' perceptions of autonomy for the county council in relation to the national level, is skewed. Thus, the results should be interpreted with great caution. This is even more so in the case of the aggregated values presented for each country.
- 5 The variable was discarded from the model because of the large number of missing values.

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3 Perceptions of New Public Management reforms

Hubert Heinelt and Max-Christopher Krapp

Introduction

Perceptions of New Public Management (NPM) reforms by local government actors will be analysed in this article to address two questions: How much support or rejection does NPM receive so that it is reasonable to talk about a Post-NPM era? And what could be possibly expected ‘beyond NPM’ (see for this debate for instance Christensen and Lægreid 2011b; 2012: 581–583)? Because NPM reforms differ from country to country,¹ the authors will also look for particular patterns of perceptions on NPM reforms between countries. Based on the literature of NPM reform profiles, England is the only case of the ‘NPM front runners’ (Christensen and Lægreid 2012: 578) in our sample. According to Pollitt and Bouckaert’s (2011: 117) distinction between different NPM reforms and NPM reformers, England is a clear case of what they call the ‘marketizers’, which ‘see a large role for private sector forms and techniques in the process of restructuring the public sector’.² Norway and Sweden as Scandinavian countries are usually also seen as NPM front-runners (Hansen 2011). However, they ‘share a more positive attitude towards the state and a less positive attitude towards private sector models’ (Christensen and Lægreid 2012: 580). Therefore, NPM ideas have been taken up to focus more ‘on citizens’ needs, citizens’ participation, performance and results and professionalization of public services’ (ibid.). This is the reason why Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011: 117) classified the Scandinavian countries as ‘modernizers’ among the NPM reformers. In contrast Germany is not seen as a ‘NPM front runner’ (Kickert 2011: 101–104), but rather as fitting to Continental European countries. For their part:

Continental European countries that have a consensual political system [. . .] and corporatist state-society relations [. . .] the public management reforms were less ideological and more pragmatic. Reform there was not about ideology and belief, but about effectiveness, efficiency and modern management techniques. [Like in] Continental European countries with a predominant legalistic “Rechtsstaat” tradition [. . .] the public management reforms hardly succeeded to break through the monopoly of legalistic thinking.

(Kickert 2011: 97)

And one can add: a positive attitude towards the state (like in the Scandinavian countries; see earlier). Belgium and France share with Germany on the one hand a predominant legalistic *Rechtsstaat* tradition together with a positive attitude towards the state; on the other hand, both countries have a lot in common with Southern European countries, like Greece, Italy and Spain. 'In Southern European countries with a legalistic and formalistic administration, and above all with a highly politicised administration [...] public management reforms also had a hard time to break through (Ongaro 2009)' (Kickert 2011: 97). The Eastern European countries in our sample – Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania – have been shaped by dramatic political overthrows in the 1990s, which are expressed by new configurations of the state. At that time a reformulation of the scope of the public sector was necessary, which became 'especially complicated [...] in state socialism where the public sector is "everything", and the public-private dichotomy hardly exists at all' (Ásh 2003: 537). In this context, beside democratisation, the effectiveness and efficiency of public administration belong to the main reform goals. It was (mostly) a controversial question as to which services should be privatised and how services could be provided in the most efficient way while still being offered in a public form.

It is necessary to point out that there might be 'discrepancies between the *world of ideas* [i.e. preferred reform perspectives] and the *world of practice*' (Christensen and Lægreid 2012: 577; italics added). In our survey councillors were clearly asked about their preferences. The question of how much support the NPM reform perspectives still achieve and what could be possibly expected 'beyond NPM' will be analysed based on the perceptions of NPM reforms by councillors from the second tier of local government in all the countries included in the survey (Section 2). Furthermore these findings will be tackled by putting them in the context with findings of previous surveys, having been carried out over the last two decades. Although these surveys were focused on different local government actors – namely municipal chief executive officers (CEOs), mayors and municipal councillors – such a longer time frame will allow reflections on possible changes in the perceptions of administrative reforms at the local level.

Perceptions of NPM reforms by councillors from the second tier of local government

To identify current perceptions of NPM reforms by councillors from the second tier of local government, councillors were asked if, based on experiences in their county, *a further outsourcing and privatisation or a direct provision of formerly outsourced or privatised services are endorsed*. Furthermore, they were asked about the reasons for these different routes of changes. Finally, they were asked *which form of service delivery (either public, private, or a public-private partnership) is most preferable in respect to different tasks* – namely public transport, maintenance of school buildings, waste management, energy supply, water supply and sewage, hospitals as well as care homes for the elderly.³

Further outsourcing and privatisation and/or a direct provision of formerly outsourced or privatised services by the second tier of local government

The responses to the question ‘Based on the situation in your county, do you endorse further outsourcing and privatisation?’ and to the question ‘Based on the situation in your county, do you endorse the county providing directly formerly outsourced or privatised services’ based on experiences in their county *either further outsourcing and privatisation or a direct provision of formerly outsourced or privatised services are endorsed* are shown in Table 3.1. While about 64 per cent of the European councillors at the second tier of local government were not in favour of further outsourcing and privatisation, about half of them declared that they do not support a direct provision of formerly outsourced services by their counties. These findings indicate that in general there is no dominant trend of a reform preference either in the direction of further outsourcing and privatisation or in the one of directly providing formerly outsourced or privatised services. At the same time, it is remarkable that the rejection of further privatisation is high. This reveals a stronger mistrust in this reform strategy. Therefore it seems to be reasonable to carefully agree to Wollmann and Marcou’s (2010: 256) assessment that an ‘international trend towards reversing the privatization wave of the 1990s appears to be gaining momentum’.

Table 3.1 Responses of second tier councillors to the question ‘Based on the situation in your county, do you endorse . . .’ by countries (in per cent)

Country	. . . further outsourcing and privatisation?		. . . the county providing directly formerly outsourced or privatised services?	
	No	Yes	No	Yes
England	50.4	49.6	40.4	59.6
Norway	61.8	38.2	65.0	35.0
Sweden	52.9	47.1	59.9	40.1
Germany	74.8	25.2	54.5	45.5
Belgium	69.3	30.7	53.6	46.4
France	72.3	27.7	30.5	69.5
Italy	70.8	29.2	47.3	52.7
Greece	44.9	55.1	41.8	58.2
Spain	53.0	47.0	52.8	47.2
Czech Republic	63.9	36.1	58.3	41.7
Poland	44.5	55.5	53.8	46.2
Croatia	58.1	41.9	31.5	68.5
Romania	36.2	63.8	38.9	61.1
Hungary	85.4	14.6	39.2	60.8
Total*	63.8	36.2	50.5	49.5

Source: Second Tier Survey

* Average based on weighted country data

However, there are differences between countries. In England and Sweden, the ‘NPM front runners’ in our sample, the percentage of councillors in support of further outsourcing and privatisation was considerably higher than the European average. This indicates that for these ‘NPM front runners’ outsourcing and privatisation are still relevant topics. Nevertheless the absolute support within these countries is under 50 per cent, so we have to assume that the privatisation strategy enjoys only limited acceptance – even though it is stronger than in other countries. In Germany, Belgium, France and Italy, which can be either labelled as ‘modernizers’ or as ‘maintainers’ (in contrast to ‘marketizers’), councillors are clearly less in favour of further outsourcing and privatisation. According to the statements of the councillors, Greece and to a lesser extent also Spain are different cases because outsourcing and privatisation seems to be more supported strategies there. This might be explainable by the reforms pushed forward by the fiscal crises in these two countries. Finally, the Eastern European countries show quite diverse patterns which are hard to explain. Especially in Hungary further privatisation was strongly neglected, while in Poland and Romania this strategy was positively evaluated by the majority. This indicates that in these countries quite different reform debates have been developed, so that the Eastern European countries do not comprise a common group.

However, responses of councillors from the second tier of local government to the question if they endorse a direct provision of *‘formerly outsourced or privatised services’* show an interesting picture. Councillors from France, Italy and Greece (as well as from Croatia and Romania) declared that they support this approach. Remarkably, also county councillors from England were quite positive towards more ‘insourcing’. This indicates that in England as one of the ‘NPM front runners’ not only a critical perspective on outsourcing and privatisation has been developed, but also a reform perspective of direct provision of services gained importance. That the direct provision of formerly outsourced or privatised services by the second tier of local government is – according to the majority of responses of the councillors – not an attractive reform approach in Norway, Sweden, Germany and Belgium can be explained by the fact that in these countries outsourcing and privatisation have been limited in the past, at least in comparison to the ‘marketizers’ among the NPM reformers (e.g. England). However, one should not ignore political struggles in these countries about ‘remunicipalisation’, like the ones in Germany particularly affecting the energy sector (see for example Sack 2014).

In the literature some core motives for ‘insourcing’ are pointed out, which focus on bad experience with formerly privatised services. Rising costs for citizens, missing control opportunities for local authorities and unsatisfactory results or quality of services are emphasised in political and scholarly debates (see for instance Wollmann and Marcou 2010: 255–256; Christensen and Læg Reid 2011b: 392–394). In our survey we asked for the relevance of these reasons for both strategies. Regarding the advantages of further outsourcing and privatisation, those councillors declaring a preference for this strategy stated that costs, flexibility and quality altogether would be the most important reasons for pursuing that strategy (see Table 3.2a). Also the combinations of quality and costs as well as flexibility and costs were marked quite often. Therefore the reduction of costs seems to be the

Table 3.2a Reasons for further privatization (in per cent)

Country	Quality	Flexibility	Costs	Quality and flexibility	Quality & costs	Flexibility and costs	Quality, flexibility and costs	Total
England	6.0	4.5	17.9	0.0	17.9	6.0	47.8	100
Norway	8.3	4.8	4.8	14.3	27.4	7.1	33.3	100
Sweden	5.3	4.4	1.4	16.0	6.5	2.8	63.6	100
Germany	1.5	1.8	8.4	2.7	15.6	27.5	42.5	100
Belgium	14.8	13.0	13.9	4.6	9.3	13.9	30.6	100
France	5.1	11.4	15.2	2.5	13.9	30.4	21.5	100
Italy	8.1	8.1	24.3	5.4	35.1	5.4	13.5	100
Greece	7.4	11.0	6.6	11.0	13.2	7.4	43.4	100
Spain	2.5	5.1	13.9	5.1	12.7	21.5	39.2	100
Czech Rep.	3.0	0.0	12.1	3.0	15.2	3.0	63.6	100
Poland	1.5	3.0	19.4	0.0	26.9	7.5	41.8	100
Croatia	12.8	4.1	14.5	8.1	34.3	2.9	23.3	100
Romania	14.7	3.2	6.3	3.2	24.2	3.2	45.3	100
Hungary	7.7	0.0	7.7	15.4	23.1	15.4	30.8	100
Total*	4.5	4.3	13.4	3.6	20.4	14.0	39.8	100

Source: Second Tier Survey

* Average based on weighted country data

Table 3.2b Reasons for direct provision (in per cent)

Country	Quality	Control	Costs	Quality and control	Quality and costs	Control and costs	Quality, control and costs	Total
England	14.8	6.2	12.3	6.2	12.3	11.2	46.9	100
Norway	20.8	3.9	5.2	18.2	16.9	1.3	33.8	100
Sweden	15.4	2.4	9.1	8.4	28.1	3.6	32.9	100
Germany	4.9	6.2	2.8	34.7	6.7	8.5	36.2	100
Belgium	10.3	13.5	12.7	15.1	13.5	18.3	16.7	100
France	11.5	1.4	14.4	3.6	55.4	4.3	9.4	100
Italy	17.5	1.6	12.7	1.6	50.8	1.6	14.3	100
Greece	13.0	13.0	11.0	6.2	11.0	6.8	39.0	100
Spain	19.0	2.5	15.2	6.3	31.6	7.6	17.7	100
Czech Rep.	5.4	0.0	10.8	10.8	24.3	8.1	40.5	100
Poland	17.0	5.7	15.1	11.3	17.0	9.4	24.5	100
Croatia	5.2	6.6	10.4	9.9	17.9	14.6	35.4	100
Romania	12.5	6.2	9.4	6.2	18.7	15.6	31.3	100
Hungary	11.9	11.9	26.9	1.5	19.4	4.5	23.9	100
Total*	10.9	5.2	9.4	17.6	20.7	7.2	29.1	100

Source: Second Tier Survey

* Average based on weighted country data

most important driving force for privatisation. Especially in England supporters of privatisation indicated a high relevance of costs as reform motive, while councillors from Norway and Sweden more often quoted in favour of combinations with the quality dimension, which is in line with the described NPM profiles. Notably the councillors from Eastern European countries who support further privatisation

quoted particularly for the combination of quality and costs as main reasons, while in France, Germany and Spain the combination of flexibility and cost also received much support.

Looking at the contrary strategy, it is remarkable that the respondents declare that the quality is the most relevant factor for providing directly local services (see Table 3.2b). Certainly, councillors supporting this strategy marked quality, control as well as cost, but particularly combinations with the quality dimension are indicated quite often. This can be understood as a rather fundamental concern of councillors from the second tier of local government in respect to private provision of local services. It is evident in the Scandinavian cases as well as in Germany, while in France, Italy and Spain especially the specific combination of quality and costs is – from the perspective of second-tier councillors – an important reason for the direct provision of services. Within the Eastern European countries the dimension of costs (in combination with others) seems to be most relevant for strategies of ‘insourcing’.

Taken together, based on these findings the councillors of the second tier in our sample show different patterns of reform motives. What is the most crucial issue (quality, efficiency or democratic control) for an assessment of reform perspectives is weighted differently in different reform contexts. Therefore a modernisation paradigm ‘beyond NPM’, which should appeal to local actors, has to be balanced in this respect.

Preferences for particular forms of service delivery

In the following section the responses to the request ‘Please indicate which form of service delivery is most preferable in respect to different tasks?’ will be discussed, which could be answered with public, private, or a public-private-partnerships and have been differentiated by separate fields of local activities – namely public transport, maintenance of school buildings, waste management, energy supply, water supply and sewage, hospitals as well as care homes for the elderly.

The responses clearly show that a majority of the responding councillors of the second tier of local government had a preference for a public provision of service in every field addressed in the survey (see the totals in Table 3.3). The preferences for public forms are in general particularly strong in the field of water supply and sewage as well as hospitals. This can be explained with the more sensitive character of these tasks, which points to a preference for unrestricted control by the public sphere. Remarkably, the cooperative form of service delivery in public-private partnerships (PPP) seems to be in general the second choice of councillors – particularly in public transport and care homes for the elderly – while private forms receive less support. This may indicate that PPPs are perceived as a realistic and preferable alternative to more comprehensive approaches of outsourcing like privatisation.

But there are also clear differences between countries and country groups. Based on the debate about differences of NPM reforms between countries (see the references given in Note 1) we have ordered the countries covered by our survey in Table 3.3. We have started with England as the only case of the ‘NPM front runners’ (Christensen and Lægreid 2012: 578) of the Anglo-Saxon countries. English county councillors are still the only ones who prefer more than the

Table 3.3 Responses of second tier councillors to the question 'Please indicate which form of service delivery is most preferable in respect to the following tasks' by countries (in per cent)

Country	Public transport			Maintenance of school buildings			Waste management			Energy supply			Water supply and sewage			Hospitals			Care homes for the elderly		
	PPP*	Private	Public	PPP	Private	Public	PPP	Private	Public	PPP	Private	Public	PPP	Private	Public	PPP	Private	Public	PPP	Private	Public
England	27.8	30.1	42.1	30.2	40.3	29.5	29.9	28.4	41.8	20.9	54.3	24.8	30.5	51.6	18.0	52.6	8.3	39.1	27.6	29.1	43.3
Norway	38.2	20.9	40.9	36.0	26.2	37.8	29.8	37.8	32.4	28.1	20.5	51.3	21.3	8.9	69.8	31.9	2.2	65.9	38.6	4.9	56.5
Sweden	47.9	10.8	41.3	43.3	28.6	28.1	43.4	25.6	31.0	44.3	21.6	34.1	29.6	7.4	63.0	37.3	3.7	59.0	49.1	7.2	43.6
Germany	17.1	21.9	61.0	13.5	7.7	78.8	12.7	26.3	61.0	14.8	30.9	54.3	7.8	13.4	78.8	14.0	27.8	58.2	16.2	54.6	29.2
Belgium	24.8	11.1	64.2	28.1	36.4	35.5	29.4	23.8	46.8	29.6	24.8	45.7	24.2	12.1	63.6	37.7	25.9	36.4	47.8	18.3	33.9
France	32.7	18.3	48.9	18.1	19.6	62.3	29.0	20.8	50.2	28.0	25.8	46.2	23.5	12.1	64.4	16.0	6.5	77.5	32.4	12.4	55.3
Italy	36.0	21.6	42.3	18.9	17.1	64.0	33.9	14.8	51.3	47.3	17.0	35.7	25.4	16.7	57.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spain	40.2	24.0	35.8	21.2	11.2	67.6	46.6	18.0	34.4	38.4	41.2	20.3	51.4	15.1	33.5	23.3	2.8	73.9	39.4	7.8	52.8
Greece	31.8	23.5	44.7	29.7	24.7	45.7	40.2	26.9	32.9	33.6	21.2	45.2	20.1	15.1	64.8	26.0	6.8	67.1	37.5	14.4	48.1
Czech Rep.	43.4	31.3	25.3	18.3	23.2	58.5	30.5	37.8	31.7	16.0	50.6	33.3	29.3	26.8	43.9	20.5	15.7	63.9	30.5	12.2	57.3
Poland	22.0	35.8	42.2	11.0	7.3	81.7	22.9	32.1	45.0	17.6	19.4	63.0	21.8	12.7	65.5	20.9	15.5	63.6	25.0	23.7	51.3
Croatia	25.3	29.0	45.8	26.8	20.1	53.0	21.8	11.4	66.8	16.8	6.1	77.1	11.7	3.0	85.2	10.0	1.7	88.3	31.3	22.2	46.5
Romania	42.6	29.7	27.7	27.2	21.8	51.0	37.4	40.8	21.8	32.0	28.6	39.5	29.7	19.6	50.7	41.9	11.5	46.6	50.7	17.8	31.5
Hungary	24.4	2.4	73.2	6.2	1.2	92.6	20.5	9.6	69.9	13.1	6.0	81.0	15.5	4.8	79.8	16.9	2.4	80.7	42.2	9.6	48.2
Total**	26.0	24.1	50.0	18.2	14.4	67.4	23.5	26.0	50.5	23.0	27.4	49.6	18.5	15.1	66.4	21.2	17.4	61.4	26.3	33.7	40.0

Source: Second Tier Survey

* PPP = public-private partnerships

** Average based on weighted country data

average European councillor at the second tier of local government a private form of service delivery in all listed sectors – except hospitals where PPP are highly preferred among English county councillors. The Scandinavian image of NPM front runners with more positive attitudes towards the state (which was described in the first section in this article) is also reflected by the results for Norway and Sweden as the two cases in our sample for the Scandinavian countries: Scandinavian respondents supported less than their European colleagues on average private forms of service delivery – with the exception of the maintenance of school buildings (and waste management in Norway. Instead, they strongly preferred public provision of water supply and sewage, of hospital services as well as of care for the elderly. In addition, PPP are also preferred (above average) for the provision of hospital services and care homes for the elderly as well as for public transport, waste management and maintenance of school buildings. The strong emphasis of either public service provision or PPP is also expressed by the only bigger difference between Norwegian and Swedish councillors: while the Norwegian councillors expressed their preference for a public form of energy supply, their Swedish colleagues preferred PPP in this sector.

The responses of the German councillors of the second tier reveal a strong preference for public forms of service delivery in all mentioned sectors – except care homes for the elderly. However, in the case of care homes for the elderly a specific private service fulfilment has a long-standing tradition in Germany: namely the provision of services by the non-profit sector (see Evers and Wintersberger 1988; Evers and Olk 1996; Zimmer 1999). The same applies to a certain extent for hospitals, with German councillors from the second tier of local government preferring more than the average European councillors a private form of service delivery, though this includes an involvement of the non-profit sector (including Protestant and Catholic organisations).

The responses from the Southern European countries show strong preferences either for public or at least PPP forms of service provision in almost all of the mentioned sectors. Particularly in Spain, PPPs were relatively strongly (in comparison to other countries) preferred for the provision of most of the mentioned services (except energy supply).

The Eastern European countries in our sample offer a quite different picture – both in respect to the other countries as well as between them. This again is hard to explain.⁴ Nevertheless, councillors from Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania shared preferences for public forms of service provision in the maintenance of school buildings, water supply and sewage as well as hospitals. This feature fits to a strategy of ‘maintaining’ (according to the typology of Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011: 115). Furthermore, Croatian, Hungarian and Polish councillors also declared their preference for public forms of service delivery regarding public transport, waste management, energy supply and care homes for the elderly, while councillors from the Czech Republic and Romania reveal a more scattered image (with more positive attitudes towards PPP and private forms of service provision).

These differences between countries show that when it comes to concrete tasks there are fewer councillors with positive attitudes towards private forms of service provision, which could imply that the NPM era is coming to an end. But it seems that the trend does not clearly revert to the opposite direction. Furthermore, the many different country profiles indicate a rather differentiated answer to questions of service fulfilment, which seem to reflect specific national experiences and debates with regard to concrete services.

Has the heyday of NPM passed? Perceptions of local government actors over time

As mentioned in the introduction, these diverse findings raise the question of what could be possibly expected 'beyond NPM'. This issue will also be addressed by putting the findings of the survey on councillors from the second tier of local government in the context of previous surveys with local government actors. These previous surveys will be briefly described in the following subsection.

Previous surveys with municipal CEOs, mayors and municipal councillors

For about 20 years a group of scholars organized in the standing groups on Local Government and Politics (LOGOPOL) of the European Consortium of Political Science (ECPR) and/or in the European Urban Research Association (EURA) have carried out surveys on actors performing different roles within local government.

The first survey was focused on executive officers (CEOs) or the highest ranking appointed and non-elected civil servant or employee at the municipal level.⁵ As it was supported by UDITE (*Union des dirigeants territoriaux de l'Europe*) it has been called the UDITE survey.⁶ The next survey – named the POLLEADER ('political leader') survey – dealt with European mayors from municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants.⁷ It followed a survey on councillors from municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants – called the MAELG ('Municipal Assemblies in European Local Governance') survey. It was based on a stratified sample that took into account the regional distribution of the total number of municipal councillors in a country.⁸ The latest survey, which provides the basis for the chapters in this book, concerns the second tier of local government.⁹

For the first time, results of all of these surveys related to *reforms of the administration at the municipal and second level of local government* are presented together (for a comparative analysis of municipal councillors and mayors, see Krapp 2013). Taking the results on administrative reforms of all surveys or at least some of them into account allows reflection on changes of the perception of NPM reforms over time because the responses of the groups of actors were given at different points in time. This applies not only to the roughly 10 years between the survey on municipal CEOs and municipal councillors but also to the more or less five years between the survey on mayors and municipal councillors as well as to the different years

Table 3.4 Surveys on local government actors and the number of respondents by countries and time in which they were carried out

<i>Country</i>	<i>Municipal CEOs (1995–1997)*</i>	<i>Mayors (2002–2004)</i>	<i>Municipal councillors (2007–2008)</i>	<i>Second-tier councillors (2012–2013)</i>
Austria	-	40	408	no second tier
Belgium	352	140	634	336
Croatia	-	-	233	331
Czech Rep.	-	78	624	85
Denmark	200	108	-	no second tier
Finland	324	-	-	no second tier
France	266	188	720	308
Germany	414	636	894	1,672
Greece	-	145	235	233
Hungary	-	82	-	133
Ireland	21	20	-	no second tier
Italy	541	256	1,201	131
Netherlands	404	234	1,222	-
Norway	324	-	1,134	226
Poland	-	229	328	120
Portugal	104	41	-	no second tier
Romania	-	-	-	177
Spain	366	155	520	188
Sweden	224	142	1,346	1,225
Switzerland	-	94	1,616	no second tier
GB/England	284*	123*	700**	140*
Total	3,824	2,711	11,815	5,285

+ In Germany this survey was carried out in 1999.

* The survey covered just England.

** The survey covered GB

between these surveys on municipal actors and those acting at the second level of local government. However, in reflecting on changes over time, it is also necessary to consider the different roles of respondents in countries covered by the surveys.

Admittedly, there is only a limited number of questions in all or most of these surveys which can be used for an analysis of differences in the reform perceptions of local government actors and changes of their reform perceptions. Nevertheless, common questions addressing administrative reforms are the following:

- A basic question asks respondents to evaluate the statement that ‘The need for changes and reorganisation of the public sector has been greatly exaggerated.’
- At least for mayors, municipal councillors and municipal CEOs, it is possible to compare their agreement or disagreement with the statement that ‘There are few benefits from contracting out or privatising services in the municipality.’
- Furthermore, a fundamental issue of NPM reforms – namely the separation of politics and administration – is addressed by the questions of how much the respondents agree or disagree with the statement that ‘Politicians should

only define objectives and control outputs, and never intervene into the task fulfilment of local administration.'

In addition, more detailed responses of particular local government actors on administrative reforms can be considered. This pertains firstly to those of municipal councillors on the statements that 'Competition between service providers facilitates citizen choice in public services' and that 'Public-private partnerships are more effective in solving problems than public administration and representative bodies.' Furthermore, responses of municipal CEOs from the second half of the 1990s (i.e. the heyday of NPM reforms in most European countries) can be taken into account. These were responses to the statement that 'The public sector has grown too large compared to the private sector,' and that 'In general, the private sector is more efficient than the public sector.'

Has the need for changes and reorganisation of the public sector been greatly exaggerated?

In all surveys one question has been asked regarding administrative reforms – namely if the respondents agree or disagree with the statement that the 'need for changes and reorganisation of the public sector has been greatly exaggerated'. Looking at the results, a number of general assessments can be drawn.¹⁰

A general and obvious finding is that most of the different groups of local government actors from all European countries covered by the respective surveys neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement between the second half of the 1990s and 2012/2013. This is indicated by a mean value between 2.87 for the mayors and 3.09 for municipal councillors (and with mean values for municipal CEOs of 3.04 and for councillors from the second tier of local government of 3.13).

Looking for differences between countries and the different local government actors, it turned out that only in a few countries do the responses of the actors deviate from the general pattern mentioned. Indeed, there are no large deviations from the European average among municipal councillors. However, municipal CEOs from Sweden tended at the end of the 1990s to *disagree* with the statement that a need for changes and reorganisation of the public sector *has been exaggerated*¹¹ (i.e. they saw a need for public sector reforms at this time). The opposite applies for the Spanish CEOs who tended to agree with this statement. Both of these (extreme) findings are in line with debates about differences in NPM between countries (see above). These findings confirm debates on NPM reforms in which Sweden is seen as an 'NPM front runner'¹² and Spain is usually classified as a 'maintainer' (see 2.1 of this article). Interestingly, mayors from England and particularly mayors from the Netherlands were (at the beginning of the 2000s) more sceptical about the need for changes and reorganisation of the public sector (see the mean values for mayors from these countries in Table 3.5). Furthermore, provincial councillors from Italy (with a mean value of 3.54) and particularly from Croatia (with a mean value of 3.96) tended in the early 2010s to agree with the statement that the 'need for changes and reorganisation of the public sector has been greatly exaggerated'. That

Table 3.5 Mean responses (by country) to the question ‘How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The need for changes and reorganisation of the public sector has been greatly exaggerated’

<i>Country</i>	<i>Municipal level</i>			<i>Second-tier Councillors</i>
	<i>CEOs</i>	<i>Mayors</i>	<i>Councillors</i>	
Austria	-	2.97	3.18	no second tier
Belgium	2.91	3.07	3.12	3.12
Croatia	-	-	3.18	3.96
Czech Rep.	-	3.22	3.07	3.36
Denmark	3.02	2.88	-	no second tier
France	3.16	2.95	2.95	3.14
Germany	3.19	2.73	2.95	2.96
Greece	-	3.26	3.24	3.23
Hungary	-	2.29	-	3.03
Ireland	2.81	3.00	-	no second tier
Italy	2.97	2.65	2.97	3.54
Netherlands	3.25	3.70	3.41	-
Norway	2.57	-	2.84	2.73
Poland	-	2.83	3.47	3.36
Portugal	2.73	2.85	-	no second tier
Spain	3.65	2.57	2.93	3.31
Sweden	2.44	2.54	3.15	2.86
Switzerland	-	2.63	3.03	no second tier
GB/England	3.08*	3.52*	3.25**	2.77*
Total***	3.04	2.87	3.09	3.13

Source: Second Tier Survey.

The respondents could answer ‘strongly agree’ = 5; ‘agree’ = 4; ‘neither agree nor disagree’ = 3; ‘disagree’ = 2; or ‘strongly disagree’ = 1.

* The survey covered just England.

** The survey covered GB

*** Based on weighted country data.

provincial councillors in Italy disagreed at that time with a need for changes and reorganisation of the public sector can be explained by the already started debate about changes affecting the provinces in this country (see Bertrana and Heinelt 2013: 84) which were finally carried out in 2014.

Considering changes over time by looking at the responses from the different local government actors, no clear support can be ascertained either for the existence of a sort of heyday of NPM or ‘that the heyday of NPM may have passed’ (Haque 2007: 179). Instead, a strong need for changes and reorganisation of the public sector has rather been neglected by the studied actor groups in most countries over the whole period of 20 years where the mentioned surveys had been carried out. Especially Spanish municipal CEOs (between 1995 and 1997) and English and Dutch mayors (in the period from 2002 to 2004) and particularly Italian councillors from the second tier of local government tend to support the statement that the ‘need for changes and reorganisation of the public sector has been greatly exaggerated’.

Are there benefits from contracting out or privatising services in the municipality?

The issue of contracting out and privatisation already considered on the basis of the most recent survey on councillors from the second tier of local government were also addressed in former surveys in which actors from the municipal level – namely mayors, councillors and CEOs – were asked if they agree or disagree with the statement that ‘There are few benefits from contracting out or privatising services in the municipality’ (actors from the second tier of local government were not asked the same question).¹³

The results show again that in total these three groups of municipal actors neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that ‘there are few benefits from contracting out or privatising services in the municipality’ (indicated by a mean value of 2.95 for municipal CEOs, 2.86 for the mayors and 3.14 for municipal councillors; see Table 3.6). This finding confirms that from the previous surveys there is no clear indication that there was a peak of success of NPM which has really passed.

Table 3.6 Mean responses (by country) to the question ‘How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? There are few benefits from contracting out or privatising services in the municipality.’

Country	Municipal level		
	CEOs	Mayors	Councillors
Austria	-	3.23	3.50
Belgium	2.81	2.95	3.16
Czech Rep.	-	2.23	2.94
Denmark	3.09	2.87	-
France	3.53	3.17	3.40
Germany	3.03	2.99	3.32
Greece	-	3.21	3.47
Ireland	2.67	2.95	-
Italy	2.86	2.50	3.16
Netherlands	2.81	3.08	2.93
Norway	2.56	-	3.12
Poland	-	2.77	2.68
Portugal	2.76	2.32	-
Spain	3.04	2.75	2.93
Sweden	3.00	2.76	2.83
Switzerland	-	3.40	3.44
GB/England	2.93*	2.66*	2.90**
Total***	2.95	2.86	3.13

Source: Second Tier Survey

The respondents could answer ‘strongly agree’ = 5; ‘agree’ = 4; ‘neither agree nor disagree’ = 3; ‘disagree’ = 2; or ‘strongly disagree’ = 1.

* The survey covered just England.

** The survey covered GB

*** Based on weighted country data.

As in the case of responses to the question on the perceived need for changes in the public sector, there are only minor deviations in the answers of municipal councillors between countries (except the Polish ones), and again some deviations by countries among municipal CEOs and mayors can be observed. Municipal CEOs from France saw in the late 1990s fewer benefits from contracting out or privatising services than their colleagues in other European countries, and their counterparts from the ‘modernizer’ country Norway emphasised the strongest such benefits. In the case of mayors (in the early 2000s) only the Czech and Portuguese mayors tend to deny the statement that ‘There are few benefits from contracting out or privatising services in the municipality.’ Looking for changes in the responses of the actors by countries over time, the agreement with this statement increased particularly in Mediterranean countries like France, Greece and Italy but also in Germany (and the Czech Republic) between the early and the late 2000s, i.e. between the survey on mayors and the one on municipal councillors. This indicates that in the mentioned Mediterranean countries the time for public management reforms became even harder during the 2000s, and that in Germany, as a late-comer among the ‘modernizers’, benefits from contracting out or privatising services were questioned more and more.

The separation between politics and administration

A basic idea of NPM reforms is to separate the tasks and responsibilities of politics and administration. The crucial argument behind this idea is that only by such a clear separation can accountability be achieved (Hood 1991: 4). This applies particularly to politicians who should concentrate on determining policy objectives and on controlling the actually achieved outcomes as well as to bureaucrats who should be free to choose the appropriate way for implementing policy programmes and to effectively and efficiently realise the policy objectives defined by politicians. However, it remains an open question as to whether or not this idea has been comprehended as well as accepted and taken over by the concerned actors – or if it has been rejected because it has not been compatible with either their particular role perception or their role behaviour.¹⁴

It might not be astonishing that municipal CEOs as leading bureaucrats tend to agree or even strongly agree that ‘It is the politicians’ duty to decide only on major principle issues and not on routine matters’ However, it is remarkable that, in total, mayors (with a mean value of 3.56) as well as councillors from both levels of local government (with mean values of 3.26 and 3.20 respectively) tend to restrict their role in this way. This finding is especially noteworthy as it may indicate that mayors and councillors have taken over ideas which happen to fit with a role model advocated by NPM.

Nevertheless, in total the slightly decreasing mean values for mayors, municipal and county councillors may indicate that the acceptance of this role model for politicians is shrinking over time (because the surveys were carried out – as mentioned in 3.1 of this article – at different times). Looking for change between these groups of local government actors and in this way also over time in countries, the

Table 3.7 Mean responses (by country) to the question 'How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Politicians should only define objectives and control outputs, and never intervene into the task fulfilment of local administration.'

Country	Municipal level			Second-tier councillors
	CEOs*	Mayors	Councillors	
Austria	-	3.30	3.43	no second tier
Belgium	4.06	2.94	3.10	3.12
Croatia	-	-	3.58	3.20
Czech Rep.	-	3.12	3.34	3.46
Denmark	4.71	2.48	-	no second tier
France	4.36	2.82	2.86	2.65
Germany	4.61	3.97	3.25	3.21
Greece	-	3.60	3.86	3.94
Hungary	-	4.23	-	3.72
Ireland	4.81	2.85	-	no second tier
Italy	4.63	3.69	3.46	3.49
Netherlands	4.26	3.94	3.58	-
Norway	4.83	-	2.96	3.03
Poland	-	4.28	3.90	-
Portugal	4.35	3.20	-	no second tier
Spain	3.92	3.14	3.21	3.12
Sweden	4.47	3.91	3.70	3.43
Switzerland	-	3.43	3.16	no second tier
GB/England	4.25*	3.10*	2.91**	2.73*
Total**	4.41	3.56	3.31	3.26

Source: Second Tier Survey

The respondents could answer 'strongly agree' = 5; 'agree' = 4; 'neither agree nor disagree' = 3; 'disagree' = 2; or 'strongly disagree' = 1.

* CEOs responded to a statement which was slightly different: 'It is the politicians' duty to decide only on major principle issues and not on routine matters.'

** The survey covered just England.

*** The survey covered GB.

**** Average based on weighted country data.

declining acceptance of this role model is remarkable mainly in Sweden and Great Britain respectively England as 'NPM front runners' as well as Germany as a late-comer among the 'modernizers'. This may show that this core idea of NPM has been increasingly questioned in these countries.

Further results from the survey on municipal councillors and municipal CEOs

From the findings presented so far it seems that NPM ideas and reforms have never been enthusiastically supported among the studied local government actors since the late 1990s. Quite the contrary, there are a number of results pointing to decreasing support.

Table 3.8 Mean responses (by country) of municipal councillors to the questions ‘How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Competition between service providers facilitates citizen choice in public services’ and ‘Public-private partnerships are more effective in solving problems than public administration and representative bodies’

<i>Country</i>	<i>‘Competition between service providers facilitates citizen choice in public services’</i>	<i>‘Public-private partnerships are more effective in solving problems than public administration and representative bodies’</i>
Austria	3.46	2.94
Belgium	3.06	3.07
Croatia	3.99	3.61
Czech Rep.	3.98	3.16
France	3.40	3.18
Germany	3.46	2.84
Greece	3.74	3.48
Italy	3.78	3.22
Netherlands	3.11	3.36
Norway	3.36	3.29
Poland	4.49	4.18
Spain	3.42	3.15
Sweden	3.58	3.47
Switzerland	3.30	2.90
Great Britain	3.28	2.95
Total*	3.51	3.18

Source: Second Tier Survey
 The respondents could answer ‘strongly agree’ = 5; ‘agree’ = 4; ‘neither agree nor disagree’ = 3; ‘disagree’ = 2; or ‘strongly disagree’ = 1.
 * Average based on weighted country data.

That municipal councillors were more undecided in the second half of the 2000s than enthusiastic about basic ideas of the NPM reform movement is also demonstrated by their responses to the statement that ‘public-private partnerships are more effective in solving problems than public administration and representative bodies’ (see Table 3.8). With limited deviations (from the average mean value of 3.18) between countries, municipal councillors tend to ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

The findings are different regarding the responses to the statement that ‘competition between service providers facilitates citizen choice in public services’. In this case the whole group of municipal councillors were (with an average mean value of 3.51) a bit more than halfway between ‘neither agree nor disagree’ and ‘agree’, thus an overall slight tendency toward agreement. However, this finding is explainable by the strong support of this statement by municipal councillors from some Eastern European (Poland, Croatia and the Czech Republic) and some Mediterranean countries (Greece and Italy) where at that time obviously some hope for the positive effects of ‘consumer choices’ played a role.

Table 3.9 Municipal CEOs and their response to the statements ‘The public sector has grown too large compared to the private sector’ and ‘In general, the private sector is more efficient than the public sector’ (means)

<i>Country</i>	<i>‘The public sector has grown too large compared to the private sector’</i>	<i>‘In general, the private sector is more efficient than the public sector’</i>
Portugal	2.79	3.87
Spain	3.85	3.57
Italy	3.02	3.57
Belgium	2.88	3.31
Germany	3.07	3.12
Netherlands	2.81	3.06
France	2.55	2.53
Norway	3.33	2.39
Sweden	2.67	2.08
Denmark	3.13	1.89
England	2.08	1.81
Ireland	2.33	1.71
Total*	2.95	2.90

Source: Second Tier Survey

The respondents could answer ‘strongly agree’ = 5; ‘agree’ = 4; ‘neither agree nor disagree’ = 3; ‘disagree’ = 2; or ‘strongly disagree’ = 1.

* Average based on weighted country data

Looking at results of the survey on municipal CEOs, which was carried out in the second half of the 1990s, it turns out that already at this time (which is usually seen as the heyday of NPM) these leading bureaucrats from some ‘NPM front runners’ were sceptical toward critical arguments about the public sector. The opposite was the case for some Mediterranean countries (see Table 3.9). While municipal CEOs from Ireland, Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden and Norway disagreed or tended to disagree with the statement that ‘in general, the private sector is more efficient than the public sector’, municipal CEOs from Portugal, Spain and Italy clearly agreed with it. Irish and British municipal CEOs also disagreed with the statement that ‘the public sector has grown too large compared to the private sector’ while it was most strongly supported by their Spanish colleagues.

Conclusion

As ‘[v]ariations in reform practice from one country to another are the rule rather than the exception’ and as countries ‘have different starting points, are at different stages of reforms and face different external and internal constraints’ (Christensen and Lægreid 2011a: 10; see also Christensen and Lægreid 2002a: 20–23 and 2012: 578–580) it is thus unsurprising that the picture of support and refusal of NPM ideas in Europe is quite differentiated.

Accordingly, it is hardly possible to make any certain generalisations about a post-NPM perspective or to predict what will come ‘beyond NPM’. Furthermore, we have to be aware that there are ‘certain “families” of NPM-related reforms (devolution, contracts, privatisation, market- und consumer-oriented reforms, etc.)’ (Christensen and Lægreid 2002b: 301–302), which have never been implemented all together in the same way, but rather selectively and with more or less emphasis on some of these ‘families’ of NPM-related reforms. In view of the sources of this approach, such diversity is in the end likewise ‘arising from the hybrid character of NPM, which combines economic organization theory and management theory’ (Christensen and Lægreid 2012: 578). This leads inevitably to tensions in political and administrative practice: ‘They result from the contradiction between the centralizing tendencies inherent in contractualism and the devolutionary tendencies of managerialism’ (*ibid.*).

Against the background of the findings presented in this chapter, it seems reasonable to conclude that a strong and widespread belief of the majority of the studied local government actors in a straightforward reform path according to NPM ideas has not been taken, nor has it ever existed. In other words, it seems that these actors have already realised in the past that NPM ‘was driven by lofty ideas, ideals and principles rather than by practical experiences’ (Brunsson 2011: 66). If something like a belief in a straightforward reform path according to NPM ideas has existed at all at some point in time, it has been more and more replaced by pragmatic searches for a better – and this means mainly a more context related – way to change administrative practise. For sure, such searches for more context-related solutions will lead to a diversity of post-NPM reforms.

Notes

- 1 For differences of NPM reforms between countries see Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Christensen and Lægreid 2002a: 26–30; 2002b: 302–305; 2012: 578–580; Sahlin-Andersson 2002: 48–50; Bevir *et al.* 2003; Halligan 2011; Kickert 2011; Hansen 2011.
- 2 For another distinction between NPM reformers see Halligan 2002: 75. He distinguishes ‘hesitant reformers’, ‘specialist reformers’, ‘ambivalent reformers’ and ‘comprehensive reformers’. These ‘types of reform’ (as Halligan 2002: 74–76) cannot only be applied to countries or groups of countries but may also capture differences within countries.
- 3 For a detailed reflection on the provision of long-term care, health care, electricity, water and waste management in France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom see Wollmann and Marcou 2010.
- 4 Explanations are also missing in the literature mentioned in Note 1.
- 5 This survey covered not only European countries but also Australia and the United States.
- 6 Results of this survey were published by Klausen and Magnier (1998), Dahler-Larsen (2000) as well as Mourtizen and Svara (2002; see also Heinelt and Haus 2002 for the results of the survey in Germany).
- 7 Comparative results of the POLLEADER survey were published in Bäck *et al.* (2006) whereas results for single countries or on particular issues were published separately (see Egner 2007 for Germany or Egner and Heinelt 2008 for mayors’ perception of the role of municipal councils).

- 8 Comparative results of the MAELG survey were published in a special issue of *Lex Localis* (2012, Vol. 10, No. 1) and a special issue of *Local Government Studies* (2013, Vol. 39, No. 5) as well as in Egner *et al.* (2013b) and Heinelt (2014). For a comparison of attitudes to administrative reforms between countries cp. especially Krapp *et al.* (2013). In addition, partners involved in the survey published national results (like Egner *et al.* 2013a).
- 9 A new survey on European mayors is currently under preparation in close cooperation with the COST project (see 'Local Public Sector Reforms – an International Comparison' in LocRef, www.uni-potsdam.de/cost-locref/). It will be carried out in 2015 and a publication of its comparative results can be expected in 2016 or 2017.
- 10 In the following discussion those countries have not been considered which were just included in one of the surveys, i.e. where we do not have the opportunity to observe changes over time. This applies for Finland, which was included only in the survey on municipal CEOs, and for Romania, which was covered just by the Second Tier Survey.
- 11 This is indicated by a mean value of 2.44, i.e. a value tending slightly to a disagreement that such a need is exaggerated than to 'neither nor'.
- 12 The mean value for Norwegian municipal CEOs is with 2.57 just slightly higher than the one for the Swedish municipal CEOs. This indicates that Norwegian municipal CEOs had at that time perceptions of a need for public sector reforms similar to their Swedish colleagues which is in line with debates about NPM reforms in Scandinavia (Hansen 2011).
- 13 Again those countries have not been considered in the following which were only included in one of the surveys. This applies for Finland, which was included only in the survey on municipal CEOs; Hungary, which was included only on the survey in mayors; and Croatia which was covered only by the survey on municipal councillors.
- 14 For the debate on this issue in general terms, see Christensen and Lægreid (2002a: 25); for Germany, Bogumil *et al.* (2007); and for Italy, Ongaro (2009).

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4 County councillors

Between revenue shortfalls and growing responsibilities

Dubravka Ćurlina Alibegović and Sunčana Slijepčević

Introduction

European regional development policy has the goal to create an environment in which sub-national government can strengthen its own development potentials, which will then contribute to economic growth and development according to sustainable development principles. The body of literature stresses the fundamental role of sub-national tiers of government in implementing sustainable development policies, based on the goals set in the sub-national development strategies. Also, regional development policy should create conditions that will raise the competitiveness of sub-national government within the country. According to the Council of Europe Resolution (2012), the second tier of local government has a role in most European countries in increasing the efficiency of public service provision and delivering services which may not be possible for municipalities to engage in. Such a statement of the importance of decentralisation for local economic development is based on the theoretical literature concerning decentralisation, with foundations in the research of Tiebout (1956) and Oates (1972), which state that a decentralisation process leads to a higher efficiency of public services provision. However, Oates (1972) also stresses that decentralisation of public activities is very expensive and that the state must have adequate resources to provide a decentralised supply of public goods and services.

These theoretical reflections are underpinned by a number of empirical studies. A positive correlation of fiscal decentralisation and growth is indicated in theory, and promotion of decentralisation is happening in countries containing heterogeneous developmental characteristics of regions. In this case, it is important that limited resources are used effectively and contribute to economic growth of regions. Fiscal decentralisation has been associated with efficient fulfilment of local development goals, greater competitiveness among the sub-national levels of government in providing public services and with boosting economic growth (Bahl and Linn 1992; Bird and Wallich 1994). Decentralisation could increase growth by raising the ability of a decentralised system to encourage the implementation of reforms (Dillinger 1994; Yilmaz 2000; Iimi 2005). A relatively small number of publications contain the empirical research of a decentralisation-growth nexus. Davoodi and Zou (1998) conducted empirical research using panel data from

46 countries in the period 1970–1989, in order to investigate a fiscal decentralisation-economic growth relationship and found that it is negative in developing countries. In their empirical research, Martinez-Vazquez and McNab (2003) presented the negative effect of fiscal decentralisation on economic growth in developed countries which, in contrast, is positive in developing countries.

Nevertheless, the body of literature is not clear about the direction of the relationship between decentralisation and economic growth. Bahl and Linn (1992) and Bailey (1999; 2002; 2004) suggest that decentralisation comes with a higher level of development. Ezcurra and Rodriguez-Pose (2013) and Rodriguez-Pose and Ezcurra (2010) demonstrated the negative effect of fiscal decentralisation on economic growth for 21 OECD countries. Gemmell *et al.* (2013) pointed out that spending decentralisation decreases growth, but revenue decentralisation increases it.

The literature dealing with the link between decentralisation and local and regional economic development is rare. Jurlina Alibegović (2013) determined a positive relationship between the level of fiscal decentralisation and economic development at the second tier of local government in Croatia. Furthermore, Sienkiewicz (2014) stresses that economic development, besides activities of the business sector, depends on the economic development policy carried out by all sub-national levels of public authorities. According to Swiburn *et al.* (2006: 1), local economic development has the purpose to ‘build up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all. It is a process by which public, business and non-governmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation’. The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (2008) emphasises the importance of decentralisation and territorial reforms for fostering local economic development, but also stress the importance of capabilities and capacities of sub-national government units, as well as cooperation of different levels of sub-national government units, in providing public functions.

In the last several years, decentralisation tendencies were visible in a large number of European countries. Decentralisation is a process which involves the transfer of powers, competences and resources from central government to elected sub-national governments. It entails political, administrative and fiscal decentralisation (European Commission 2009). As noted by the European Commission (2009: 1) ‘the decentralisation process and its perspectives are relevant in assessing the country situation, the government development agenda and the sustainability of the development strategies’. By obtaining increased responsibilities and resources, the role, power and actual influence of county councillors changed. However, already in 1998 the International Monetary Fund (IMF), noted that in some countries the transfer of responsibilities was not followed by adequate fiscal decentralisation; this has remained an issue until today (IMF, 1998). The recession that began in 2007 in the United States and then spread to the rest of the world has a large impact on the second tier of local government revenues and their effectiveness in meeting fiscal responsibilities (IMF, 1998). The body of literature shows that the financial crisis negatively affected the fiscal position of sub-national government more in

those countries which are less decentralised (Roitman 2009). It is expected that central government finances rebound quicker than sub-national finances, which will feel the consequences of reduced revenues, grants from central to sub-national government and decrease of property values for longer periods (Gordon 2012; Slijepčević 2014).

Drawing on these issues, this chapter explores the attitudes of second-tier councillors towards a decentralisation process and their perception in fostering local economic development. It is important to explore these attitudes because of the role assigned to sub-national level of government in promoting sustainable economic growth. County councillors have legislative powers. Their role in promoting local economic development will be observed, keeping in mind that there is a gap between revenue shortfalls and growing responsibilities that has been further deepened by the global financial crisis. Therefore, additional attention will be given to the analysis of county councillors' attitudes towards territorial reforms and the division of responsibilities for providing basic public services/goods between the private and the public sector in different European countries. The emphasis is on an advocacy role of county councillors in the promotion of regional development and overall well-being of the local community.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. Decentralisation trends and the fiscal autonomy of sub-national government in different countries are described in the second part of this chapter. Survey results of councillors' attitudes towards decentralisation and reforms are analysed in the third part of this chapter. The chapter ends with some conclusions.

Decentralisation trends in different countries

Fiscal federalism theory and empirical research suggests that less-developed countries are more centralised than developed countries (Gadenne and Singhal 2013). Reforms in European countries covered by the survey go in different directions (Table 4.1). In the last decade, administrative decentralisation reforms have been conducted in France, Germany, Hungary, Czech Republic and Croatia. In contrast, Greece and Spain are examples of countries where centralisation processes occur. The last wave of centralisation tendencies started five to six years ago with

Table 4.1 Ongoing tendencies of administrative decentralisation/centralisation by countries

<i>Decentralisation/centralisation reforms</i>	<i>Countries</i>
Predominantly decentralisation processes	France, Germany, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Croatia
Predominantly centralisation processes	Greece, Spain
Reforms toward centralisation and decentralisation	Belgium, Sweden

Source: Authors' systematisation

the beginning of the last economic and financial crisis. According to Hlepas (2014), more than a hundred tasks were transferred from the second tier of local government to central government in Greece during 2010–2011, while decentralisation of additional tasks to the second tier of local government was cancelled. The division of competences among different tiers of government is currently under discussion in Spain (Council of European Municipalities and Regions 2013), which could result in increasing competences of second-tier government. There is an obvious tendency for several and new patterns of control by the central level of government, especially concerning financial management and fiscal stabilisation of sub-national governments.

It is difficult to classify Sweden into a group. In Sweden there are tendencies in both directions. Re-centralisation has emerged in the debate during recent years. For example, there are several proposals to centralise responsibility for schools and for the health-care system. However, no such changes have been supported by the political majority. Also, in Belgium the role of sub-national government has been changed. After several waves of reform, the 2013 decentralisation round was comprised of a number of re-centralisation measures, which were considered to be the first re-centralisation process in the Belgian history of fiscal federalism (Jennes 2014). The tendency toward centralisation at the regional level has occurred in Belgium, with the consequence that the regions started acting as the new centres. Also, a decentralisation process in Croatia started in 2001, with the assignment of additional responsibilities to local government. Although there is continuous debate about further decentralisation and territorial reforms of the country, the decentralisation process has not continued over the last few years.

The World Bank (2015) noted that in unitary countries sub-national government is not constitutionally empowered to make decisions over public functions, while the Council of Europe (2012) stressed that administrative decentralisation should be followed with adequate fiscal decentralisation. General differences between European countries are that sub-national governments in federal states are constitutionally protected and have decision-making power. The second tier of local government is in most European countries responsible for environment, economic development, transport and education. In order to fulfil these tasks it should have sufficient fiscal autonomy. Since 2008, in France, Greece, Hungary, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Norway and Czech Republic there has been a tendency towards fiscal decentralisation, measured as the share of consolidated sub-national revenues in GDP. Table 4.2 gives an overview of the powers and competences of the second tier of local government in European countries.

As can be seen from Table 4.2, the distribution of public functions among levels of government is different and responsibilities for public functions are allocated to various levels of government. This is also confirmed by Bertrana and Heinelt (2013). Total sub-national government expenses by functional classification of budget (COFOG functions)¹ presented in Table 4.3 show that sub-national government (which includes second-tier government and local government) spends most of the financial resources for general public services in Italy, health in Sweden, education in Sweden, Norway, Poland and Czech Republic and social protection

Table 4.2 Distribution of powers and competences on regional development policies in different groups of analysed countries

Competences	Federalised states			Unitary regionalised states			Unitary Northern Systems			Other unitary states		
	State/second tier	Municipal		Second tier	Municipal		Second tier	Municipal		Second tier	Municipal	
Infrastructure and services	++	++		+++	+++		+++	+++		++	++	++
Transport and communications	+++	++		++	++		+++	+		++	++	++
Energy	++	+		+++	+		++	++		+	+	+
Environment	++	+++		++	+++		+++	+++		++	+++	+++
Health	+++	++		+++	+		+++	+		++	+	+
Housing	+++	++		++	+++		+++	+++		+	+	+
Public safety	++	++			++		+			+	+	+
Culture	+	+++		++	++		++	++		++	+++	++
Social services		+++		+++	+++		++	+++			+	
Education and training	+++			+++	+		++	++		+++	++	++
Research and development	++			+++			+			+	+	
Aid schemes for development	++	++		+++			++	++		++	++	

Source: Systematisation based on Ismeri Europa and Applica (2010).

Note: +++ = high importance; ++ = medium importance; + = low importance; blank = no importance.

Federalised states: Belgium, Germany; unitary regionalised states: Spain, Italy; unitary Northern Systems: Sweden, Norway; other unitary states: Croatia, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Romania.

Table 4.3 Total second-tier local government expense according to functional classification, as percentage of GDP, 2012

<i>Countries</i>	<i>General public services</i>	<i>Public order and safety</i>	<i>Economic affairs</i>	<i>Environmental protection</i>	<i>Housing and community amenities</i>	<i>Health</i>	<i>Recreation, culture and religion</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Social protection</i>
Belgium	1.4	1.0	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.7	1.4	1.6
Croatia	1.2	0.2	1.0	0.2	1.3	0.2	0.8	1.3	0.4
England	0.3	1.1	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.2	3.5	3.5
Czech Rep.	1.4	0.2	2.3	1.0	0.5	0.3	0.8	3.3	0.6
France	2.0	0.4	1.6	1.0	1.8	0.1	1.2	1.8	2.2
Germany	1.4	0.2	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.5	1.2	2.5
Greece	1.1	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.6
Hungary	1.9	0.0	1.1	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.6	2.7	1.3
Italy	2.1	0.2	2.0	0.8	0.5	7.2	0.4	1.1	0.7
Norway	1.5	0.1	1.4	0.6	0.6	2.1	0.8	3.6	4.0
Poland	1.4	0.3	2.1	0.5	0.7	1.9	0.9	3.8	1.7
Romania	1.0	0.1	1.8	0.5	0.9	1.3	0.7	1.9	1.4
Spain	2.1	0.5	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.7	0.2	0.5
Sweden	3.1	0.2	1.6	0.2	0.7	6.9	0.8	5.3	6.8

Source: Authors' own analysis based on Eurostat; HM Treasury (2012) for England and Ministry of Finance (2015) for Croatia.

Table 4.4 Structure of second tier and local government revenues by countries

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Sub-central government revenue as percentage of GDP</i>	<i>Own tax revenues as percentage of total sub-national government revenue</i>	<i>Tax shares + general grant as percentage of total sub-national government revenue</i>	<i>Revenue of the second tier as percentage of total sub-national government revenue</i>
Belgium	6.9	45.0	42.0	9.5
Croatia	12.3	5.0	61.0	15.4
Czech Rep.	10.2	3.0	71.0	39.5
France	11.5	57.0	23.0	31.0
Germany	7.8	18.0	51.0	28.0
Greece	3.9	31.0	42.0	15.0
Hungary	10.0	34.0	60.0	6.8
Italy	14.8	24.0	61.0	n.a.
Norway	-	43.0	36.0	n.a.
Poland	13.0	33.5	66.5	n.a.
Romania	9.3	8.0	55.0	n.a.
Spain	6.3	27.0	55.0	9.4
Sweden	25.2	57.0	13.0	34.0

Source: Eurostat (2015) and national statistics

in Sweden and Norway. The second tier is mostly responsible for education and social welfare (expenses for the construction of buildings and for other capital investments), but also for other public service provision.

The share of revenues and expenses of sub-central government in general government revenues and expenses, as well as the share of these revenues and expenses in GDP, indicates the level of fiscal decentralisation in the country. The share of sub-central government revenues as percentage of GDP amounts from 3.9 per cent (Greece) to 25.2 per cent (Sweden). The degree of decentralisation in analysed countries varies greatly (Table 4.4). Even larger differences can be seen in the share of the second tier of local government in the total local government revenue. Hungary is an example of a country where the second tier of local government has the least participation in total local government revenues (6.8 per cent). In contrast, the second tier in the Czech Republic accounts for 39.5 per cent of the total local government revenue.

The previously presented data show that the second tier of local government has in general a broad range of competences, but its decision-making power and share of public expenses is quite different between countries. Also, the fiscal autonomy of second tier of local government varies between countries.

In most of the European Union member states a number of important functions are entrusted to the second tier of local government, such as those relating to the environment, economic development, transport and education. For these functions this level of government has resources of its own. In compliance with the principle of fiscal autonomy, those authorities benefit from fiscal resources (Council of Europe 2012). Figures in Table 4.4 show that, despite growing responsibilities of the second tier of local government, the fiscal autonomy of sub-national

government is still quite low. The Council of Europe (2012) stresses that economic and financial crises engender (de)centralisation reforms, but also territorial reforms which have been mostly focused on the position of the second tier of local government. The crises that affected the majority of European countries could speed up the process of amalgamations at both levels of local government.

Local development policy cannot be effectively conducted without a greater reliance on sub-national government's own financial and human resources. The importance of own resources is, for instance, confirmed in the analysis by Eyraud and Moreno Badia (2013) of EU15 countries over the period 1995–2011. They showed that a decentralisation of expense, financed through transfers or borrowing as it was mostly performed in the EU15 countries, leads to weaker fiscal outcomes. Also, they state that a number of studies showed that sub-national government propensity to spend intergovernmental transfers is significantly larger than the propensity to spend own resources.

Survey results

Depending on different levels of decentralisation and fiscal autonomy in the analysed countries, county councillors' actual influence can significantly differ from their perception. The analysis of the survey data starts with an analysis of the county councillors' attitude towards the importance of the coordination of local economic development in different European countries. In the next stage of the analysis county councillors' attitudes towards different reforms and diffusion of responsibilities for providing basic public services between private and public sectors are analysed.

Insight into overall councillors' attitudes toward their own involvement in the coordination of local economic development shows that 74.9 per cent of them find that it is fairly or very important that the coordination of local economic development is one of their main tasks. This task is considered not important at all or of very little importance by only 6.4 per cent of European county councillors. An analysis by countries shows that more than 10 per cent of county councillors in Belgium, Greece and England find it is of very little importance that they coordinate economic activities. Both Belgium and Greece have a lower share of sub-national government revenues in GDP than most of the analysed countries, which could be the explanation for county councillors' attitudes in these countries. Although there is no straightforward link between the level of fiscal decentralisation and the county councillors' attitudes toward their role in fostering local economic development, most of the countries with a lower level of fiscal decentralisation rate the importance of this task lower than those with a higher level of decentralisation. County councillors from European countries with a larger share of sub-national revenues in GDP evaluated the importance to be involved in the coordination of local economic development as more significant. Examples of these countries are Italy and Hungary, where more than 85 per cent of the respondents find that it is fairly or very important to be involved in the coordination of local economic development. A significant change in the level of fiscal

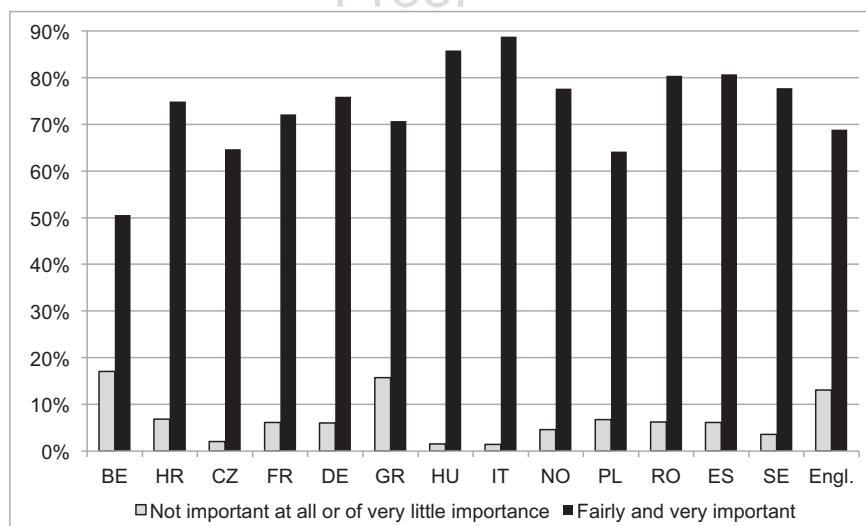


Figure 4.1 Overview of attitudes toward own involvement in the coordination of local economic development by country

Source: Authors' analysis based on the survey.

Notes: Percentages are sums of not important and of very little importance or of fairly and very important on a five-point scale. Where county councillors did not answer these questions, data were omitted from the analysis.

BE – Belgium, HR – Croatia, CZ – Czech Republic, FR – France, DE – Germany, GR – Greece, HU – Hungary, IT – Italy, NO – Norway, PL – Poland, RO – Romania, ES – Spain, SE – Sweden, Engl. – England.

decentralisation measured by the share of sub-national budget revenues and expenses in the consolidated general government budget or by the share of sub-national government revenues and expenses in GDP gives greater power to the sub-national level of government. In this case, county councillors could have greater influence on local development policies. It is also noteworthy that there are countries in which there is no correlation between the level of fiscal decentralisation and the county councillors' attitudes toward this issue; these are Romania and Spain. Both of these countries have low levels of fiscal decentralisation, but the county councillors are aware that they could influence local economic development.

In the more decentralised countries, the second tier of local government exercises greater influence on decisions, which have a positive or negative influence on the local development. Therefore, the second group of analysed questions is related to the county councillors' views about decentralisation of tasks to different local government levels, regardless of the fact of whether or not such a reform has already been conducted in the country. We analyse the data on the attitudes of county councillors toward decentralisation of tasks to the county as well as decentralisation of tasks to the municipalities.

Table 4.5 County councillors' attitudes toward decentralisation of tasks

Countries	Decentralisation of tasks to the county			Decentralisation of tasks to the municipalities		
	Mean	Standard deviation	Desirable or highly desirable (per cent)	Mean	Standard deviation	Desirable or highly desirable (per cent)
Belgium	3.3	1.157	51.4	3.2	1.189	43.3
Croatia	3.9	0.811	77.3	3.9	0.802	77.4
Czech Rep.	3.7	1.005	63.4	-	-	-
England	3.8	0.959	73.3	3.3	1.054	49.6
France	3.4	1.056	55.4	-	-	-
Germany	3.4	1.007	55.2	3.4	1.017	51.4
Greece	4.1	1.076	77.7	3.7	1.125	65.7
Hungary	4.1	0.987	77.7	2.9	1.212	29.3
Italy	4.2	0.950	83.6	-	-	-
Norway	3.6	1.158	66.3	3.7	1.121	64.6
Poland	3.1	1.095	37.0	3.1	1.129	38.1
Romania	4.1	0.978	80.0	3.9	1.010	70.3
Spain	3.6	1.166	62.4	3.7	1.072	63.6
Sweden	3.7	0.997	58.7	3.5	0.960	50.0

Source: Authors' analysis based on the survey

Notes: Mean values on a five-point scale or percentages, calculated as the sum of desirable and highly desirable. Where county councillors did not answer these questions, data were omitted from analysis.

Table 4.5 shows responses to the survey from county councillors in all countries analysed. The summary results for all analysed countries show that slightly more than half of the respondents support the decentralisation of tasks to a lower level of government. On average, 58.1 per cent of county councillors find that the decentralisation of tasks to counties or municipalities is desirable or highly desirable reform. Also 59.9 per cent of the county councillors agree or strongly agree with the statement that decentralisation of tasks to local government is a good way of involving citizens in public affairs.

However, there are large differences between countries. The percentage of county councillors that find decentralisation of tasks to counties desirable, vary from 37.0 per cent in Poland to 83.6 per cent in Italy, while the percentage of those who support decentralisation of tasks to municipalities vary from 29.3 per cent in Hungary to 77.4 per cent in Croatia. More than half of the respondents support decentralisation of tasks, both to municipalities and to counties in Croatia, Germany, Greece, Norway, Romania, Spain and Sweden. The results of the deeper analysis of county councillors' attitudes towards a decentralisation process in Croatia, which are presented in Jurlina Alibegović *et al.* (2014), show that county councillors are more concerned with fiscal than with administrative decentralisation. Jurlina Alibegović *et al.* (2014) stated that improving the quality of public services and obtaining financial autonomy are the two most important goals of decentralisation.

Poland is the only clear example of a lack of trust in the decentralisation process. Only in Poland, the number of county councillors who found that the decentralisation of tasks to counties or municipalities is undesirable or highly undesirable is almost equal to the number of councillors who found that these reforms are desirable or highly desirable. These results are fully in line with the results of the research carried out by Brusis (2013). He explored connection among electoral competition, ideological divides and territory-based divisions in the creation of regions and regional self-governments (started in 1999), local electoral reform (introduced in 2002), rules of adopting regional development projects (adopted in 2006) and the creation of metropolitan regions (created in 2008). His study provides evidence that a national conservative opposition to the process of decentralisation arose in Poland (see also Rincker and Battle 2011).

Thirty-eight per cent of all councillors surveyed find that decentralisation of tasks is desirable or highly desirable, both for municipalities and for counties. However, 16 per cent of county councillors did not have clear opinions about these issues, stating that decentralisation of tasks to some of the lower levels of government is neither desirable nor undesirable. In addition, only 9 per cent of all county councillors found that decentralisation of tasks to a lower level of government is not desirable. This confirms that, on average, most of the county councillors support administrative decentralisation reforms, regardless of their previous experiences with fiscal decentralisation and limited revenues for financing their tasks.

County councillors were also asked which services should be provided either in a public, a private form or by a public-private partnership (PPP).

The PPP, as a separate form of providing tasks, has been included in the analysis due to the fact that the literature demonstrates that this form of providing public services can encourage local development in European countries (see for example, Boxmeer and Bechoven 2005). Yescombe (2007) also stresses that PPP has become a popular form for obtaining and maintaining public sector infrastructures in many sectors, such as transportation and social infrastructure, but also in providing public services. Besides an inadequate structure of sub-national budgetary revenues and expenses, the reasons for private sector involvement in infrastructure development are increased local and regional needs, the size of local and regional projects, high costs of project preparation and construction as well as borrowing restrictions at the central and regional levels. Metaxas and Preza (2012) stress the role of PPPs during and after last financial crises, when the need for collaboration between the private and the public sector increased due to the lack of necessary financial resources for delivering public services.

County councillors were asked to choose between three different forms of service delivery for seven different public functions (see also Heinelt and Krapp, Chapter 3 in this book). Those public functions are public transport, maintenance of school buildings, waste management, energy supply, water supply and sewage, hospitals and care homes for the elderly.

Analyses of county councillors' opinions do not bring us to a straightforward conclusion. Differences in county councillors' opinions are especially evident when they were asked whether or not private or public sectors should be responsible for

Table 4.6 County councillors' attitudes about which form of service delivery is most preferable with respect to different tasks

<i>Service</i>	<i>Form of service delivery</i>	<i>Countries with between 30 and 50 per cent of county councillors who have chosen a form of service delivery</i>	<i>Countries with more than 50 per cent of county councillors who have chosen a form of service delivery</i>
Public transport	PPP	CZ, FR, GR, IT, NO, RO, ES, SE	-
	private	PL, ENGL.	-
Maintenance of school buildings	public	HR, FR, GR, IT, NO, PL, ES, SE, ENGL.	BE, DE, HU
	PPP	NO, SE, ENGL.	-
Waste management	private	BE, ENGL.	-
	public	BE, GR, NO	HR, CZ, FR, DE, HU, IT, PL, RO, ES
Energy supply	PPP	BE, CZ, GR, IT, RO, SE, ES	-
	private	CZ, NO, PT, RO	-
Water supply and sewage	public	BR, FR, GR, IT, NO, PL, ES, SE, ENGL.	HR, DE, HU
	PPP	BE, GR, IT, RO, SE, ES	-
Hospitals	private	DE, ES	CZ, ENGL.
	public	BE, CZ, FR, GR, IT, RO, SE	HR, DE, HU, NO, PL
Care homes for the elderly	PPP	CZ, IT, RO, ENGL.	ES
	private	-	ENGL.
	public	CZ, RO, SE	BE, HR, FR, DE, GR, HU, IT, NO, PL, SE
	PPP	BE, RO, SE	ENGL.
	private	-	-
	public	BE, RO, ENGL.	HR, CZ, FR, DE, GR, HU, NO, PL, SE, ES
	PPP	BE, HR, CZ, FR, GR, HU, NO, ES, SE	RO
	private	-	DE
	public	BE, HR, GR, HU, SE, ENGL.	CZ, FR, NO, PL, ES

Source: Authors' analysis based on the survey

Note: where county councillors did not answer these questions, data were omitted from analysis.

certain public services. More than half of the European county councillors found that the maintenance of school buildings, water supply, sewage and hospitals should be the responsibility of the public sector.

Regarding the delivery of services in the form of PPP, opinions were different, depending on the country and the specific public service. More than 30 per cent of all county councillors found that only three public services should be developed in this form: public transport, waste management and care homes for the elderly. Almost one-third of all analysed county councillors (32 per cent) found that public

transport should be offered through a PPP, while almost half of the respondents (48 per cent) found that it should still be the responsibility of the public sector. The distribution of answers is similar when respondents were asked about waste management and care homes for the elderly. One-third of county councillors (34 per cent) found that care homes for the elderly should be developed in the form of PPP, while 41 per cent found that it should be the responsibility of the public sector. Similarly, 30 per cent of respondents found that waste management should be conducted in the form of PPP, while 45 per cent of them find that the public sector should stay responsible for this public service.

Based on the previous analyses, we assume that councillors prefer a specific form of public services provision, regardless the sector. This is explored by testing the correlation between different sectors (Table 4.7) using phi and Cramer's V correlations. Moderately strong to strong correlations between county councillors' attitudes towards different forms of public service provision show that those councillors who prefer PPP as the form of public delivery in one sector, would choose the same form in other sectors as well. The results are the same for public and private-public services provision.

The second channel recognised in the large number of European countries, through which public services could be improved and local development encouraged, is territorial reform. The fiscal federalism literature suggests that a modified territorial structure of a country should be a result of implemented fiscal autonomy principles for sub-national government units, in order to achieve an efficient public service provision. The territorial division of the country should be conducted, taking into account different criteria such as population size, fiscal capacity, economic structure and other specific factors (e.g. historical factors). There are many other different criteria that should be implemented in order to strengthen the administrative capacity of sub-national authorities. All of them have the same goal: strengthening of the political profile of sub-national government and the political and administrative accountability of sub-national actors aiming to achieve an increase in the well-being of a local community. In their research, Wollmann (2004, 2011) and Wollmann and Bouckaert (2006) systematised the experience of developed countries (Germany, France) in the implementation of territorial reform. The process of territorial reform happens in almost all Eastern European countries. The general conclusion provided by Kuhlmann and Wollmann (2011) is that territorial reorganisation of local governments can rely on voluntary or imposed mergers of general-purpose local units or on creating functionally oriented inter-municipal bodies. There are examples of countries that have been preparing a proposal of a new administrative-territorial division of the country which would, by reducing the number of local government units and public spending, providing optimal performance of public tasks and responsibilities at sub-national level.

The results of the survey conducted among county councillors show large differences in their opinions regarding territorial reforms, irrespective of the fact of whether or not such reforms were conducted in the country. Overall, the analysis of all responses shows that

Table 4.7 Correlation between attitudes about which form of service delivery is most preferable with respect to the different tasks

	Maintenance of school buildings	Waste management	Energy supply	Water supply and sewage	Hospitals	Care Homes for the Elderly
Public transport	Phi Cramer's V N	0.397** 0.281** 4,847	0.494** 0.350** 4,782	0.453** 0.321** 4,846	0.411** 0.291** 4,867	0.442** 0.313** 4,543
Maintenance of school buildings	Phi Cramer's V N		0.493** 0.349** 4,858	0.366** 0.259** 4,837	0.340** 0.240** 4,584	0.332** 0.235** 4,527
Waste management	Phi Cramer's V N		0.651** 0.460** 4,870	0.606** 0.428** 4,887	0.402** 0.284** 4,600	0.416** 0.294** 4,549
Energy supply	Phi Cramer's V N			0.742** 0.525** 4,874	0.436** 0.308** 4,589	0.417** 0.295** 4,534
Water supply and sewage	Phi Cramer's V N				0.434** 0.307** 4,608	0.360** 0.254** 4,552
Hospitals	Phi Cramer's V N					0.789** 0.558** 4,558

Source: Authors' own work.
Note: For Phi and Cramer's V, ** p<0.01.

- 44.0 per cent of county councillors found that merging municipalities is a desirable or a highly desirable reform, while 33.5 per cent of county councillors found it a highly undesirable or an undesirable reform;
- 33.3 per cent of county councillors found that merging counties is a desirable or a highly desirable reform, while 46.6 per cent of county councillors found it a highly undesirable or an undesirable reform;
- 6.9 per cent of county councillors found that splitting up counties is a desirable or a highly desirable reform, while 75.9 per cent of county councillors found it a highly undesirable or an undesirable territorial reform.

The results of the survey show that more than 50 per cent of county councillors who answered the questionnaire in Croatia, France, Hungary, Italy and Norway consider that merging municipalities would be a good idea. Norway is the example of a country which conducted territorial and decentralisation reforms in 2010, introducing new competences, but also introducing additional financial resources to counties. Municipalities obtained the new competences in the areas of health and social affairs (Council of European Municipalities and Regions 2013). This implies that county councillors in those countries believe that too many small municipalities are a barrier to faster local development in those countries.

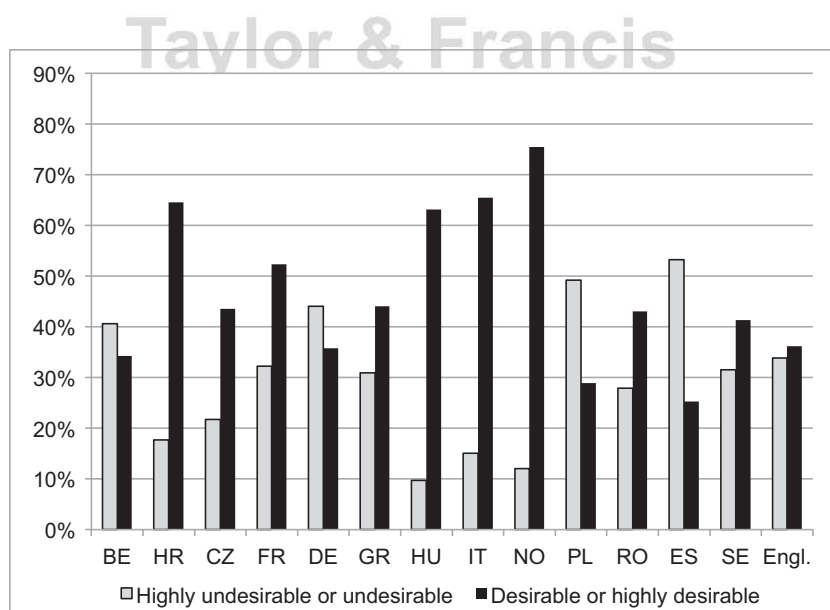


Figure 4.2 County councillors' attitudes towards merging municipalities within the county

Source: Authors' analysis based on the survey

Note: Percentages are sums of highly undesirable and undesirable or desirable and highly desirable on a five-point scale. Where county councillors did not answer these questions, data were omitted from analysis.

Generally, federalised states have a larger level of decentralisation with stronger decision-making power at the second level of local government. In those countries, on average, the majority of county councillors support the merging of municipalities. Until 1993, Belgium conducted reforms to transform a unitary into a federal state, but the overlapping territories and competences still remain the problem (Ismeri Europa and Applica 2010).

In Spain, however, more than 50 per cent of respondents find that this is a highly undesirable or an undesirable territorial reform. However, countries in which territorial reform failed or where reforms were conducted with only minor modifications, are those which try to support inter-municipal cooperation. The examples are Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, France and the United Kingdom (Council of European Municipalities and Regions 2013).

As could be expected, when talking about merging counties, more county councillors in the analysed countries considered that this is an undesirable rather than a desirable territorial reform. The situation is different in only two countries. On one hand, more than 50 per cent of county councillors from Norway and Sweden find that merging counties is a desirable reform. On the other, less than 10 per cent of county councillors from Belgium, Spain and England find that merging counties should be conducted.

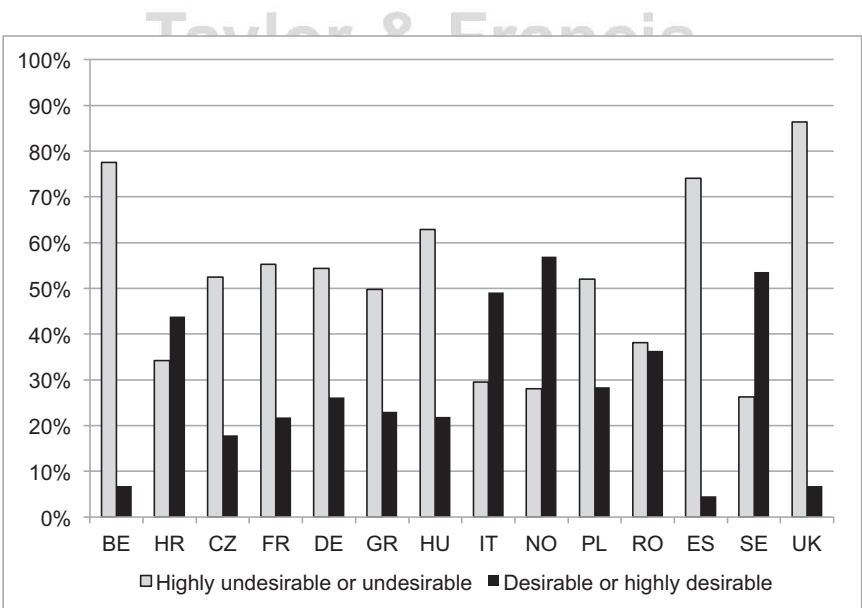


Figure 4.3 County councillors' attitudes towards merging counties

Source: Authors' analysis based on the survey

Note: Percentages are sums of highly undesirable and undesirable or desirable and highly desirable on a five-point scale. Where county councillors did not answer these questions, data were omitted from analysis.

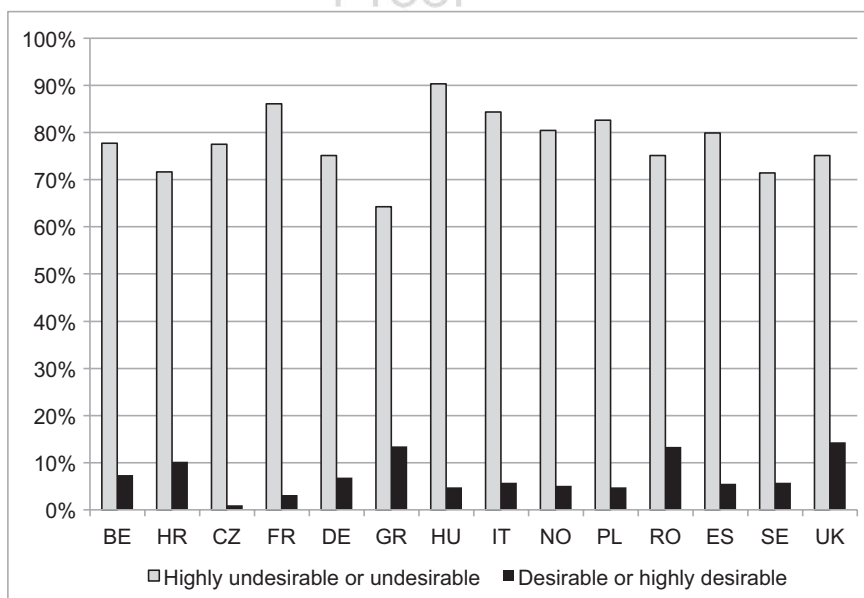


Figure 4.4 County councillors' attitudes towards splitting up counties

Source: Authors' analysis based on the survey

Note: Percentages are sums of highly undesirable and undesirable or desirable and highly desirable on a five-point scale. Where county councillors did not answer these questions, data were omitted from analysis.

However, county councillors have similar opinions about splitting up counties. Most of the county councillors found that this reform should not be conducted, revealing their attitudes, that the number of local government units is large enough. Such attitudes could be especially strong during financial crises, when most of the local government units are faced with the lack of financial resources and have to cut expenses. Indeed, most of them found such a reform extremely undesirable. Such an opinion is mostly pronounced in Hungary, where 79.2 per cent of county councillors found that splitting up counties is a highly undesirable reform and an additional 10.6 per cent consider it to be an undesirable reform.

Although the survey discovered large differences between county councillors, which are a consequence of many different factors, including historical background, successfulness on conducting territorial reforms so far, etc., the division of competences is determined mostly only under ordinary legislation, and there is no constitutional division of competences between different levels of government (Ismeri Europa and Applica 2010). The conducted decentralisation process was mostly only administrative, while the level of fiscal autonomy remained very low. Hence, the county councillors felt the gap between the revenues and expenses needed to conduct local economic development. Such a fiscal imbalance, especially during and after the financial crises, is more pronounced in also influencing the

county councillors' attitudes toward territorial reforms. Therefore, it is not surprising that almost all county councillors found that merging municipalities and/or counties would not be a preferable reform.

Conclusions

In the last few decades, the role of the second tier of local government has changed in many countries, depending on the constitution of the country, whether it is a unitary or a federal country. Also, the role of second-tier local government depends on the direction of conducted reforms. The special problem is that the share of the second tier of local government in GDP stayed at relatively low levels in most of the European countries. The long (and in some countries still ongoing) financial crisis further widens the financial gap between revenues and expenses of sub-national governments. The central government keeps under its control almost all revenue sources. Transferred responsibilities to the second tier of local government in the analysed countries are different, but mostly cover education, health and social welfare. In generally, the responsibility of the second tier of local government for coordinating local development policy remained low.

The attitudes of county councillors towards new tasks and responsibilities are not homogenous across the analysed countries. This is partly a consequence of the fact that the second tier of local government has limited financial resources for current responsibilities. In spite of that, most of the county councillors across Europe find that their role in the coordination of local economic development should be more important.

Overall, more than one-third of all analysed county councillors in Europe considered that territorial reforms, which would lead to a decreased number of municipalities and/or counties, are desirable. A somewhat smaller share of county councillors with those attitudes could be noticed in countries which have already conducted such reforms. Such territorial reforms would have an impact on a more efficient provision of public services.

County councillors do not neglect the possibility of larger participation by the private sector in providing public functions in the form of privatisation or PPP. Water supply, sewage, hospitals, and care homes for the elderly are public functions which most of the county councillors would like to remain in the sphere of the public sector. For deeper analysis of county councillors' attitudes, additional research would be necessary, with the goal of gaining insight into their opinions about local economic development goals in different countries and an acceptable division of responsibilities between government levels from county councillors' perspectives.

Note

- 1 International Monetary Fund (2001) international guidelines for statistical methodology of compiling public finance statistics is harmonised with the System of National Accounts 1993 (SNA 1993). The methodology brought some changes in fiscal statistics with the goal of improving transparency. Therefore, classification of revenues and expenses

changed and now includes the following classification of public functions: 01 General public services, 02 Defence, 03 Public order and safety, 04 Economic affairs, 05 Environmental protection, 06 Housing and community amenities, 07 Health, 08 Recreation, culture and religion, 09 Education and 10 Social protection.

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5 The political representation focuses of second-tier councillors in Europe

Cristina Stănuş

Introduction

The alliance between democracy and political representation has always been an uneasy one, though participatory democratic politics at the local level made this a workable relationship (Pitkin 2004). This uneasiness is significantly greater in a context defined by the introduction of governance-oriented reforms on all levels of government. With governance and collaborative-governance mechanisms comes a challenge to the traditional views on political representation, which goes as far as requiring elected officials to reinvent their roles in relation to citizens and other relevant actors in governmental structures (Hansen 2001; Saward 2005; Brugué and Vallés 2005). In political representation research, the emphasis falls upon representational role orientations and the gap between normative expectations and role behaviours. An inherently normative component of representational role orientation, yet with practical reverberation, is linked with the question of whom elected officials claim to represent. This is a particularly valid question in the context provided by the second tier of local government. Normatively speaking, electoral mechanisms compel an elected official to represent his or her territorial constituency. Yet, in a governance context, constituencies become fluid and depart significantly from the Burkean notion of national/local territorial focus of representation of elected officials (Saward 2005: 182). Consequently, in the case of a single elected official we may speak of multiple constituencies (some territorially defined and some not) which overlap. It is thus important to explore the space carved out for territorially oriented political representation in the new governance configuration.¹

In this direction, the chapter sets out to answer three questions: (1) How does the notion of overlapping focuses of representation manifest itself at the second tier of local government in Europe? (2) To what extent is territorial representation being replaced/complemented by more flexible forms of political representation? And (3) what are the factors that account for variation (if any) in territorial representation focuses of second-tier elected officials in Europe? Based upon empirical research on the representational styles and focuses assumed by members of national and European legislative bodies and officials in the first tier of local government, a set of empirical expectations regarding the representational focuses of county councillors in Europe is formulated and tested in a comparative context.

In the following section the chapter reviews findings concerning political representation, with an emphasis on the focus of representation (for representational styles see Aars *et al.*, Chapter 6 in this volume). Next, it describes the overlapping focuses of territorial representation of elected officials at the second tier of local government in Europe. Afterwards, it explores the linkages between territorial and functional (interest-based) political representation. Later on, the chapter attempts to explain the variation in terms of the focus of representation taking into account institutional, party-related and personal variables.

The focus of representation

At the heart of representative democracy, political representation defines the relationship between elected officials and voters. The simplest definition available emphasises that representation is about making citizens present (Pitkin 1967). It is concerned not with what decisions should be made, but with how decisions are to be made by elected officials (Eulau *et al.* 1959: 745). Hence, there is a strong emphasis on who the representatives are, how they see their role, and how they behave in their elected positions. Only more recently (see for example Saward 2005), the emphasis has shifted towards the represented (the citizens), as well as towards non-electoral forms of political representation. Much of the research on political representation has unavoidably focused on members of national parliaments. It was in this context that role theories of legislative behaviour were developed. Researchers shifting the focus to other levels of government or other types of elected officials have generally tried to test and expand existing propositions and concepts (for example de Groot *et al.* 2010; Rao 1998; Verhelst *et al.* 2014).

Among a legislator's key roles the representational role is singled out (Katz 1997). It comprises norms and expectations concerning decision-making processes and, consequently, the relationship between officials and citizens (pressure groups, other citizens), as well as between officials and other officials, deriving from their administrative role and the leadership positions they occupy, as well as from their expertise on certain subject-matters (Wahlke *et al.* 1962: 14). Conflicting role definitions are possible, which is why investigations of the topic emphasise the *role orientation*, which is defined as a translation of expectations related to the rights, duties and obligations connected with the position of representative (Wessels/Giebler 2011). A key difference in the literature, stemming from a different theoretical tradition, is whether the self-perceptions and self-definitions (see for example Searing 1991) or strategic plans for action (Strøm 1997) are seen as key elements of a representative's role.

The role orientation of elected officials at all levels of government is defined by two main dimensions, the *style* and *focus* of political representation (Wahlke *et al.* 1962; Saalfeld and Müller 1997; Eulau *et al.* 1959; Eulau and Karps 1977). The question of whom the representative claims/aims to represent addresses what is known as the *focus of representation* (Weßels 2007). The focus of representation is multidimensional, with three main categories identified in the literature: (1) geographical (nation, state, district or other territorial level); (2) group (religious, ethnic,

economic and ideological/party groups); and (3) individual (focused on the representation of individuals) (Weßels 2007: 839). These are analytical categories; in practice we find a mix and overlap of representational focuses of given politicians (Eulau *et al.* 1959).

Political parties play an important role in building representational linkages in most European countries (according to the ‘responsible party’ model, see Bengtsson/Wass 2011; Thomassen 1991; Wessels and Giebler 2011), in contrast to the more individualist approach used in studies made on the American continent. When looking at national legislatures, in many European political systems the focus of representation seems to be biased towards the party, with territorial and functional representation thought to be less important (Weßels 2007: 839). It can also be argued that, given the importance of the political parties in representational linkages, they have moved beyond being a focus of representation. Parties thus became part of the institutional settings which incentivise individual representatives in choosing a specific role. Most certainly, favouring one approach over the other would result in missing some of the aspects of the representative process (Thomassen and Andeweg 2004; Thomassen and Esaiasson 2006; Brack *et al.* 2012).

Institutional settings shape the acquisition of legislator’s representative focus and style (Weßels 2007; Saalfeld and Müller 1997; Kuklinski and Elling 1977). Variation between the countries is explained by systemic features, such as electoral rules and candidate selection procedures (Weßels 2007: 839). Research on representational role behaviour has especially focused on the amount of constituency work representatives choose to do and its relationship with the electoral formula in use (Studlar and McAllister 1996 on MPs in New Zealand; Bowler and Farrell 1993 on MEPs). This debate has surpassed the limits of the academic world, being frequently invoked whenever a democratic country discussed electoral reform. The focus of representation seems to depend also on individual-level characteristics (Itzkovitch-Malka 2014; Russo 2011). The importance of individual-level characteristics is highlighted by the focus on constituency representation in the case of officials elected using closed-list proportional representation.

From a focus of representation point of view, the second tier of local government is particularly interesting since it encompasses several first-tier governments. Available literature actually describes a struggle between representing the entire constituency or just the locality or area where the representative lives (Bengtsson and Wass 2011). There is a reasonable expectation that the territorial aspect of representation is a key issue in the case of elected officials at the second tier of local government. Consequently, this chapter focuses on territorial representation, while briefly exploring other dimensions of political representation focuses.

Within the second tier of local government, the chapter will focus strictly on the county councillors. The existence of a mediating assembly of some kind between the citizenry and political decision making is the key feature of political representation (Brennan and Hamlin 1999; de Groot *et al.* 2010), while research on mayors (Kjaer 2013) has suggested a completely different conceptualisation applies to the representational role orientations of occupants of one-of-a-kind positions. In the

following section of the chapter I proceed to describe the representational focuses of second-tier councillors in Europe.

A description of the representational focuses of second-tier councillors

How do councillors at the second tier of local government define their focus of representation? The search for an answer to this question is guided by two theoretically reasonable expectations. The first expectation is that county councillors in Europe are similar to other officials elected in representative assemblies in the sense that they mix several focuses of representation. The second expectation is that, given the institutional variation at second tier of local government in Europe and the importance of the institutional settings in shaping role orientations, we can expect some institutionally induced variation between councillors. Therefore, throughout this chapter we will seek to showcase differences between the main types of local government systems: the strong political leader, committee leader, collective leader and council-manager forms (Mouritzen and Svava 2002; Heinelt and Bertrana 2011; Bertrana and Heinelt 2013). The horizontal power relations at the heart of this typology are particularly relevant to our topic due to the fact that they prescribe different policy-making roles for councillors, which incentivise councillors to take on the representation of certain groups (or not). Countries were classified based on Heinelt and Bertrana (2011) and information from the national research teams involved in the Second Tier Survey (see the ‘Method and issues’ section).

In order to find out how second-tier councillors define their focus of representation, councillors at the second tier of local government in Europe were asked to respond to the following question: ‘As a county councillor, do you speak on behalf of the following groups or interests?’ Respondents were asked to position themselves in terms of territorial representation (entire county, part of the county), socially defined groups (the elderly, youth, ethnic minorities, the middle class, less-resourceful citizens, the unemployed, religious groups), and economically defined interests (different economic sectors, public servants, workers, particular public services).

The geographical or territorial element of political representation is rarely discussed when approaching members of parliament, given the nationalisation of major political issues and controversies in all contemporary democracies (Thomassen and Andeweg 2004). However, not even in extreme cases such as the Dutch parliament is the notion of territorial representation missing from how MPs build and perform their representational roles (Thomassen and Andeweg 2004). Second-tier councillors investigated in this chapter fit this picture, as they dominantly declare some type of territorial representational focus (see Table 5.1). Only one county councillor in 20 declares that he or she does not have a territorial focus of representation. A second aspect stems from the fact that the largest group of councillors declares to represent at the same time both the entire county and a part of it, which was labelled *dual territorial representation*. The latter aspect very probably

Table 5.1 The territorial focus of representation of councillors in different second-tier local government systems

<i>Type of local government system</i>	<i>No territorial representation</i>	<i>Representing a part of the county</i>	<i>Representing the entire county</i>	<i>Dual territorial representation</i>	<i>Number of cases</i>
Strong-leader form*	8.0%	17.6%	40.3%	33.8%	2,508
Committee-leader form*	3.7%	7.5%	51.0%	37.7%	1,147
Collective form*	1.5%	16.4%	14.2%	67.75%	668
Council-manager form			60.1%	39.8%	216
All countries*	5.8%	16.5%	34.0%	43.5%	4,539

Source: Second Tier Survey

* Significant at 0.000.

Weighted data.

reflects the broader notion of political representation, which goes beyond electoral mechanisms, associated with local governance. This view on territorially oriented political representation is universalist and localist at the same time, a reflection of the complex set of cues and incentives a representative has to deal with.

The next step in this analysis looks at the extent to which this pattern persists within different types of local government systems. As shown in Table 5.1, there are significant differences between the categories. In the case of the collective form of second-tier local government, where elected councillors play important roles in policy making, dual territorial representation is the dominant category. In the case of the strong political leader and committee leader forms of second-tier local government, the largest category is that of councillors declaring to represent the entire county. This could probably be linked to the need of the councillors to legitimize their position in relation with the political leadership of the county. In the case of the council-manager form, where much of the role of the councillor is defined in relation to the professionalised county manager, the same applies. This, however, needs to be approached with caution as only one country included in this sample (Norway) classifies as a council-manager form of second-tier local government. The same is also true for Sweden, the only country classified under the committee-leader form of local government system.

Taking this to the country level, Table 5.2 shows significant variation in terms of how county councillors in Europe define their territorial focus of representation. A few countries (France, Hungary, Norway, and Poland) stand out as different. France has a significant number of second-tier councillors declaring they have no territorial focus of representation, which could be linked to the position of county councillors as political notables with high political weight, allowed to cumulate multiple mandates in a political system in which there is even a legal requirement that MPs do not mention their constituency and plea for local interests (see Négrier and Nicolas 2011; Brouard *et al.* 2013). In the Hungarian case almost all county councillors declare the same, which is quite unusual. This might be explained by the strong standing of national political parties in county councils in Hungary, reinforced by

Table 5.2 The territorial focus of representation of councillor by country

<i>Country</i>	<i>No territorial representation</i>	<i>Representing a part of the county</i>	<i>Representing the entire county</i>	<i>Dual territorial representation</i>	<i>Number of cases</i>
Belgium*	1.9%	39.0%	27.0%	31.8%	251
Croatia*	6.1%	18.8%	35.5%	39.4%	276
Czech Rep.*	4.5%	37.8%	18.1%	39.3%	66
England*	3.1%	32.5%	3.1%	61.1%	126
France*	39.0%	24.4%	17.7%	18.7%	192
Germany*	3.4%	16.0%	46.8%	33.6%	1,498
Greece*	1.1%	15.0%	39.8%	43.9%	173
Hungary*	92.6%	2.1%	4.2%	1.0%	95
Italy*	1.0%	19.7%	38.5%	40.6%	98
Norway	—	—	60.1%	39.8%	216
Poland*	—	7.4%	8.4%	84.1%	98
Romania*	3.5%	33.5%	34.2%	28.6%	143
Spain*	—	6.5%	27.4%	66.0%	153
Sweden*	3.7%	7.5%	51.0%	37.7%	1,147

Source: Second Tier Survey

* Significant at 0.000.

legal provisions such as those forbidding independent candidates and requiring voters to cast their vote for a political party based on a partial list of candidates (Soós 2011). In this institutional and political context it is quite likely that councillors might feel themselves to be representatives of the political parties. Poland has a very large number of councillors declaring dual territorial representation, which could be explained by looking at the intersection of formal rules which prescribe the election of county councillors in wards with the particular non-partisan nature of local politics (see Gendźwiłł and Żótkak 2014; Swianiewicz 2011).

The large numbers of councillors declaring dual territorial representation, and thus seemingly applying a broad notion of political representation, suggests it could also be relevant to explore linkages with functional political representation. Functional representation (i.e. the representation of interest not primarily related to a particular territorial unit) is seen as an indicator of a representative's willingness to build for himself or herself an individual role. It is considered to characterise the behaviour of individual representatives even in countries with strong political parties (Thomassen and Andeweg 2004). In this respect, the literature distinguishes between administrative, pressure group and party-related focuses of representation (Rao 1998). I focus this analysis on the administrative and interest group-related focuses of representation, as these reflect underlying changes to representational role orientations in the context of local governance. An administrative focus of representation reflects the extent to which elected officials in local government see it as their role to be involved in day-to-day administration (which is a departure from a councillor's prescribed role of non-involvement in local governance contexts, see Hansen 2001). Taking interest in practical and implementation issues unavoidably leads to elected officials keeping close contact with public servants or particular public services and speaking on their behalf.

At the same time, it is reasonable to expect that functional representation might also be linked to the division of labour practised by political parties (asking certain councillors to focus on certain policy issues), as well as to the particular professional background of the individual councillor (the councillor might choose to focus on a policy field which is linked to his or her occupation outside politics).

I employ univariate analysis and exploratory principal axis factoring to describe functional representation among second-tier councillors in Europe (see Linz 1981). The analysis shows councillors are less inclined to declare they speak on behalf of administrative interests, the only groups even less favoured by councillors being those defined in religious terms. Functional representation at the second tier of local government in Europe seems to have two main components. The first, which can be labelled *representation of social interest groups*, sees councillors declaring they speak on behalf of the elderly or ethnically defined groups. The second sees them declaring to speak on behalf of business groups from various economic sectors. The two dimensions are relatively strong. While several variables load both dimensions, in all but two cases there is a significant difference in favour of one of the two dimensions. The social dimension of functional representation seems oriented towards groups perceived as being worse off from different points of view, which would explain why the middle class loads this component slightly less than most other groups. The church and/or religious groups are included in both the social and economic dimension of representation, with a slight tendency towards the economic dimension, which is reflective of

Table 5.3 Dimensions of functional representation, county councillors in Europe

<i>Do you speak on behalf of ...?</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Social interests</i>	<i>Economic interests</i>
Elderly people/ pensioners/retired	66.4%	0.78	
Youth	77.5%	0.79	0.42
Ethnic minorities	45.0%	0.76	
Public Servants	41.2%	0.77	
Workers	61.8%	0.78	0.48
The middle class	68.9%	0.70	0.53
Less-resourceful citizens	73.9%	0.75	
Unemployed	67.3%	0.82	0.43
Private business employees	52.8%	0.52	0.71
Primary sector (farming, fishing, etc.)	67.9%		0.81
Secondary sector (industry)	58.8%		0.87
Construction/real estate sector	52.6%	0.43	0.84
Trade sector	56.1%		0.87
Tourism sector	61.7%		0.83
The Church/religious groups	34.2%	0.49	0.57
Particular public service(s)	42.4%	0.54	0.54
Explained		0.43	0.42

Source: Second Tier Survey

PAF of correlation matrix, varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization.

Explained variance Rho = 0.85, KMO = 0.71, N = 2153.

the historical role of the church in some Western European societies in articulating social and economic interests (see Linz 1981). The only variable which loads similarly both components of functional representation concerns whether councillors declare to speak on behalf of particular public services. This reflects the dual nature of these services, deriving from whether they are outsourced or not: outsourced public services may be perceived as economic interests, while non-outsourced services are part of the administrative sphere to which a councillor should pay attention.

The same analysis was conducted for each type of local government system to see whether there are departures from this pattern. The broad pattern (two components, one focusing on the representation of social problems and the other one focusing on the representation of business interests) holds, with slight variations in terms of loading, for councillors in strong leader, committee leader and collective leader forms of second-tier local government. In the case of the council-manager type of local government systems the analysis revealed a single dimension, corresponding to the social representation dimension. The latter case has to be viewed with caution, due to the fact that it is based on a small number of cases from a single country. The next step in this analysis focuses on exploring the connections between territorial and functional representation.

A theoretically reasonable expectation concerning the linkages between territorial and functional focuses of representation is that it is more likely that councillors who declare to represent both the entire county and a part of it at the same time will also declare more interest in representing social or economic groups. In order to test this I conducted point-biserial correlation (Anderson 1994) analyses between a series of dummy variables reflecting the four different categories of territorial representation and the factorial scores corresponding to the two dimensions of functional representation. Data concerning second-tier councillors supports this (see Table 5.4). Thus, when moving from other categories to the councillors declaring a dual territorial representation focus we find a significant increase in the councillor's interest in speaking on behalf of social groups and, to a lesser extent, economic groups. In the opposite direction, when moving from any other category to councillors declaring to represent the entire county, we have a significant

Table 5.4 Linkages between territorial and functional representation, county councillors in Europe

	<i>Economic representation</i>	<i>Social representation</i>
No territorial focus of representation	0.03	-0.12*
Representing a part of the county	-0.03	0.04**
Representing the entire county	-0.05****	-0.13*
Dual territorial representation	0.06***	0.17*

Source: Second Tier Survey

Point bi-serial correlation: * significant at 0.001; ** significant at 0.02; *** significant at 0.002; **** significant at 0.007. $N = 2,074$.

decrease in social representation. When moving into the category of councillors declaring to have no territorial focus of representation, we have a significant decrease in terms of social representation and a very small but statistically insignificant decrease in economic representation.

The next step in this analysis involved exploring this pattern across the various types of local government systems. As shown in Table 5.5, the positive relationship between dual territorial representation and functional representation seems to hold across different types of local government systems. Within strong-leader local government systems it seems that there is an increase in social representation as we move towards the category of councillors declaring to represent the entire county and a significant decrease in economic representation as we move into the category of councillors declaring to represent a part of the county. Within the committee leader systems there seems to be an increase in social representation as we move towards the category of councillors declaring to represent a part of the county. In collective leader systems, when we move into the category of councillors declaring to represent the entire county, economic representation increases and social representation decreases. No relationship could be detected in the case of the council-manager form of second-tier local government, which suggests different patterns apply in the one country included in this category (Norway).

These differences possibly suggest that, in different local government systems, the institutional cues concerning the councillor's role might emphasise as acceptable different combinations (overlaps) of representational focuses. The impact of

Table 5.5 Linkages between territorial and functional representation by forms of local government system

	<i>Strong political leader form</i>		<i>Committee-leader form</i>		<i>Collective leader form</i>		<i>Council-manager form</i>	
	<i>Econ. repr.</i>	<i>Social repr.</i>	<i>Econ. repr.</i>	<i>Social repr.</i>	<i>Econ. repr.</i>	<i>Social repr.</i>	<i>Econ. repr.</i>	<i>Social repr.</i>
No territorial focus of representation	-0.02	-0.25*	-0.02	-0.01	-0.07	-0.16***	–	–
Representing a part of the county	-0.10****	-0.008	0.006	0.08*****	-0.21*	0.04	–	–
Representing the entire county	0.04	-0.001	-0.002	-0.19*	0.03	-0.17**	-0.07	-0.08
Dual territorial representation	0.05	0.21*	0.01	0.16*	0.20*	0.14*****	0.07	0.08
Number of cases		709		901		346		118

Source: Second Tier Survey

Point bi-serial correlation: * significant at 0.000; ** significant at 0.001; *** significant at 0.002; **** significant at 0.006; ***** significant at 0.007. *N* = 2,074.

Econ. repr. = economic representation; Social repr. = social representation

the type of local government system, as well as of other institutional, party-related and personal level variables, on the choice of territorial focuses of representation is further explored in what follows.

Factors shaping a representative's role orientation

An explanation of differences in territorial representation can reasonably start with factors or categories of factors in line with the conventional wisdom in the field of political representation research. Thus, two assumptions guided the search for potential explanatory factors. First, given the unavoidable linkage between the style and focus of representation, we can reasonably assume that factors linked to the style of representation might help shed some light on the choice of focus of representation. Second, we assume that second-tier legislatures are, at least to some extent, mini-parliaments where patterns of building representational roles similar to those of MPs apply. Applying this double perspective, three categories of potential explanatory variables can be identified: institutional, party-related and personal characteristics.

Institutional settings play an important role in how elected officials see territorially defined political representation. Among the more powerful elements of the institutional settings are the type of local government system, as power relations provide very powerful cues for councillors regarding of what is expected of them, the electoral system and the size of the county council.

The type of local government system influences the choice of representational role due to the extent to which horizontal power relations get councillors to experience the pressure of effective decision-making. In the committee leader and the collective form of local government system, councillors are somewhat constrained in taking effectiveness more into account. Consequently, we would expect them to show more restraint towards representing sectoral interests or adopting a localist view on territorial representation.

Research on MPs has suggested that representational role perception and the amount and type of constituency work depend on the electoral rules, with MPs elected in single-member districts doing broadly more constituency work than those elected on party lists (Bradbury and Mitchell 2007; Gallagher and Holliday 2003; Bowler and Farrell 1993). We can reasonably expect that councillors elected in single member districts to be more focused on the respective districts, which are in fact geographical parts of the counties. Linked to the choice of electoral system and a potential key element in how a councillor defines his or her territorial representation focus is whether he or she is elected in a constituency which covers the entire territory of the county or just a part of it.

Linking to the practical and theoretical discussions concerning the size of the assemblies, an interesting aspect is the extent to which a political system favours representativeness or efficiency. Favours representativeness will give small groups and parties the opportunity to make their voice heard, or might even give a local elected official from a larger political party an incentive to speak on behalf of small groups in need of a voice. The best reflection of the option for representativeness is given by the assembly size; for example, the larger the assembly size in a proportional representation system, the greater the chances for smaller political parties

and lists to be represented (Kjaer and Elklit 2014). To some extent this also holds for majority systems, as larger assembly sizes mean smaller constituencies and better chances for smaller political actors. I hypothesise that the larger the county council, the more likely it is to have individual representatives adopting a more localist or interest-based view on political representation.

The category of party-related predictors includes the type of political party. The literature suggests that belonging to the governing party or coalition helps explain some of the variation in terms of attitudes toward political representation (de Groot *et al.* 2010). In the realm of local politics equal importance might be given to the distinction between local parties or lists and the national political parties, with the former more likely to reject universalist views on political representation. However, it was also suggested that a greater territorialisation of representation can cause national parties to allow greater internal diversity within the organisation, even if it does not produce the expected territorialisation in terms of political recruitment (Montero 2007).

In the category of individual-level variables we find the ideological orientation of the councillor, his or her seniority, future career plans and whether the councillor is a full-time politician or not. In connection to party-related variables, the ideological orientation is often mentioned as influencing the choice of representational style and focus (Verhelst *et al.* 2014; Itzkovitch-Malka 2014; Méndez-Lago and Martínez 2002). Data concerning the direction of the relationship is inconclusive. Data from Spain supports the idea that right-leaning parties encourage a more national approach to the focus of representation, while an analysis of French MPs is inconclusive (Méndez-Lago and Martínez 2002; Brouard *et al.* 2013).

Of particular importance is the issue of seniority, as previous studies suggest there might be a difference in terms of style and focus of representation between newly elected officials and the more experienced ones (de Groot *et al.* 2010; Itzkovitch-Malka 2014). More experienced councillors are expected to be more likely to embrace a more traditional universalist view on territorial representation.

At the same time it is important to take into account the future career plans of the councillor, as previous research has suggested that MPs choose the role that maximises their chances to achieve their career prospects (Strøm 1997; Gallagher and Holliday 2003; Blidook and Kerby 2011). Career plans were shown to be a significant predictor of the representational focus of MPs (Itzkovitch-Malka 2014; Brouard *et al.* 2013). In the case of county councillors it thus becomes relevant whether they plan to quit politics, remain councillors or become mayors, ministers or MPs. Politicians intending to promote from local to national politics are more inclined to focus on policy making and national issues to prove their credentials. They are probably also keener to get some support from local party activists and organisations during the selection process and the subsequent electoral race – this could direct them to focus on representing a part of the territory.

The previous section of the chapter pointed out there seems to be a connection between the territorial focus of representation on a part of the county and functional representation. Among the two dimensions of functional representation, the social one seems to be more strongly correlated with territorial representation. Consequently, it can reasonably be included in the category of potential predictors of territorial representation.

Method and issues

In order to test the influence of these factors over the county councillor's choice of representational focus I use a multinomial logistic regression model. The dependent variable is the territorial focus of representation. The analysis contrasts the 'normal' situation – councillors declaring they represent the entire county – to other situations: for example, councillors declaring no territorial focus of representation, those declaring to represent just a part of the county and those declaring a dual focus of territorial representation. The analysis excludes Norway, and thus the council-manager form of local government system, due to the distribution of the Norwegian councillors on the dependent variable. Due to missing data, councillors from Germany, Hungary, Poland and England were also excluded at this step of the analysis. Although alone in the committee-leader category, Sweden provides sufficient cases and significant variation on the dependent variable and is included in the analysis.

The analysis tests for the influence of eight independent variables grouped alongside the three dimensions and uses four control variables. Two of the variables (proportional representation², type of local government system³) represent contextual data built based on information provided by national research teams and Heinelt and Bertrana (2011). A third variable, the size of the council, is a contextual variable also provided by national research teams.

The analysis of the influence of ideological orientations takes the individual self-placement on the (11-point) left-right scale into account. The characteristics of the data available do not allow for an analysis which also discriminates between local and national political parties. Consequently, we will only distinguish between independents and party members.⁴

I control for the effects of whether a councillor is a full-time politician or not, since what a councillor does or thinks he or she can do obviously depends on the time available. To a large extent, this is linked to the institutional/systemic factors. Whether a county councillor is a full-time politician depends on how this position is regulated in the national legal framework.

On the personal characteristics level I also take into account the age, gender and education of the councillors. Gender and age are key variables, given the tendency of local elected officials to be male and older (see for example Rao 1998 on England) and, consequently, more likely to have been exposed throughout their lives and careers⁵ to the traditional electoral-based view on political representation. The next section of this chapter presents the multinomial logistic regression model.

A multivariate explanation of the variations in territorial representation

The model in Table 5.6 suggests that at the intersection between institutional, party and individual characteristics we can build a potential explanation of how councillors define their territorial representation focuses.

Table 5.6 Explaining variation in representational focuses, county councillors in Europe

	No territorial focus of representationcoef. (SE)	Focus on a part of the countycoef. (SE)	focus on the entire county (base outcome) Dual focuscoef. (SE)
electoral rules – PR	–4.933* (0.018)	–1.593* (0.009)	–0.309* (0.009)
form of local government system			
committee leader	1.895* (0.024)	–1.762* (0.015)	–0.593* (0.009)
collective leaders	2.251* (0.023)	.967* (0.010)	0.163* (0.009)
size of the council	–.012* (0.0003)	.016* (0.0001)	0.008* (0.0001)
affiliated with a political party	–.206* (0.013)	0.236* (0.012)	0.167* (0.011)
ideological orientation of the councillor	0.038* (0.001)	.123* (0.001)	–0.041* (0.001)
Seniority	–0.004* (0.0006)	–0.044* (0.0005)	–0.025* (0.0004)
future career plans	–0.781* (0.012)	–.445* (0.008)	–0.314* (.006)
continuing as councillor	–0.334* (0.014)	–0.414* (0.009)	0.220* (.007)
promoting to a higher political office			
social representation	–0.059* (0.009)	0.306* (0.006)	0.774* (0.005)
full time politician	0.280* (0.009)	0.661* (0.007)	0.334* (0.006)
Education	1.264* (0.024)	1.065* (0.019)	0.543* (.011)
secondary school	1.054* (0.024)	1.054* (0.018)	0.424* (.011)
university/college			
Male	0.051* (0.012)	0.236* (0.008)	0.297* (0.006)
Age	–0.024* (0.0004)	–0.014* (0.0003)	–0.018* (0.0002)
_cons	2.234* (0.043)	–1.020* (0.031)	–0.0757** (0.023)

Source: Second Tier Survey.

N = 1,244, weighted data

Multinomial logistic regression, LR $\chi^2(45) = 419,266.89$; Prob > $\chi^2 = 0.0000$; Pseudo- R^2 (McFadden) = 0.1599; Log likelihood = –1,101,054.5, multi-collinearity testing – mean VIF = 1.19; * Prob 0.0000; ** Prob 0.01

The institutional variables seem to significantly influence the territorial focus of representation acquired by the county councillors (the strongest dummy predictors in the model). Proportional representation is shown to favour the more traditional emphasis on strictly representing the entire county and to significantly discourage councillors from not having a territorial focus of representation and from declaring to represent just a part of the county. This fits our expectation that councillors in proportional representation systems are more likely to have a universalistic take on territorial representation.

Horizontal power relations, reflected in the type of local government system, are also a significant predictor. Councillors in committee leader forms are more likely to choose no territorial representation over representing the entire county and less likely to choose forms of territorial representation which involve representing a part of the county. Councillors in collective leader forms seem more likely to choose any other form of territorial representation than strictly resuming themselves to representing the entire county, with the important observation that they too are more inclined towards not having a focus of territorial representation. Our expectations are thus confirmed only in the case of councillors in committee leader forms. A separate analysis indicated that councillors in strong leader forms are slightly more inclined to choose dual territorial representation over representing the entire county, and quite unlikely to choose the other possible stances.

The size of the county council has minimum impact. However, it is important that a bigger size of the assembly slightly increases the odds in favour of representing a part of the county or having a dual focus of territorial representation. This supports our expectation that in systems where representativeness is encouraged via larger assembly size the chances increase that councillors will focus on specific groups or areas.

The affiliation of a county councillor to a political party decreases the odds that the councillor acquires a focus of representation which does not have a territorial component. This suggests that the socialization of councillors into their roles in a partisan context includes among the socially desirable elements the fact that the councillors should have a positive territorial focus of representation. I was unable to test our expectations concerning a difference between local parties or lists and national parties.

Moving to the ideological orientation, as we move towards the right of the political spectrum odds increase that councillors declare to focus on a part of the county or a dual focus as opposed to the entire county. This suggests a localist orientation, which fits the more individualist internal logic of the political right.

If councillors see themselves as representatives of social groups, the odds decrease that they declare to have no territorial representation focus. As expected and suggested by bivariate analysis, they are more strongly inclined towards a dual focus of territorial representation. This is consistent with the notion that, in a governance context, elected officials deal at the same time with representing traditional territorially defined constituencies and constituencies which are more fluidly or informally defined.

The goal of continuing as a councillor translates into less openness of county councillors towards other forms of territorial representation. Consistent with

theoretical expectations and results obtained in other contexts, councillors aiming for a higher political position are more likely inclined towards a dual focus of representation, which suggests deliberate efforts to widen one's base of support in view of future candidate selection and electoral processes. The expectation that more experienced councillors will be less likely to depart from representing the entire county does not seem to find enough support in the data. Full-time politicians are more likely to depart from the focus on the entire county, with the strongest effect in favour of focusing on a part of the county. This suggests specialisation and division of labour tend to happen when the councillor gets the opportunity (or the obligation, depending on the national legal framework) of working full time.

Age does not seem to help explaining the acquisition by county councillors of a certain focus of representation. Gender seems more relevant in the case of focusing on a part of the county or dual focus: males are overall more likely to depart from the strict focus on the entire county. Education is less relevant in explaining the choice of a dual focus, while generally speaking the better educated the councillors are the more likely it is to depart from the strict focus on the entire county.

Conclusions

This chapter has set out to tentatively answer three questions: (1) How does the notion of overlapping focuses of representation manifest itself at the second tier of local government in Europe? (2) To what extent is territorial representation being replaced/complemented by more flexible forms of political representation? And (3) what are the factors that account for variation (if any) in territorial representation focuses of second tier elected officials in Europe?

The analysis shows that territorial and functional representation coexist and complement each other at the second tier of local government. Territorial representation seems to tend towards more localised forms. More and more councillors declare to represent a part of the county, though most of the councillors in this category also declare allegiance to the entire county (a dual focus of territorial representation). Bivariate analysis suggests this trend is stronger in local government systems where councillors play important roles in policy making and, consequently, find themselves more involved in local policy networks. This led to the exploration of functional representation. Functional representation at the second tier of local government in Europe seems to have two main components: social representation, seemingly oriented dominantly towards worse-off groups in society; and economic representation, oriented towards business interests. While there is some correlation between territorial and functional representation, the relationship is not particularly strong. It is, however, clear that as we move from other categories towards councillors declaring a dual focus of territorial representation we find an increased interest of county councillors in Europe to speak on behalf of social groups.

The next step of the analysis partially and limitedly explains variation in terms of territorial representation focuses across Europe by looking at a set of institutional, party-related and individual-level variables. The type of territorial

representation that is acquired by county councillors in Europe seems to depend significantly on institutional level variables, namely the electoral formula and the type of local government system. The latter aspect must be regarded with caution, as this model could not be tested for the council-manager form of local government system and only one country is subsumed under the committee-leader form. At individual level, the future career plans of a councillor as well as whether he or she is a full-time politician (which is at least partially institutionally determined) help shed some light on the acquisition of representational focuses. The influence of a councillor's career plans supports the idea that role perception are linked to a councillor strategic behaviour towards advancing his or her political career. The affiliation of a councillor with a political party also seems to have some influence in terms of how he or she defines a territorial representational focus. However, the influence of party membership seems reduced as compared to the institutional and some of the individual-level variables. These elements only provide a partial explanation, since characteristics of national and local politics also influence the role perception of elected officials at the second tier of local government.

Notes

- 1 This chapter was developed as part of the project 'Local democracy and political representation: an in-depth analysis of the second tier of local government in Romania' supported by the CNCS-UEFISCDI through grant no. PN-II-RU-PD-2012-3-0512.
- 2 The variable on proportional representation is dichotomic: 0 = plurality/majority electoral formula; 1 = proportional representation electoral formula. France and the United Kingdom are subsumed under the plurality/majority electoral formula. The other countries included in the analysis are subsumed under the proportional representation formula.
- 3 The variable on forms of local government system is categorical: 0 = strong leader form; 1 = committee leader form; 2 = collective leader form. Croatia, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania and Spain are subsumed under the strong leader form; Sweden under the committee leader form; and Belgium, Czech Republic, England and Poland under the collective leader form. Cases from Germany were labelled as follows: councillors in Hessen are included in the collective leader form category, while other councillors in Germany are subsumed under the strong leader form.
- 4 Independent councillors are coded with 0, and councillors affiliated to local or national political party with 1.
- 5 The variable on future career plans is categorical: 0 = quit politics; 1 = continue as councillor; 2 = promote to a higher political office.

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6 Representational styles among county and municipal councillors

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Introduction

As Edmund Burke's well-known speech to the electors of Bristol in 1774 served to highlight, elected representatives face potentially conflicting normative demands (Burke 1774). On one hand, they are expected to consult with and be attentive to their voters in order to express the views of their constituency. On the other hand, they may be expected to formulate their own policy initiatives, independently of their constituents' opinions. These two demands entail different representational perspectives or role orientations: whereas the first primarily implies what Burke termed a *delegate* role, the second implies what Burke termed a *trustee* role.

At the time when Burke made his speech, however, political parties in the form that we know today did not exist. Elected representatives were able to decide upon their role orientations more or less unfettered by party organisations. The introduction of political parties as a linkage mechanism operating between voters and elected officials fundamentally altered the context of role formation. Representatives are now typically nominated by political parties and stand for election on the basis of a party platform. Elected representatives are expected to pay heed to the political party or grouping with which they are affiliated. In modern democracies, in short, parties commonly have a strong hold on representatives; they serve as both linkages and buffers between representatives and their electorates. Indeed, political parties may have the ability to 'lock' the system, contributing to a party-mandate role orientation that overrides the other two role orientations identified by Burke.

What is in fact the case in contemporary democracies? What is the relative prominence of alternative role orientations among county and municipal councillors? Are role orientations at these two levels similar or do they differ? In the course of time research on the roles and behaviour of elected representatives has expanded in many directions, both substantively and geographically, and has provided insight across a broad range of topics. Despite this growth there is to date relatively little systematic research devoted to how representational styles may vary among elected representatives according to the specific contexts in which they are elected and operate (Bengtsson and Karlsen 2013 constitute a noteworthy exception in this regard). This applies in particular to possible similarities or differences in representational styles across different political-administrative units and levels found within

any given country. The intention here is to help fill this lacuna. The chapter begins with a discussion of representation and the representational role concept. We then elaborate our general theoretical argument and expectations before turning to the empirical question of whether representational styles vary according to (a) different national political systems, and (b) different levels of government within each political system. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the findings. Data about both county and municipal level councillors are used in order to examine the empirical questions raised.

Representation and representational roles: a conceptual discussion

Representation has been generally defined as ‘the making present of something which is nevertheless not literally present’ (Pitkin 1967: 144), or to be acting on behalf of the represented ‘as they would have acted, had they been able to participate themselves’ (Friedrich 1948: 127). In this sense representation implies a degree of identification with the represented by the representative. Still, performing the task of political representation allows for a variety of orientations. The representatives’ perception of their task has in this regard been conceptualised as a set of roles. The concept of *role* suggests that there are a number of demands or expectations with which an elected official must deal, and that in performing the task of representation the representative may choose between or weight various considerations differently. Burke’s speech serves as a classical reference in this regard.

In an important contribution to the literature discussing representational roles, Eulau *et al.* (1959: 744) differentiate between representational *focus* on one hand, and representational *style* on the other. Focus refers to the particular constituency or segment of the electorate to whom the representative is primarily oriented (see also Cristina Stănuș, Chapter 5 in this book). Style, by comparison, denotes the predominant kind of relationship which may exist between a representative and her or his constituents. Our concern in this chapter is with the latter – i.e. how representatives perceive that their actions while in office may be constrained by a mandate or instructions from their constituents or their political parties. This is the so-called mandate-independence controversy discussed among others by Miller and Stokes (1963) and Pitkin (1967).

In its purest form, the term *mandate-independence* suggests a continuum where at one end representatives are instructed by their constituents whereas at the other end they are completely unconstrained by the constituents’ concerns. But as has been pointed out by Pitkin (1967: 127), neither of the two terminal points can actually be classified as representation in the sense of acting for others. She argues that representation rather involves some kind of sensitivity to the perspective of the ones for whom the representative is acting (Pitkin 1967: 142). Such considerations of the other’s viewpoint are absent from the pure, extreme ends of the mandate-independence continuum. Research on styles of representation has nonetheless been dominated by the pair of conceptual terms used by Burke which are commonly seen as corresponding to opposite ends of a continuum. In practical

empirical terms, however, use of these role concepts must be interpreted as *leaning towards* one or the other of the two roles. Someone who leans toward the delegate role acts on the basis of a fairly close instruction given by her or his constituents. Conversely, someone who leans toward the trustee role considers herself or himself relatively free to use their own independent judgment and act on the basis of what they consider to be in the true interest of their constituents.¹

Yet as we have already noted, the original delegate and trustee role concepts were shaped in an era prior to the introduction of mass political parties. When parties gradually evolved into member organisations and party systems became fundamental institutions in most Western political systems (cf. Dalton 1985: 269; Sartori 1976: 22), the role of elected representatives also changed. Candidates were elected on a party ticket. Through party programmes voters were given a tool for ex ante screening of candidates and ex post facto holding them accountable for their performance. Whereas prior to party politicisation attention had mainly been on the linkage between voters and individual candidates, more recently greater emphasis has been placed on the importance of party organizations. Consequently, acting as a ‘party loyalist’ (Katz 1997: 212) has appeared as a viable third alternative to the delegate and trustee role orientations. In this case the primary emphasis is on representing the party and acting according to a ‘party mandate’. Such an orientation does not preclude the representative from giving consideration to the constituency and acting either as a delegate or trustee on behalf of her or his constituents. All the same the presence of political parties does serve to shift the reference point for what may be termed ‘the representational map’. Representatives may orient themselves to their political party every bit as much or perhaps more than their constituencies.² Important in this respect is the fact that political parties have also penetrated both levels of local government in most countries (for an overview see Loughlin *et al.* 2011).

Representation style: what is the significance of system and level?

As this brief discussion of party politicisation suggests, representation is likely to have different meanings in different situations and contexts. This state of affairs lies at the heart of the concept of ‘politico’ introduced by Eulau and his associates (1959: 749). The basic observation which underlies the politico concept is that the choice of role orientations depends on the particular decision to be made. By introducing a concept designed to combine the two initial notions of delegate and trustee, Eulau and his associates explicitly acknowledge that in practical decision making there is not a choice between only two options but rather a combination of the two (or perhaps more), and that a more sequential logic exists where the mixture of orientations depends on the specific policy decision and context in question. Political systems as well as electoral systems differ, impinging directly or indirectly on the role of elected representatives. The socio-demographic and political composition of constituencies may also affect the linkage between voters and representatives. Birch (1971: 87–88) as well as Prewitt and Eulau (1971: 300–301),

for example, present arguments in favour of an understanding of representation that is sensitive to social context. Birch contends that a high level of social conflict within a constituency raises the level of pressure on elected officials, while Prewitt and Eulau suggest that heterogeneous contexts may enhance the independence of representatives since they are offered more discretion in choosing between alternative policy options.

In the present chapter we pursue this line of reasoning and seek to assess the significance of differences to be observed when comparing representation style orientations among elected representatives at different political-administrative levels within any given country. The fundamental question posed, in short, is to what extent is there evidence suggesting that there are similarities or differences in representative role orientations among county and municipal councillors within a number of European countries. Arguably there are two potential patterns of systematic variation – one based on what may be termed country or *system effects*, the other based on what may be termed within country or political-administrative *level effects*.

A ‘system effect’ presumes that certain features are common across different levels of government within any given country. The thesis about nationalisation of party systems, for instance, postulates that the national party system will gradually penetrate the county and municipal level (Kjær and Elklit 2010; Rokkan 1966). Hence, in the course of time local and regional party systems are expected to grow more similar to the party system at the national level. The prevalence of a broadly shared national political culture or specific electoral arrangements could be expected to have a comparable effect. Insofar as this is true – and we presume that the degree of party nationalisation, cultural consensus, electoral arrangement or other national factors will affect the manner in which elected officials at all sub-national levels of government perceive their representational roles – then a first hypothesis is that *role perception will be highly consistent across different levels of government within each country*. Thus, if local councillors in a country tend to identify with the party mandate role orientation more than a trustee or delegate orientation, we would expect to find a similar pattern among councillors at the second tier of local government. Conversely, if we find relatively weak support for a party mandate orientation among municipal councillors, we would expect to find a correspondingly weak orientation toward a party mandate orientation at the county level.³

It should be emphasised here that this hypothesis does not presume that such a ‘national representational profile’, if we can use this phrase, will be the same or quite identical across different countries. Cross-national similarities in representational profiles might well occur as a result of, for example, internationalisation and forces of convergence which such processes entail, but this is another matter. It is not the gist of our first working hypothesis, nor do we have access to appropriate diachronic data that would permit inquiry into such a dynamic process of convergence. At the present we would instead expect national representational profiles to vary, although just how much, and why, is another matter which is not a primary focal point here.

The idea of a 'level effect' is based on a different line of thinking. Party system penetration, national political cultures and electoral arrangements or other factors may contribute to similarities in role orientations among representatives at different political-administrative levels. But the 'level effect' is based on a supposition that differences in conditions existing at different levels of government will lead to differences in the emphasis representatives place on their respective role orientations. The assumption, in other words, is that the level of government will have an impact on elected officials' role perception, and that *predominant role orientations will vary across different levels of government within any given country*. Thus, we can expect differences in role perception across representatives serving at the municipal and second tier of local government respectively.

This second hypothesis rests on a central tenet – namely that whereas municipal and county levels of government may not be expected to have a great deal of explanatory power in their own right, the two levels may be associated with at least three more general contextual properties, all of which point in the same direction. The first of these properties is that municipal councillors typically function in closer geographical proximity to their constituents than do their county counterparts (on this topic, see also Heinelt, Chapter 8 in this book). For this reason we expect municipal councillors are likely to exhibit a stronger constituency orientation – either delegate or trustee – in their representational role preferences than will county councillors. If so, we would take this as evidence of a level effect within any given country. Second, and in line with the first point, since we presume county councillors are likely to be less closely linked to the individual voters, we expect county politics to be more closely structured by party divisions than municipal politics. Accordingly, we would expect party loyalty to be a stronger role orientation among county councillors than among municipal councillors. Third, it has been observed that county elections are often perceived as less important than both national and municipal elections by voters (see discussions found in Dandoy and Schakel 2013). In Norway, for example, only about 10 per cent of the voters report that county council elections are important, whereas the corresponding figure for municipal elections is 29 per cent (cf. Rose and Hansen 2013: 212). If municipal elections are second order to national elections, this would suggest that county elections may in many instances have a status as third-order elections. If so we suppose that county councillors might be expected to have less of an incentive to serve as delegates for the voters than do municipal level councillors and will rather emphasise their party loyalties.

In sum, by highlighting the peculiarity of each level of government this second level effect hypothesis stands in contrast to the first system effect hypothesis. We do not anticipate that role preference profiles of elected representatives at the municipal and county levels respectively will be *identical* in order to support the system effect hypothesis, but merely that the profiles would display a relatively high degree of similarity. Under the level effect hypothesis, by comparison, we expect greater differences in role perception across the two levels of local government. With this we can turn to our empirical evidence.

Empirical evidence

Analyses presented here are based on a relatively simple and straightforward comparison of data from two primary sources: surveys conducted among elected councillors at the municipal and county levels respectively in connection with two comparative research projects (for these surveys see Heinelt and Krapp, Chapter 3 in this book).⁴ These two data sets contain relevant responses from councillors at both levels of local government in 12 countries that constitute our empirical base. Although the two data sets were collected at different points in time using different data collection procedures, the two surveys contain many questions which are comparable, and no clear effects of different data collection procedures have been detected. Moreover, conditions surrounding the election and operation of municipal and county councils within these countries have not changed in any dramatic fashion during the period in question. There are therefore no immediate grounds to question the reliability and comparability of the survey data.

The dependent variables for the analyses reported – general representational role orientation or style – have been created based on three different response alternatives used in connection with the following question: ‘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?’

Before looking more closely at the distribution of responses for each of the 12 countries it is appropriate to consider the broader picture. Results presented in Table 6.1 provide an initial perspective in this regard. This table contains the average distribution of role orientations across all 12 countries. Two features stand out in this table. Most evident is the apparent predominance of a trustee role orientation at both levels of local government. On the average, over half of all respondents within each of the 12 countries indicate this role as most relevant in determining voting behaviour in cases where there may be a conflict between a member’s own opinion, the opinion of the party group in the council and the opinion of the

Table 6.1 Distribution of representational role orientations among municipal and county councillors in 12 countries. Average percentages*

<i>Role preference</i>	<i>Municipal councillors</i>	<i>County councillors</i>
Party mandate	29	35
Trustee	54	53
Delegate	16	11
Total	100	100

Sources: Second Tier Survey and MAELG (Municipal Assemblies in European Local Governance) Survey

* Averages are calculated on the basis of unweighted distributions for each of the 12 countries.

voters. Across the board, in other words, councillors seem to emphasise the ability to exercise independent judgement in deciding what is best for their constituents, and the percentages indicating this preference are roughly equal for municipal and county level councillors (54 and 53 per cent respectively). In this respect there is little evidence of a level effect.⁵

Looking beyond this, we see that a party mandate orientation is the second most common role orientation, whereas a delegate role orientation obtains on the average the least support. However the average percentages for these latter two role orientations vary from municipal to county level. In particular we observe that a party mandate role orientation is more common among second-tier councillors than it is among municipal councillors (35 versus 29 per cent), and the opposite is true regarding a delegate role orientation (11 versus 16 per cent). These differences, while not large, are in keeping with arguments suggesting a level effect: municipal councillors operate in closer contact with their constituents and appear therefore more likely to endorse a delegate role whereas second-tier councillors, operating in a 'third-order vacuum' with greater distance to their constituents, are more likely to favour a party mandate orientation when confronting conflictual decision-making situations.

Does the level of local government matter?

Caution must be exercised in considering and interpreting these results. Average values may conceal as much as they reveal. Such is the case in this instance since there is much variation in what we can term the *role orientation profiles* of municipal and second-tier councillors in the 12 countries. This is evident in Table 6.2. If one ignores the countries involved, we see that there is a very substantial spread in the degree to which different role orientations are identified as being most appropriate in conflictual decision-making situations. The range of differences is around 50 percentage points for both party mandate and trustee role orientations, and around 25 percentage points for a delegate role orientation. These differences apply at both the municipal and county levels.

These differences do not attest to a uniform European representation style among municipal and second-tier councillors across the 12 countries – rather just

Table 6.2 Distributional statistics for representational role orientations among municipal and county councillors in 12 countries. Minimum, maximum and percentage difference

<i>Role preference</i>	<i>Municipal councillors</i>			<i>County councillors</i>		
	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Party mandate	31	75	44	28	78	50
Trustee	7	56	49	13	67	54
Delegate	7	31	24	4	29	25

Sources: Second Tier Survey and MAELG Survey

the opposite. Whereas 75 per cent of municipal-level councillors in France emphasize a trustee role, only 31 per cent of the councillors at the same level in Spain do the same. In Spain 56 per cent of municipal level councillors indicate a party mandate role orientation as most appropriate, but only 7 per cent of Polish representatives at the municipal level do the same. As for a delegate role orientation, this is endorsed most frequently in Poland (31 per cent) while only 7 per cent do the same among German local level representatives. Similar differences in role orientation profiles are to be observed among second-tier councillors in various countries.

Against this backdrop a closer look at the role orientations found in each country is in order. In doing so we choose to present Figure 6.1, which facilitates consideration of the theoretical expectations and hypotheses introduced previously. This figure contains a comparison of the distributions of role orientations among municipal and county councillors in each of the 12 countries. In presenting the figure in this fashion it is the *within country* similarity or difference in role orientations at the two separate levels of local government that is the principal object of interest, not the similarity or differences that may exist *across national political systems*. As noted previously, our primary attention and commentary here is not focused on explaining specific country findings; we are rather most interested in the patterns of role orientations found within each country.

The figure is organised according to the share of party mandate orientations found on the county level, ranging from the lowest to highest per cent as one moves from top to bottom. In examining the figure, several aspects are worthy of note. To begin with the figure confirms what has already been shown in Table 6.1 – namely that with the exception of four countries (Spain, Belgium, Sweden and Norway), a party mandate role orientation is not typically of foremost importance among representatives in the countries considered. In the four countries mentioned roughly half or more of the councillors do endorse this representational style, whereas in all of the other countries this style is preferred by only about 30 per cent or less. This applies at both county and municipal levels.

More interesting and of greater relevance in light of the hypotheses advanced earlier, however, is the degree of similarity or difference to be observed with respect to support for a party mandate orientation at the municipal and county levels respectively within each country. Except for three instances – Germany, England and Greece – we see that a party mandate role orientation is more frequently endorsed by *county-level councillors* than it is by municipal-level councillors. The greatest disparities are found in Italy, Sweden and Norway (roughly 15 per cent in each case) whereas in the Czech Republic there is no significant difference (less than 1 per cent). Overall this pattern of findings fits quite well with the level effect argument set forth earlier. Geographic and thus perhaps substantive insight and nearness is greater for local-level councillors than it is for second-tier councillors, and hence they are more likely to see a trustee or delegate role orientation as being a preferred representational style.

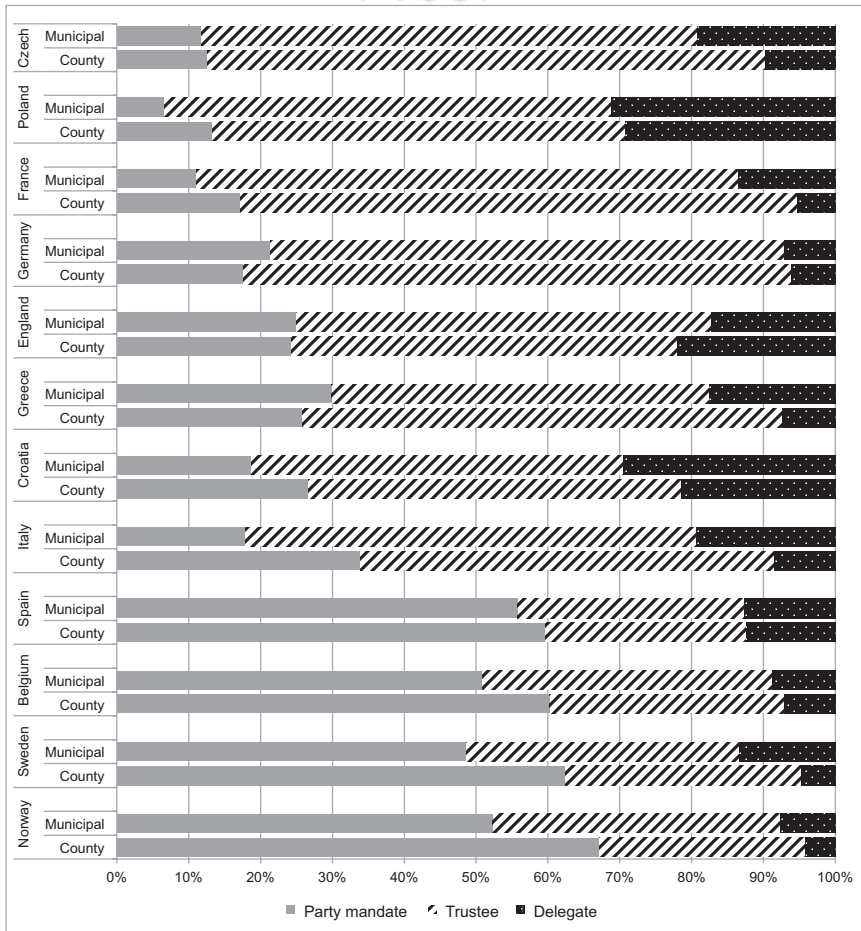


Figure 6.1 Prevalence of different representational role orientations among councillors at the municipality and county levels in 12 countries, shown in percentages

Sources: Second Tier Survey and MAELG Survey

This logic receives further support when viewing the distribution of trustee and delegate role orientations. For one thing we see that the results for the delegate role tend to constitute a mirror image of the findings related to party mandate. In 10 out of 12 countries the delegate role is stronger among municipal councillors than it is among their counterparts at the second tier of local government. The only exceptions are found in England, where the pattern is reversed, and in Spain, where there is no difference between local and county councillors' preference for the delegate role. This observation serves to reinforce the claim that politics at the municipal level is characterised by stronger proximity to the voters and that politics at the second tier of local government is more strongly structured by political parties.

System versus level effects – a closer look

Overall, the respective country role profiles displayed in Figure 6.1 support a level effect hypothesis. Yet before accepting this conclusion and rejecting the system effect hypothesis, the data merit a closer look. As already indicated, a system effect hypothesis predicts small or at least no significant differences in the proportion of councillors at the two different levels of local government within each country which express support for each of the three role orientations. In its purest form the same proportion of second-tier councillors should advocate a party mandate representational style as do municipal councillors, and the same with respect to both trustee and delegate role orientations. This criterion applies to all countries. As soon as any differences appear, the system effect hypothesis is weakened and the level effect hypothesis becomes more plausible. But the prospect of totally *identical* representational role orientation profiles at the two levels for all 12 countries is highly unlikely. Some ‘random noise’ may be anticipated.

The question therefore is how much variation should be required to set aside the system effect hypothesis in lieu of the level effect hypothesis? There is no standard answer to this question. One approach is to consider the *magnitude of the absolute differences* in role orientation profiles found among municipal and second-tier councillors in each of the 12 countries considered. In theory mean differences between the three role orientation distributions at the municipal and county levels can vary between zero and 66.7 per cent. This is because there are three possible role orientations and two levels of local government which are compared. In the hypothetical case where there are no differences in the distributions of role orientations between the two levels of government, the mean is zero. If, for example, the role preferences are 33.3 per cent for each orientation at both levels, then the mean absolute difference would be zero. At the other hypothetical extreme, in the very unlikely situation where 100 per cent of the councillors prefer one role orientation at the county level and 100 per cent of the councillors at the municipal level prefer another role orientation, then the mean absolute difference would be 66.7 – that is, $(100 + 100) / 2 = 66.7$. In interpreting means calculated in this fashion, the basic logic is quite straightforward: the greater the absolute mean values deviate from zero, the stronger is the indication of level effects.

Taking first the absolute differences for each of the three role orientations separately and calculating average values across all 12 countries, we obtain the following values: party mandate, 7.3; trustee, 5.7; and delegate, 6.0 respectively. The magnitude of these deviations from zero is not great, but they do attest to some moderate level effects with respect to representational role orientations when looking across all 12 countries. While the effects are most evident with respect to party mandate orientations reported by municipal and second-tier councillors, they are also observed with respect to the two other role orientations.

These effects need not be uniformly distributed either geographically across different countries or across the three representational orientations. Rather, as we have seen in Figure 6.1, the effects are more pronounced with respect to the three alternatives in some countries than they are in others, and the degree to which a

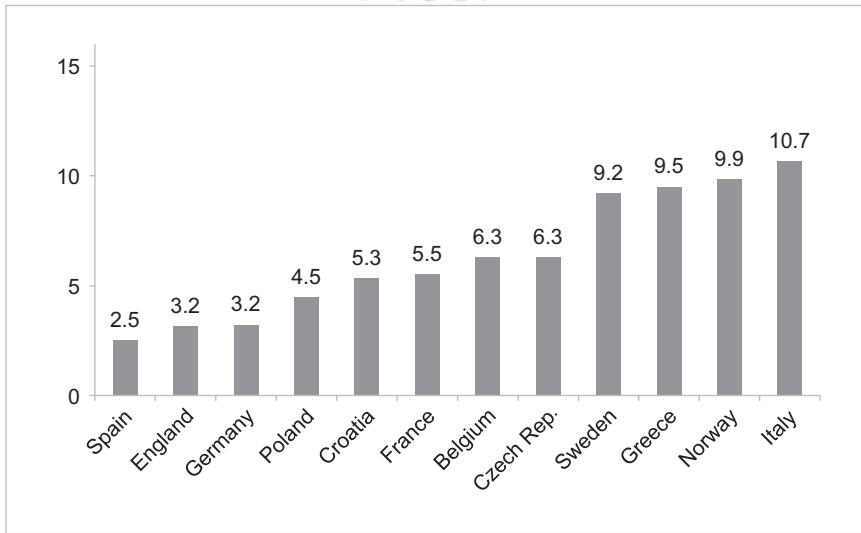


Figure 6.2 Mean differences between local and regional level representational role orientations by country (all representations styles combined)

Sources: Second Tier Survey and MAELG Survey

level effect is observed within any given country varies. In order to get a better impression of where the level effects are most pronounced, we can look at the *average absolute differences* found in each country when all three role orientations are taken into consideration. These values may be considered a cumulative or summary indicator of a level effect found in any given country. The results are displayed in Figure 6.2 wherein countries are ranked according to the size of the mean differences between municipal and county levels.

As can be seen in Figure 6.2, there is substantial geographic variation in the relative magnitude of level effects to be observed in the 12 countries considered. Spain, England and Germany are countries where representational role orientations are quite similarly distributed between the levels and hence the overall level effect is quite modest. Even so this does not mean that the representational profiles for these countries are *similar* on a cross-national basis. In Spain a party mandate role orientation is predominant at both levels (60 and 56 per cent respectively) while a delegate role orientation is nearly identical, being endorsed by 12 and 13 per cent respectively. In England, by comparison, the proportion of councillors at the county and the municipal level that support a party mandate role orientation is likewise nearly identical, but much below that found in Spain (24 and 25 per cent respectively). A delegate role orientation, however, is slightly more prevalent among second-tier councillors than it is among municipal councillors (22 versus 17 per cent).

Italy and Norway constitute examples found at the other end of the scale displayed in Figure 6.2. Both countries have values reflecting substantially greater

average absolute differences in the representations profiles found among county and municipal councillors. These values, however, derive from different segments of the national representational profiles – especially from differences relating to trustee and delegate role orientations at the two levels of local government. Still, it is important not to exaggerate these percentage differences. Even in the four countries where level effects are most evident, the differences are less than one-fifth of the maximum potential variation.

Another way of assessing the degree of relative similarity of role orientations among representatives across levels within each country is to calculate pairwise correlation coefficients within the same representational style but across different levels. Is there, for instance, a tendency that – within each of the 12 countries – the proportion of second-tier councillors indicating a party mandate role orientation is correlated with the proportion of municipal councillors indicating a party mandate orientation? With such an approach the higher the value of the correlation coefficient the greater is the relative consistency of specific role orientations across levels of local government in the 12 countries. Correlation coefficients approaching a value of 1.0 indicate that representational styles are highly consistent across different levels of local government within each country (independent of the specific representational orientation profile for the country), and thus indicative of a strong system effect. Lower correlation coefficients are indicative of more pronounced level effects among the 12 countries.

Pairwise correlation coefficients comparing the distributions within national representational role profiles at municipal and county levels have been calculated and are displayed in Table 6.3. The findings are striking. Even though we have detected some level effects in our previous analyses, when all 12 countries are considered, the correlation coefficients found in Table 6.3 document a strong correspondence between role preferences across political-administrative levels within each country. With respect to both the party mandate and trustee role orientations the coefficients approach a value of 1.0. The correlation coefficient for the delegate role is somewhat lower yet still indicates a high degree of accordance between role orientation styles for municipal and county councillors. Thus, in countries where the party mandate is comparatively important to municipal councillors, the same can

Table 6.3 Pairwise correlation coefficients between role preferences of county and municipal councillors in 12 countries (Pearson's r)

<i>Role preference</i>	<i>County/municipality coefficient</i>
Party mandate	0.952***
Trustee	0.946***
Delegate	0.802**

Sources: Second Tier Survey and MAELG Survey

***=sig > 0.001

**=sig > 0.05

be said about county councillors. This is most evident in Spain. The same holds where a party mandate role orientation is less prominent. England and the Czech Republic offer clear examples of this. And even when there are differences in the distribution of representational role orientations between municipal and county councillors (as seen, for example, in Norway), they are, when considered in a cross-national perspective, relatively modest.

To sum up, a level effect is first and foremost evident insofar as certain role orientations are more or less evident at particular levels in many countries – e.g. the party mandate receives greater support at county level than at municipal level in most countries (nine out of 12) whereas the delegate role receives greater support at municipal level in most countries (10 out of 12). But even if there are traces of a level effect, a system effect cannot be discarded. Despite the differences observed between county and municipal councillors, and the differences between countries, there is substantial correspondence in representational role orientations found across the levels of local government within each country.

Discussion and conclusion

This chapter has investigated representational role orientations among county and municipal councillors in 12 European countries. In addition to the classic distinction introduced by Edmund Burke in the late 1700s between being a *trustee* versus a *delegate* in representing one's constituents, the role of representing a *party mandate* has also been used in the analysis. Findings demonstrate that representational styles vary between both countries and electoral levels. Differences in national representational role profiles do not tend to be great, but they are nonetheless noteworthy in several respects. Somewhat surprising in light of the party politicisation literature is the fact that the party mandate role orientation is not more predominant among municipal and second-tier councillors in the countries investigated. In part this may be due to the countries considered – especially those of Central and Eastern Europe where party systems have been in flux following the re-emergence of democratic local government. Yet even aside from these countries, in only four countries (Norway, Sweden, Belgium and Spain) do roughly half or more of the councillors at both levels of local government indicate that a party mandate representational style is most appropriate in situations when there may be a conflict between a member's own opinion, the opinion of the party group in the council and the opinion of the voters. Elsewhere a party mandate role orientation is weaker.

As for our tests of the two respective hypotheses (system and level effects), the evidence is somewhat mixed. Some support of a level effect is found for all 12 countries in our study, although the magnitude of these effects varies with respect to the different role orientations and from one country to another. In most instances in which we find evidence for such level effects, however, the differences are consistent with theoretical arguments advanced at the outset concerning the nature of such effects. In particular the delegate role orientation tends to be more prevalent among municipal councillors, something we would anticipate on the grounds of

nearness and possible contact between representatives and their constituents, whereas a party mandate role orientation tends to be more common among second-tier councillors where constituents are not as close at hand and political parties may exercise a stronger point of reference.

But there is also clear evidence of a system effect in the 12 countries we have considered. For whatever representational role distribution is found at the county level in a given system, the representational role distribution at the municipal level tends to be quite similar. This is indicated by strong correlation coefficients between municipal and county councillors' role orientations within each country. Accordingly, it would seem that certain features within a country, whether these are structural, cultural or otherwise, generate similar representational styles across different levels of government.

At the end of the day one can discuss whether the differences observed are significant – either statistically or substantially – and whether some of the results may be methodological artefacts based on the analytical approach we have employed. This will have to remain an open question at this juncture. With the approach employed it is nonetheless undisputable that a great deal of variety exists in how councillors from the various countries perceive their representational roles. What accounts for this is not readily apparent. Closer inspection reveals different sources of variation from one country to another. The respective country profiles and summary values displayed in Figure 6.1 do not allow for a grouping of the 12 countries according to some of the common typologies of sub-national political systems found in the literature – for example those of Page and Goldsmith (1987), Hesse and Scharpe (1991) and more recently Loughlin and Peters (1997) and Heinelt and Hlepas (2006). Neither is there any clear relationship between national representational style profiles and indicators of other systemic characteristics such as relative authority of municipal and county councils, types of local electoral systems or extent of electoral control.⁶ National representational role profiles and the scores to which they give rise must remain a matter for further research.

Notes

- 1 For a critical discussion of representation in terms of the delegate and trustee role distinction, see among others Rehfeld (2009).
- 2 This suggestion is consistent with the work of Converse and Pierce (1986: 664–696) who use the term *loyal partisan* with respect to representatives who see the party as much as their constituents as the focus of their role orientations.
- 3 The logic extends to elected representatives at the national level as well, but at this point we do not have comparable data to investigate this hypothesis empirically.
- 4 Results from the same surveys have also been used in the chapter from Heinelt in this book.
- 5 The predominance of a trustee role orientation is noteworthy in light of a trend reported by Andeweg and Thomassen (2005: 509) suggesting that the trustee role had been gradually losing ground in a 30-year period from 1972 to 2001, at least among Dutch MPs. If a similar trend has existed at the sub-national level, this would suggest an even greater predominance of a trustee role orientation among municipal and second-tier councillors previously.

- 6 See, for example, regional authority index scores found at Arjan H. Schakel's website (www.arjanschakel.nl) and information on local electoral systems found in van der Kolk (2007).

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7 **Patterns of gender representation in councils at the second tier of local government**

Assessing the gender gap in an unexplored institutional setting

Carmen Navarro and Lluís Medir

Introduction

The political representation of women in parliaments is, by far, the most studied subject within the research field of gender and politics. It has been extensively analysed with reference to national legislatures, both through large-*n* comparative surveys testing the impact of specific factors – such as the electoral system, parties recruitment, quotas, culture and socioeconomic development – on the numbers and behaviour of women in politics (see e.g. Paxton and Hughes 2013, Rosenbluth *et al.* 2006; Dalhøp 2006; Franceschet 2013), and through case studies that have explored the specificities of decision-making processes using more in-depth strategies (see e.g. Celis 2006; Weikart *et al.* 2006).

Yet, there are relatively few studies focused on the sub-national level of government (Vengroff *et al.* 2003; Smith *et al.* 2012). Not many analyses have addressed the topic of women in local politics, and there is arguably a significant lacuna to fill. This is remarkable because (a) local governments have become increasingly important in policy areas (education, welfare, etc.) of particular concern to women, (b) local spaces may also serve as a key recruiting ground for women candidates to higher-level offices and (c) local politics is generally seen as more woman-friendly because of its proximity to work and home. More generally, politics and policy outcomes cannot be fully understood if national parliaments are the sole institutions analysed: decision-making processes increasingly take place in multi-level networks, and local governments constitute a compelling arena for research for all who aim to understand how societies are organised and governed.

Data from the survey on councillors from the second tier of local government enables us to explore the numbers, attributes and visions of female council representatives, thereby adding to the still limited body of research on gender and local government. This chapter will analyse the patterns of representation of women in local government. Is there a gendered path to local political power? What are the attributes of women councillors in the second tier of local government? Do they have distinctive visions of their roles as representatives?

In the following sections, we first review the main theories explaining women's political representation articulated around its two main dimensions: descriptive

representation and substantive representation. Building upon this literature and the specific hypotheses derived from it, we then analyse and discuss the data gathered by the survey. In the concluding part, we try to assess the findings and explore whether or not and for what type of research, local assemblies are promising institutional sites for testing theories on women's political representation. Finally, we discuss potential avenues for a future research agenda.

Descriptive and substantive representation of women in legislatures: 'still few but responsive'

Questions regarding when and where women have come to hold political office, as well as questions regarding the characteristics of those women who have been motivated to seek political office possess, have driven much scholarly work in recent decades (Kenny 2013). Characterising the distinctiveness of women's attitudes and behaviour when engaged in politics has inspired a great number of researchers as well. These two poles of attraction correspond with two dimensions of political representation: (1) descriptive (or quantifiable) representation, which looks at how many women are elected and what their basic characteristics are; and (2) substantive representation, which focuses on whether or not women representatives have distinctive values, priorities and policy preferences and to what extent they manage to advance them in policy agendas.

Referring to *descriptive representation*, whether based on pragmatic (electoral gains), substantive (women make a difference) or justice (democratic legitimacy) arguments, the agreement on the belief that women should be equally present in politics is nowadays widely shared. Parties' strategies, policy choices (e.g. gender quotas) and voters' behaviour provide ample evidence of this: the share of women in assemblies has increased over the last decades throughout the world, and is no longer a phenomenon confined to the Western world (Franceschet *et al.* 2013). In correspondence with this circumstance, and due to the fact that there are still fewer women in politics than men, research efforts have focused on identifying, at the macro level, the factors that explain country variation in the percentages of women in legislatures and, at the micro level, the particular features distinguishing recruitment processes for political offices from each other, as well as the correlations (negative and positive) between those features and the successful recruitment of women.

In following the pace at which women have entered parliaments, empirical studies have devoted attention to cross-national variations. This growing body of literature has identified three categories of factors that explain cross-country differences in percentages of female elected legislators: *institutional*, such as electoral rules or how parties organise candidate selection; *socioeconomic*, such as the proportion of women in the workforce and the strength of the welfare state; and *cultural*, such as modernisation trends, beliefs about equality, and the social acceptance of women for representational and leadership roles.

In the first place, studies acknowledge that electoral institutions shape the emergence of candidates, the outcomes of elections and the dynamics of democratic politics. Women's presence in politics is not an exception in this respect. Already

in the 1950s, the earliest work on electoral institutions identified the benefits of proportional representation (PR) systems for the emergence of women candidates (Duverger 1955): the fewer the number of contested political offices there were in any particular system, the more difficult it would be for women in that system to run and to win. In PR systems, as distinct from plurality/majoritarian systems, open places are available for newcomers without displacing incumbents or other candidates preferred by political parties. District size also impacts women's chances: the incentive for parties to balance their candidate lists, and to allow room for women without displacing male candidates, is greater in larger districts (Kittilson 2006). Finally, a ballot structure of closed lists can benefit female candidates in more traditional societies, in which cultural views regarding women in politics can diminish women candidates' chances (Wangnerud 2009).

Social and economic factors are key to increased women's representation as well. Overall, levels of development and women's position in the labour market and in the educational system have transformed gender roles and have promoted higher political representation (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2008). The welfare state, based on a dual-earner model, has been built on family policy choices that have strongly impacted the gendered distribution of private and public work. This has, in turn, encouraged women's equal participation in politics (Rosenbluth *et al.* 2006).

Cultural factors such as religion and general attitudes toward gender equality have a significant effect on women's presence in politics as well. More egalitarian cultures, greater secularization and early women's enfranchisement are positively correlated with higher numbers of women representatives (Dalherup and Leyennard 2013). The link between culture and women's equality in political institutions has been explored largely and fruitfully, normally based on the work of Inglehart and Norris (2003) and their proposal of a scale to measure gender equality culture around the world. Their gender equality scale – based on citizens' attitudes regarding women as political leaders/professionals or filling a traditional mother role – is strongly connected with women's opportunities for upward mobility and for political recruitment.

Important though they are, the three dimensions mentioned earlier do not encompass all the variables. Significantly: (a) they do not take into account the recent fast-track advances in some countries, due to the implementation of legislated candidate quotas that regulate the gender composition of candidate lists; and (b) the variety of results among countries with similar institutions, socioeconomic levels, culture and quotas have opened new perspectives of research. Internal processes through which candidates are selected are being examined, with a greater focus on political parties as the main actors in recruitment processes and candidate selection. These approaches acknowledge that parties do not always adhere to formal rules (which are considered more favourable for women), and that informal institutions that often reward attributes more commonly found among men – e.g., service to the party, previous office holding or time available – exist as well. In analysing recruitment processes, it is crucial to explore the dynamics of nomination of party candidates. Studies have consistently shown that more formal rules, as well as greater centralisation of leadership in the recruitment system, favour women candidates (Kenny 2013).

Elegantly conceived and executed, Norris and Lovenduski's supply and demand model of political recruitment (1995) looks at parties and argues that the outcome of their selection processes can be understood as an interaction between the supply of candidates wishing to stand for political office and the demands of gatekeepers (parties) who select the candidates. Supply factors are inherent to the individual characteristics of aspirants, and demand factors refer to the preferences of the parties' electorate. The elements that shape the supply of candidates are their personal resources (education, time, experience), motivation, ambition and interest in politics (Krook and Schwindt-Bayer, 2013). Demand factors connote the processes the parties engage in in the candidates' recruiting process, and their perceptions of their qualifications and skills. In these processes, there is evidence that – in mechanisms such as electoral laws, parties' rules like primaries, group membership, spheres of recruitment or dedication to the party – women aspiring to political office do not have all of the same opportunities as men (Kitilson 2013). Studies using the supply and demand framework have argued that the personal resource 'time to devote to politics' is scarcer for women due to the unequal share of household and family tasks, operating as a barrier (in the 'supply' category) to their equal presence. Some analyses have also pointed to the fact that women's weaker political networks place them in a disadvantaged position to attain seniority and to compete (Krook and Schwindt-Bayer, 2013).

In contrast to studies on descriptive representation, *substantive representation* is a less developed line of research in gender studies. This is due both to its being a less straightforward ground to explore, and to the challenge of measuring change in the context of the relatively recent arrival of women in legislatures. Unlike 'counting women', measuring the difference women make requires researchers to define what they are looking for: whether or not women are bringing in different perspectives and shaping legislative procedures, outcomes, style, and the quality of democracy (Wangnerud 2009). A further challenge consists in the circumstance whereby the best strategy for capturing the difference women are said to make involves using longitudinal research designs in long lag-time frameworks that can capture changes in processes that are slow in showing effects. The difficulty, however, is that empirical material required for longitudinal studies is available in a only handful of cases (mainly the Scandinavian countries) where the presence of women in legislatures has had a long trajectory.

Interest in substantive representation grew after Anne Phillips's *The Politics of Presence* (1995). From a normative perspective, Phillips provided arguments to support the claim that women should be present in elected political institutions in order to advance women's issues. Her work suggested a link between descriptive and substantive representation, as it claimed that female politicians are best equipped to represent the interests of women and that, therefore, democratic political systems must not exclude them. The theory is based on the premise that distinctive experiences characterising women's lives (childbearing, occupation, unequal positions in paid and unpaid work, etc.) result in preferences that are best represented by those who have shared those experiences, or, at the very least, by institutions that are not dominated by men. Although that premise is contested (Young 2000), two decades of empirical research have shown that female

politicians come to institutions with distinctive attitudes and values and that they have contributed (to a greater or lesser extent) to improving women's positions in society through their work in parliaments and executive offices (Lovenduski and Norris 2003; Mateo-Diaz 2005; Thomas and Wilcox 2005; Dodson 2006).

If women express different values, attitudes and public priorities, or if they behave with a different political style,¹ this means that they make a difference. First, women's decision-making style has been identified as more inclusive, seeking broader participation, stressing cooperation rather than conflict, and consulting more sources to define the problem and to explore the solutions, in contrast with a more command-and-control masculine style (Weikart *et al.* 2006). Further, scholars have detected distinct attitudes and policy priorities among male and female legislators (Lovenduski and Norris 2003; Mateo-Diaz 2005; Thomas and Wilcox 2005; Dodson 2006). Showing the outcomes of these differences is not straightforward: the introduction of new attitudes and priorities does not always suffice in order for policy changes to occur. With respect to the proportion of women elected,² factors such as party discipline and other contextual variables (e.g. being in the opposition) can obstruct the translation of values and priorities into outputs (Lovenduski and Norris 2003). But overall, the evidence does appear to support the theory that having a greater percentage of women in elected office helps to make women's position in society stronger. Relevant work has mapped distinctive political attitudes of women in office and has shown that female elected officials tend to prioritise issues such as social policy, gender equality and family policy (Dodson 2006). Specifically focussing on local government, several empirical studies in the Nordic countries have reported an increase in women's interest in social policy agendas, followed by outcomes that have been beneficial for women in their daily lives (Bratton and Ray 2002; Wangnerud and Sundell, 2012).

Women's political representation and the unknown world of the second tier of local government

Based on the literature presented, we will now look at: (a) the composition of councils at the second tier of local government, (b) the personal characteristics of female councillors and (c) their distinctive attitudes and values. In this way we will explore whether the main hypotheses and findings on women's political representation can be confirmed for second-tier local assemblies as well. Councillors at this level of government enter politics, follow specific recruitment patterns, compete in elections, work in assemblies, hold specific visions about their role and their constituencies, and take part in decision-making processes (Heinelt and Bertrana 2011). Every dimension of political representation analysed in national parliaments can be found in local arenas as well. Regarding descriptive representation, institutions – together with cultural and socioeconomic variables – can potentially explain differences in the share of women in councils. Analysing quota implementation, as well as supply and demand factors in political recruitment, can aid us in understanding cross-country and gender differences. From female councillors' responses to questions regarding their role as councillors, their views on democracy

and decision making, and their vision of public services, we can learn more about certain aspects of their substantive representation. Although we are confronted with some limitations (the questionnaire was not designed in order to test gender differences) exploring gender representation in councils at the second tier of local government is worthwhile, feasible and, to our knowledge, original.

Methodological approach

The databases created for analysing councillors, political executives and leading bureaucrats in local government covers a wide range of features and variables, including the gender of the respondent. In most of these cross-country surveys, the 'gender variable' is often placed as a fundamental control variable used to illustrate the side effects of gender in other substantive research. In contrast, for the present study, gender is our main dependent variable. Starting from it, we will develop a wide range of basic bivariate analyses to test some of the aforementioned fundamentals in the gender and politics literature in a hitherto unexplored political institutional setting.

The dichotomous variable in the questionnaire, 'gender', enables us to distinguish between two independent groups based on the natural attribute of gender. In this sense, the analysis made in this chapter states that 'gender' is an independent attribute of our objects of analysis (councillors), which has an impact on their role, perceptions and visions. Our main analyses focus on differences between groups (men versus women), rather than cross-country comparisons. The null hypothesis operates under the theoretical assumption that these groups are two different samples from the same population. Thus, the test reflects the likelihood that their values are equal.

To test the basic assumption that no differences based on gender for a same population should exist, we mainly use the independent means *t*-test for continuous variables and Pearson's chi-square test for categorical variables. The independent-samples *t*-test compares the means of two sets of values from one continuous variable, while the Pearson's Chi-square tests the idea of comparing the frequencies observed in certain categories to the frequencies one might expect to get in those categories by chance. When using this latter technique, we often recode the original variables in the database into a dichotomous one to create 2×2 matrices that easily capture the most important information for each indicator.³

The *t*-test states that the observed differences between groups, if they exist, are not due to chance, while Pearson's chi-square test examines whether there is an association between two categorical variables, and tests whether the two variables are independent. If the significance value is small enough, then we reject the hypothesis that the variables are independent and gain confidence in the hypothesis that they are in some way related. Moreover, to better capture the magnitude of the effect for our categorical data, we are offering the odds ratio as well. We also show the results of Fisher's exact test for our contingency tables, as a robustness check for the probability of the chi-square statistic to be accurate, though all of our tables have sufficiently large values for *n*. Utilising both techniques enables us

both to test the likelihood that ‘gender’ is not a ‘natural attribute’ for individuals involved in politics, and to show that the fact that being a man or a woman also has an impact on the political activities of politicians in local government.

Descriptive representation

Women are underrepresented in legislative bodies around the world. That is the case not only in national legislatures (Interparliamentary Union 2014), but also in municipal assemblies (Sundström 2013), despite the common perception that women have greater access to local elected office than to national elected office (Vengroff et al. 2003). Equal representation in local politics has definitely not been achieved in the countries included in this study and, in second-tier councils, women are underrepresented as well (see Figure 7.1). However, differences among countries are great and the share of women in elected office does approach real balance in some of them, such as Sweden (47.3 per cent) and Norway (43.5 per cent.) To understand the great cross-country variation, we first have to take a look at the institutional, socioeconomic and cultural factors that an extensive body of research suggests are the main explanatory variables. After numerous empirical studies, we can assume that: (1) proportional representation electoral systems with (2) closed party lists, (3) large district sizes, in countries with (4) generous welfare states, (5) high proportions of women in the labour force and a (6) culture of gender equality, are the most favourable contexts for women to compete and win seats in representative institutions (see e.g. Krook and Schwindt-Bayer 2013; Wangnerud 2009; Rosebluth *et al.* 2006). In addition, the implementation of legislated candidate quotas makes a difference and, other things being equal, leftist parties have traditionally been more likely to nominate women to safe places on their lists, although party ideology does not matter as much nowadays as it did in the past (Kitilson 2013). In the same degree that these traits affect the composition of national parliaments, we expect them to have an incidence in local councils.

Figure 7.1 shows the percentages of women in national parliaments, second-tier councils and municipal assemblies for the countries included in the study, classified by descending order of the percentage of women in municipal assemblies. Some of the percentages are fairly consistent with the existing research, although some others will require further exploration and cannot all be addressed in depth here. Overall, as expected, countries ranking highly in socioeconomic variables, with strong welfare states and cultures that value gender equality – such as Sweden and Norway – are at the top of the list in terms of the percentage of women in all legislatures. Even though we cannot compare the national figures for each one of these variables in detail, we can surmise that the countries’ positions illustrate the strong effect of structural factors, with the exception of Spain, whose second place is explained only by the effectiveness of compulsory gender quotas, and Hungary, which is in a relatively high position only with respect to the female share in municipal assemblies.

Just focusing on provincial councils, some interesting features arise. First, as expected, the electoral system seems to produce effects in terms of the election of women to local assemblies (see Table 7.1). The general proposition is that, other

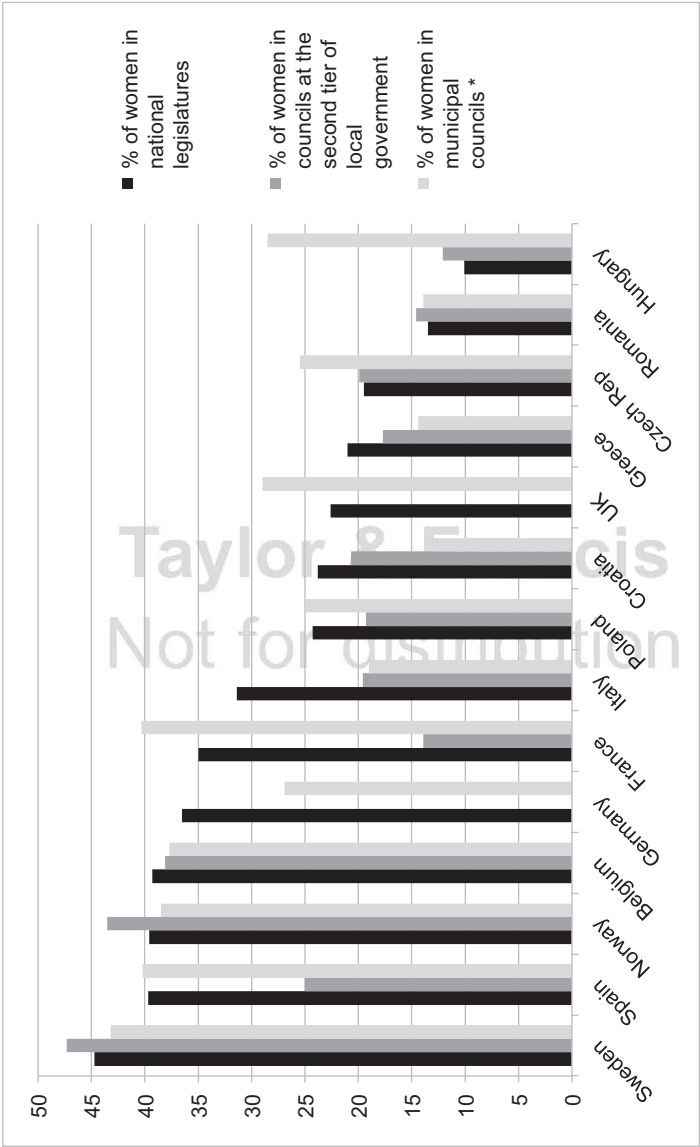


Figure 7.1 Share of female representatives in assemblies at the national as well as at the second and first tiers of local government

Source: Second Tier Survey
Authors' elaboration from Interparliamentary Union 2014; Sundström 2013 (for France: French State Department, after the 2014 renewal); information provided by national teams that participated in the survey

Table 7.1 Share of women (in per cent) in national and local representative bodies and electoral institutions

Country	Women in national parliaments *	Female councillors		Proportional representation system at the second tier of local government	Legally defined candidate quotas at the second tier of local government
		At the municipal level**	At the second tier of local government*** According to the database		
Sweden	44.7	47.3	45.8	X	
Spain	39.7	25.0	23.6		
Norway	39.6	43.5	43.9	X	
Belgium	39.3	38.1	37.7	X	X
Germany	36.5		26.9	X	
France	35.0	13.9	40.3		
Italy	31.4	19.6	19.0	X	X
Poland	24.3	19.3	25.0		X
Croatia	23.8	20.7	13.0	X	
UK	22.6		29.0		
Greece	21.0	17.7	14.4	X	X
Czech Rep.	19.5	19.9	25.5	X	
Romania	13.5	14.6	13.9	X	
Hungary	10.1	12.1	28.5		

Source: Second Tier Survey

Authors' elaboration from Interparliamentary Union 2014; Sundström 2013 (for France: French State Department, after the 2014 renewal); information provided by national teams who participated in the survey

things being equal, councils elected according to a proportional representation rule will, in principle, have more women, while plurality/majoritarian systems will have a negative impact on the percentage of female councillors. District magnitude and ballot structure (closed or open lists) are held to influence proportions of female elected officials as well, although we lack the detailed information on these two aspects that would be required in order to assess their effects.

The relatively low presence of women in county councils in the United Kingdom – as compared with figures in the similar (with respect to culture, modernization, women's status and the absence of quotas) Scandinavian and Middle European countries – can be explained in these terms looking at its plurality electoral system, as it has been extensively referred in the literature about the House of Commons (see e.g. Lovenduski and Norris 1993). Although local politics seems to be a friendlier arena for women than Westminster, important barriers still exist. It is the same phenomenon we find in French *département* councils, elected under majoritarian rules, which shows the effect of different electoral systems within a country, with significantly larger numbers of female councillors in French municipalities, whose assemblies are elected under the proportional representation system. The corresponding Spanish percentages at provincial and municipal levels can also be explained by looking at the election system. Interestingly, in Spain members of provincial councils are indirectly elected by and among the municipal councillors, according to the electoral results and following political parties' orders. The output of this system is a much lower representation of women (25 per cent) in provincial councils compared to municipal assemblies (40 per cent). There are a number of possible explanations for this, the main one being that when parties are not bound by quota legislation in Spain, candidate selection processes favour males. Belgium is another case deserving closer attention, as the same electoral system produces different results by territory for provincial elections only. Although it is not shown in Figure 7.1, according to our data the Flemish region has a significantly higher share of women (41.6 per cent) compared to the Walloon region (only 32.7 per cent) – with no apparent explanation if one considers that both territories have comparable percentages in municipal councils. Poland will be an interesting case to follow from the next municipal elections onwards, once the 2014 reform that implements a majoritarian system for municipalities (differing from the PR system in counties) is enforced.

In addition to electoral rules, gender quotas have proven to be an effective tool for increasing women's representation in elected bodies of government in comparative perspective (Dahlerup 2006; Franceschet *et al.* 2013; IDEA 2013), although they have not always resulted in uniform increases. Quotas regulate – with specific targets – the gender composition of candidates' lists and can be either mandatory for all political forces running in elections (legislated candidate quotas) or voluntary (party quotas) adopted by individual parties for their own candidate lists, following their internal statutes or regulations. Quotas started being voluntarily implemented in the early 1970s by social democratic parties in Western Europe, and they have had the greatest impact on proportional representation systems with party lists. The Scandinavian democracies have never adopted legal compulsory quotas, yet

balanced lists are a common practice among most of the political parties. The strong influence of women's groups on society, parties and politics, combined with solid social democratic welfare states have led to this result (Dalherup and Leyenaar 2013). In the rest of Europe, compulsory candidate quotas are the rule in a large range of national legislatures⁴, but not all of the countries in question have implemented them for local elections. Among the countries surveyed, only Belgium, Italy, Greece and recently Poland have quotas for council elections at the second tier of local government, although they have not always brought about the expected results. Except for Belgium, none of these countries rank high on the chart. On the contrary, Italy and Greece in particular seem to struggle with women's descriptive representation. This confirms previous studies' findings that quotas' effectiveness is constrained by parties' discriminatory practices such as the gendered allocation of safe positions (Verge and Troupel 2011) or by the specific details of individual measures, such as the disincentive effects of sanctions or the ambition of the specific targets to attain power (Franceschet 2013).

An additional solid finding in the field is that women do better in left-wing parties (see e.g. Dahlerup and Leyenaar 2013; Wangnerud 2009). The explanation for this involves a variety of factors. First, there are party platforms: parties on the left embrace progressive and egalitarian ideals and therefore tend to put forward more female candidates (Paxton and Hughes, 2013). But there are also important agency factors to take into account, such as women's activism. Leftist parties have traditionally been more likely to have strong women's sections in their ranks that have lobbied party leaders to implement voluntary quotas and to recruit more female candidates (Kittilson 2006; Dalherup and Leyenaar 2013). Whatever the explanation, the fact is that this pattern is weaker nowadays than it was 20 years ago. Substantial increases are found in most party families in Western democracies due either to quota implementation or to a contagion effect, with the possible exception of religious and ultra-right parties. Green parties have had more women elected, possibly because of their agendas of promoting environmental sustainability over economic growth (Paxton and Hughes 2013). Irrespective of whether the party is from right, centre or left, research on this topic suggests that centralised leadership in recruitment processes tends to favour women's chances to become candidates (Kittilson 2013). In more centrally and hierarchically organised parties, top leaders have better chances to enforce organisational guidelines with respect to balanced lists, even in cases of local branch revolts. Ultimately, therefore, left-wing parties and national parties would seem to offer a friendlier atmosphere for women.

Our data for the councils at the second tier of local government are consistent with these patterns. The variable in the questionnaire asking for the partisan affiliation of the respondents, and the later recodification according to Andersson *et al.*'s work (2014), allows us to differentiate between Left-wing parties and Right wing parties.⁵ According to the theoretical statements made earlier, we should expect to find a significant proportion of women in left-wing parties. Table 7.2 summarises the results of the Chi-square test based on the ideological affiliation to a party.

Table 7.2 Affiliation to left-wing parties (Chi-square test)

Women left-wing parties (per cent)	62.5
Men left-wing parties (per cent)	54.4
χ^2	22.452
<i>p</i> -value	0.000
Fisher's exact test	0.000
Odds ratio	1.38

Source: Second Tier Survey

According to our data, there is a significant association between party family (the ideological cleavage) and gender ($\chi^2 = 22.452, p < 0.000$). In particular, the results show that the odds for women to enrol in left-wing parties are 1.38 times higher than they are for men. In other words, gender is a relevant factor in explaining enrolment in left-wing or right-wing political parties; this finding supports previous theoretical statements.

A final aspect of descriptive representation we want to address is the distinctive personal characteristics of female councillors. Women in legislatures are not only fewer in number, but they are also slightly different from men in some personal attributes. In other surveys of local leaders, it has been detected that, for instance, women legislators tend to be younger and better educated (MAELG database).⁶ Analysing patterns of female representation inevitably points to the concepts of supply and demand in recruitment processes, and to the connected Norris and Lovenduski framework (1995) referred to earlier. As was mentioned, supply-side factors determine who presents him- or herself as a potential candidate, and demand-side factors determine who, among candidates that have come forward, is favoured by the political elites. The fact that specific traits are overrepresented in legislatures (following the 3M mantra of political recruitment: typically men, middle-class, middle age; see Steyvers and Reynaert 2006) could be the result either of there being more aspirants coming from that group, or of political recruiters preferring those characteristics. Lack of time, as well as lower levels of political ambition and confidence purportedly detected in women – as a consequence of gender role socialization – have been identified as gendered supply-side explanations for women's weaker presence in politics, while the biased recruitment practices of political elites that tend to overlook available women count as gendered demand-side variables (Fox and Lawless 2010). Analysing which variable is weightiest, or whether the outcome of the recruitment process is a product of both, would go beyond the scope of the present chapter, but the questions implicated are worthy of investigation in their own right.

We might expect female councillors to be older than their male counterparts, and to enter politics only after the child-rearing period (from the age of 25 to 40 years), considering that women are in general more likely to take more responsibility for raising families. If lack of ambition or of self-efficacy were common characteristics of women, they would probably show this gendered socialisation effect once they were in office as well, in ways that would be reflected in their

Table 7.3 Councillors by age and years as a county politician (independent means *t*-test)

Age		Years in office	
men's age (mean)	54.4	men's years in office (mean)	8.7
women's age (mean)	52.7	women's years in office (mean)	7.6
Levene's test (<i>p</i> -value)	0.298	Levene's test (<i>p</i> -value)	0.000
<i>t</i> -test	4.864	<i>t</i> -test	5.487
Difference in means	1.752	Difference in means	1.16
<i>p</i> -value	0.000	<i>p</i> -value	0.000
R ²	0.060	R ²	0.098

Source: Second Tier Survey

decisions regarding whether to pursue political careers (ambition) or in how much influence they would report having in council decisions (self-efficacy). Some of the variables in the questionnaire enable us to gauge these effects.

Our data for councillors at the second level of local government show that women councillors are (slightly but statistically significantly) younger and better educated than, and as ambitious as, their male colleagues, although their perceived levels of self-efficacy are lower. To analyse differences in age and years in county politics, in Table 7.3 we present the results of the independent *t*-test, while to analyse differences in political ambition, education and their perception of self-efficacy, we show the results of the Chi-square test in Table 7.4.

Regarding age, although the difference is quite small (54.4 years for men; 52.7 years for women) it is significant from a statistical perspective. We assume equal variances for data (Levene's test is non-significant), but a significant difference on age based on gender. The results for years in office also show small, but significant, differences by gender. A man in the sample has spent an average of 8.7 years as a council member at the second level of local government, while a woman has spent 7.6 years. In this case we cannot assume equal variances on data (Levene's test is significant), but a small statistically significant difference in means, caused by gender. In both cases the effect size (*R*²) is quite modest.

The data displayed in Table 7.4 present divergent results: for education and self-efficacy we find differences related to gender, while for political ambition there do not appear to be significant differences.

There is a significant association between level of educational attainment (higher education versus medium or basic education are considered) and gender ($\chi^2 = 8.599, p < 0.003$). The results show that the odds of women councillors having attained higher education are 1.22 times higher than is the case for their male colleagues; gender is thus a relevant factor in understanding differences in levels of educational attainment among second-tier councillors. Regarding self-efficacy (measuring how much influence respondents exercise on county activities), we find that again a significant association with gender exists ($\chi^2 = 7.803, p < .005$). When high versus low or moderate self-efficacy is considered, the odds for women to consider themselves with high self-efficacy is 0.80, which is to say that men are 20 per cent more likely to consider themselves highly effective when performing

Table 7.4 Councillors by education, self-efficacy and political ambitions (independent means *t*-test)

<i>Education</i>	
Women with higher education (per cent)	71.3
Men with higher education (per cent)	67.1
χ^2	8.599
<i>p</i> -value	.003
Fisher's exact test	.003
Odds ratio	1.22
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	
Women with high self-efficacy (per cent)	17.5
Men with high self-efficacy (per cent)	21.1
χ^2	7.803
<i>p</i> -value	.005
Fisher's exact test	.005
Odds ratio	0,8
<i>Political ambition</i>	
Women willing to continue in politics (per cent)	83.6
Men willing to continue in politics (per cent)	83.1
χ^2	0.198
<i>p</i> -value	.656
Fisher's exact test	.691
Odds ratio	(1.04)

Source: Second Tier Survey

their political tasks. By contrast, our results on political ambition do not show any pattern of difference linked to gender ($\chi^2 = 0.198, p > .05$, odds = 1.04), suggesting similar levels of expectations for professional advancement, once in office, for both genders.

In summary, these findings offer a mixed picture. First, female elected officials tend to be younger than their male colleagues; this suggests that women of child-rearing age are, on average, better represented among elected officials than is generally the case in other occupations. This fact could have different explanations. From a supply-side perspective, it could be the effect of fewer time barriers than those identified in the literature because of: (a) changing patterns in family responsibilities that have freed women to devote time to political involvement, (b) the fact that local politics might be less time-consuming compared to other arenas or (c) the higher representation of young women without family responsibilities. The first and second explanations point to optimistic scenarios, and probably indicate that participation of women in local political institutions will grow. The third explanation, on the contrary, points to a reality where women confront a trade-off between pursuing a political career and having a family, being forced to choose between them. Second, higher levels of education probably point to barriers that

still exist for women wishing to gain spaces on party lists, which are only overcome when they are better prepared (in this case, in the sense of having higher educational qualifications). In this context, education seems to be a vital resource for women (Paxton and Hughes 2013). Third, the equivalent political ambition of male and female councillors seems to indicate that this supply-side factor plays a role only in the process of becoming an aspirant and seeking elective office, but that once women enter into politics, ambition is similar. Sadly, it does not seem to be the case for self-perception of personal efficacy as – other things being equal – women councillors see themselves as having less influence than their male counterparts over county activities.

In conducting this analysis, we have also detected that women have lower levels of seniority as councillors. Again, this can lead to an optimistic and a pessimistic explanation. If fewer years serving as councillors is the consequence of a cohort effect, due to the relatively recent arrival of women to politics, it can be expected that the gap will narrow over time and that women will soon acquire the seniority and experience men already have, which are required in order to pursue influential positions and an equal presence in executive positions. But it might also be the effect of higher rates of turnover in women, a state of affairs identified in multiple studies (see e.g. Verge and Troupel 2011). If the latter is the case – i.e. if female politicians are less likely to be re-elected either because they give up or because parties replace them in higher numbers – the forecast is pessimistic and the chances for women to accumulate political experience and advance in substantive representation diminish.

Substantive representation

As developed at the beginning of this chapter, substantive representation asks whether women seek to promote ‘women’s issues’ once they are elected to political office, and whether they are able to do so. Much less mature as a field of research, and much more elusive as an object of inquiry (Wangnerud 2009), substantive representation’s main concern is to determine whether women behave differently, whether they pursue different objectives and, as a further step, whether they manage to promote their purportedly distinctive issues once they are elected to political office. Knowing whether women have made a substantial change since they were first elected to representative bodies exceeds the scope of this chapter. Pursuing that question would require longitudinal studies gauging outcomes over time and their connection to the increased presence of women in each particular assembly, in line with what Bratton and Ray (2002) did when they analysed whether policy outputs have been altered in Norwegian local governments over 15 years, and with Wangnerud’s and Sundell’s research on Swedish local assemblies (2012). But even if studies like those conclude that a great change has not been introduced, that would not necessarily mean that representation of women is not substantially different. Other elements of the political system, such as party discipline and economic cycles, can impede women from expressing their values and priorities in policy decisions.

The variables included in the questionnaire do not suffice if we wish to conduct a thorough analysis or to test the main hypotheses in the field, but they do offer some information which is potentially of great value if we wish to gauge substantive representation issues. They enable, for instance, the mapping of women in executive positions, which is a precondition for their making a difference in decisions, and they illuminate several relevant aspects of women's role as councillors, their interactions with other political actors and with their constituents, and their visions of democracy.

As an example, exploring the issue of horizontal substantive representation (in other words, whether or not women are concentrated in some commissions or committees) would require knowing more about the respondents' responsibilities within the councils, the hypothesis being that women are better represented in some commissions (education, social issues) and have limited access to a range of others (finance, infrastructure). Absent such information, what can be gauged is whether women are equally represented in leading political positions. After decades of reforms towards the reinforcement of political leadership (Haus *et al.* 2005), councillors' transformed roles have come to resemble the roles played by back-bench MPs in national parliaments, and holding executive positions has become a way for them to gain influence and power, thus guaranteeing substantive representation.

To analyse this, we use the variables originally designed for assessing political careers. We combine the variables covering different possible executive positions and, separately, the variables covering non-executive positions, and then we cross them by gender. The information we obtain is the percentage of men and women holding 'at least' one executive position versus the percentage who did not have 'at least' one non-executive position. The results show that a significant association with gender exists ($\chi^2 = 18.487$, $p < 0.000$). That is to say: the odds of a woman councillor having at least one executive position in her career are 0.82, meaning that men have 18 per cent greater likelihood of occupying at least one executive position. The findings here are in line with other studies that have identified an unequal gendered distribution in political hierarchies (Dalherup and Leyernaard 2013).

We can also explore some aspects concerning a gendered path to political office. From the different possibilities suggested by the variables used to assess the political career, we have selected those with large n in responses, and those having

Table 7.5 Executive positions in political career (Chi-square test)

Women with at least one executive position (per cent)	34.1
Men with at least one executive position (per cent)	38.2
χ^2	18.487
p -value	0.000
Fisher's exact test	0.003
Odds ratio	0.82

Source: Second Tier Survey

an impact on political positions (such as mayor). Moreover, we have recoded some of them to specifically capture the respondents' entry in politics. In other words, for each individual respondent, we separate his or her entry in politics from the other positions he or she has held. By doing this, we can have both the information regarding each first political position, and the impact of gender on that position.

Our results show that there are no differences based on gender for beginning the political career as a municipal executive or as a municipal councillor. However, we find significant association between gender and beginning one's political career as a mayor ($\chi^2 = 5.402$, $p < 0.020$), confirming that men have 45 per cent greater likelihood to begin as mayors than women (odds ratio = 0.55). However, women are more likely to debut in politics by entering directly at the second tier of local government. The percentage of women beginning as county

Table 7.6 First appointment or election in the political career (Chi-square test)

<i>Begin as a mayor</i>		<i>Begin as a county councillor</i>	
Women beginning as a mayor (per cent)	20.2	Women beginning as a county councillor (per cent)	46.1
Men beginning as a mayor (per cent)	31.3	Men beginning as a county councillor (per cent)	36
χ^2	5.402	χ^2	38.670
<i>p</i> -value	0.020	<i>p</i> -value	0.000
Fisher's exact test	0.022	Fisher's exact test	0.000
Odds ratio	0.55	Odds ratio	1.51
<i>Begin as a municipal councillor</i>		<i>Begin as a county executive</i>	
Women beginning as a municipal councillor (per cent)	87.4	Women beginning as a county executive (per cent)	20
Men beginning as a municipal councillor (per cent)	89.3	Men beginning as a county executive (per cent)	11.4
χ^2	2.315	χ^2	17.058
<i>p</i> -value	0.128	<i>p</i> -value	0.000
Fisher's exact test	0.132	Fisher's exact test	0.000
Odds ratio	(0.88)	Odds ratio	2.08
<i>Begin as a municipal executive</i>			
Women beginning as a municipal executive (per cent)	34.4	<i>p</i> -value	0.134
Men beginning as a municipal executive (per cent)	30.5	Fisher's exact test	0.145
χ^2	2.245	Odds ratio	(1.2)

Source: Second Tier Survey

councillors is statistically significant and different from the percentage among men ($\chi^2 = 38.670$, $p < 0.000$). The results show that for women the odds of beginning in politics as county councillors are 1.51 times higher than is the case for men. Moreover, women are 2.08 times more likely than men to debut in politics as county executives. Thus, gender is a relevant factor explaining the debut in politics, especially if we look at the second tier of local government, where women are substantially more likely than men to begin their political careers serving as councillors.

The assumption that women have certain interests in common is another commonly shared premise in studies on women in representative bodies and on the bases of substantive representation. Following the literature reviewed at the beginning of this article, we expect that women will tend, compared to men, to show different values and attitudes as a group and to share common interests and policy priorities. Female political representatives tend, more than their male colleagues do, to view women as a group of special constituents. In Weikart *et al.*'s study (2006), when directly asked whether they thought female legislators were better able to represent women's special concerns, almost 80 per cent of female political representatives said 'yes', whereas only 30 per cent of men did so. Women in councils at the second level of local government are not an exception in this sense.

Table 7.7 reflects the Chi-square test for the degree of importance given to the promotion of views and interests of women. The percentage of women considering the promotion of such views and interests of high or very high importance is 76 per cent, while the percentage among men is 54.4 per cent. Thus, there is a clear relation between gender and the highest concern about the task of promoting views or interests of women. Chi-square tests are significant for representing women's interests ($\chi^2 = 198.523$, $p < 0.000$), and the odds of a woman councillor considering the promotion of women's views and interests to be of utmost importance is 2.66 higher than is the case with male councillors.

Finally, acknowledging the importance of the role of parties in recruitment, we have explored the relationship between women and parties. We have identified significant gender differences here as well. Since centralised recruitment processes tend to favour women, we expected to find more female representatives in national parties compared to local or independent candidatures. We have explored whether there are distinctive patterns of party loyalty as well.

Table 7.7 Interest representation of women (Chi-square test)

Considered by women of high importance (per cent)	76
Considered by men of high importance (per cent)	54.4
χ^2	198.523
<i>p</i> -value	0.000
Fisher's exact test	0.000
Odds ratio	2.66

Source: Second Tier Survey

Table 7.8 Party recruitment and party alignment in voting (Chi-square test)

Party recruitment		Party alignment in voting	
Women elected as national party candidate (per cent)	90.6	Women voting following their party rather than personal opinion (per cent)	52.6
Men elected as national party candidate (per cent)	86.4	Men voting following their party rather than personal opinion (per cent)	42
χ^2	15.750	χ^2	33.801
p -value	.000	p -value	0.000
Fisher's exact test	.000	Fisher's exact test	0.000
Odds ratio	1.52	Odds ratio	1.53

Source: Second Tier Survey

The results linking partisanship and partisan alignment when voting in county decisions are shown in Table 7.8. They express a significant association for both variables with gender. In this scenario, 90.6 per cent of women were elected as candidates of national parties, as compared with 86.4 per cent of men, and 52.6 per cent of women would usually vote according to their party's position – even against their personal position – as compared with 42 per cent of men. These results offer a significant association ($\chi^2 = 15.750$, $p < 0.000$, for national party affiliation; $\chi^2 = 33.801$, $p < 0.000$, for voting following party's indications), followed by a significant odds ratio. Women are 1.52 times more enrolled in national parties than men, and the odds of women voting in line with the positions of the parties with which they are affiliated (as distinct from voting on the basis of their personal opinions) are 1.53 times greater than is the case for men.

Conclusion

Taking as its starting point the recognition that gender balance in political institutions is far from achieved even in European countries (and in the allegedly friendlier local arenas), this chapter has analysed the representation of women in local government councils, focusing not only on differences between women and men in numbers and characteristics (descriptive representation) but also on the distinctive attitudes and priorities women express (substantive representation). Using original data, we have tested some of the main hypotheses in the field – mainly with reference to national legislatures – and have provided evidence in support of the theory that gendered paths to local political office do not differ substantially from the gendered paths to national political office, although some singularities exist. Throughout the analysis, great cross-country differences have been identified; they are a relevant aspect of the landscape that ought not to be neglected.

Women councillors tend to be younger and better educated than, and as ambitious as, their male counterparts, which gives hope for advances in their descriptive and substantive representation. They are more likely than men to debut in politics as county executives. They are committed to women's interests and better coordinated with their parties, and this 'party soldier' spirit could open a window in the

future for change from within. But they continue to be fewer in number than their male counterparts – worrisomely so in many countries, even after decades during which gender equality issues have been discussed in public fora, and despite the implementation of quota mechanisms (either compulsory or party voluntary). Furthermore, they express lower perceived levels of self-efficacy when it comes to assessing their influence on council decisions.

The limited scope of the information available – due both to the lack of detailed knowledge on some national institutional and socioeconomic indicators, and to the absence of some key variables to test gender differences – has left many open questions. But many important issues have been addressed. Being able to look at women's political representation in large numbers, from a comparative perspective and with reference to a hitherto unexplored institutional setting is valuable in itself, and, from the authors' perspective, adds to the literature in the field. Looking forward, gaining a deeper understanding of recruitment processes and attempting longitudinal studies that can measure the desired change should be a priority.

Notes

- 1 This distinctiveness is considered to be more probabilistic than deterministic (Dodson 2006).
- 2 The proportion of women elected could be measured in the accomplishment of a minimum share or 'critical mass' (Lovenduski and Norris 2003). According to Kanter's theory of critical mass, the size of a group matters because the minority adapts to the surrounding, confirming the predominant rules of the game. Once the group reaches a certain size, the available strategies change; the minority starts to assert itself and transform the institutional culture, norms and values (Kanter 1977).
- 3 For reasons of space, we are not offering in this chapter all of the cross tables done, neither are we providing details of each recodification. Instead we are offering light tables with summarized information. In any case, both the complete cross tabs and the recodifications criteria are available upon request to the authors.
- 4 Albania, Armenia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain.
- 5 The recodification process was based on the categorization made by Andersson *et al.* for classifying political parties, and followed four different steps. First, we analyse in the survey how respondents state their current party affiliation, where three possible answers were useful for our purposes (no/yes local party; no/yes national party). Second, those who answered 'yes', were also asked to precise the name of their party. Third, a recodification made by the editors according to Andersson *et al.* (v.2802_ERD-Party_Family), gave up to 13 different party families (electoral alliance, Liberal, Conservative, Special issue, Social democracy, Regional, no family, Communist/Socialist, Ethnic, Green/Ecologist, Christian democracy, Agrarian, Right-Wing). Finally, in order to differentiate between left-wing and right-wing, we assume to be stable across countries their general positions regarding the role of women in political life, from a more open vision to a more traditional approach to gender. So, we assign the following parties to the left-wing group: Liberal, Social Democracy, Communist/Socialist, Green/Ecologist; and the following to the right-wing: Conservative, Ethnic, Christian Democracy, Agrarian and Right-Wing. We exclude from the classification for not being general enough Regional, electoral alliance, Special Issue and no family.
- 6 MAELG is the acronym for Municipal Assemblies in European Local Governance, an international research project surveying councillors in European cities (see Egner, B. *et al.*, 2013 and Heinelt and Krapp, Chapter 3 in this book).

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8 Notions of democracy of councillors at the municipal and second tier of local government – and their role perception and behaviour

Hubert Heinelt

Introduction

Councils of the municipal as well as of the second level of local government have traditionally been seen as representative bodies, i.e. a core institution of a particular understanding of democracy – namely representative or ‘liberal’ democracy. This model of democracy stresses (a) the individual’s right to participate in general elections and by this, the aggregation of individual preferences to form policy guidelines for those in representative bodies or in government and (b) the option to make the latter accountable to the individual citizen through general elections. However, it is an open question whether or not councillors have an understanding of democracy according to this model – or one which goes beyond this model by considering the relationship between broader forms of participation (beyond participating in elections) and democracy.

In previous publications (Heinelt 2013a, 2013b, 2014) I have shown that municipal councillors clearly have an understanding of democracy either in line with the representative or a broader participatory model. Furthermore, I have also shown that the municipal councillor’s role perception and behaviour as well as their attitudes towards reforms depend on their notion of democracy. It will be shown in this paper if this holds true also for councillors of the second tier of local government.

The theoretical explanation for the findings on municipal councillors’ notion of democracy has been that their understanding of democracy is not only an expression of their basic beliefs about appropriate behaviour and subjective norms (see Heinelt 2013c: 633 ff. with reference to Fishbein and Ajzen 1975 as well as Ajzen and Fishbein 1980), but also reflecting their views of human nature. According to reflections in the literature on political theory² and especially by Benjamin Barber (1984), ‘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). ‘Liberal democratic politics is thus the logic of a certain form of radical individualism written 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’ (ibid.). 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 means something ‘[o]ne cannot “get behind”’ (Barber 1984: 27). The inertial frame of liberal democracy is based on one axiom. This ‘axiom sets up materialism. [It] posits that humans are material beings in all they are and in all they do’ (Barber 1984: 32).

Following Barber, the alternative to the ‘thin’ liberal democracy is ‘strong democracy’. It ‘is a distinctively modern form of participatory democracy’ (Barber 1984: 117). ‘[L]iterally, it is 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: 22–27; Heinelt 2011) 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 enforcement of broad citizen participation. Yet it has to be tested whether also the second-tier councillors’ understanding of democracy does reflect different axiomatic concepts – like in the case of municipal councillors.

Differences in the understanding of democracy between municipal and second-tier councillors as well as differences in the factors effecting different notions of democracy among councillors from the two layers of local government may indicate the relevance of Dahl and Tufte’s (1973) reflections on ‘size and democracy’. Early reflections by Dahl summarised as follows: ‘for most citizens, participation in very large units becomes minimal and in very small units it becomes trivial. At the extremes, citizens may participate in a vast range of complex and crucial decisions by the single act of casting a ballot; or else they have almost unlimited opportunities to participate in decisions over matters of no importance. At the one extreme, then, the people vote but they do not rule; at the other, they rule – but they have nothing

to rule over' (Dahl 1971: 97). Against this background it could be argued that councillors at the second tier of local government see only limited opportunities for citizens to participate in decisions over matters of importance at the upper level of local government. At the extremes, this could lead either to focus (a) on elections and contacts around party politics and political representation in the machinery of the second tier of local government or (b) on direct interest intermediation also beyond elections between citizens and local government through frequent contacts with the political head of a province, county etc. and the administration – at least more than their colleagues from the municipal level where citizens have more opportunities to participate in decisions over matters of importance.

This article starts with an analysis of the responses of second-tier councillors which can be linked either to a representative or to a broader participatory understanding of democracy. In this section, like in the following ones, the results of the analysis of second-tier councillors will be compared with those of the analysis of municipal councillors. In the following section the findings on the understanding of democracy are linked to personal characteristics which can be related to basic beliefs and subjective norms of a person. Furthermore, this section also considers whether second-tier councillors' understanding of democracy is linked to the formal horizontal power relations between councillors, the political and executive head (president) and the leading bureaucrats of the administration of the respective second level unit of local government determined by different local government systems. The analysis of municipal councillors' understanding of democracy has shown that it is not determined by different institutional conditions which offer councillors options to perform a specific role according to their understanding of democracy (see Heinelt 2013a: 646–648; 2013b: 91–93). Finally, in the last section role perception, role behaviour and attitudes towards reforms at the local level of councillors are identified and analysed to see whether or not councillors' notions of democracy can be related to their role perception, role behaviour and attitudes towards reforms as dependent variables.

Councillor's understanding of democracy

How do councillors at the second tier of local government understand democracy? To answer this question, councillors at the second level of local government were asked to respond to the following statements:³

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

Where councillors highlight 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* because these statements capture basis meanings of this notion of democracy.

To identify a contrasting understanding of democracy, the agreement by councillors to 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.’
- ‘Decisions should be made by reasoning and discussion aiming at reaching consensus rather than by majority voting.’
- ‘Before an important decision is taken reasons for and against the options to be decided on should be discussed in public.’⁴

These statements do not focus on representative democracy. Instead, emphasis is given to a broader participatory understanding of democracy for 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 seen as crucial 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, analysis of the agreement or disagreement on the part of councillors with the statements listed allows us to answer the question whether or not councillors have an understanding of democracy according to the model of *representative democracy* or ‘*liberal democracy*’ – or an understanding which is situated beyond this model by considering the relationship between broader forms of participation (beyond participating in elections) and democracy. Such an extended notion of democracy is related to *participatory governance* (Heinelt 2010) or democracy beyond the core of governmental structures at the local level. It is focused on enhancing the realm of democracy, that is by ‘bringing citizens back in’, and emphasises (as suggested by Papadopoulos and Warin 2007) that the democratic quality of governance arrangements should be assessed according to their openness and accessibility, the quality of deliberation taking place within them and their links to the public sphere.

To test whether or not councillors at the second tier of local government have an understanding of democracy according to these models, a factor analysis was conducted for the whole data set (i.e., for all countries) to look for joint dimensions behind the groups of statements mentioned above. Furthermore, the results are compared with those from the survey on municipal councillors.

As shown in Table 8.1, a clear pattern between the variables connected with either a representative or a broader participatory understanding of democracy can

Table 8.1 Notions of democracy among municipal and second-tier councillors

Statements	Municipal councillors		Second-tier councillors		Second-tier councillors without Norway	
	1st component: participatory democracy	2nd component: representative democracy	1st component: participatory democracy	2nd component: representative democracy	1st component: participatory democracy	2nd component: representative democracy
Political representatives should make what they think are the right decisions, independent of the current views of local people		0.676		0.635		0.645
Apart from voting, citizens should not be given the opportunity to influence local government policies		0.758		0.702		0.687
The results of local elections should be the most important factor		0.528		0.457		0.495
Residents should participate actively and directly in making important local decisions	0.777		0.603		0.616	
Political decisions should not only be taken by representative bodies but be negotiated together with the concerned local actors	0.613		0.683		0.676	
Residents should have the opportunity to make their views known before important local decisions are made by elected representatives	0.648		0.635		0.659	
Decisions should be made by reasoning and discussion aiming at reaching consensus rather than by majority voting	–		0.602		0.592	
Before an important decision is taken reasons for and against the options to be decided on should be discussed in public	–		0.575		0.577	
Local referenda lead to high quality of public debate	0.626		0.581		0.571	

Source: Second Tier Survey

Varimax with Kaiser normalisation. Converged after three iterations each. KMO for the results of municipal councillors = 0.633, of second-tier councillors = 0.737 and of second-tier councillors without Norway = 0.738.

be detected for second-tier councillors.⁵ This means that there is one group of councillors who clearly emphasise representative democracy, whereas another group is more in favour of participatory democracy. The only remarkable difference between councillors at the second tier of local government and municipal councillors is that the factor 'The results of local elections should be the most important factor' is loading rather low in the case of those councillors at the second tier of local government emphasising representative democracy.⁶

Since factor analysis with orthogonal rotation always produces factors which do not correlate by definition, it could be argued that this is an artificial treatment of the items. When using oblique (non-orthogonal rotation), the factors produced are allowed to correlate and show a better representation of the underlying data. However, as in the municipal councillor survey, both oblique factors only correlate with $r = -0.15$, which is quite low. Thus, it can be argued that even without the assumption of non-correlating factors, the latent variables are virtually independent from each other.

Finally, the same factor analysis has been conducted country-by-country to look for countries without the detected general pattern or with different background dimensions which may reflect distinct country-specific characteristics. This has been done to test if the same results as found in the case of municipal councillors could be detected where a country-by-country factor analysis has shown that the general pattern detected for the whole group of municipal councillors appears in almost all countries (although with slight variations in some; see Heinelt 2013a: 644 ff.). All countries covered by the Second Tier Survey show with slight variations the same general pattern detected for the whole group of second-tier councillors – except one, *Norway*.

In Norway there is no distinct separation of councillors with a representative or a much broader understanding of democracy. At the second tier of local government in Norway no councillors are clearly in favour of representative democracy. Instead there are two other groups of councillors: One shows an understanding of democracy clearly in line with deliberative democracy because they are not only underlining that 'Political decisions should not only be taken by representative bodies but be negotiated together with the concerned local actors.' They furthermore emphasise that 'Decisions should be made by reasoning and discussion aiming at reaching consensus rather than by majority voting' and that 'Local referenda lead to high quality of public debate.' The second group shows a less deliberative but a participatory understanding of democracy by giving emphasis to opportunity for residents 'to make their views known before important local decisions are made by elected representatives' as well as to an active and direct participation of residents 'in making important local decisions'. At the same time the second group is strongly against an understanding that 'Apart from voting, citizens should not be given the opportunity to influence local government policies.'

Because the Norwegian second-tier councillors do not show the clear distinction between the two contrasting notions of democracy detected for the other countries, they will not be considered in the following analysis, which is on the one hand focused on the explanation of these contrasting notions of democracy and on the

other on their relevance for explaining the councillors' role perception, role behaviour and attitudes towards reforms at the local level.

How to explain the different notions of democracy among councillors?

As already mentioned, it has been shown by the analysis of municipal councillors that their notion of democracy does not depend on country-specific institutional structure in which councillors have to act – particularly on the competence of the council and its influence in the local power relationship between it and the mayor and the municipal administration (see Heinelt 2013a: 646–648; 2013b: 91–93). Instead, it could be shown that municipal councillors' understanding of democracy depends on personal characteristics. Does this hold true also for second-tier councillors?

Do personal characteristics of second-tier councillors matter?

Do personal characteristics of the councillors affect their ideas about democracy – and which personal characteristics might be relevant? As has been shown by the study of municipal councillors the following personal characteristics could matter.

Drawing on Karl Mannheim's reflections on 'generations' (1964), age can matter insofar as specific *age-groups* have not only had 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 which 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 frame') 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 second-tier councillors' notions of democracy differ according to their *membership in particular political parties*, the latter being an expression of their political orientation.

Finally, based on the work of Barnes *et al.* (1979) on 'conventional' and 'unconventional political participation' it seems reasonable to test if the *gender* of second-tier councillors matters, because differences of 'political action' between men and women were detected by them (see Kaase and Marsh 1979: 173 ff.): 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.

Testing the personal characteristics of age, gender and political orientation⁷ as well as membership in particular parties,⁸ we find the following tendencies, which confirm that there are in general no difference between municipal and second-tier councillors.

- The older councillors are, the more they tend to have an understanding of democracy in line with the representative model.
- The more councillors tend to the right in the ideology dimension, the more they tend to support the idea of representative democracy; the more they tend to the left, the more they are in favour of participatory democracy.

In the case of municipal councillors their party membership was considered according to the MANIFESTO categories (see Klingemann *et al.* 2006) and it turned out that their self-perception on a political left-right scale corresponds at least for members of conservative parties and of some left political parties, including members of ecology and (former) communist parties, with a particular understanding of democracy. The latter are more in favour of participatory democracy and do not follow the idea of liberal democracy, while the opposite applies to members of conservative parties. More or less the same pattern can be detected in the case of second-tier councillors whose party membership has been comparatively considered according to the party families distinguished by Andersson *et al.* (2014). While representative democracy is clearly more favoured among conservative and Christian democratic second-tier councillors, participatory democracy finds more support among second-tier councillors who are members of green or ecological, special issue as well as (former) communist and socialist parties.

Furthermore, it turned out that in line with the findings of the study carried out by Barnes, Kaase *et al.* 1979 on ‘conventional’ and ‘unconventional political

Table 8.2 Notions of democracy among councillors by age and political orientation

Notions of democracy	Age		Left–right dimension	
	Municipal councillors (<i>N</i> = 10,560)	Second-tier councillors (<i>N</i> = 4,203)	Municipal councillors (<i>N</i> = 10,664)	Second-tier councillors (<i>N</i> = 4,187)
Participatory democracy	0.010	−0.074**	−0.126**	−0.112**
Representative democracy	0.123**	0.065**	0.146**	0.140**

Source: Second Tier Survey

Left–right dimension between 0 = left and 10 = right.

Table 8.3 Notions of democracy among second-tier councillors by the gender of councillors

<i>Notions of democracy</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>N</i>
Participatory democracy	Male	−0.028	1.016	3,411
	Female	0.089	0.927	833
	Total	−0.005	1.000	4,244
Representative democracy	Male	0.048	1.000	3,411
	Female	−0.193	0.974	833
	Total	0.000	0.999	4,244

Source: Second Tier Survey

participation’ and like in the case of municipal councillors (see Table 8.3 and Heinelt 2013a: 650–651; Heinelt 2013b: 93–94):

- female second-tier councillors are slightly more in favour of participatory democracy than their male colleagues;
- male second-tier councillors are more in favour of representative democracy than are female.

Taking a closer look at different age-groups of municipal councillors (see Table 8.4), we see the following: 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 younger councillors (i.e. those 18–29 and 30–39 years). This finding confirms the relevance of ‘generations’ (following Mannheim), and it 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’ notion of democracy – at least in relation to support for representative democracy among different age-groups.

Scrutinising support of the different models of democracy by different age-groups of female and male second-tier councillors (see Table 8.4), it becomes clear that there are differences between the age-groups of both sexes with respect to participatory democracy: While the older as well as the youngest male councillors (i.e. those older than 60 and younger than 30 years) do not favour this understanding of democracy, it is particularly supported by female councillors of the age-groups 30–39 and 40–49. In relation to representative democracy, there are differences between the age-groups of female and male councillors – except those older than 60 years: both female and male councillors older than 60 years are the strongest supporters of representative democracy. This indicates that the social and political changes since the late 1960s have had in particular an impact on the younger female municipal councillors’ notion of democracy. These general findings on the support of the different models of democracy by different age-groups

Table 8.4 Notions of democracy among second-tier councillors by age-groups and gender of councillors (means)

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age-groups (years)</i>	<i>Representative democracy</i>	<i>Participatory democracy</i>
Male	18–29	–0.028	–0.174
	30–39	–0.033	0.119
	40–49	–0.005	0.046
	50–59	0.025	0.010
	60 and older	0.123	–0.108
	Total	0.049	–0.021
Female	18–29	–0.145	0.099
	30–39	–0.350	0.222
	40–49	–0.168	0.247
	50–59	–0.254	0.038
	60 and older	–0.079	0.029
	Total	–0.196	0.096
Total	18–29	–0.065	–0.101
	30–39	–0.093	0.139
	40–49	–0.039	0.087
	50–59	–0.039	0.023
	60 and older	0.093	–0.088
	Total	0.001	0.004

Source: Second Tier Survey

of female and male second-tier councillors are the same like those for municipal councillors – although some findings for single age-groups of female and male councillors differ (see Heinelt 2013a: 650; Heinelt 2013b: 93–94).

To sum up, there are good reasons to argue that in the case of councillors at the second tier of local government, as well as of municipal councillors, their notion of democracy – as an expression of their basic beliefs about appropriate behaviour and their subjective norms – is affected by personal characteristics, namely age, political orientation and gender.

Do horizontal power relations between the council, the president and the leading bureaucrats matter?

It has been shown that local government systems do not have an impact on municipal councillors’ understanding of democracy (see (Heinelt 2013a: 446–449, 2013b: 91–93). It will be test if this applies also to councillors at the second tier of local government. To control such possible impacts the typology developed by Mouritzen and Svava (2002) is brought into play, as it was in the case of municipal councillors.

This typology has been chosen because it specifically focusses on the institutionally determined horizontal power relations between councillors, the political leader

(the mayor at the municipal level and the president – or *Landrat* etc. – at the second level of local government) and the leading bureaucrats of the local administration, and therefore on different options of councillors to perform a particular role according to their understanding of democracy.⁹

Mouritzen and Svara start from the following hypothesis: ‘The structural features of municipal government in any specific country reflect a balance or compromise among [...] three organizing principles: layman rule, political leadership, and professionalism’ (Mouritzen and Svara 2002: 50–51). Whereas ‘*the layman rule* means that citizens elected for political office should be involved effectively and intensively in the making of decisions’ (Mouritzen and Svara 2002: 51; italics by the authors), the notion of *political leadership* implies the concept of politicians ‘promoting value choices and feeding energy and passion into policy systems’ (Mouritzen and Svara 2002: 52). Finally, *professionalism* rests on the following crucial distinction: ‘As politicians respond to demands, professionals respond to and seek to address needs’ (Mouritzen and Svara 2002: 53). Based on these considerations, Mouritzen and Svara distinguish four types of local government systems in respect to the horizontal power relations between councillors and the other local key actors:

- the ‘strong mayor form’
- the ‘committee-leader form’
- the ‘collective form’
- the ‘council-manager form’.

Regarding the second tier of local government, horizontal power relations can be characterised (according to Heinelt and Bertrana 2011: 319–322 and my own classification based on information of the national teams involved in the survey) as follows:

- in Croatia, France, most parts of Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania and Spain by a *strong political leader form*;
- in Sweden by the *committee leader form*;
- in Belgium, the Czech Republic, England, the German federal state of Hesse, and Poland by the *collective form*;
- in Norway by the *council-manager form*.

It can be assumed that councillors acting in a *committee-leader form*, i.e. in the Swedish *landstings*, are in favour of representative democracy: elected politicians play an important role in this form of local government system, as the ‘political leader 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; H.H.]’ (Mouritzen and Svara 2002: 56).¹⁰

The same can be expected for the *collective form*, to be found in Belgium, the Czech Republic, England, the German federal state of Hesse, and Poland, since in this kind of local government system the ‘decision centre 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 Svava 2002: 56). Those councillors who are not members of the executive committee may be or feel excluded from some decisions. However, not only the elected members of the executive committee but also the other councillors play an important role in this form of local government as they are affiliated with the members of the executive committee through their parties or political groups, and it can be assumed that they agree with the concept of representative democracy.

In contrast, in an institutional setting characterised by a *strong political leader form*, i.e. in a local government system where an elected political leader 'controls the majority of the city council and is legally and in actuality in full charge of all executive functions' (Mouritzen and Svava 2002: 55), the influence of (ordinary) councillors is limited, and one can assume that they do not focus 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 democracy; this could increase their limited power in relation to the elected political leader, who controls the council as well as the administration. This applies to the rest of the councillors in the countries studied – except Norway.

Norway is the only country in the sample with the *council-manager form* where all 'executive functions are in the hands of a professional administrator [. . .] who is appointed by the [. . .] council, which has general authority over policy but is restricted from involvement in administrative matters' (Mouritzen and Svava 2002: 56). As the position of the council as a representative body is in the *council-manager form* (the strongest among the four types of local government systems distinguished by Mouritzen and Svava), it can be assumed that councillors acting in this kind of system are strongly oriented towards an understanding of democracy in line with the 'liberal model'. However, as has been shown in the last section, Norwegian second-tier councillors do not clearly favour this model of democracy but perceive democracy in a way not compatible with the two distinct notions to be found in the rest of the countries (which is the reason why Norwegian second-tier councillors are not considered in this chapter).

The findings for municipal councillors (see Table 8.5 and Heinelt 2013a: 646–649; Heinelt 2013b: 91–93) indicate that at this level of local government, the institutionally determined power relations between councillors, the mayor and the leading bureaucrats of the municipal administration do not have an impact on the distribution of a particular understanding of democracy among councillors: there are no clear differences between the two undoubtedly divergent types of local government systems (namely the strong mayor and the council-manager form). Furthermore, there are divergent patterns between the committee-leader and the collective form which can hardly be explained by the institutionally determined function of the council in terms of horizontal power relations since they are rather similar.

Table 8.5 Notions of democracy among second-tier councillors by local government systems according to the typology of Mouritzen and Svava

<i>Forms of local government systems</i>		<i>Participatory governance</i>	<i>Representative democracy</i>
Strong political leader form	Means	0.018	−0.045
	<i>N</i>		2,849
	Standard deviation	1.027	1.010
Committee-leader form	Means	−0.327	0.618
	<i>N</i>		211
	Standard deviation	1.029	0.965
Collective form	Means	0.014	−0.001
	<i>N</i>		1,284
	Standard deviation	0.923	0.950
Total	Means		0.000
	<i>N</i>		4,345
	Standard deviation		1.000

Source: Second Tier Survey

The values for ‘participatory democracy’ and ‘representative democracy’ are the seven factor scores from the factor analysis.

The results are different for the second tier of local government. They are meeting more the hypotheses formulated before on the notion of democracy among councillors acting in the different local government systems. This applies on the one hand to second-tier councillors acting in a local government system characterised by the strong political leader form. In this case second-tier councillors are not only favouring participatory democracy more than representative democracy; they are clearly less in favour of representative democracy, which can be related to the relatively weak institutional role of the council in this form of local government system. On the other hand, second-tier councillors acting in an institutional setting determined by the committee-leader form – which gives them much more influence – are clearly favouring representative democracy and opposing a stronger participatory involvement of citizens. This is not the case for councillors who are acting in a collective form of government at the second tier of local government. This form of local government may give them influence as members of a representative body as they are usually affiliated with the members of the executive committee through their parties or political group’s second-tier councillors. However, second-tier councillors from parts of Europe with a collective form of government are more in favour of participatory governance and more or less indifferent regarding representative democracy (shown by a mean value of −0.001). This may indicate that they feel – like their colleagues from countries with a strong leader form – somehow detached from the executive committee, consisting of some locally elected politicians, which is clearly the power centre in this form of local government system.

To sum up, in contrast to municipal councillors where no relation could be detected between their notion of democracy and the horizontal power relation at the municipal level of local government, such a relation can be shown in case of councillors acting at the second tier of local government:

- Those councillors acting in a council with limited power due to the institutionally determined strong role of a political leader (the president or *Landrat*) are not in favour of representative democracy and emphasise (although to a low degree) a more participatory form of democracy;
- The same applies to a limited degree also to the collective form in which the executive committee consisting of some locally elected politicians is clearly the power centre;
- Councillors acting under the institutional setting of the committee-leader in which the council as a representative body is a much stronger organ are clearly strong in favour of representative democracy. In this case councillors also oppose a participatory involvement of citizens in politics.

How to explain these findings? Can they be related to the perception of councillors that policy making in councils at the second tier of local government is more spatially detached from citizenry than at the municipal level where citizens have more opportunities to participate directly in decisions and where councillors can act more effectively together with citizens to achieve a particular goal? How to prove such an explanation? We will see if the attitudes and behaviour of councillors considered in the following section give evidence for such an explanation.

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Attitudes and behaviour of councillors at the second tier of local government in relation to their understanding of democracy as an expression of basic beliefs and subjective norms

Role orientation

To identify the role orientation of second-tier councillors the following question was asked: 'How important do you believe the following tasks are for a councillor to perform?'¹¹ The possible answers (see Table 8.6) were chosen to see whether the councillors have a more *inward-looking role orientation* focussing on items such as monitoring the achievement of county strategic policies and defining the main goals of county activity, or a more *outward-looking role orientation* related to items like mediating conflicts in the local society, promoting the views and interests of particular groups in the local society, publicising debate on local issues before decisions are taken and interacting with local people by explaining council decisions to the citizens.

It was assumed that councillors with an *inward-looking role orientation* are not only focussed on activities taking place within the organisational setting of the second level of local government, but are also more favourable to the concept of representative democracy. By contrast, councillors with an *outward-looking role orientation* can be seen as councillors focussed *not* primarily on activities taking place within

Table 8.6 Role orientation of municipal councillors

	<i>Municipal councillors</i>		<i>Second-tier councillors</i>	
	<i>Outward- looking role orientation</i>	<i>Inward- looking role orientation</i>	<i>Outward- looking role orientation</i>	<i>Inward- looking role orientation</i>
Controlling the municipal activity		0.802	Taking part in monitoring the achievement of county strategic policies	0.844
Defining the main goals of the municipal activity		0.780	Taking part in defining the main goals of county activity	0.839
Mediating conflicts in the local society	0.667		Mediating conflicts in the local society	0.698
Promoting the views and interests of women in the local society	0.815		Promoting the views and interests of women	0.670
Promoting the views and interests of minorities in the local society	0.820		Promoting the views and interests of minorities	0.654
			Creating consensus for implementing council decisions	0.652
Reinforcing the executive			Supporting the executive	0.534
Publicising the debate on local issues before decisions are taken			Publicising debate on local issues before decisions are taken	0.518
Representing the requests and issues emerging from the local society		0.507	Representing the requests and issues emerging from local society	0.509
Explaining decisions of the council to the citizens	0.523		Explaining decisions of the council to the citizens	
			Taking part in implementing policies and projects of the county	
			Taking part in controlling the executive	
			Taking part in coordinating economic development	
Implementing the programme of my political party/ movement			Taking part in implementing the program of the political party/ movement	

Source: Second Tier Survey

Varimax with Kaiser normalisation. Converged after three iterations.

KMO = 0.814 for municipal councillors and = 0.839 for second-tier councillors

the organisational setting of the second level of local government, but on an interaction with and involvement in local society, which is associated with the concept of participatory democracy.

By factor analysis, two components can be identified which indicate the existence of councillors with either an inward or outward looking role orientation (see Table 8.6). Other tasks (based on answers to the questionnaire) – namely, explaining decisions of the council to the citizens, implementing the programme of their political party – are not loading on the two detected factors identified, which means that they are not clearly linked to councillors with either an inwards or outward looking role orientation. Table 8.6 shows also that these results are more or less the same as a similar analysis of the responses of municipal councillors (although the questions were slightly different), except for two tasks: interaction with citizens by explaining decisions of the council formed a part of the outward-looking role orientation of municipal councillors whereas this shows a factor load below the threshold of < 0.5 for second-tier councillors. Furthermore, representing requests and issues emerging from the local society played a role for an inward-looking orientation of municipal councillors; this factor loaded positively with respect to an outward-looking role orientation of second-tier councillors. However, it has to be emphasised that in both of these exceptions the factor loads are rather low so that they are not considered as crucial.

In seeking correlations between these groups of second-tier councillors and their notion of democracy (see Table 8.7), only low correlations can be observed between a representative understanding of democracy and both role orientations, but there is a significant correlation (0.357) between a broad participatory notion of democracy and an outward-looking role orientation. This is consistent with the assumption that councillors with this kind of understanding of democracy emphasise interaction with the local society. Accordingly, they are less oriented towards the organisational setting of the second level of local government (as indicated by a correlation coefficient of -0.005). In general, these results are similar to those of municipal councillors. However, there is one minor exception (indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.097): For municipal councillors with a more participatory understanding of democracy also an orientation to the city hall is of some relevance.

Table 8.7 Correlations between the role orientation of councillors and their notion of democracy

		<i>Outward-looking roleorientation</i>	<i>Inward-looking roleorientation</i>
Participatory democracy	Municipal councillors	0.288**	0.097**
	Second-tier councillors	0.357**	0.005
Representative democracy	Municipal councillors	0.046**	0.026*
	Second-tier councillors	-0.028**	-0.032*

Source: Second Tier Survey

* Pearson's r ; $p < 0.05$. $N = 10,312$ for municipal councillors and $N = 4,006$ for second-tier councillors.

** Pearson's r ; $p < 0.01$. $N = 10,312$ for municipal councillors and $N = 4,006$ for second-tier councillors.

Role behaviour

Similar issues have been listed as possible answers to a question by which the *role behaviour* can be detected – namely: ‘In your experience as a councillor, how would you rate your influence regarding the following tasks?’¹² Councillors were asked to define their own contribution regarding these tasks in particular – and not just to consider how important these tasks are for a councillor.

A factor analysis shows two background components behind the responses of the second-tier councillors (see Table 8.8).

Table 8.8 Role behaviour of councillors

<i>Municipal councillors</i>		<i>Second-tier councillors</i>	
<i>Outward-looking role behaviour</i>	<i>Inward-looking role behaviour</i>	<i>Outward-looking role behaviour</i>	<i>Inward-looking role behaviour</i>
Defining the main goals of the municipal activity	0.815	Defining the main goals of county activity	0.817
		Monitoring the achievement of county strategic policies	0.799
Controlling the municipal activity	0.762	Controlling the executive	0.707
Reinforcing the executive	0.666	Supporting the executive	0.677
Publicising the debate on local issues before decisions are taken	0.547	Publicising the debate on local issues before decisions are taken	0.815
Explaining decisions of the council to the citizens	0.567	Explaining decisions of the council to citizens	0.789
Representing requests and issues emerging from the local society	0.581	Representing requests and issues emerging from local society	0.622
Implementing the program of my political party/movement		Implementing the program of my political party/movement	0.544
Promoting the views and interests of minorities in the local society	0.869		
Promoting the views and interests of women in the local society	0.840		
In mediating conflicts in the local society	0.558		

Source: Second Tier Survey

Varimax with Kaiser normalisation. Converged after three iterations. KMO = 0.859 for municipal councillors and 0.855 for county councillors.

Accordingly, an inward-looking role behaviour of second-tier councillors is not only characterised by defining the main goals of county activity and monitoring the achievement of county strategic policies (as emphasised by second-tier councillors in respect to role orientation (see the last section) but also by controlling and supporting the executive. An outward-looking role behaviour of second-tier councillors is expressed by emphasising particularly publicising the debate on local issues before decisions are taken, explaining council decisions to citizens, and representing requests and issues emerging from local society. Here differences can be detected in comparison to municipal councillors: for them, all of these tasks (factors) loaded positively in respect to an inward-looking role behaviour. However, for an interpretation of this finding it is important to recognise that municipal councillors could respond to quite different statements (see Table 8.8). Furthermore, it has to be mentioned that the task (factors) implementing the program of her or his political party or movement loads positively in respect to an outward-looking role behaviour of second-tier councillors, which was not the case for municipal councillors. Yet, this finding should not be taken too seriously because the factor load is quite low.

Looking at correlations between the role orientation and role behaviour of second-tier councillors, it becomes clear that a stated inward-looking role orientation is consistent with an inward-looking role behaviour. This applies also to an outward-looking role orientation and behaviour for which the correlation coefficient is rather high (0.360). Nevertheless, also the correlation coefficient for an outward-looking role orientation and an inward-looking role behaviour is quite high (0.173) which indicates that also second-tier councillors with such a role orientation do not neglect the tasks related to an inward-looking role behaviour.

These findings for the relation of role orientation and role behaviour of second-tier councillors are similar to those of municipal councillors, although in their case the correlations between either an outward or an inward looking role orientation and an a respective role behaviour is stronger. This may indicate that second-tier councillors with an outward-looking role orientation in particular find it more difficult than municipal councillors with the same role orientation to give more emphasis to interactions with citizens or actors outside the county house, which can be seen as a result of the larger distance of the second tier of local government

Table 8.9 Correlations between the role orientation and role behaviour of councillors

		<i>Inward-looking role behaviour</i>	<i>Outward-looking role behaviour</i>
Outward looking role orientation	Municipal councillors	0.069**	0.582**
	Second-tier councillors	0.173**	0.360**
Inward looking role orientation	Municipal councillors	0.288**	-0.016
	Second-tier councillors	0.151**	-0.008

Source: Second Tier Survey

** Pearson's r ; $p < 0.01$. $N = 10,527$ for municipal councillors and $N = 4,053$ for second-tier councillors

Table 8.10 Correlations between the role behaviour of councillors and their notion of democracy

		<i>Outward-looking role behaviour</i>	<i>Inward-looking role behaviour</i>
Participatory democracy	Municipal councillors	0.279**	0.015
	Second-tier councillors	0.181**	-0.071**
Representative democracy	Municipal councillors	0.053**	0.195**
	Second-tier councillors	0.024	0.143**

Source: Second Tier Survey

** Pearson's r ; $p < 0.01$. $N = 10,402$ for municipal councillors and $N = 3,711$ for second-tier councillors

to the 'life world' (Habermas 1987) of laypeople. This gives some evidence to the explanation that the formal role of the council determined by local government systems matters more for the questions answered by second tier councillors than by municipal councillors. As argued, second-tier councillors may perceive that policy making in councils at the second tier of local government is more spatially detached from citizenry than at the municipal level, where citizens have more opportunities to participate directly in decisions and where councillors can act more effectively together with citizens to achieve a particular goal.

This is confirmed by the fact that the correlation between the role behaviour of municipal councillors and their notion of democracy is much clearer than the correlation between their notion of democracy and their role orientation (see Table 8.10). In respect to their role behaviour, there is not only a significant correlation ($r = 0.279$) between a broad participatory notion of democracy and an interaction with local society, but also a significant (although relatively low) correlation ($r = 0.195$) between a representative understanding of democracy and behaviour focussed on city hall. This is different in the case of second-tier councillors. Both the correlation between second-tier councillors emphasising participatory democracy and an outward-looking role behaviour and councillors favouring representative democracy and stating an inward-looking role behaviour are lower. Nevertheless, the significant correlation coefficients in both cases (0.181 and 0.143) point in the expected direction.

To test if the role behaviour of councillors is consistent with their contacts with particular local actors – namely on the one hand with actors acting in city hall or the county house and on the other with actors located outside – the frequency of contacts with actors listed in Table 8.11 has been considered. Factor analysis leading to two background components again indicates differences between councillors (although the actors listed in the questionnaire for municipal and second-tier councillors differed slightly). However, these differences are not the same in the case of municipal and second-tier councillors. Municipal councillors clearly show a differentiation between inward- and outward-oriented councillors – namely those who have either frequent contact with (a) the mayor, members of the executive board, committee leaders, the president of the council, the chief executive officer

Table 8.11 Frequency of contacts with local actors

	Municipal councillors		Second-tier councillors	
	1st component: frequent outward- oriented contacts	2nd component: frequent inward- oriented contacts	1st component: frequent outward- oriented contacts	2nd component: frequent inward- oriented contacts
Private business representatives	0.540		Private business representatives	0.750
Organisations of ethnic minorities	0.745		Other local associations/groups/ social movements	0.688
Women's organisations	0.732		The Church/religious groups	0.658
Leading actors from voluntary associations	0.706			
Individual citizens in your role as a councillor	0.515			
Civil servants in the municipality		0.561	Civil servants in the county administration	0.651
The municipal chief executive officer		0.694	The county chief executive officer	0.647
The mayor		0.810	The county president	0.606
The president of the council		0.717	The president of the council	0.524
Members of my party group			Members of my party group	0.833
Members of other party groups			Members of other party groups	0.781
Committee leaders		0.661	Committee leaders	0.686
The leaders of my own local party organisation			The leaders of my own county party organisation	0.586
Union representatives	0.630		Union representatives	0.563
Members of the executive board		0.788	Members of the executive board	0.536
Journalists	0.567		Journalists	

Source: Second Tier Survey

Varimax with Kaiser normalisation. Converged after three iterations.
KMO = 0.895 for municipal councillors and 0.834 for second-tier councillors.

as well as civil servants of the municipality or with (b) local associations, initiatives and social movements as well as representatives of local union, business organisations and journalists.

The frequency of contacts with members of their own as well as other party groups and the leaders of their own local party organisation do not load on either of the two components, which indicates that they play a similar role for both groups of municipal councillors. Such a clear differentiation between inward- and outward-oriented councillors cannot be detected for second-tier councillors. Nevertheless, there is also among second-tier councillors a group who has quite frequent contact with the business community and other local associations, groups or movements as well as with the Church and religious groups which indicate that they are outward oriented. However, they have – in contrast to outward oriented municipal councillors – at the same time frequent contact with civil servants and the chief executive officer of the county administration as well as with the county president and the president of the council. This finding indicates that the group of outward-oriented second-tier councillors try to bring in interests of societal actors and to mediate between them and the mentioned administrative and political key actors at the second tier of local government. There is also a group of second-tier councillors who are inward-oriented insofar as their contacts are centred around party politics and political representation in the machinery of the second tier of local government – namely the committees of the council and (where existing) the executive board. For this group of second-tier councillors, outward-oriented contacts are (with a relatively low factor load) show only with representatives of trade unions which may indicate a traditional local neo-corporatist style of policy making.¹³

In particular, the differences between outward-oriented municipal and second-tier councillors indicate that it is easier for municipal councillors than for second-tier councillors to concentrate on frequent contacts with organisations of minorities and women as well as voluntary associations (see also the relatively high factor loads for these kinds of actors) and looking at the same time for good (frequent) contacts with people acting in local government. The latter have not only much more frequent contact with actors from the business sector than municipal councillors but also with people within the county administration and political key actors at the second level. This points to their role as interest intermediators. Such a role could be more necessary for societal actors in respect to the upper level of local government because it may be not so easy for them to get access to this level of local government due to the larger spatial distance to this level than to the municipal level.

High correlations between the role behaviour of municipal councillors and the frequency of their contacts to the listed actors demonstrate that their stated role behaviour is consistent with their contacts with particular local actors (see Table 8.12): those municipal councillors who have an outward-looking role behaviour also have frequent outward-oriented contacts ($r = 0.408$), and those with an inward-looking role behaviour also have frequent inward-oriented contacts ($r = 0.416$). In the case of second-tier councillors such a correlation cannot be shown. As those second-tier councillors with frequent contact to actors from

Table 8.12 Correlations between the role behaviour of councillors and the frequency of their contacts to local actors

		<i>Frequent outward-oriented contacts</i>	<i>Frequent inward-oriented contacts</i>
Outward-looking role behaviour	Municipal councillors	0.408**	−0.001
	Second-tier councillors	0.106**	0.182**
Inward-looking role behaviour	Municipal councillors	0.125**	0.416**
	Second-tier councillors	0.255**	0.182**

Source: Second Tier Survey

** Pearson's r ; $p < 0.01$. $N = 4,837$ for municipal councillors and $N = 1,156$ for second-tier councillors

outside the county house have also frequent contacts with administrative and political key actors at the second tier of local government, it is not surprising that the correlation coefficient for a stated outward-looking role behaviour and frequent inward-oriented contacts is even higher ($r = 0.182$) than those for a stated outward-looking role behaviour and frequent outward-oriented contacts ($r = 0.106$).¹⁴

Attitudes of councillors towards reforms at the local level

The attitudes of councillors towards political reforms at the local level can be determined by looking at their answers to the question of how desirable or undesirable some of the reforms are that have been introduced in local government in different European countries – irrespective of whether such reforms have or have not been introduced in their country (see Table 8.13).

In the case of municipal as well as of second-tier councillors there are some who favour those reforms at the local level, through which wider participation of citizens can be achieved going beyond simply voting in periodical elections or occasionally on referenda. These councillors support citizen consultation and forms of co-decision, wherein citizens can discuss and make binding decisions on certain local issues. Furthermore, this group of municipal as well as of second-tier councillors favours the devolution of responsibilities to neighbourhoods, which clearly goes beyond the realm of representative and direct democracy. Finally, there is also clearly more support in this group for the transfer of scrutiny power over municipal/county services to user boards and – in the case of second-tier councillors (as only they were asked about it) – on participatory budgeting. The only differences between second-tier and municipal councillors with such a reform perspective are that the latter favour advisory referenda whereas the former support the idea of binding referenda. However, the factor loads in both cases are so low that these differences are not considered further.

There are also municipal as well as second-tier councillors who are more in favour of reforms focusing on electoral efficiency by direct elections of mayors and county presidents, the reduction of council members and – in the case second-tier councillors (as again only they were asked about it) – a recall of the county president by referendum.

Table 8.13 Attitudes towards reforms at the local level

Municipal councillors		Second-tier councillors	
1st component: broader participation	2nd component: electoral efficiency	1st component: broader participation	2nd component: electoral efficiency
Reducing the number of members of the council	0.658	Reducing the number of council members	0.650
Direct elections of mayors	0.755	Direct election of county presidents	0.648
		Initiate the recall of county presidents by referendum	0.646
A decisive (binding) referendum		A decisive (binding) referendum	0.504
Devolution of responsibilities to neighbourhood organizations	0.651	Devolution of responsibilities to neighbourhood organizations	0.672
Transferring the powers of scrutiny over municipal services to user boards	0.561	Transferring the powers of scrutiny over county services to user boards	0.658
Co-decision procedures, where citizens can discuss and make binding decisions on certain local issues.	0.655	Co-decision procedures, where citizens can discuss and make binding decisions on certain local issues	0.653
Citizen consultation procedure, where citizens are informed about and can support or criticize municipal proposals	0.701	Citizen consultation procedure, where citizens are informed about and can comment on proposals of the county council	0.652
Frequent surveys to monitor local public opinion	0.586	Participatory Budgeting	0.649
An advisory (non-binding) referendum	0.512	An advisory (non-binding) referendum	

Source: Second Tier Survey
Varimax with Kaiser normalisation. Converged after three iterations.
KMO = 0.800 for municipal councillors and 0.836 for second-tier councillors

Table 8.14 Correlations between councillors' attitudes towards reforms at the local level and their notion of democracy

		<i>Reform attitudes aiming at a broader and more direct participation of citizens</i>	<i>Reform attitudes aiming at a strengthening of electoral efficiency</i>
Participatory democracy	Municipal councillors	0.546**	0.198**
	Second-tier councillors	0.586**	0.206**
Representative democracy	Municipal councillors	-0.110**	0.090**
	Second-tier councillors	-0.194**	-0.093**

Source: Second Tier Survey

** Pearson's r ; $p < 0.01$. $N = 10,283$ for municipal councillors and $N = 3,825$ for second-tier councillors

In some respects Table 8.14 reveals correlations between these two different attitudes of councillors towards reforms at the local level and their notion of democracy. However, in the case of municipal as well as second-tier councillors, the correlation is clearly more significant between a broad participatory understanding of democracy and attitudes to reform that aim at a broader and more direct participation of citizens ($r = 0.546$ and $r = 0.586$). Nevertheless, municipal as well as second-tier councillors are also (though to a much lesser degree) in favour of reducing the number of council members, the direct election of the political head of the executive (i.e. the mayor or the county president) and – in the case of second tier councillors (where this reform option has been mentioned) – of initiating the recall of county presidents by referendum. For municipal councillors, the correlation between a representative notion of democracy and broader and more direct participation of citizens is negative at a low level of significance ($r = -0.110$) and positively significant at a quite low level regarding strengthening of electoral efficiency ($r = 0.090$). Nevertheless, these results support the assumption that basic beliefs and subjective norms of a person – as they underlay a particular understanding of democracy – influence councillors' attitudes to different options for reform, which are either centred on an increase in electoral efficiency or a broader involvement of citizens in policy making beyond casting a vote in periodical elections. However, in case of second-tier councillors with an understanding of democracy in line with the liberal model the data are a bit puzzling: the negative significance ($r = -0.194$) in respect to reforms aiming at broadening citizen participation fit to this notion of democracy.

Conclusion

The analysis has shown that not only municipal councillors (as have been shown on previous studies) but also councillors acting at the second tier of local government have different understandings of what democracy means, and further that these differences can be related clearly on the one hand to a model of *representative democracy* and on the other to a model of *participatory democracy* in which the

individual's right to participate in general elections alone is perceived as insufficient for democratic self-determination. In this model, democracy beyond the core of the governmental structures at the local level is emphasised. Furthermore, it has been proven that the role perception and behaviour as well as the attitudes towards reforms at the local level of municipal and second-tier councillors depend (although to different degrees) on the councillors' notion of democracy as an expression of their basic beliefs about appropriate behaviour and subjective norms.

It could be shown that the councillors' notion of democracy from both tiers is affected by personal characteristics – namely age, political orientation and gender. However, in contrast to municipal councillors, second-tier councillors' notion of democracy shows relationships to the power relation between the council and other local key actors determined by local government systems. This may indicate that second-tier councillors with a broader participatory understanding of democracy and a corresponding outward-looking role orientation find it more difficult than municipal councillors to actually give more emphasis to interactions with citizens or actors outside the county house, which can be seen as a result of the larger distance of the second tier of local government to the 'life world' (Habermas 1987) of laypeople. Such an interpretation is confirmed by the fact that there is a significant correlation between a broad participatory notion of democracy and interaction with the local society (i.e. outward-looking role behaviour) in the case of second-tier councillors, but this correlation is much lower than for municipal councillors. In fact, although those second-tier councillors who have quite frequent contacts with the business community and other local associations, groups or movements as well as to the Church and to religious groups have – in contrast to outward-oriented municipal councillors – at the same time frequent contact with civil servants and the chief executive officer of the county administration as well as the county president and the president of the councillor. This finding indicates that the group of outward-oriented second-tier councillors try to bring in interests of societal actors and to mediate between them and the mentioned administrative and political key actors at the second tier of local government. This points to their role as interest intermediators. Such a role could be more necessary for societal actors in respect to the upper level of local government because it may be not so easy for them to get access to this level of local government due to the larger spatial distance to this level than to the municipal level.

Notes

- 1 I am grateful for the support and comments of Björn Egner.
- 2 See for instance Habermas (1992: 349–353); Habermas 1996b; Pierre and Peters (2000: 137–141); or Cohen (2007) and for early debates Pateman (1970) and Pitkin (1967) (the latter especially for the mandate-independence controversy).
- 3 The question in the second-tier questionnaire was: 'How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?' and the respondents could 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'.

Instead, the municipal councillors were asked the following question: 'People have different ideas about how local democracy should function. Please indicate how important for local democracy you feel the following requirements are.'

- 4 The question in the second-tier questionnaire was again: ‘How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?’ and the respondent could again ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neither agree nor disagree’, ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’.

In the questionnaire for municipal councillors, the first two statements were 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 next two statements in this questionnaire were possible answers to the question: ‘How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?’ The last two statements were not included in the questionnaire for municipal councillors.

- 5 For reason of readability, factor loadings < 0.5 based on the results of the Second Tier Survey are displayed in Table 8.1 only and not in the rest of this article.
- 6 Even if Norwegian councillors are not considered – which is reasonable as will be shown below – the factor load remains rather low (and under the threshold of a factor load < 0.5 otherwise used in this paper; see Note 5).

How to interpret the finding? It can be simply a result of a misunderstanding insofar as local elections have been understood by the respondents only as municipal elections and not also as elections at the second tier of local government (which was meant by those who constructed the questionnaire). Such an interpretation of this statement and a respective response by those councillors at the second level of local government emphasising representative democracy would simply mean that they do not feel bound to municipal but only to elections for the council at the second tier of local government in which they are a member. This would be consistent with their understanding of democracy. However, we cannot be absolutely sure whether or not such a misunderstanding lead to the presented finding.

- 7 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?’
- 8 As in the case of municipal councillors, a number of other variables were also tested. However, neither the number of years in office nor the membership in a party (or not) play a significant role with respect to the notion of democracy of councillors at the second tier of local government (all absolute values of $r < 0.15$). 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.
- 9 For other typologies of local government systems and their conceptual weaknesses and strengths, see the overview in Heinelt and Hlepas (2006).
- 10 The quotations of Mouritzen and Svava (2002) refer to the municipal level here as well as in the following.
- 11 Municipal councillors were asked the question: ‘In your experience as a councillor, how important are the following tasks for you as a councillor?’
- 12 Municipal councillors were asked the following question: ‘In your experience as a councillor, how would you define your contribution regarding the following tasks?’
- 13 The frequency of contacts between second-tier councillors to journalist do not load on both components.
- 14 Instead, it is puzzling that a stated inward looking role behaviour is correlating more strongly with outward oriented frequent contacts ($r = .255$) than inward oriented frequent contacts ($r = .182^{**}$).

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9 The importance of political parties in county government

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Introduction

Although the role and power of national political parties in local government varies across Europe, the organisation and activities of parties and the role they play in local government has an influence on the way councillors act as local representatives, decision makers and governors of their localities (see Ware 1996; Back 2003; Copus 2000, 2004; Leach 2006; Guerin and Kerrouche 2008). Indeed, national political parties interpose themselves between the councillor and the citizen and make demands on the loyalty and representative focus of the councillor, drawing him or her away from a direct link with the citizen (Glassberg 1981; Cole 2002; Copus 2004 and Delwit *et al.* 2007). Moreover, national political parties impose disciplinary demands on their councillors to ensure they act in unified, coherent *blocs* speaking and voting together. In addition, feelings of party loyalty and the strength of attachment councillors have to their parties also ensures that they focus on it as a point of political reference. Party discipline and party loyalty places the party at the forefront of the councillor's attention and generates a tension between the citizen and community and the councillor (see Eulau and Whalke 1959; Fallend *et al.* 2006 and Getimis and Hlepas 2013 and Aars *et al.*, Chapter 6 in this book).

The presence of national political parties in local government not only intercedes between the councillor and the citizen in the representative–represented relationship (Pitkin 1972), but also ensures that the national party political battle lines and operating practices also find their way into council chambers (see Reiser and Holtmann 2008). As we shall see in this chapter, national political parties are the dominant players in some of our sample country settings, while in others they are less dominant, but are certainly present. Despite their strength in those local government systems where they are dominant, national political parties have been experiencing a period of ‘party decline’ and their legitimacy as the mainstay of democratic politics has been brought into question (Blondel 2002; Drummond 2006). Party decline has been evidenced as the shift within parties from a large-scale mass-membership base to a professionalised organisational arrangement where full-time politicians speak directly to the voter through the media, and party members are required to act more as foot soldiers than policy makers (see Seyd and Whiteley 2004; Ringkjøb 2004; Blyth and Katz 2005).

The concept of party decline reflects the marginalisation of party members when compared to leading politicians, locally and nationally, and when compared to senior party managers who are not elected politicians. Indeed, party members become unnecessary as a channel to the electorate for views, currents of opinions and shifting attitudes among electorate and are replaced by professional polling, focus groups or other market-driven attitudinal tests. Party members are required just to pay their subscriptions to fund the party and in some states even that role has been replaced by state funding or large donations (see Goul Andersen and Hoff 2001; Heidar and Saglie 2003; Wheeler 2005; Bäck *et al.* 2005; Wilks-Heeg and Clayton 2006). Party decline is a local as well as a national phenomenon with local power becoming increasingly located within small units of the local organisation of national parties and particularly within the council party group and council leadership (Bäck 2000; Fredriksson 2003; Erlingsson 2008). Given the notion that party decline affects parties at all levels of organisation and activity, we are left with this question: Can we reasonably expect to see councillors becoming increasingly distant from the local membership of their national party and operating with scant attention or link to the local units of national parties?

The question about the effect of party decline at the local level becomes all the more pertinent when thinking about the upper tier of local government – the county council – because of the greater size of county government, the scale of its activities, the nature of the services and policy areas covered by counties, and the distance between the location of party units and members of the county council. We could again reasonably expect that county councillors will be among the more professionalised of councillors (Reynaert 2012; Verhelst and Kerrouche 2012; Verhelst *et al.* 2013) and as a consequence not be reliant on their party, be poorly connected to its local institutions, and be resistant to being influenced by local party institutions and party members. Indeed, we might also expect county councillors to act more as trustees or politicians than delegates of the electorate or delegates of the party and party loyalists (Eulau *et al.* 1959; Karlsson 2013a, 2013b).

The chapter examines the organisation, activities and impact of party politics on the role of the county councillor as an elected representative. It will examine the way county councillors respond to party group demands for their loyalty and the way in which they act in a coherent and disciplined fashion in the conduct of local government business (Gyford, *et al.* 1989; Stoker 1991). The chapter will explore, using attitudinal data, how county councillors balance party pressures with the representation of local communities. It will address this question: If local democracy is party controlled and, as councillors (more often than not) belong to a national political party (see Bäck, 2003; Guerin and Kerrouche 2008), how do they balance the best interests of their voters and the parties of which they are a member (Copus 2004)?

The chapter will examine the relationship that county councillors have with their parties to comment on the applicability of the concept of party decline in local government. It will also explore how county councillors manage the tension generated by their membership in a national political party and the demands it

makes for their loyalty and disciplined action with the demands generated by, and the articulated opinions of, the communities that county councillors represent. It will do this by exploring the attitudes of councillors towards the party of which they are a member and the demands of community representation and engagement. In so doing the chapter will examine how county councillors as members of national political parties act as representatives, decision makers and governors at the county level, and the effects that party membership has on county-level local representation. The next section examines in more detail the notion of party decline as it relates to an understanding of the relationship between county councillors and the local units of their national parties. The following section explores the findings of the research data from our European sample. The chapter concludes by setting out what the research findings mean for party decline and local representative democracy.

Party decline and county government

The involvement of national political parties in local government is a European-wide phenomenon (Nielsen 2001; Petersson 2005; Soininen and Etzler 2006; Wolinetz 2007; Reiser and Holtmann 2008) and – much as at the national level – parties have a role in the recruitment and selection of candidates, supporting and organising election campaigns, providing political space within which people of the same views can explore political and policy issues and develop solutions, and then bringing those solutions together with a range of policy ideas to present to the local electorate. Indeed, political parties have long been seen as an essential element for the effective functioning of modern representative democracy (Schattschneider 1942; Montero and Gunther 2002).

The organisation and activities of national political parties in local government also have their defenders for the way in which they provide a link between the council and citizen, provide a recognisable ruling administration and opposition *bloc* as an alternative for the voters to select, add consistency and certainly to policy development and provide accountability for the policies and decisions of the council and provide councillors with private political space (Leach 2006; Leach and Copus 2004; Leach and Wilson 2008). Moreover, Hayden Phillips (2006: 3) in an interim report on party funding commented: ‘parties are essential to democracy and there is no mature democracy anywhere in the world in which political parties do not play a vital role’. But a year later, in a final report (Phillips 2007: 1), it was noted that parties were in declining membership across Europe, concluding that parties were: ‘the least trusted of our social institutions’. In the same year, however, the Councillors Commission (DCLG 2007: 46) commented: ‘Parties are essential to a functioning democracy; they provide clarity of choice based on values, ensure a healthy degree of electoral competition and play a crucial role in upholding ethical standards and providing clear lines of collective accountability’. But healthy competition also relies on effective challenge to party domination from citizens and groups outside of national political parties – and no more so than in local government.

In England, some 90 per cent of all council seats are held by members of the three British parties: Conservative, Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Keen (2014) has shown, however, that only 1 per cent of the population are members of those parties, a decline from almost 4 per cent in 1983. It would appear for all the discussion about the underrepresentation of various groups on councils, the most underrepresented group in society, by far, are citizens who are not members of one of the three national parties – at least in the English context.

The figures for national party membership in England provide a necessary backdrop to the debate about the impact of party decline in local government and on the role of the councillor sitting as a member of the upper-tier of local government: county council. Party membership, and the relationship between members of a party and the elected representatives (at any level of government) are, of course, not measures of party decline or of assessing the power of influence of parties within representative democracy. Party membership may fall, but it is always the smaller number of active members that keep parties functioning locally and that provide a continuing supply of councillors. Wilks-Heeg and Clayton (2006), in their study of party membership in the English towns of Burnley and Harrogate, showed that even with a perilously low level of local party membership the national political parties – in their cases Labour and Conservative Parties respectively – were able to continue to control the councils and to do so with ease and large majorities. So, low levels of membership (in these cases at least) did not indicate that the parties were moribund or in organisational decline, only that large-scale membership was not necessary or required by the existing local political elite. While the work of Wilks-Heeg and Clayton (2006) provides only one case study of falling membership, which is however recognised as a European-wide phenomenon (Saiz and Geser 1999; Seyd and Whiteley 2004; Lundell, 2008; Li and Marsh 2008). Nevertheless, councillors from the party group (or administration) in power but outside the leadership will within their private party group meetings be able to question, challenge, criticise, hold to account and then ultimately support in public, the council leadership.

The party group meeting as a private space for debate thus provides a veneer of involvement and influence for the backbench councillor, further masking the professionalisation of county politics and the decline of councillors and party members to act as conduits for the citizens into county government decision making. Such disengagement and disenchantment with local government will display itself differently in different national settings, but the concentration of power associated with party decline ironically is one of the factors that have entrenched, rather than diluted, party control. Such entrenchment of the party has been achieved because councillors outside of the leadership are increasingly inclined to become more loyal to the party and more disciplined in public – seeing the party and not the voter as responsible for the councillor's tenure in county government (Back 2000; Fredriksson 2003; Erlingsson 2008). It is the party that selects the councillor and campaigns for his or her election; once elected, it is the party group which expects the councillor's loyalty.

Party decline, and party group loyalty and discipline, go hand in hand as they serve to weaken the link between the councillor and the community and so become a cycle of decline. Parties no longer find themselves embedded in local communities, rather sitting on top of the community as a barrier between the citizen and the council. Such a position is exacerbated by the size of county government and by the existence of the councils at the first tier of local government, which also attenuates the relationship between the party on the ground and the party in county office (see Biondi *et al.* 2000; Katz and Mair 2005; Wauters, 2010).

It is time then to turn to our data findings to explore in a European context whether declining party effectiveness and mass membership means (as we could logically expect) that county councillors care little about the views or activities of their party outside the council and concentrate on their party groups as a point of reference and a focus for their loyalty.

Counties and party across Europe

This section presents the results and analysis of the responses to the questionnaire statements exploring the subject of party influence. Some of the results are simple frequencies, ordered by country or groups of country. For some other responses, we constructed a party significance index (PSI) which takes into account several items related to various aspects of the activities and influence of parties on county politics. This involved transforming six of the questionnaire items into an index score.¹ The index was constructed on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 signifies no importance of parties, while 100 signifies the highest importance of parties on the political life of county councillors. The six selected variables were:

- ‘How important do you believe the following tasks are for a councillor/county president/CEO to perform?’ ‘Taking part in implementing the program of the political party/movement’;
- ‘How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?’ ‘Political parties are be the most suitable arena for citizen participation’;
- ‘How frequently do you have contact with the following individuals or groups?’ ‘Members of my party group’;
- ‘What is your opinion on the following statements?’
 - ‘Leader(s) of your national or regional party have a large influence over the decisions made by the party group in the county council’;
 - ‘The national or regional party policies have a large influence over the decisions made by the party group in the county council’;
 - ‘The leader of the party group usually informs and seeks the support of the party group when decisions are taken.’

The first point to make from our analysis is that the vast majority of our sample are party members, and the vast majority of these are members of national parties. In Table 9.1, eight of the 14 countries listed have more than 90 per cent of county councillors as national party members, and the mean across the sample is also more

Table 9.1 Councillors who are (local or national) political party members, by country, ordered by national party members (in per cent)

	<i>Not party member</i>	<i>National party members</i>	<i>Local party members</i>
Sweden	0.5	99.5	0.0
Hungary	1.2	98.8	0.0
Norway	1.3	98.7	0.0
Belgium	1.9	98.1	0.0
Romania	1.7	97.7	0.6
Spain	0.0	96.7	3.3
Croatia	7.1	91.4	1.5
England	5.8	90.6	3.6
Italy	8.6	87.5	3.9
Czech Republic	10.6	85.9	3.5
Germany	4.4	85.5	10.2
Greece	16.7	81.9	1.4
France	21.6	76.3	2.1
Poland	45.9	52.3	1.8
Total	5.8	90.6	3.6

Source: Second Tier Survey

than 90 per cent. In four countries, fewer than two out of each 100 county councillors are not national party members. Only one country – Poland – has less than three-quarters of its county councillors as national party members, and only in Germany does the proportion of county councillors belonging to local parties exceed 10 per cent. In several countries (the Czech Republic, Greece, France and Poland) there are higher numbers of councillors that are not party members, yet these numbers are still dwarfed by those that are members of political parties. The responses from the sample show that there is clear evidence of widespread penetration of national parties at the county level of government, across Europe.

According to the Hesse and Sharpe (1991) typology, modified to take into account Central and Eastern Europe,² there is an association between party membership and country group. Table 9.2 shows that Southern and Central/Eastern European countries reported more non-party membership than Anglo and North-Middle European countries.³ This finding plays in to the image of the more professionalised bureaucracies of Northern Europe (see e.g. John 2001). Yet there are important exceptions to this picture. For example, according to our sample Spain's provinces have no non-party members at all, and the English counties have more non-party members than the counties of Hungary, Belgium and Romania.

However, party membership does not automatically translate into party support. Table 9.3 shows what percentage of party members had national and county level party support at the previous election. Two observations can be made about this table: First, while in many cases most councillors agree they had the support of their national parties, in some countries this is not the case for many councillors: for example, it is less than half in Italy and Greece. Second, in all cases the levels of support from national level parties and county level parties is virtually identical,

Table 9.2 County councillors who are party members or not party members, by countries with different local government systems (in per cent)

<i>Local government systems</i>	<i>Not party member</i>	<i>Party members</i>
Southern ('Franco') type	10.2	89.8
Anglo type	5.8	94.2
North-Middle European type	2.4	97.6
Central-Eastern European type	11.5	88.5
Total	5.8	94.2

Source: Second Tier Survey

Table 9.3 Support at the last election (per cent agree) of party members that had support at last election, ordered by support of national party (in per cent)

	<i>National party support</i>	<i>County party support</i>
Hungary	93.8	93.8
Norway	92.8	92.8
Spain	90.7	90.7
Croatia	89.4	89.3
Romania	89.0	89.0
Sweden	79.3	79.4
Czech Republic	76.3	76.3
France	69.5	69.8
Poland	69.0	69.0
Germany	67.3	67.3
Belgium	66.9	66.9
England	60.2	60.6
Italy	47.3	47.3
Greece	36.2	36.4

Source: Second Tier Survey

giving further evidence of the Europe-wide penetration of national parties into county party politics.

In looking at these results, we are left wondering if support transfers into influence for the county party over what county councillors do at the council and the policies they develop. Table 9.4 sets out the responses to statements designed to test councillors' opinions about the level of influence that the national and county party organisation had over the activities of the county council party group.

It is worth noting that in countries where there appears to be a high level of support for the candidates from national parties (shown in Table 9.3), there is also considerable influence over the decisions made by party groups in the council (shown in Table 9.4). This is the case in Spain, Norway and Croatia. Table 9.4 also shows that there is reason to believe that party groups of councillors at the county

Table 9.4 Intra-party influence, ordered by higher level policy influence over county party decisions (per cent agree)

	<i>'The national or regional party policies have a large influence over the decisions made by the party group in the county council.'</i>	<i>'The county's party organisation has much influence over the decisions of the party's council group.'</i>	<i>'The leader of the party group usually informs and seeks the support of the party group when decisions are taken.'</i>	<i>'The county's party organisation has a large influence over decisions of the national party.'</i>
Spain	71.0	77.6	91.3	34.4
Croatia	59.1	81.4	76.5	28.3
Romania	57.9	77.8	72.5	35.7
Norway	57.7	74.8	81.1	35.6
Sweden	51.9	62.5	55.7	28.0
Greece	44.1	30.7	70.9	20.1
Belgium	40.6	57.1	76.5	20.0
Italy	37.6	43.6	35.0	11.1
France	34.2	40.4	79.8	11.4
England	27.5	29.0	72.5	8.4
Czech Republic	25.0	52.6	82.9	14.5
Poland	23.7	40.7	59.3	3.4
Germany	15.9	36.0	81.5	1.8
Hungary	Not asked	56.8	51.9	19.8

Source: Second Tier Survey

level feel more connected to the broader party organisation at that level, rather than higher-level party organisations. In many cases, the score for influence of the county party organisation (second column) is higher than the score for influence of policies at national or regional levels (third column). Clearly there will be mutual influence occurring between each of these organs, but this influence tends to flow downwards rather than upwards. In every case, the score for the influence of the county organisation over the national organisation (fourth column) is lower than that for influence the other way (first column).

We now turn to our analysis, informed by the construction of our index related to the influence of party, outlined earlier. Table 9.5 presents, in order, the PSI scores for the county councillors in our sample. According to these results, there is considerable variance between countries according to this measure. In Spain, party influence appears strongest, compared to Poland, which is the weakest. These results, and others like it, are perhaps expected bearing in mind the party membership results reported in Table 9.1. High on the list come the Scandinavian countries of Sweden and Norway, whereas a surprising result to these authors is how low the England comes in this list by comparison with other European countries, especially bearing in mind the significance of parties in the functioning of English local government articulated in the prior section of this chapter.

Table 9.5 Party significance index, by country, ordered by the PSI score (1–100)

	<i>Mean PSI score</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
Spain	80.8	11.74
Romania	73.3	11.55
Sweden	72.5	11.65
Norway	72.2	10.14
Croatia	68.2	13.33
Belgium	66.8	12.31
Greece	66.2	14.35
Italy	65.6	13.59
Germany	63.2	11.18
Czech Republic	62.4	10.96
England	61.4	14.51
France	58.6	14.25
Poland	55.3	14.40

Source: Second Tier Survey

Table 9.6 PSI by country grouping

<i>Local government systems</i>	<i>Mean PSI Score</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
Southern (Franco) type	67.2	14.91
Anglo type	61.4	14.51
North-Middle European type	68.3	12.22
Central-Eastern European type	67.2	13.76

Source: Second Tier Survey.

There is limited purchase on this data according to country grouping. Table 9.6 shows the Anglo-type group is different from other groups, but little can be read into that result as only England is included in that group.⁴ What is more notable is the lack of variation between country groups, no clear pattern emerging from either Tables 9.3 or 9.4.

Next we move on to discuss the loyalty that councillors express towards their political parties and to do that the results of the responses to the following statement are presented: ‘the last time there were differences between your personal opinion and the opinion of your party group in the council and the opinion of the voters, how did you vote?’ The statement tests what the councillor sees as his or her focus for loyalty when faced with a ‘crisis of representation’ (Copus 2004) – that is, when faced with competing calls for the councillor to act in certain ways and in accordance with the wishes and opinions of three competing element: the party, the public and the councillor’s own opinions. Table 9.7 sets out the responses received (on this topic see also Aars *et al.*, Chapter 6 in this book).

Table 9.7 Representative orientation, by country, ordered by party group score (per cent)

Countries	n	<i>I voted according to the opinion of the party group.</i>	<i>I voted according to my own conviction.</i>	<i>I voted according to the opinion of the voters.</i>
Spain	87	78.2	17.2	3.0
Belgium	275	68.4	26.9	4.7
Sweden	941	66.1	29.4	4.5
Norway	197	65.5	31.5	4.6
Croatia	294	45.6	47.6	6.8
Hungary	58	41.4	37.9	20.7
Italy	149	38.9	50.3	10.7
France	209	33.5	61.2	5.3
Greece	190	32.6	61.1	6.3
England	109	31.2	49.5	19.3
Romania	117	26.5	46.2	27.4
Germany	1,038	24.9	70.9	4.2
Poland	104	14.4	63.5	22.1

Source: Second Tier Survey.

This table presents what proportion of councillors when confronted with differences between personal opinion, party group opinion, and the opinion of voters would vote 1) according to the opinion of the party group (*party soldiers*), 2) According to his or her own conviction (*trustees*) or 3) According to the opinion of voters (*delegates*). Countries are sorted by percentage of party soldiers.

The sample may also highlight differences between the strength of party support at different geographic levels. In particular, contrasting Sweden and Norway where party support is located at the local level whereas support for councillors in England and Croatia tends to come from the national organs of their parties. It is simplistic to suggest a 'North – South/East' distinction in the influence of party groupings contrasting the partisan and organised party groupings in Scandinavian countries with post-communist and Mediterranean countries such as Poland, Romania and Greece where the role of parties in local political careers is weaker. Despite this, clear exceptions exist, in particular the dominance of parties in both Spain and Croatia.

Table 9.6 also demonstrates that despite ideas of party decline explored earlier in the chapter parties remain an important element in the machinery and procedure of local politics. The question relating to the representational styles of *trustee*, *delegate* and *party soldier* first developed in the United States (Eulau *et al.* 1959; Wahlke *et al.* 1962) has been used extensively in studies of local government (Newton 1974; Kjær 2000; Copus 2004; Aars *et al.*, Chapter 6 in this book).

The pervasive influence parties play in informing the choices of councillors and loyalty party groups command is reflected across the data, and (beyond sample size limitations) highlights that in Spain and much of Northern Europe the impact of party group control sustains the influence of parties on county councillors, in clear contrast with alternative indicators which depict party decline. What we see here

is that despite the notion of party decline, parties are not losing their influence when it comes to the actions taken by councillors and therefore parties can survive falling membership and disconnection from the public, and that professionalisation of parties re-enforces party control rather than diminishes it as councillors continue to grant loyalty to the group.

Conclusions

The chapter began by exploring the notion of party decline and the effect that the professionalisation of parties and marginalisation of the ordinary party member had on political parties, generally. Party decline is not just a national phenomena but a process replicated locally where the local political elite become distant from the local party membership and therefore the influence that the membership has over the actions of party leaders is diminished. As a consequence local power becomes ever more focused in a smaller and smaller group of leading party members – and such leaders are to be found among councillors. Indeed, even among councillors and the council party group, power becomes centralised in the hands of a few leading members, thus also potentially marginalising even councillors from the centre of local political power (see Getimis and Hlepas, Chapter 11 in this book). Given that county council and county party machinery operates at the top tier of local government, the scale and population size of county entities could also add to the distancing and marginalisation of the party membership – larger units often require the concentration of decision-making into fewer and fewer hands – both within parties and county councils. So we are left wondering: Does this matter for the continued dominance (where it exists) of parties and their role within county government?

We saw in our survey that for all countries (with the exception of Poland at just over 52 per cent), the overwhelming majority of county councillors were members of national political parties, ranging from France with 76 per cent to Sweden with just over 99 per cent being party members. Indeed, the total European score for party political county councillors is just over 90 per cent. Party dominance of county government is reflected across the Southern ('Franco'), Anglo, North-Middle European and Central and Eastern European types of local county systems. While party decline may reflect an internal process that involves a withering away of the relationship between a mass membership and the party leadership – locally or nationally – decline is not an external process. That is, party decline does not affect the dominant position that parties hold on county councils across Europe. But, as we saw in Table 9.3 party membership does not automatically translate into party support for county councillors. Moreover, the support county councillors receive from their parties is very much a variable characteristic across Europe. We must take care here, however, as the figures for county councillors receiving support from either the national or county party may indicate that it is difficult for councillors to distinguish between the national party and the county party when it comes to electoral support. In many cases, for example, councillors may receive printed leaflets from their party as part of a national, local election campaign, but those

leaflets would be delivered by local party members, including councillors themselves. It also depends on how councillors interpret the term *support*: are they referring to finances, material and physical resources? Or are they referring to leafleters, canvassers and election day helpers or party members who organise and conduct local election campaigns? There is sufficient ambiguity here for us to conclude that in county council elections party decline has not seriously affected county councillors in our survey countries from conducting electoral activity.

It is with the question of which party organisation – the national or county level – has influence over what the county council party group does that we begin to see that party decline has not comprehensively across Europe had the result of distancing the local party machinery and therefore local party members from the activity of the party group and leadership of that group at the county level of government. The differences between the national results could reflect the rules and regulations of party branches, as in the case of England, where the rules of the main national parties heavily regulate the relationship between the party groups and non-councillor party members. The concept of influence can also be a tricky one to define and understand: Does it reflect formal influence through official debates and votes of party units? Or does it refer to a more informal process of private discussion and interaction that provides ordinary party members with opportunities to contribute to the development of policy decisions through contact with county councillors. It is likely that councillors responded to the question with the formal role of the county party unit in mind – which will vary between countries – but we cannot exclude the possibility that individual members have more informal routes to influence. Equally, we must remember that county party units are likely to include large numbers of county councillors, who themselves will be able to either influence the county party or indeed may control its activities, or prevent it from making formal decisions which the party group could not support.

When we considered the results for the statements which explored whether, when faced with a *crisis of representation* (Copus, 2004) councillors would vote with the party group, their own conscience or the articulated views of the voters, we saw that the party group loomed large in the councillors; assumptions of loyalty and that the party soldier is found at the county level in all countries. It is possible to suggest that for all those councillors who said that they would pursue their own views as a *trustee* of the general good we may also find that they support the party line as well. It is highly possible that given a county councillor's membership in a party, the support he or she receives from it, the loyalty he or she grants to it generally and the ability that a councillor has to contribute to party group decisions, that they may rarely be faced with the need to rebel from the party line. Indeed, the councillors 'own opinion' may be exactly the same as the party group view on an issue, so we may see an inflation of the support for the group line by considering that councillors' own opinions coincide with that of the group.

Party decline and the resultant loss of influence the party membership may experience over the party leadership and particularly the county council group, is clearly a feature of note. From our study, however, decline does not appear to extend to a reduction in the role that political parties play in county government.

That applies across Europe, or at least in those countries where parties are a strong element of the local political scene. A gradual concentration of power into the hands of local political elite may indeed be simply a normal part of political interaction as the more active members separate themselves from the less active members by virtue of being just more active. Parties tend to develop internal networks of smaller and smaller numbers of activists and councillors to organise and run the party, locally (Leach and Wilson 2000; Leach 2006). Such a process does not indicate decline, rather a political separation of labour.

It is clear from our data, however, that even if political parties are in decline, losing membership and seeing an increasing gulf between the role played by local political elites – including councillors – and other party members, the ability of national parties to control local government is not impeded. Where we see cross-national differences in the degree of party penetration of the local level and the nature of the relationship between councillors in the group and the party, we are not seeing varying speeds of party decline; rather we are witnessing the effects of local and national political culture, the different journeys that democracies have taken across Eastern and Western Europe, and changes in voter attitudes towards political parties and the role played by county government within each national setting. We can confidently conclude that party decline does not mean a decline in the domination of county government by political parties. Most certainly there is no decline in the power of the political party group at the county level. County government, in a European context, is by and large party government.

Notes

- 1 Further relevant variables pertaining to the comparative proportion of weekly hours spent on party business were omitted due to gaps in the cross-national data.
- 2 The countries of the South European (or 'Franco') type are (Belgium, France, Greece, Italy and Spain; those of the Anglo type, England; the North-Middle European type, Germany, Norway and Sweden; and the Central/Eastern European type Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania.
- 3 There is a significant association between country grouping and party membership as $\chi^2(3, N = 4,701) = 139.338, p < 0.0001$.
- 4 One-way ANOVA (using Welch correction owing to unequal variances), revealed significant differences in PSI scores in relation to country grouping according to the typology of local government systems adopted from Hesse and Sharpe (1991): $F(3,496) = 9.651, p < 0.0001, \eta^2 = .0084$. Post-hoc tests (Games-Howell) revealed significant differences between the Anglo type and all other types: at $p < 0.001$, effect size (d) = 0.39 for comparison with the Southern/'Franco' type, 0.51 for the North-Middle European type, and 0.41 for the Central/Eastern European type.

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10 Parties and ideology

How parties shape their manifestos
to obtain votes

Björn Egner

Introduction

From a rational choice perspective, politics is understood as a market (Downs 1957) where parties offer policy choices and voters buy those choices by giving their votes to the party they like best. This view has been harshly criticised and is still hotly debated (see Wood and Oliver 2012 for an overview). Especially, two central assumptions for the economic model of democracy are challenged: The first assumption is that voters are well informed about the choices the parties have to offer. Additionally, voters are expected to be perfectly informed about the parties, their policies, their own current situation and the possible ramifications for their future well-being triggered by potential political change. The second – and even more important – assumption is that the parties are not honest in proposing their policies. The model expects that a party seeks to maximize its vote share at election day, thus it is open for parties committing ‘fraud’ by either implementing policies it did not propose before the election or by not implementing policies it originally committed to. It seems reasonable for parties to act in this way, because policies with a negative impact on the public may hurt the party at the polls in the next election.

In order to be at least competitive with the other parties, a party must propose policies which enable it to collect enough votes – even if it does not want the policies, or at least not in the proposed form. If it wins the election in the end, the party may try to find some excuses for not implementing the policy or implement it in another way, whether the reason be a coalition partner (who can be blamed easily), altered circumstances or a process of ‘learning’. It becomes clear that parties behave strategically in the shadow of elections.

However, it may likewise seem reasonable that countries differ in this respect. Parties may be forced to pick different strategies in different institutional and political environments. In this contribution, I try to uncover the difference between the parties’ ‘real’ ideology and the ones they propose for elections. For this purpose, I will use the ideology data collected within the frame of the project to draw a picture of the ideological positions of the main parties in the 14 European countries covered.

To introduce the topic, I will briefly introduce how to measure ideology and why using data from the second tier of local government is appropriate for this

challenge in the next section. I will also discuss whether the left-right divide is still a sensible distinction in the spatial measurement of ideology. In the following section, I will prepare the main analysis by looking into the ideological party landscape from three different perspectives. The first perspective will include the comparison between the individual ideology as stated by the councillors and their assessment of their party's ideology, which may yield interesting results concerning the internal cohesion of the single parties. The second perspective will try to relate individual ideology of a councillor to his or her personal attributes. The third perspective entails focusing on the ideology of party families and their member parties. In the final section, I will compare the data for second-tier councillors' assessments of their party's ideology with data from the macro level using party manifestos in order to describe the interaction between ideological setup of the parties and electoral competition within the countries.

Measuring ideology

Measuring ideological party positions is one of the central challenges in political science, especially in comparative politics. A large number of empirical analyses use ideology scores for parties as independent variables, e.g. for policy choice, fiscal performance, electoral campaign strategies and for testing classical approaches like the economy of democracy.

There are four traditional approaches for the assessment of ideology scores. First, there is the programmatic approach, where a party's position in the ideology space is measured by reading party manifestos and assigning values to statements of the party concerning policies or societal issues (e.g. the Comparative Manifesto Project; cf. Klingemann *et al.* 2006). Second, the parties' positions can be approximated by expert judgements, which can be based for instance explicitly on questionnaires (Huber and Inglehart 1995) or implicitly by rough comparison (cf. Carlsen 1997: 147; Gross and Sigelman 1984). The third option is to use the self-assessments of voters of the respective parties (cf. Laver and Schofield 1990: 245 ff.). Each of these options raises its own sets of questions about reliability and validity of the data collected. The fourth possibility is scarcely used by political scientists, although it suggests enhanced validity and reliability: the measurement of party positions according to the self-assessment of party members (cf. Benoit and Laver 2006: 60 ff.). New developments of measuring party ideology include e.g. observing campaign finance portfolios (Bonica 2014) or Twitter messages (Barbera 2015).

Measurement of ideology in the frame of the second tier project

The second tier project provides us data about the ideological self-assessment of politicians on this level of local government. The survey respondents are thus in touch with the 'real', everyday tangible problems of the local level, but are also potential career politicians for upper levels. Therefore, the assessment of the people being active in politics on the second tier of local government level may be representative for what the 'party infantry' (which may be potential future leaders of the party) thinks where 'their' party is located on the traditional left-right dimension.

Within the second tier survey, there were two questions asked about ideology. The first asked respondents to assess their own ideological position on a scale between 0 (left) and 10 (right): ‘There is often talk about a left-right dimension in [. . .] politics.¹ Where would you place yourself on a left-right dimension?’

The second question reads ‘There is often talk about a left-right dimension in politics. Where would you place your party on a left-right dimension?’ Respondents were able to assess the ideology of the county level, the regional/state level and the national level of their respective party.²

In the following analysis, data from all 14 countries are used. In order to ensure maximum comparability, I use councillor data only for measurement, since it provides a more representative picture than data shaped by holders of ‘unique’ offices such as county CEO or county president.

A descriptive overview

Looking at the county level, nearly 90 per cent of all councillors assessed their individual ideology score on the scale mentioned. More than 80 per cent of them also stated their view about their national party’s ideology. These high numbers show that the concept of a left-right scale appears to be a suitable concept for the respondents. In some countries, the share of respondents seems reasonably lower because of the make-up of the local party systems, e.g. in Germany or Poland, where ‘local parties’ or ‘independent councillors’ are common (see Heinelt and Egner 2011: 114; Swianiewicz 2011: 192). In those countries, local policy making is widely perceived as a ‘pragmatic’ realm, where there is no need or significantly less appropriateness for party politics. However, in the Nordic countries, in Spain and in England, party membership as a common feature of national and local politics helped to generate considerably large shares of responses.

Table 10.1 Response rate for ideology assessment questions

<i>Country</i>	<i>N all councillors</i>	<i>Per cent assessed self-ideology</i>	<i>Per cent assessed national party ideology</i>
Czech Rep.	85	100.0	100.0
Norway	226	100.0	100.0
Sweden	1,225	99.7	99.6
Italy	131	96.2	83.2
Spain	188	95.7	93.1
England	140	93.6	92.1
France	308	92.2	68.8
Belgium	336	91.7	89.0
Poland	120	91.7	55.8
Croatia	331	90.9	87.0
Greece	233	86.3	73.4
Romania	177	83.6	81.9
Germany	1,672	77.5	65.0
Hungary	113	70.8	64.6
Total	5,285	88.9	81.1

Source: Second Tier Survey

The first question is whether the data is valid, i.e. if it represents the dimension that was addressed by the question asked. Did councillors state their real ideological self-assessment? Using the concept of external validity (McDermott 2011: 34), I will in the following use correlation analysis to check if the councillors' self-assessed ideology is connected to their self-perception about the representation of societal actors or groups.

The survey asked the councillors: 'As a county councillor, do you speak on behalf of the following groups or interests?' The councillors could respond on a 5-point scale.

As Table 10.2 depicts, left-leaning councillors describe themselves as speakers for the poor, the unemployed, ethnic minorities, workers, public servants, the youth and the whole country. Right-leaning councillors to the contrary associate themselves with the industry, particular geographic parts of the county, private-sector employees and the church. These patterns appear to match fairly the traditional left-right scheme.

We can further assume external validity by cross-checking support of societal actors and groups for the electoral competition as perceived by the councillors. The survey asked: 'As a candidate in the last election, to what extent did you have the support of the following groups?' where the councillors again responded on a 5-point scale.

Councillors from the left consider themselves to be strongly supported by trade unions and to a smaller extent by local movements, whereas councillors from the right feel supported by business and the Church.

Table 10.2 Correlations of self-assessed ideology and representation

<i>Actor/group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Pearson's r</i>	<i>p</i>
Less resourceful citizens	4,064	-0.196	0.000
Unemployed	3,966	-0.187	0.000
Ethnic minorities	3,880	-0.177	0.000
Workers	3,959	-0.149	0.000
Public servants	3,896	-0.088	0.000
The youth	4,135	-0.051	0.001
The whole county	4,411	-0.048	0.001
Elderly people/pensioners/retired people	4,076	-0.027	0.079
Particular public service(s)	3,847	-0.024	0.136
The middle class	3,936	0.010	0.538
Tourism sector	2,736	0.049	0.010
Secondary sector (industry)	2,677	0.064	0.001
Construction/real estate sector	2,634	0.077	0.000
Primary sector (farming, fishing etc.)	2,721	0.079	0.000
Trade sector	2,649	0.090	0.000
A particular geographic part of the county	4,270	0.093	0.000
Private business employees	3,848	0.145	0.000
The Church/religious groups	3,743	0.148	0.000

Source: Second Tier Survey

Table 10.3 Correlations of self-assessed ideology and perceived support

<i>actor/group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Pearson's r</i>	<i>p</i>
Trade union(s)	4,465	-0.283	0.000
Other local associations/groups/social movements	4,473	-0.100	0.000
National organ(s) of your party	4,348	0.022	0.139
Your party at the county level	4,433	0.036	0.004
National politician(s)	4,337	0.036	0.018
The media	4,450	0.053	0.000
Farmers, fishers <i>et al.</i> (primary sector)	3,187	0.088	0.000
Industrial enterprises (secondary sector)	3,175	0.096	0.000
Tourism sector	3,163	0.097	0.000
Construction/real estate	3,168	0.104	0.000
Trade-services (tertiary sector) enterprises	3,173	0.124	0.000
The Church/other religious groups	4,435	0.139	0.000

Source: Second Tier Survey

To sum up, both representation and perceived support are congruent with the traditional left-right cleavage. We can thus assume that the measurement of the self-assessed ideology is valid.

Second-tier councillors and their ideology

Ideology of parties and their second-tier councillors compared

Where does a party stand considering a one-dimensional ideology scale? To answer that question, we will first compare the councillors' self-assessment of their individual ideology with the ideology position of their respective party from their individual perspective. It is important to note the difference: the first variable displays how councillors rate their own *personal* ideology. The second variable measures how they view the ideological position of their *national party*. Gaps between the own ideological commitment and the perceived ideological position of the own party may be caused by the party's ideological position moving due to electoral competition or simply time trends. Also, speaking in market terms, parties can be narrow 'niche' products which collect a small portion of the electorate (and thus, also a small fraction of potential party members), or can be 'catch-all' parties both in electoral and party membership terms.

In fact, a correlation between those two variables across the database shows a strong relationship (Pearson's $r = 0.783$ with $p < 0.000$ while $N = 3,721$), but there is still a significant gap.

For the purpose of analysis, only parties will be considered with at 10 ten councillors responding to the ideology items in the questionnaire. To be consistent with the check against the manifesto project data carried out next, only parties will be included that are present in the manifesto database (Volkens *et al.* 2014). In some instances this leads to an incomplete display of party systems: e.g. in France, where

the political right is in a constant reorganization process or in England, where the rise of the UKIP has not been covered yet by the manifesto project. Ultimately, 60 parties from 14 countries are included in the analysis. Altogether, 3,784 councillors are members of these parties and answered the respective items in the questionnaire, which means that roughly three out of four councillors included in the project database will be covered by the analysis within this chapter.

The first finding is that the data indeed paint a plausible picture of the present party systems in the countries covered. We find communist, leftist, green, socialist and Social Democratic parties on the left, liberal and ‘centre’ parties in the centre and Christian, conservative and nationalist parties on the right. Despite the debates about the obsolescence of the left-right scheme, second-tier councillors have no problem collectively reproducing the image of ‘their’ party within the current national party system – within the left-right spectrum, no less.

Table 10.4 also shows that there are different types of countries concerning the gaps between mean self-assessment and party assessment. In six of the countries,

Table 10.4 Self-assessed ideology and national party ideology compared

Country	Party	Self-assessment		Party assessment		Difference
		N	Mean	N	Mean	
Belgium	groen! Green!	11	1.73	11	1.55	0.18
	sp.a Socialist Party	42	2.21	42	2.55	-0.33
	Different					
	ECOLO Ecologists	10	1.90	11	2.64	-0.74
	PS Francophone Socialist Party	41	2.24	40	3.28	-1.03
	CDH Christian Social Party	18	5.00	18	4.67	0.33
	CD&V Christian Democratic and Flemish	68	4.99	66	4.88	0.11
	openVLD Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats	43	6.23	41	5.95	0.28
	MR Reform Movement	23	7.04	24	6.79	0.25
Croatia	VB Flemish Interest	21	8.43	21	9.29	-0.86
	SDP	42	2.26	40	2.53	-0.26
	HSU	11	3.55	12	2.83	0.71
	HNS	11	3.27	13	3.62	-0.34
	HSS	33	5.97	33	6.42	-0.45
Czech Republic	HDZ	66	7.42	68	7.09	0.34
	KSCM	17	1.66	17	1.66	0.00
	CSSD	20	3.45	20	3.36	0.09
	KDU-CSL	10	6.55	10	6.36	0.18
England	ODS	21	8.23	21	7.97	0.26
	Labour	15	3.40	16	4.38	-0.98
	Liberal Democrats	28	4.22	29	5.33	-1.11
	Conservative	73	6.74	72	6.54	0.20

Country	Party	Self-assessment		Party assessment		Difference
		<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>N</i>	Mean	
France	PCF French Communist Party	13	0.92	13	1.08	-0.15
Germany	PS Socialist Party	108	3.18	103	3.38	-0.20
	Die Linke	62	1.74	62	1.29	0.45
	Grüne	167	3.26	167	2.87	0.39
	SPD	336	3.32	330	3.28	0.04
	FDP	79	5.49	78	4.99	0.50
	CDU	338	6.37	330	5.12	1.25
Greece	CSU	84	6.45	83	5.76	0.69
	PASOK	95	3.66	83	4.47	-0.81
Hungary	ND	69	7.12	55	7.00	0.12
	MSzP	13	3.15	12	2.58	0.57
Italy	FiDeSz	49	6.90	46	6.17	0.72
	PD	41	3.07	39	3.26	-0.18
	PdL	32	6.38	32	6.19	0.19
Norway	SV Socialist Left Party	10	3.00	10	2.73	0.27
	AP Labour Party	91	3.53	91	3.92	-0.39
	SP Centre Party	16	5.57	16	4.32	1.25
	KrF Christian People's Party	16	5.40	16	5.68	-0.28
Poland	V Liberal Party	16	6.19	16	6.25	-0.06
	FrP Progress Party	21	8.14	21	7.58	0.56
	H Conservative Party	49	7.46	49	7.29	0.17
	SLD	14	2.36	15	1.87	0.49
	PSL	20	6.25	18	6.17	0.08
Romania	PO	14	6.57	13	6.46	0.11
	PSD	40	2.65	40	2.53	0.13
	UDM/RMDSz	14	6.86	14	5.64	1.21
	PD-L	28	8.36	28	7.68	0.68
Spain	PNL	37	8.51	37	7.78	0.73
	IU	13	1.15	13	–	-0.15
	PSOE (socialist)	70	2.53	68	3.26	-0.74
	CiU	14	5.00	13	5.23	-0.23
Sweden	PP (conservative)	65	6.52	62	6.56	-0.04
	V Left Party	77	1.22	77	1.18	0.04
	AP Social Democratic Labour Party	461	2.93	460	3.64	-0.71
	MP Green Ecology Party	62	4.18	62	4.32	-0.15
	CP Centre Party	97	5.70	97	6.19	-0.48
	FP Liberal People's Party	84	5.46	84	6.38	-0.92
	Kd Christian Democrats	55	6.15	55	6.80	-0.65
	MSP Moderate Coalition Party	290	7.52	290	7.38	0.14

Source: Second Tier Survey

individual ideology self-assessment and perception of the national party's ideology do not differ much. This is the case in most Eastern European countries (Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland), France and Italy. For the countries in Eastern Europe, this finding is not surprising since the party systems and the parties within those systems are comparatively 'young'. This means that the possible gap between individual and collective ideological identity has not had the chance to evolve. Concerning data for France, half of the political spectrum is missing. In Italy, only the major contenders (PD and PdL) are included in this analysis, which both seem to be coherent blocks.

In five countries, the relationship between individual ideology and party ideology is lopsided. On one hand, in Spain, Sweden and England, average party members in the majority of parties considers themselves to be *left* of their own party. In Romania and Germany, on the other hand, members tend to view themselves further to the *right* of their own party. Especially in Germany, this can be explained by the nature of the data: since the survey covers the *Landkreise* and thus no cities (which are mostly 'county-exempt cities', i.e. municipalities that are counties at the same time – see Heinelt and Egner 2011: 106) the councillors represent the rural parts of the country, where people in general are more conservative than their colleagues from the cities. Three other countries seem to be special cases, where either two parties show significant gaps (the ecologist and the francophone socialist party in Belgium) or members of a single party show a larger gap with their party's ideology (PASOK in Greece and the Centre Party in Sweden) while the others are parties where the mean member are fairly in line with their party's ideology.

Individual ideology and personal attributes

In the next step, I will give some insights to correlations between individual ideology and individual attributes of the councillors. For this purpose, I will use age (in years), gender (male = 1 and female = 2), education (1 = elementary, 2 = secondary, 3 = university degree) and seniority (years of party membership).

Having tested 60 parties and 14 countries with four pairs of variables each, I show the results of 296 correlation tests in table 10.5. Since the analysis is based on micro-level data, most of the significant correlations are weak, but some are considerably strong. There are no clear patterns of correlations, which means that there is no individual attribute which is connected to the self-assessment of personal ideology in the same direction over all countries with a significant effect, let alone all countries in the analysis. But nonetheless, there are some interesting results.

- *Age seems to be related to leftism.* Although only six significant correlations could be found, five of them are pointing to this direction. One correlation is valid only for Greece itself, but nor within the Greek parties themselves. One case is the English Labour party, which shows a rather strong correlation ($r = 0.590$), associating party members to the right with growing age. At the same time, the duration of Labour party membership is strongly associated with

Table 10.5 Self-assessed ideology and individual attributes

<i>Country/party</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Seniority</i>
Belgium	0.021	-0.094	-0.036	0.081
groen! Green!	0.153	0.232	0.425	0.220
sp.a Socialist Party Different	-0.154	-0.284	*-0.371	0.137
ECOLO Ecologists	-0.173	-0.147	-0.441	-0.270
PS Francophone Socialist Party	-0.184	-0.296	0.240	0.190
CDH Christian Social Party	-0.238	0.242	-0.142	-0.082
CD&V Christian Democratic and Flemish	-0.076	-0.108	0.072	0.059
openVLD Open Flemish Liberals and Democrat	0.074	0.270	0.054	-0.089
MR Reform Movement	0.023	-0.036	0.314	0.249
VB Flemish Interest	-0.033	-0.147	-0.044	-0.165
Croatia	-0.122	-0.059	-0.069	-0.052
SDP	0.075	-0.178	-0.146	*0.362
HSU	-0.381		0.025	*0.682
HNS	-0.062	-0.228	-0.341	-0.081
HSS	0.296	**0.548	-0.018	0.115
HDZ	0.083	0.148	-0.195	-0.145
Czech Republic	0.055	-0.130	-0.104	0.136
KSCM	0.002	0.085	-0.100	0.180
CSSD	-0.005	-0.322	-0.210	-0.146
KDU-CSL	-0.141		0.075	-0.075
ODS	-0.003	0.191	-0.085	0.375
England	0.020	-0.100	-0.098	0.026
Labour	*0.590	0.169	-0.060	*-0.675
Liberal Democrats	-0.173	0.161	0.074	0.078
Conservative	-0.172	-0.157	-0.034	0.055
France	0.053	0.089	0.087	**0.278
PCF French Communist Party	0.076		-0.124	0.257
PS Socialist Party	0.105	0.043	-0.033	0.170
Germany	-0.102	-0.190	-0.065	-0.009
Die Linke	0.010	0.034	-0.040	-0.157
Grüne	-0.152	-0.024	0.056	0.117
SPD	*-0.109	-0.070	**0.165	**0.173
FDP	-0.020	-0.196	-0.072	-0.035
CDU	-0.068	*-0.109	0.007	*-0.119
CSU	-0.162	0.090	0.008	0.121
Greece	*-0.220	*0.164	0.010	*0.166
PASOK	-0.070	0.091	0.040	-0.005
ND	-0.191	0.209	0.011	0.074

(Continued)

Table 10.5 (Continued)

<i>Country/party</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Seniority</i>
Hungary	0.066	0.187	-0.181	0.196
MSzP	0.535		-0.222	-0.324
FiDeSz	0.070	0.037	-0.079	0.003
Italy	-0.067	** -0.316	-0.095	* -0.292
PD	0.123	-0.244	0.082	-0.099
PdL	-0.195	0.021	0.049	0.158
Norway	-0.023	-0.121	* -0.134	0.022
SV Socialist Left Party	0.282	-0.470		0.174
AP Labour Party	0.044	-0.036	0.170	* -0.219
SP Centre Party	-0.024	-0.166	* -0.532	-0.028
KrF Christian People's Party	0.114	0.040	-0.178	0.038
V Liberal Party	-0.279	-0.197	0.163	0.282
FrP Progress Party	0.116	-0.197	-0.332	-0.329
H Conservative Party	-0.016	-0.153	0.004	-0.041
Poland	0.177	0.024	-0.030	-0.099
SLD	0.230	-0.139	0.153	-0.217
PSL	0.133	-0.186	* -0.473	* -0.485
PO	0.329	0.108		-0.090
Romania	-0.141	-0.145	0.161	0.116
PSD	-0.120	* -0.343	0.145	-0.099
UDM/RMDSz	0.357	-0.228		0.007
PD-L	-0.311	0.261		0.125
PNL	0.166	0.024		-0.285
Spain	0.072	-0.087	** -0.240	0.101
IU	-0.460	0.062	0.262	0.161
PSOE	0.118	-0.197	-0.084	-0.110
CiU	0.080	-0.326	-0.270	0.098
PP	-0.172	0.053	* -0.250	-0.110
Sweden	-0.071	-0.014	** 0.140	** 0.091
V Left Party	0.202	-0.169	-0.009	-0.204
AP Social Democratic Labour Party	-0.012	-0.045	0.003	0.051
MP Green Ecology Party	-0.173	0.058	0.104	0.157
CP Centre Party	-0.127	* 0.233	-0.170	0.134
FP Liberal People's Party	* -0.244	0.161	0.169	* 0.265
Kd Christian Democrats	* -0.271	-0.068	* 0.330	* 0.281
MSP Moderate Coalition Party	* -0.163	0.044	* -0.151	-0.025

Source: Second Tier Survey. * indicates significant on .05 level, ** on .01 level.

describing the personal ideology as left ($r = -.675$). This separates the English Labour party from the German SPD, where older members are left and members with a brief party membership are more on the right wing of the party. The three remaining cases are all situated on the right side of the spectrum in Sweden, where older members of the Liberal People's Party (FP) the Christian Democrats (KD) and the Moderate Coalition Party (M) significantly tend to the left.

- *Gender and ideology are unsystematically linked together.* In two countries, there is an overall correlation, but the findings are contradictory. In Italy, women tend to lean more to the left than men altogether, whereas in Greece, the connection is inverted. In both countries, the pattern cannot be reproduced within the parties, and thus are probably inter-party effects, e.g. because one party shows significantly more women in the sample than the other. In two countries, we see one party each where women are leaning to the left (the German CDU and the left-leaning PSD in Romania). But in two countries, we also see women tending to the right (HSS in Croatia, and the Centre Party in Sweden).
- *If education and ideology are connected, it usually means that the higher educated are inclined to the left.* This finding is based on two country patterns (Spain and Norway). Also, six parties show this correlation, among them the Dutch SPA, German Social Democrats, the Centre Party in Norway, PSL from Poland, the Spanish conservatives (PP) and the Swedish Moderate Coalition Party. Two findings indicate the other direction; both are again located in Sweden, where the overall pattern shows that the higher educated lean to the right, as do the members of the Christian Democrats.
- *Self-assessed ideology and the individual duration of party membership show the most significant correlations, but no clear pattern.* Although the majority of findings supports that party membership is connected to a tendency to the right, the direction of the effect may in some cases be dependent on the general ideology position of the party. In three countries, the national pattern follows the idea of long-time party members as leaning to the right, namely France, Greece and Sweden. The latter is the most interesting case, with two Swedish parties supporting the trend – again, it is the Liberal Party and the Christian Democratic Party. Three left-leaning parties show the same behaviour, namely the two Croatian parties (SDP and HSU) and the German Social Democrats. Four parties show different patterns where long-time party members lean to the left. Those are the German CDU, the Norwegian Labour Party, the Polish PSL and the English Labour party (where age also is a strong variable, as discussed earlier). The only country with an overall pattern of party membership and left leaning is Italy; but again, the effect is not reproduced within the parties.

It seems that on the macro level, the findings are rather poor. This may be an effect of the low numbers of councillors representing some of the parties, but it

Table 10.6 Self-assessed ideology and individual attributes by party family

Party family	N	Ideology	Pearson's <i>r</i>			
			Age	Gender	Education	Seniority
Communist/socialist	192	1.50	.070	-.033	.034	.032
Social Democratic	1,345	3.10	-.001	**-.087	-.018	-.021
Green/ecologist	250	3.36	*-.155	.018	.053	*.134
Electoral alliance	85	4.25	.098	.008	-.174	.045
Agrarian	133	5.77	-.035	.098	**-.253	.030
Liberal	295	6.17	**-.299	-.056	**-.198	**-.316
Christian Democratic	648	6.25	**-.109	*-.088	-.006	.020
Ethnic	14	6.86	.357	-.228		.007
Conservative	628	7.18	-.061	.067	*-.081	*-.068
Right wing	21	8.43	-.033	-.147	-.044	-.165
Total	3,802	4.76	**-.071	**-.075	.023	*.040

Source: Second Tier Survey

may be also a result of different ideological positions and historical development of each party and its respective country. Therefore, I grouped the parties into party families according to Andersson *et al.* (2014).

As Table 10.6 shows, the correlations from the single parties (which had been sometimes 'flip-flopping') are now behaving consistently for most of the combinations.

- Concerning age, becoming older seems to be associated with leaning to the left. This relationship is consistent over the whole population, but also in three party families (green and liberal as well as Christian Democratic parties).
- Additionally, women seem to assess their ideology as slightly more to the left than men. Although this relationship is quite small, it is consistent over the whole sample and two party groups (Social Democratic and Christian Democratic).
- Education has a different impact on ideology in party families. Higher education is associated with leaning to the left in the agrarian and conservative group while being associated with leaning to the right in the liberal group.
- Party membership seniority is interrelated with leaning to the right in the whole population and consistently in the green and liberal party family, while the effect is reversed in the conservative group.
- Four party families (communist, electoral alliance, ethnic and right wing) show no correlation at all.

Party ideology and party families

The last step in the descriptive analysis about parties concerns whether the party families, as constructed by Andersson *et al.* (2014), are consistent from the perspective of the second-tier data. Therefore, I will investigate if the parties' ideology scores from the councillors' view match the values of the parties' families. Only families with more than two parties are included in the analysis.

Table 10.7 Party ideology from councillor perspective by party family and party

<i>Party family/party (country)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
Communist/socialist	192	1.34	0.97
Parti communiste (France)	13	1.08	1.12
Vänsterpartiet (Sweden)	77	1.18	0.97
Die Linke (Germany)	62	1.29	0.69
IU (Spain)	13	1.31	1.03
KSČM (Czech Rep.)	17	1.66	1.12
SV (Norway)	10	2.73	0.86
Green/ecologist	251	3.16	1.26
Groen (Norway)	11	1.55	1.13
Ecolo (Belgium)	11	2.64	1.36
Grüne (Germany)	167	2.87	0.93
Miljöpartiet de gröna (Sweden)	62	4.32	1.25
Social Democratic	1,317	3.50	1.55
SLD (Poland)	15	1.87	1.96
PSD (Romania)	40	2.53	1.66
MSZP (Hungary)	12	2.58	1.16
PD (Italy)	39	3.26	1.35
PSOE (Spain)	68	3.26	1.31
PS (Belgium)	40	3.28	1.91
SPD (Germany)	330	3.28	1.17
ČSSD (Czech Rep.)	20	3.36	1.39
Parti socialiste (France)	103	3.38	1.87
Socialdemokraterna (Sweden)	460	3.64	1.55
AP (Norway)	91	3.92	1.54
Labour (UK)	16	4.38	1.25
PASOK (Greece)	83	4.47	1.70
Christian Democratic	623	5.52	1.36
CD&V (Belgium)	66	4.88	1.07
CDU (Germany)	330	5.12	1.19
KrF (Norway)	16	5.68	0.70
CSU (Germany)	83	5.76	1.05
KDU-ČSL (Czech Rep.)	10	6.36	0.74
Kristdemokraterna (Sweden)	55	6.80	1.11
ND (Greece)	55	7.00	1.53
Agrarian	131	5.95	1.56
SP (Norway)	16	4.32	1.31
Centerpartiet (Sweden)	97	6.19	1.39
PSL (Poland)	18	6.17	1.86
Liberal	296	6.24	1.66
FDP (Germany)	78	4.99	0.93
Lib Dem (UK)	29	5.33	1.47
V (Norway)	16	6.25	0.73
Folkpartiet Liberalerna (Sweden)	84	6.38	1.50
MR (Belgium)	24	6.79	1.18

(Continued)

Table 10.7 (Continued)

<i>Party family/party (country)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
PD-L (Romania)	28	7.68	1.36
PNL (Romania)	37	7.78	1.70
Conservative	619	7.00	1.65
CIU (Spain)	13	5.23	1.01
Conservative (UK)	72	6.54	1.89
FIDESZ (Hungary)	46	6.17	1.25
PDL (Italy)	32	6.19	1.28
PO (Poland)	13	6.46	2.37
PP (Spain)	62	6.56	1.26
H (Norway)	49	7.29	1.73
Moderata samlingspartiet (Sweden)	290	7.38	1.51
FrP (Norway)	21	7.58	2.23
ODS (Czech Rep.)	21	7.97	1.41

Source: Second Tier Survey

The first result is striking: Most of the parties rally around a relatively narrow area on the 11-point ideology scale. The mean standard deviation of a party in the sample is only $\sigma = 1.39$, which seems small considering the catch-all function of some of the parties. But if we have a deeper look into the data, we find that some of the party families and some of the parties are more consistent in terms of ideological span than others.

- The family of the far-left parties is on the very left of the spectrum (mean: 1.34) and is narrowly shaped in a small span of only 0.58 points, if we exclude one exception in the group: the Norwegian Socialist Left, which is significantly more oriented to the right. From the judgement of its own councillors, it would fit better into the green or the Social Democratic family. Apart from that, all parties show a narrow internal span, which means that councillors within those parties share equal judgement about their party's position.
- The green party family is focused clearly more to the right with a mean of 3.16 points. The group is more diverse than the family of communists and socialist parties, and the parties themselves are somewhat more diverse. According to the ideology score, the green party from Norway would fit better into the 'left' family, while the Swedish green party resembles the ideology scores of the Social Democratic family.
- The Social Democratic family is the biggest in size and is situated at a mean of 3.50, just slightly to the right of the ecologists' family. The span of the family is wider than the two families discussed above as are the parties themselves. Three distinct subgroups of Social Democratic parties emerge from the analysis. There are eight parties which are narrowly placed between

3.26 and 3.92 points and could be described as the 'core' of European Social Democracy, namely the Social Democrats from Italy, Spain, Belgium, Germany, the Czech Republic, France, Sweden and Norway. On the left, there are three parties from Eastern Europe (SLD in Poland, PSD in Romania and MSZP in Hungary) which are clearly more left-leaning than the rest of the family and would fit better either into the leftist family or the green family. On the right side of the core, there are two parties beyond a similar gap, which are the English Labour party and the Greek PASOK, which are at the edge of the Christian Democratic cluster.

- The Christian Democratic family is significantly to the right of the Social Democratic cluster with a mean of 5.52. Its parties are less diverse than those in the Social Democratic family, but nevertheless the family covers a broad ideological range. Two parties are clearly leaning to a position even further to the right, those are the Swedish Christian Democrats and the Greek ND.
- Close to the Christian Democratic family and mostly overlapping ideologically is the agrarian party family, at a mean of 5.95. It is comprised of two Nordic parties and one Polish party, of which one (the Norwegian SP) seems to be significantly different from the other two. It would fit better to the right wing of the Social Democratic cluster or could be considered the left end of the Christian Democratic family. Also, the Polish party shows a very broad internal deviation, but the low number of cases makes it difficult to judge whether there are two party wings or if it is just statistical noise.
- The liberal family is situated at 6.24, which is slightly on the right of the overall spectrum. Together with the conservative family, it shows the broadest range of all the families. The liberal 'space' is covered by consistent member parties, which vary significantly in their mean ideology score. For example, the German FDP seems to tend clearly to the left, whereas the two Romanian liberal parties tend strongly to the right – they would well fit into the 'conservative' group.
- The conservative family is clearly on the right with a mean of exactly 7.00 points. Its parties also cover a broad span of the spectrum, but only one party (the small Spanish CiU) deviates significantly from the core – namely to the left. All other parties are fitting well into the conservative cluster.

The analysis so far shows that the councillors have familiarity with the concept of the left-right cleavage and can base their ideological assessment on this notion. There is a high correlation between their self-assessed individual ideology and the ideological position of their party as they describe it; but we must be aware that there are some parties in the 14 countries that show significant gaps between the mean ideological self-assessment of individuals and the mean ideology score for the party. There are for most pairs consistent correlations between ideology and personal attributes, and party families deliver a consistent ideological picture of the parties included.

Ideology data from the survey and manifestos compared

In this section, I will compare data for the second-tier councillors' assessment of their party's ideology with data for party ideology from the macro level using party manifestos in order to find differences between competing measures of party ideology, namely the ideology position of a party from the perspective of its own councillors and party ideology judged by comparative analysis of party manifestos (Volkens *et al.* 2014). From the comparative manifesto project data, I will use the central ideology variable (right-left, 'RILE') for the party manifesto ideology. In order to compare the data with the Second Tier Survey, the manifesto data (where -100 is the extreme left and +100 is the extreme right) were recalculated to an 11-point scale to match the scale of the second tier data.

On the electoral 'market', parties tend to maximize their electoral outcome by presenting voters a manifesto. Voters may compare the party's manifesto to the programmatic statements of other parties (and maybe government performance in the past) and try to predict what the future government will do. Before the background of a standard normal distribution of voters on the ideology scale, a party is likely to move towards the middle of the scale: it can always win more voters there, even if it loses voters who are on the edge of the ideology room the party occupies (Downs 1957: 118).

Thus, we can expect parties to be more 'centralist' than the actual position their own party members are assigning to the party. We may also expect that the difference between party member assessment and the manifesto score to be larger if the party is far away from the centre, because the electoral profit is much larger in the case of big differences.

As Table 10.8 depicts, we see the same picture in all countries covered by the survey. Parties which are strongly left in the judgement of the councillors show a manifesto which is much more to the right than we would normally expect – and vice versa, parties which are normally on the hard right show strong tendencies to the left. Interestingly, the effects come with different magnitudes in different countries.

- Nine countries show the typical pattern of parties on the brink of the scale moving strongly towards the centre *from both sides*. This is the case in Belgium, where the green party and the SP.A (both left) as well as the Reform Movement and the VB (both right) show big differences between 'real' and manifesto positions. It is also true for Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania, where we can see a significant divide between right parties tending to the left and left parties tending to the right. Italy is also a perfect example, where the two party blocks are separated by a significant gap in the survey assessment but are nearly equal regarding the manifesto scores. Spanish parties are similar in behaviour. The same tendency is demonstrated by Swedish parties, where particularly the three parties on the right try to appeal to the welfare-oriented voters, but where also the leftist party (V) shows a large gap of more than three points between survey responses and manifesto scores.

Table 10.8 Assessment of party ideology and manifesto ideology

Country	Party	Party assessment		Manifesto score		Difference
		N	Mean	Original	Recalculated	
Belgium	groen! Green!	11	1.55	-0.85	4.96	3.41
	sp.a Socialist Party Different	42	2.55	-12.61	4.37	1.82
	ECOLO Ecologists	11	2.64	-31.28	3.44	0.80
	PS Francophone Socialist Party	40	3.28	-26.61	3.67	0.39
	CDH Christian Social Party	18	4.67	-24.61	3.77	-0.90
	CD&V	66	4.88	7.25	5.36	0.48
	openVLD.	41	5.95	12.73	5.64	-0.31
	MR Reform Movement	24	6.79	-0.22	4.99	-1.80
Croatia	VB Flemish Interest	21	9.29	39.44	6.97	-2.32
	SDP	40	2.53	-9.26	4.54	2.01
	HSU	12	2.83	-24.38	3.78	0.95
	HNS	13	3.62	-5.16	4.74	1.12
	HSS	33	6.42	-8.80	4.56	-1.86
	HDZ	68	7.09	-6.37	4.68	-2.41
Czech Republic	KSCM	17	1.66	-28.36	3.58	1.92
	CSSD	20	3.36	-10.66	4.47	1.11
	KDU-CSL	10	6.36	1.54	5.08	-1.28
	ODS	21	7.97	11.19	5.56	-2.41
England	Labour	16	4.38	-1.50	4.93	0.55
	Liberal Democrats	29	5.33	4.66	5.23	-0.10
	Conservative	72	6.54	17.54	5.88	-0.66
France	PCF French Communist Party	13	1.08	-48.00	2.60	1.52
	PS Socialist Party	103	3.38	-21.26	3.94	0.56
Germany	Die Linke	62	1.29	-34.57	3.27	1.98
	Grüne	167	2.87	-19.59	4.02	1.15
	SPD	330	3.28	-23.57	3.82	0.54
	FDP	78	4.99	14.04	5.70	0.71
	CDU	330	5.12	2.56	5.13	0.01
	CSU	83	5.76	2.56	5.13	-0.63
Greece	PASOK	83	4.47	-9.49	4.53	0.06
	ND	55	7.00	-17.59	4.12	-2.88
Hungary	MSzP	12	2.58	-15.20	4.24	1.66
	FiDeSz	46	6.17	-4.46	4.78	-1.39
Italy	PD	39	3.26	-6.86	4.66	1.40
	PdL	32	6.19	3.81	5.19	-1.00
Norway	SV Socialist Left Party	10	2.73	-40.11	2.99	0.26
	AP Labour Party	91	3.92	-29.79	3.51	-0.41
	SP Centre Party	16	4.32	-20.41	3.98	-0.34
	KrF Christian People's Party	16	5.68	-11.08	4.45	-1.23
	V Liberal Party	16	6.25	-18.53	4.07	-2.18
	FrP Progress Party	21	7.58	6.76	5.34	-2.24
	H Conservative Party	49	7.29	-11.40	4.43	-2.86

(Continued)

Table 10.8 (Continued)

Country	Party	Party assessment		Manifesto score		Difference
		<i>N</i>	Mean	Original	Recalculated	
Poland	SLD	15	1.87	-0.90	4.96	3.09
	PSL	18	6.17	18.30	5.92	-0.25
	PO	13	6.46	-4.41	4.78	-1.68
Romania	PSD	40	2.53	-12.91	4.35	1.82
	UDM/RMDSz	14	5.64	-2.64	4.87	-0.77
	PD-L	28	7.68	4.95	5.25	-2.43
	PNL	37	7.78	12.89	5.64	-2.14
Spain	IU	13	1.31	-36.86	3.16	1.85
	PSOE (socialist)	68	3.26	-27.23	3.64	0.38
	CiU	13	5.23	-10.86	4.46	-0.77
	PP (conservative)	62	6.56	-3.45	4.83	-1.73
Sweden	V Left Party	77	1.18	-12.20	4.39	3.21
	AP Social Democratic Party	460	3.64	-32.27	3.39	-0.25
	MP Green Ecology Party	62	4.32	-9.16	4.54	0.22
	CP Centre Party	97	6.19	-2.24	4.89	-1.30
	FP Liberal People's Party	84	6.38	-4.80	4.76	-1.62
	Kd Christian Democrats	55	6.80	8.14	5.41	-1.39
	MSP Moderate Coalition	290	7.38	2.48	5.12	-2.26
	Party					

Source: Second Tier Survey

- Four countries show a lopsided picture, where only one side of the system shows big differences. First, there is France, where only the left part of the system could have been included in the analysis (see earlier). In Germany, the party Die Linke – and, to a lesser extent, the Green Party – show a gap to the right, whereas the other parties show quite consistent scores. Norway resembles the picture of Sweden, where right-wing parties are strongly reaching out to centrist voters, but without the corresponding picture of the left side of the aisle.
- The sole exception is England, where the Conservatives and Labour show a minor difference as expected, but the magnitude is very low. This seems to be an effect of the first-past-the-post electoral system, where the parties can be expected to be even closer to each other both concerning the personal ideology of their members and their manifestos.

Conclusions

Looking at the Second Tier Survey responses of elected councillors, we can learn a number of things about individual and party ideology in the countries covered by the survey. First, it is notable that measuring ideology by asking for self-assessment and party assessment on a one-dimensional scale makes sense for the

overwhelming majority of the population in the sample: the left-right cleavage is still alive. Second, there is significant variation concerning within-party deviation from the mean, i.e. there are broad ‘catch-all’ parties and parties surviving in an electoral ‘niche’. Third, parties in Europe are very diverse concerning the linkages between ideology and personal attributes. Fourth, we can observe the effects of party competition in the various European countries, where – in line with the economic theory of democracy – parties tend to polish their manifesto to less ‘extreme’ policy statements in order to collect votes from the more centrist voters. Unfortunately, the survey only covers 14 countries; so much more research is needed covering a larger range of countries and parties within those countries.

Notes

- 1 Some of the teams used a scale with 10 points (either from 0 to 9 or from 1 to 10) instead of the 11-point scale; this was compensated for by recalculating the values to the 11 point scale.
- 2 The regional/level was only included in the questionnaire if applicable, i.e. if the respective level exists in the country. The German *Länder* or Italy’s regions are typical examples of this level.

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11 Actors' influence and horizontal power relations at the second tier of local government

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Introduction

The consolidation and strengthening of executive power at all levels of local government tends to limit traditional collective decision making within the council (John 2001; Hambleton 2002; Getimis and Hlepas 2013).¹ According to the leadership and reform debate, this development is linked with various dynamics in the European countries: personalization of politics and institutional trends or direct election of mayors in the last decades (in Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom and elsewhere, see Hambleton 2011, 2015) changed the balances of influence and power not only between the executive (mayors) and the council but also between elected politicians and professional administrators (Hambleton and Sweeting 2014). In several countries, there were also tendencies towards privatization and outsourcing of a part of municipal services, actions that seem to weaken the traditional role of municipal bureaucracies and even that of elected assemblies. At the same time, political leadership was strengthened – including the role of leading bureaucrats of the local government administration, i.e. chief executive officers (CEOs), who act as interlocutors and negotiators on the part of local government (Kuhlmann and Wollmann 2014).

Thus, executive leadership seems to gain power in local politics, while representative bodies and assemblies in which democratic decisions are traditionally debated and taken seem to lose ground.

In the present era of 'complexity and plurality' (Jessop 1998) new governance forms emerge, in which public actors, like local government and administration, are not the only steering institutions. Furthermore, it is argued that private actors and semi-public agencies are becoming more influential in new governance arrangements (Denters and Rose 2005; Heinelt 2010: 53–54), while elected politicians and leading bureaucrats increasingly act within a web of multiple players (from the business community and the civil society), who exert influence on local government decisions. In the framework of growing influence of networks in public policy, the role of leaders 'is on steering, influencing, and co-ordinating the actions of others' (Hambleton 2007: 164). Following this approach, municipalities and counties would be expected to experience growing influence of non-governmental local actors.

At the same time, upper levels of government (state level, European level) exert diverse influence on the local level. This occurs within multi-level governance arrangements, which differ among countries (e.g. varying dependence of the local level from state funds, instructions and planning guidelines, varying configuration of central/regional relations, varying openness and responsiveness of local government to European policies, etc.). The recent financial crisis particularly affected the European periphery, revitalizing, in most cases, institutional reflexes of re-centralization that disempowered local assemblies. Conversely, local executive leaders could experience a strengthening of their roles as advocates and interlocutors within the context of the crisis. Therefore, different manifestations of vertical inter-governmental relations would emerge among the different European countries, as it has been systematically analysed by Sellers and Lidstrom (2007) who measured the strengths of local capacities and degrees of upper-level supervision.

In this chapter we first refer to the applied approach and the main research questions. The second part examines the horizontal power relations in different local governments types, while the third part focuses on the perceptions of councillors, presidents and leading bureaucrats (CEOs) of the second tier of local government, in the analysed countries, concerning the influence of particular non-governmental actors and of the upper level of government over activities on the second tier. In the fourth part relations between actors will be highlighted against the background of the frequency of contacts among them and the electoral support provided to politicians by different categories of actors. Finally, conclusions are drawn, answering the initial research questions.

Approach and main research hypotheses

We are following a twofold approach: On one hand we are referring to the horizontal power relations' typology of Mouritzen and Svava (2002) as it has been adapted for the second level by Heinelt and Bertrana (2011) and, on the other hand, to perceptions about actors' influence prevailing in three different groups of respondents to the empirical survey in 14 European countries: councillors, presidents and CEOs of the second tier of local government.

The Mouritzen/Svava typology makes a major distinction between elected politicians (presidents and councillors) acting as laypeople on the one side and leading professional bureaucrats, on the other side. The latter engage their expert knowledge and usually have a long term activity in a machinery of administration marked by continuity, following service rules and duties (Mouritzen and Svava 2002). Another distinction is made between presidents that overtake an executive leadership role and councillors being members of an elected body, acting as representatives of the people (Getimis and Hlepas 2013: 146).

We expect that empirical findings about perceptions of influence will reflect the patterns of different horizontal power relations at the second tier of local government as categorized by strong leader form, committee-leader form, collective form, council-manager form.

Referring to the different horizontal power relations at the second tier of local government in the examined countries and following the typology developed by

Mouritzen and Svava (2002: 55–66), Heinelt and Bertrana (2011) summarise the main patterns of the relationships among the head of the county, the county council and the leading bureaucrats as following:

1. A *strong leader form* (similar to the 'strong mayor' form) exists where an elected leader 'controls the majority [...] of the council and is legally and in actuality in full charge of all executive functions' (Mouritzen and Svava 2002: 55). This form is found in Greece, Italy, Romania, Hungary, Croatia and most parts of Germany. It also prevails in France, in Spain and in two additional federal states of Germany (Baden-Württemberg, Schleswig-Holstein), where the head of the county, although not directly elected, is legally and actually in full charge of executive functions and controls the majority of the council. In these countries, we expect that the empirical survey will show high scores of perceived influence concerning county presidents.
2. A *committee-leader form* can be found where executive powers are shared among a political leader (who may or may not control the council) and standing committees composed of elected politicians, while administrative actors also have important executive roles (Mouritzen and Svava 2002). This form is found in Sweden. We expect that influence of committee presidents and CEOs will be relatively strong, compared to other forms of horizontal power relations.
3. A *collective form* can be expected where an executive committee, a collegiate body, is fully in charge of all executive functions. The 'executive committee' consists of elected politicians and a leader, who presides (Mouritzen and Svava 2002). This form is found in Belgium and England in the form of the leader-cabinet model, after the Local Government Act 2000. Also Poland and the Czech Republic as well as the German federal state of Hesse belong to this type, since the county council elects an executive board responsible for executive functions (Swianiewicz 2011: 191; Heinelt and Bertrana 2011: 321). In this group, we expect strong scores of perceived influence for the executive board and the county president.
4. A *council-manager form* exists in Norway where all the executive functions are in the hand of a professional administrative officer who is appointed by the council. We expect the CEO and the executive board to reach high scores of influence.

We will further investigate whether and how perceptions of councillors, presidents and CEOs differ concerning the influence of different actors at the second tier of local government. We will focus on non-governmental actors (outside the county hall) and more precisely on actors from specific economic sectors (e.g. primary, secondary and tertiary sector, tourism) as well as on civic actors (journalists,² NGOs, trade unions). Additionally, we will examine the vertical dimension concerning the influence of upper levels of government on county activities.

We presume that executive leaders (administrative CEOs and the president) perform distinctive roles and have different perceptions about actors' influence that will differ from ordinary councillors, since executives have to anticipate policy formulation and get things done, and often have to intensively interact with actors

involved in policy implementation. Conversely, ordinary councillors, as popular representatives participating in formal decision making of elected bodies, need to maintain bonds to their followers and the wider public (Getimis and Hlepas 2013). Compared to executive office holders, their perceptions about influence are expected to focus less on specific actors. Ordinary councillors would rather refer to disperse and less intensive influence of non-governmental actors. In addition, perceptions about influence of particular actors (or actor categories) will be compared with the frequency of contacts the respondents declare to have with these actors and groups of actors. Elected politicians with executive functions (presidents) and CEOs are expected to have more frequent contacts to wider sets of actors than ordinary councillors. Finally, the variable of electoral support can reveal bonds of elected politicians to different actors. Moreover, we will test if a significant correlation exists between electoral support to elected politicians, the frequency of their contacts and their perceptions of influence.

Horizontal power relations

In the Second Tier Survey, presidents, councillors and CEOs were asked to respond to the following prompt: ‘On the basis of your experience [. . .] in this county, and independently of the formal procedures, please indicate how much influence each

Table 11.1 Perceived influence of actors by responding actors acting under different forms of horizontal power relations at the second tier of local government

<i>Actors whose influence were assessed</i>	<i>Role of the assessing respondents</i>							
	<i>Strong leader</i>		<i>Committee- leader</i>		<i>Collective</i>		<i>Council- manager</i>	
	<i>Councillor president</i>	<i>CEOs</i>	<i>Councillors</i>	<i>Councillor</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>CEOs</i>	<i>Councillor</i>	
<i>Political actors</i>	3.52	3.62	3.67	3.42	3.59	3.64	4.09	3.67
County president	4.71	4.66	4.89	4.40	4.60	4.48	4.84	4.16
Executive board	3.89	4.15	4.08	4.34	4.30	4.40	4.57	4.28
President of the council	3.34	3.27	3.70	2.78	3.32	3.50	3.95	
Presidents of council committees	3.13	3.08	3.09	3.36	3.04	3.15	3.83	3.70
Single councillors without official functions	2.47	2.80	2.68	2.21	2.64	2.62	3.21	2.57
<i>Administrative/ professional actors</i>	3.32	3.46	3.27	3.67	3.14	3.42	3.08	3.65
Chief executive officer (CEO)	3.58	4.07	3.76	4.28	3.37	3.44	3.48	4.30
heads of departments	3.49	3.86	3.56	3.84	3.34	3.75	3.31	3.87

Source: Second Tier Survey

of the following actors have over county activities'. Respondents assessed influence on a scale from 1 ('none') to 5 ('very high'). In the following tables we show the influence scores of political and administrative actors as perceived by councillors, presidents and CEOs in the aforementioned four types of horizontal power configurations.³

The empirical findings confirm the hypothesis that within the *strong leader form*, county presidents are assessed by all groups of respondents to exercise much stronger influence than any other political or administrative actor. Their position seems to be unchallenged by any other actor inside the county. However, this strong leadership position of the president is not exclusive, since other actors exercising executive functions are reaching relatively high scores; indeed, the executive board (political actor) and the CEO (administrative/professional actors) reach scores which are much higher than the rest of the actors. However, single ordinary councillors have the lowest scores of influence, revealing their weak position in the strong leader form of second-tier government.

In the *committee-leader form* (represented exclusively by Sweden in our sample), empirical findings about perceptions of councillors (the only respondents to be taken into account) seem to confirm the assumptions about the relative strength of different actors sharing executive functions (county president, presidents of council committees, executive board, CEOs). However, single councillors have particularly low scores of influence. In Sweden, administrative/professional actors reach comparatively high scores of influence, probably due to the fact that leadership and executive functions are shared.

In the *collective form* empirical findings show that both county presidents and executive boards, being in charge of main executive functions, have the highest scores, while administrative actors (even the CEO) score obviously lower. Single councillors also have low scores in this form.

The initial assumption concerning the *council-manager form* was confirmed by the empirical findings in Norway (where this form is exclusively represented in our sample).⁴ This is the only form where the county president scores lower than the executive board and the CEO. Administrative/professional actors reach relatively strong scores, just as it has been found in the committee leader form.

All in all, the main features of the horizontal power relations captured by Mouritzen/Svara typology and adapted by Bertrana and Heinelt for the second tier of local government have been confirmed by the empirical findings: in the committee leader and council-manager form, both represented by Nordic countries (Sweden and Norway respectively), political actors are not stronger than administrative/actors, while in the strong leader and collective form political actors are obviously stronger than administrative actors. Both political and administrative actors with executive functions reach higher scores in all forms of second tier government. However, single ordinary councillors without official functions score lower in all aforementioned forms. These findings seem to confirm the weak influence of representative bodies (and their members) compared to the influence of politicians and administrators holding executive offices.

Perceptions of actors' influence

County presidents, CEOs and councillors participate in various decision-making procedures of county policies, at different stages (problem identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, decision, implementation, evaluation). Elected county politicians and CEOs have important institutional, managerial and local knowledge concerning networks of influence affecting county activities. Therefore, it is obvious that their assessment concerning the relative influence of different actors over county activities is significant.

Actors supposed to exercise influence have been categorized into three major categories that were further sub-divided into five groups: A first, major distinction has been made at county level between governmental and non-governmental actors. *Governmental actors* hold public offices in county institutions (councillors, heads of departments etc.). *Non-governmental actors* are connected to business (e.g. tourism, trade) and/or civic (associations, unions etc.) roles and interests. A third, distinct category is formed by public actors at *upper levels of government* (e.g. MPs, ministers), in order to illustrate vertical influence.

The category of governmental actors is further subdivided into two groupings alongside the well-known distinction between laypeople and professionals (Mouritzen and Svava, 2002: 51–52): On one hand, there is the group of *elected politicians* and bodies (country president, executive board, president of the council, presidents of council committees or even single ordinary councillors without official functions). On the other, there is a group of *professionals*, CEOs which lead the county, or heads of departments which lead units of county administration. Elected politicians are accountable to the electorate and responsive to citizen's claims and demands. Political leaders promote value choices, mobilise capacities and feed energy into the policy system, giving direction to government and exercising power. However, politicians remain government amateurs who lack expertise on the details of the executive operation, while they often tend to follow short-term strategies focusing on their own re-election and sometimes lack the knowledge that is indispensable for proper administrative decision making. The complexity of today's problems and policy instruments as well as the rising importance of technical aspects in policy making seem to increase the influence of professionalism and expertise. Professional administrators accountable to elected politicians are often able to address general, long-term problems that politicians tend to circumvent and citizens are mostly unwilling to recognize. The influence of professionals and experts is not the same in every institution; it differs depending on broader contexts, the tasks of the relevant institutions and the level of politicisation. On one hand, we expect the influence of politicians in a highly politicised institution, such as the county, to be much stronger than the influence of professionals and experts. On the other, we expect the influence of politicians exercising executive functions and holding powerful posts to be stronger than the influence of politicians with simple representative and deliberative tasks. Direct election is expected, of course, to further strengthen the position of politicians. Among professionals, we expect people

leading administrative units *inside* the county administration to be less influential than the CEOs.

Concerning vertical exercise of influence, we expect *upper levels of government* to obviously be less important than county politicians and administrators and probably even less important than non-governmental actors at county level. It is true that decision making on legal frameworks and allocation of resources affecting county activities takes place at higher levels (parliament, government). County politicians and leading administrators (CEOs), however, would not stress the influence of upper levels and put their own roles and discretion into question.

Finally, we anticipate deviation in perceptions of influence among the three groups of respondents (presidents, councillors, CEOs), since their point of view is expected to be different according to their distinctive roles and tasks.

All three groups of respondents perceive influence of governmental actors to be much stronger than the influence of non-governmental actors. Within the category of non-governmental actors all sets of respondents (county presidents, councillors, CEOs) consider the influence of the subgroup of political actors to be more

Table 11.2 Perceptions of councillors, presidents and CEOs about influence of different actors and bodies over county activities (mean values)

Type of actors	Role of respondent		
	Councillor	President	CEO
<i>A. Local governmental actors</i>	3.44	3.56	3.56
<i>I. Elected/political actors</i>	3.54	3.62	3.79
1. County president	4.66	4.63	4.87
2. Executive board	4.05	4.20	4.23
3. President of the council	3.28	3.32	3.79
4. Presidents of council committees	3.11	3.10	3.28
5. Single councillors without official functions	2.51	2.77	2.82
<i>II. Administrative actors</i>	3.30	3.45	3.22
1. CEO	3.58	3.94	3.69
2. Heads of departments	3.48	3.84	3.50
<i>B. Non-governmental actors</i>	2.42	2.71	2.38
<i>I. Representatives of sectoral interests</i>	2.40	2.71	2.34
1. Primary sector businesses	2.35	2.74	2.31
2. Secondary sector enterprises	2.44	2.80	2.37
3. Construction/real estate sector enterprises	2.41	2.55	2.25
4. Trade sector enterprises	2.38	2.60	2.24
5. Tourist sector enterprises	2.44	2.87	2.53
<i>II. Civic actors</i>	2.43	2.72	2.42
1. Local trade unions	2.32	2.73	2.46
2. Local associations	2.46	2.69	2.47
3. Journalists	2.71	2.81	2.59
4. The Church/religious groups	2.24	2.65	2.12
<i>C. Actors from upper levels of governance</i> (MPs or ministers from the region)	2.98	2.64	2.92

Source: Second Tier Survey

important than the influence of administrators. County presidents are considered to have the strongest influence, followed (where they exist) by executive boards. Politicians exercising executive functions are obviously considered to be more influential than politicians with representative and deliberative roles (members of the assembly at county level). Presidents of council committees and presidents of councils have a key role in defining the agenda and coordinating decision-making procedures in collective bodies (council and committees) and their influence is therefore perceived to be stronger than the influence of single 'ordinary' councillors but not stronger than the influence of CEOs and the heads of departments.

Among county politicians, single councillors are the only ones whose influence over county activities is considered to clearly be weaker than the influence of administrators (CEOs and heads of departments). This is a finding that illustrates the comparatively small share of power exercised by county assemblies – although in most countries, most important decisions are formally taken by the county councils. By means of party and/or personal loyalties and other means of persuasion, politicians with executive and directing posts (presidents, chairs of collective bodies etc.) seem to be able to control a great deal of decision-making procedures in collective bodies and especially in assemblies/councils. Therefore, single 'ordinary' councillors consider themselves to be less influential even compared to non-elected top bureaucrats. The latter play key roles in defining problems and setting agendas as well as in implementing county policies, while they have easier access to information and possess wider and deeper knowledge of country organization and procedures. They know their way through the secret corridors of invisible bureaucratic power (Klausen and Magnier 1998). Among the professional administrators and experts, CEO influence is considered to be just a bit stronger than the influence of heads of departments. Although hierarchically CEOs are placed over the heads of departments in most of the countries under investigation, it seems that long-term embeddedness within county bureaucracy is strengthening the position of heads of departments, probably counterbalancing hierarchical supremacy of CEOs.

Among the different non-governmental actors, journalists seem to stand out: their influence is perceived to be comparatively stronger, especially by presidents (which comes at no surprise since political leaders are more exposed to media and often become the target of their criticisms). Other civic actors and representatives of sectoral interests are considered to reach lower levels of influence. Actors from different economic sectors have similar, non-deviating scores of perceived influence.⁵ This is a finding that is similar to a previous one about European municipalities and their councillors, where perceived (by municipal councillors) influence of business interests over municipal activities was found to be obviously weaker than the influence of public actors (Plüss and Kübler 2013: 207).

Concerning upper levels of government, perceived influence reaches scores slightly surpassing the middle of the 1–5 scale, which is just a bit stronger than the influence of non-governmental actors. This last finding, once more, matches findings from the aforementioned survey about the influence of upper levels of government over municipal activities (Plüss and Kübler 2013: 207). It seems that at both tiers of local government in Europe the perceived influence of elected politicians

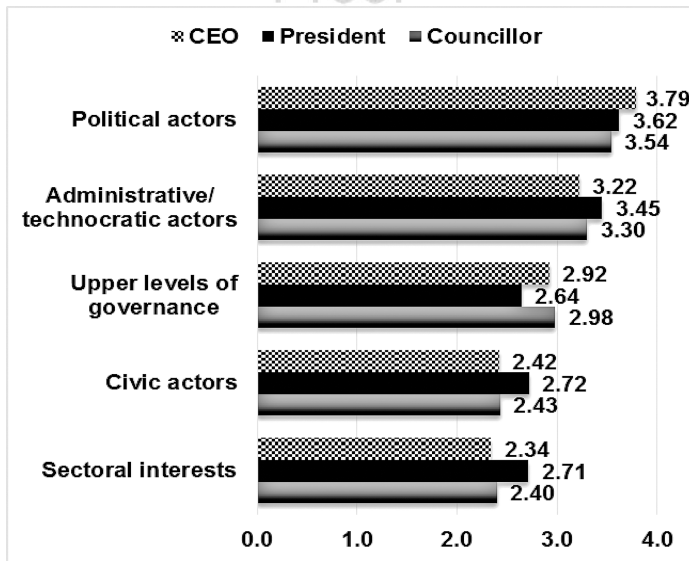


Figure 11.1 CEOs', presidents' and councillors' assessments on the influence of different actor categories (mean values)

and especially of local leaders is obviously stronger than the influence of non-governmental, civic actors and representatives from the business community, which means that democratically legitimised decision making is still seen as dominant.

Perceptions about the influence of political actors show that there are not very strong differences among the executives (presidents, CEOs) and the representatives (councillors). Presidents (who often have to deal with the socio-economic environment of their county in order to get things done) would tend to give more emphasis on the influence of non-governmental actors (representatives of business community and civic actors) than councillors and CEOs would. The same applies with regard to administrative/professional actors, whose influence is rated comparatively higher by presidents. Concerning upper levels of governance, councillors and CEOs perceive a stronger vertical influence than the presidents do. This could mean that councillors and CEOs perceive stronger upper level influence over the top politician of the county, the president, while he or she would not admit that this is a fact.

Influence of different actors and bodies over county activities is expected to differ according to national contexts. Party systems and political cultures, institutional designs and fiscal systems, distinct welfare state traditions and democratic legacies certainly affect the positions and influence of different actors in European counties. But do all these differences result into visible deviations of perceived influence? Are the various models of European local government systems (Hesse and Sharpe 1991; Page and Goldsmith 1987; Wollmann 2000; Heinelt and Hlepas 2006; Sellers and Lidström 2007) reflected into deviations of perceived influence?

Table 11.3 Perceived influence of actors and bodies over county activities in 14 European countries (mean values)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Representatives of business community</i>	<i>Civic actors</i>	<i>Political actors</i>	<i>Administrators</i>	<i>Upper levels of government</i>
Belgium	2.47	2.35	3.26	3.27	2.92
Croatia	2.47	2.44	3.42	3.01	3.20
Czech Rep.	2.39	2.35	3.44	2.99	2.69
England	2.41	2.33	3.32	3.70	2.84
France	2.50	2.29	3.53	3.26	3.04
Germany		2.34	3.48	3.32	3.02
Greece	2.65	2.73	3.56	3.02	3.13
Hungary	2.28	2.26	3.68	3.47	3.81
Italy	2.60	2.78	3.54	3.41	2.75
Norway	2.47	2.47	3.68	3.63	2.72
Poland	2.18	2.39	3.81	2.97	2.94
Romania	2.81	2.92	3.58	3.52	3.58
Spain	2.68	2.75	3.97	3.43	3.17
Sweden	1.90	2.29	3.42	3.67	2.26
Total Europe 14	2.48	2.52	3.65	3.32	2.84

Source: Second Tier Survey

Table 11.3 refers to the perceptions of all three groups of respondents (councillors, presidents and CEOs). Concerning perceived influence of representatives of sectoral interests and civic actors over county activities, Romania obviously surpasses other countries, while Sweden has the lowest scores in this category. Romania reaches the highest score for civic actors, while Hungary has the lowest score. Political actors seem to be particularly influential in Spain, while Belgium shows the comparatively lowest score, but it is worth mentioning that deviations among countries are not big in this category. Professional administrators are most influential in Sweden and England (both countries have large county administrations, while in the English county managers are very important), while they are least influential in Poland, the Czech Republic and Croatia (countries where the second level of local government falls short of administrative infrastructure; see DEXIA 2008). Finally, upper levels of government are most important in Hungary and Romania (where counties are strongly dependent from upper levels), followed by Croatia, Spain and Greece, which are typical cases of centralistic political systems, while on the other hand in Sweden, the Czech Republic and Norway, upper levels of government have the lowest scores of influence over county activities according to survey respondents.

With the exception of findings concerning upper levels of government, the aforementioned empirical results, however, cannot be connected to particular typologies of local government systems (e.g. the Hesse/Sharpe typology). It seems that national contexts prescribe perceived influence of political, administrative, business and societal actors, while local government typologies catch broader

common characteristics in country groupings (e.g. vertical power relations and relations to upper levels of governance in 'Franco' or 'Northern' types of local government, or horizontal power relations in the Mouritzen/Svara typology). Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that deviations among single countries are the strongest when it comes to perceived influence of upper levels of government.

Frequency of contacts and electoral support

While perceptions of influence are subjective estimations, personal interactions with concrete actors are factual matters. Another variable used in the survey on the second tier of local government refers to the communication behaviour of presidents, CEOs and councillors. Frequency of contact in a given period of time is often used in social network analysis as proxy indicator in order to estimate the strength of interpersonal relationship. Furthermore, the frequency of contact to specific actors can offer a picture how the respondent sees and fulfils his or her own role (Plüss and Kübler 2013: 212) and his or her own aspirations. Therefore, all three questionnaires (for councillors, presidents and CEOs) included the following question: 'How frequently do you have contact with the following individuals or groups?'

Out of a large number of actors (22) originally included in the survey, we have chosen five business actors with different sectoral interests and four civic actors. We have put aside governmental actors inside the county house (committee leaders, civil servants etc.) because respondents are also acting in the county and it is obvious that contacts to actors inside the county would be very often. In addition to that, contacts with party members and the party organization have been also put

Table 11.4 Frequency of interaction with different actors in period of observation (percentage of reported contacts of at least a few times a month)

<i>Type of actor</i>	<i>Role of respondents and the frequency of their contacts</i>		
	<i>Councillor</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>CEO</i>
<i>I. Representatives of sectoral interests</i>	26.5	48.7	5.8
1. Primary sector businesses	35.1	49.5	3.4
2. Secondary sector enterprises	24.8	54.3	4.1
3. Construction/real estate sector enterprises	23.5	43.3	8.2
4. Trade sector enterprises	23.3	43.2	7.5
5. Tourist sector enterprises	26.0	53.2	5.5
<i>II. Civic actors</i>	31.3	57.8	24.1
1. Local trade unions	22.2	39.1	23.3
2. Local associations	38.7	57.7	24.0
3. Journalists	41.8	88.1	40.0
4. The Church/religious groups	22.5	45.9	9.9
<i>External/non-governmental actors in total</i>	29.3	53.1	14.7

Source: Second Tier Survey

aside, since elected politicians would obviously have frequent contact to party members and organizations.⁶

Respondents could answer on a four-point scale, starting with 1 (almost never having contact), 2 (a few times a year), 3 (a few times a month) and finally, 4 (a few times a week). Because the frequency of contacts is measured on an ordinal and not on an interval scale, we used percentages of respondents choosing answers 3 and 4. According to the findings, presidents seem to reach a much higher frequency of contacts (compared to councillors and CEOs) to all types of the aforementioned actors. Councillors surpass the frequency of contacts declared by respondent CEOs. These findings are not surprising: they seem to confirm the leadership roles of county presidents, who participate in many kinds of social networks in order to get things done and mobilize capacities and resources, but also in order to reproduce loyalties and mutual support. It also comes to no surprise that journalists are the actors that all three groups of respondents most frequently contact. Least frequent contact with local trade unions reflect the declining roles of unions, just as similar findings for the church and religious groups do. Contact with civil actors is more frequent than contact with business actors. Business actors of the primary sector seem to surpass frequency of contact with most of the other business actors (under the exception of tourism and second-sector businesses when it comes to county presidents).

Among the different countries, frequency of contacts to business and civic actors seem to be obviously higher in some countries (Hungary, Italy, Greece). The contact to business actors is more frequent only in Hungary (and just slightly more frequent in Croatia), while in all other countries contacts to civic actors are more frequent (and most frequent in Italy, Greece, Spain and England). Once more, relation of these findings to local government types is not visible, while specific national contexts could probably offer some explanation.

Relations to different actors also include electoral support (probably also abstain from support or even opposition) to county politicians. Electoral support is probably the most important and the most desirable kind of support that county politicians can obtain from different actors. Support is also a proxy variable reflecting the relation between the different actors and elected county politicians. Electoral support indicates trust in certain politicians. It is often connected to reciprocity and reciprocal support, or at least to possibilities of easier access of the electorate to politicians after the election. There is an inevitable tension in the relationship among elected politicians and followers. As Hambleton and Sweeting underline,

On the one hand, leaders who are forever looking over their shoulders, to see whether the followers are still there, are unlikely to provide the needed vision and inspiration. Equally, the leader who has a bold agenda, but neglects the important task of winning and sustaining strong backing for the new vision, may soon come unstuck.

(2014: 3)

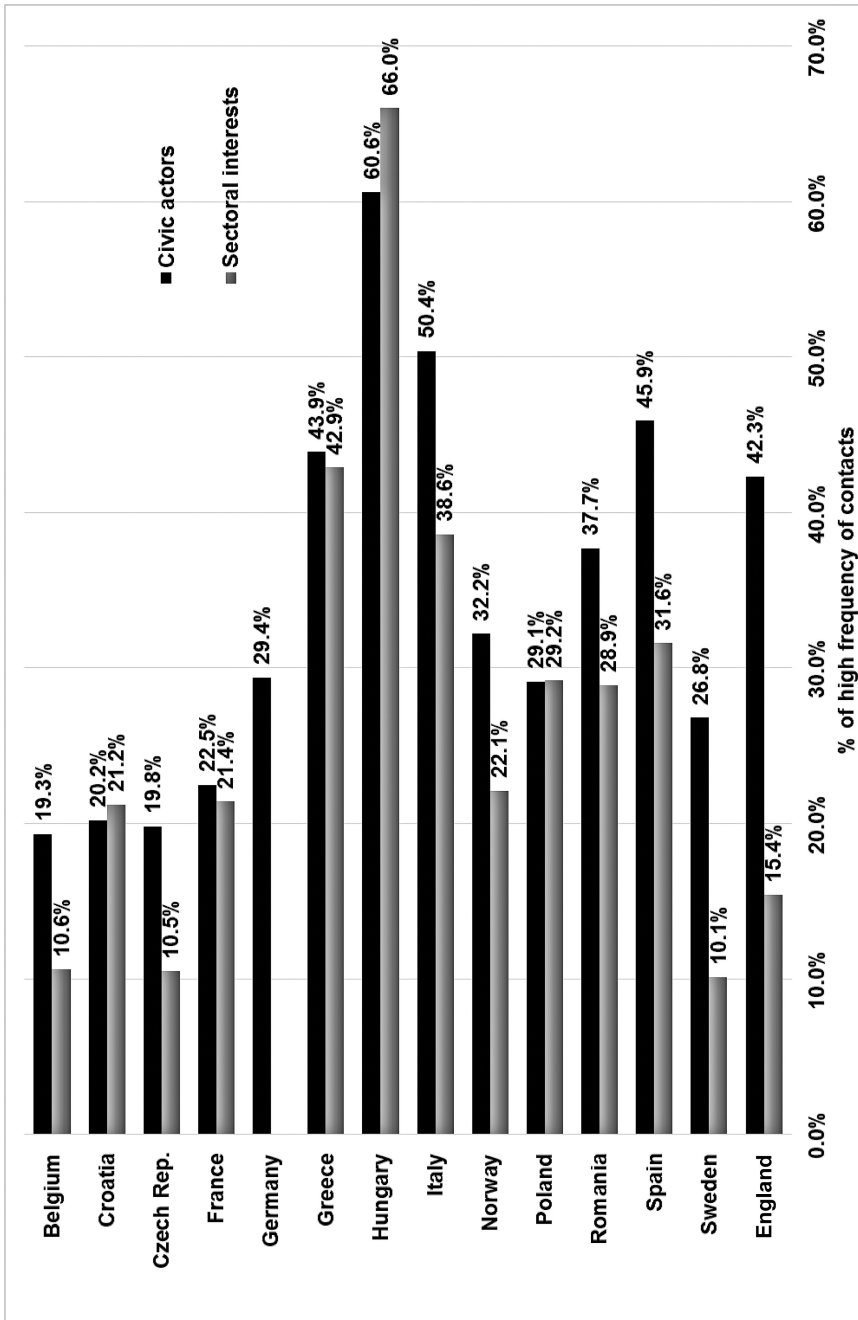


Figure 11.2 Percentage of reports of highly frequent (at least a few times a month) contacts with civic actors and sectoral interests in 14 European countries

Table 11.5 Electoral support (percentage of reports of at least some electoral support) from various types of actors

Type of actor	Role of respondents and their electoral support		
	Councillor	President	Both
<i>I. Representatives of sectoral interests</i>	10.5	23.1	11.7
1. Primary sector businesses	19.6	32.8	20.9
2. Secondary sector enterprises	7.8	21.6	9.1
3. Construction/real estate sector enterprises	7.1	20.3	8.5
4. Trade sector enterprises	9.3	20.1	10.3
5. Tourist sector enterprises	8.5	20.2	9.7
<i>II. Civic actors</i>	11.2	21.5	11.9
1. Local trade unions	23.1	34.8	23.9
2. Local associations	7.1	15.0	7.6
3. Journalists	8.5	19.8	9.3
4. The Church/religious groups	6.0	16.5	6.8
<i>non-governmental actors in total</i>	10.9	22.3	11.8

Source: Second Tier Survey

The two categories of elected county politicians (presidents and councillors) in the survey were asked about actors supported their electoral campaign. More precisely, the question was the following: ‘As a candidate in the last election, to what extent did you have the support of the following groups?’

Respondents could answer in a five-point scale from 1 (‘not at all’) to 5 (‘very great’) to describe support from different actors during the last election. It is no surprise that, according to the findings, presidents had much stronger (compared to councillors) electoral support from all types of private actors. Among these actors, local trade unions seem to offer the strongest support both to presidents and councillors, while no important differences were found when comparing support by the group of business actors with the support by the group of civic actors. Once more, business actors from the primary sector seem to be particularly important for gathering support, while the same applies (in relation to presidents) for journalists. It is worth mentioning that presidents, who often exercise ceremonial functions, have rated the support of the Church to themselves much higher than the single councillors did.

From support to influence: a circle of power (reproduction)?

As already mentioned, we would expect that a close relation characterised by trust and mutual support would include and combine findings of relatively often contacts to relatively strong electoral support.

According to empirical findings, Spearman non-parametric⁷ correlation between the frequency of contacts and electoral support⁸ is significant in all countries (with

AuQ02

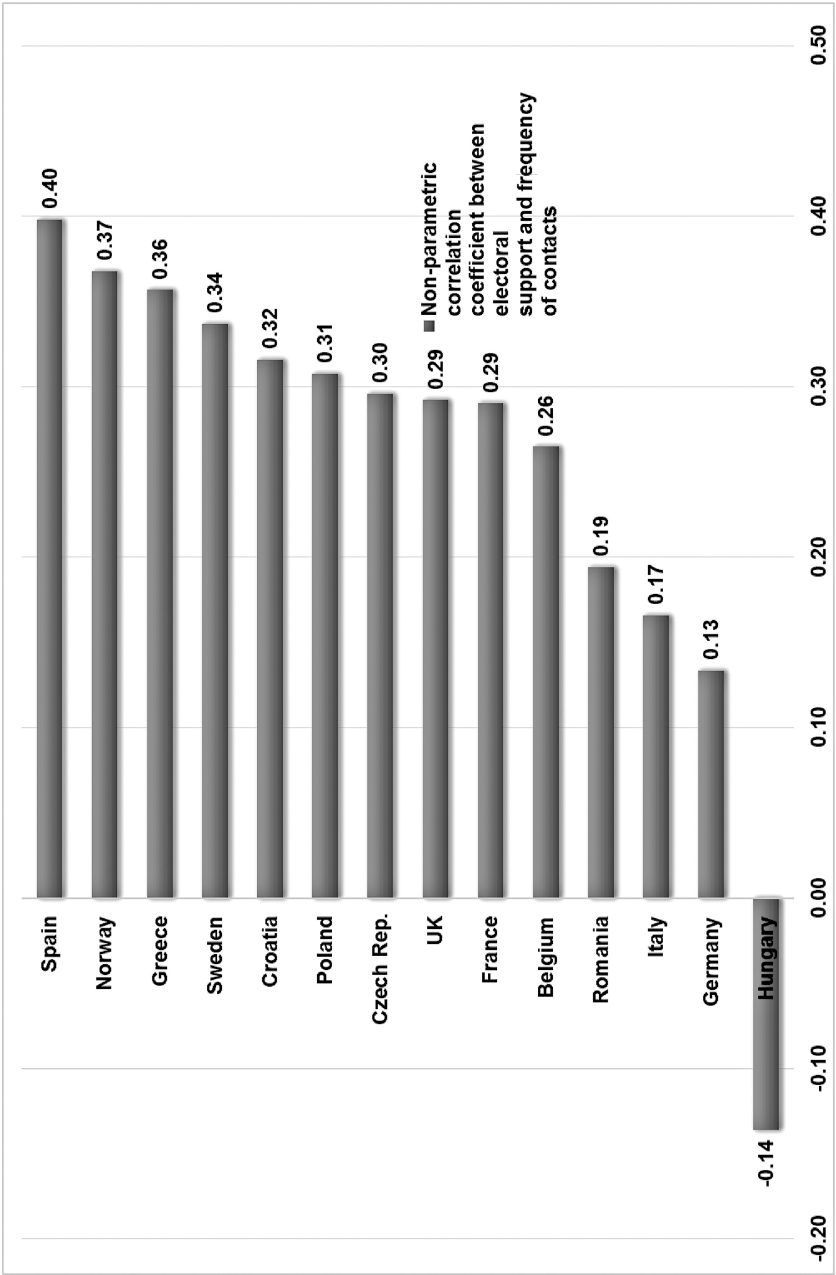


Figure 11.3 Spearman non-parametric correlation between frequency of contacts and electoral support

the exception of Hungary, which is obviously an outlier) and most significant in Spain, while comparatively least significant in Germany. In other words, elected politicians tend to maintain bonds to their supporters, often contacting them after their election to office. This attitude could be related to the influence of these supporters in local affairs (see also Figures 11.4, 11.5 and 11.6) and to re-election strategies of political personnel. However, relation to these supporters are not everywhere the same, obviously depending on national contexts.

In a next step we will try to find out whether the strength of the relationship between electoral contacts and support is associated with the perception of influence of non-governmental actors by visually representing the relationship via scatter diagrams. We hypothesise that elected politicians would receive stronger electoral support and have more frequent contacts to these actors, whose influence on second tier of local government is perceived by the politicians to be stronger. Vice versa, the politicians would receive less electoral support and have fewer contacts whose influence on the second tier is perceived by them to be weaker. In the following three figures, the function on the upper right end of the chart illustrates the geometry regression line (dashed).⁹

Concerning all non-governmental actors, the relationship between (a) perceived influence and (b) the non-parametric correlation between electoral support and frequency of contacts has been positive. Among the different countries, Greece and Spain are cases where high influence is combined with a strong correlation between frequency of contacts and electoral support (see Figure 11.4). High influence is also registered in Italy and Romania (but correlation is below average). In France, England, Poland, the Czech Republic and Sweden the influence of non-governmental actors appears to be comparatively weak, but the relationship between support and contacts is strong. Finally, in Germany and Belgium (Hungary appears as an extreme case) both the influence and the relationship between support and contacts score below the average.

Concerning representatives of sectoral interests (Figure 11.5), it is obvious that Hungary is an outlier in which the weak correlation between electoral support and frequency of contacts is combined to a much weaker (compared to the average) perceived influence of sectoral interests. Spain, Greece, France, Norway and Croatia are cases where both influence of sectoral interests and correlation of support and contacts are above the average. In total, however, the slope of the line is rather small concerning sectoral interests, which means that the perceived influence of sectoral interests does not increase when the correlation between support and contact becomes more intense, as it does strongly as in the case of civic actors (see Figure 11.6).

Concerning civic actors, it is obvious that the slope of the line is steeper than in the previous graph concerning sectoral interests. That means that when the perceived influence of civic actors is higher, the correlation between support and contacts becomes stronger. Spain and Greece are the countries where high perceived influence of civic actors is combined with a strong relationship between electoral support and frequency of contacts. In these countries, it seems that the analysis of the empirical findings confirms a 'circle of power reproduction',

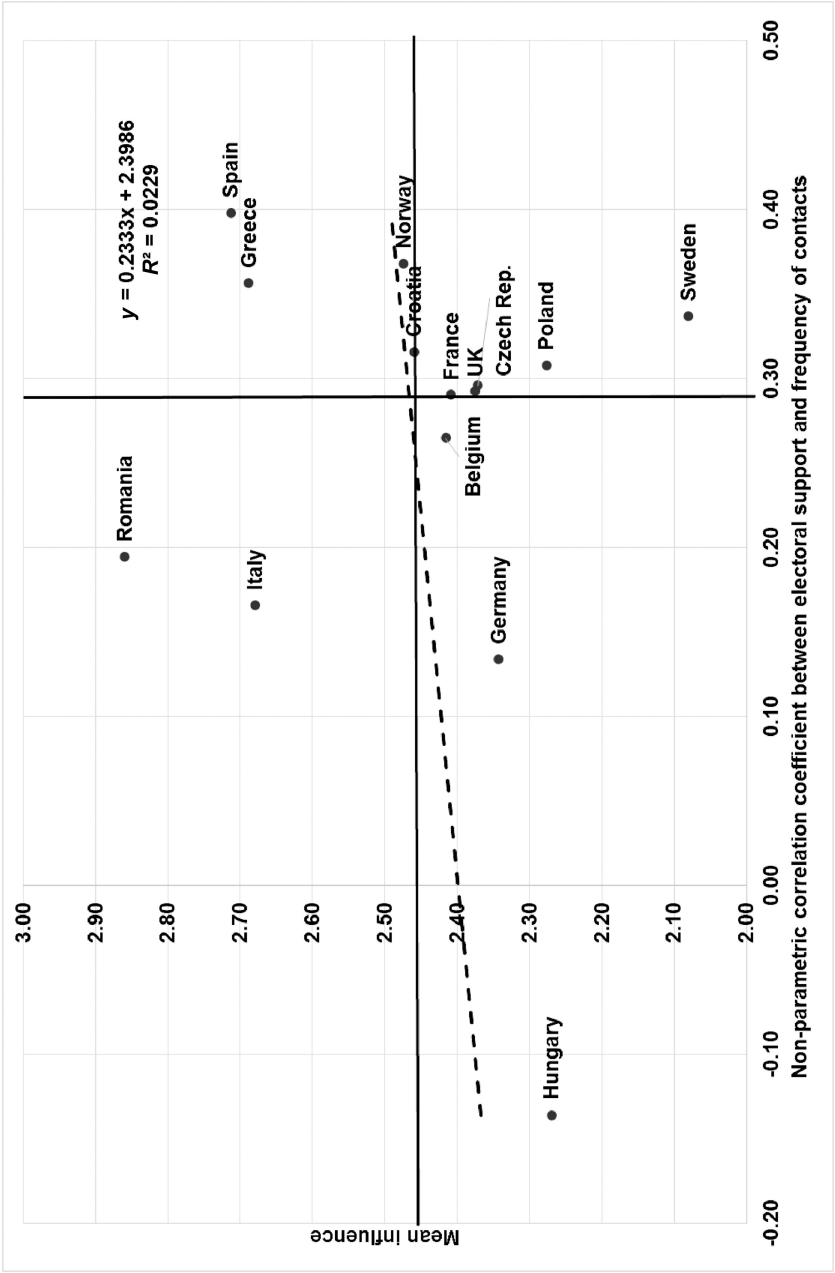


Figure 11.4 Perceived influence of non-governmental actors and correlation between electoral support and frequency of contacts

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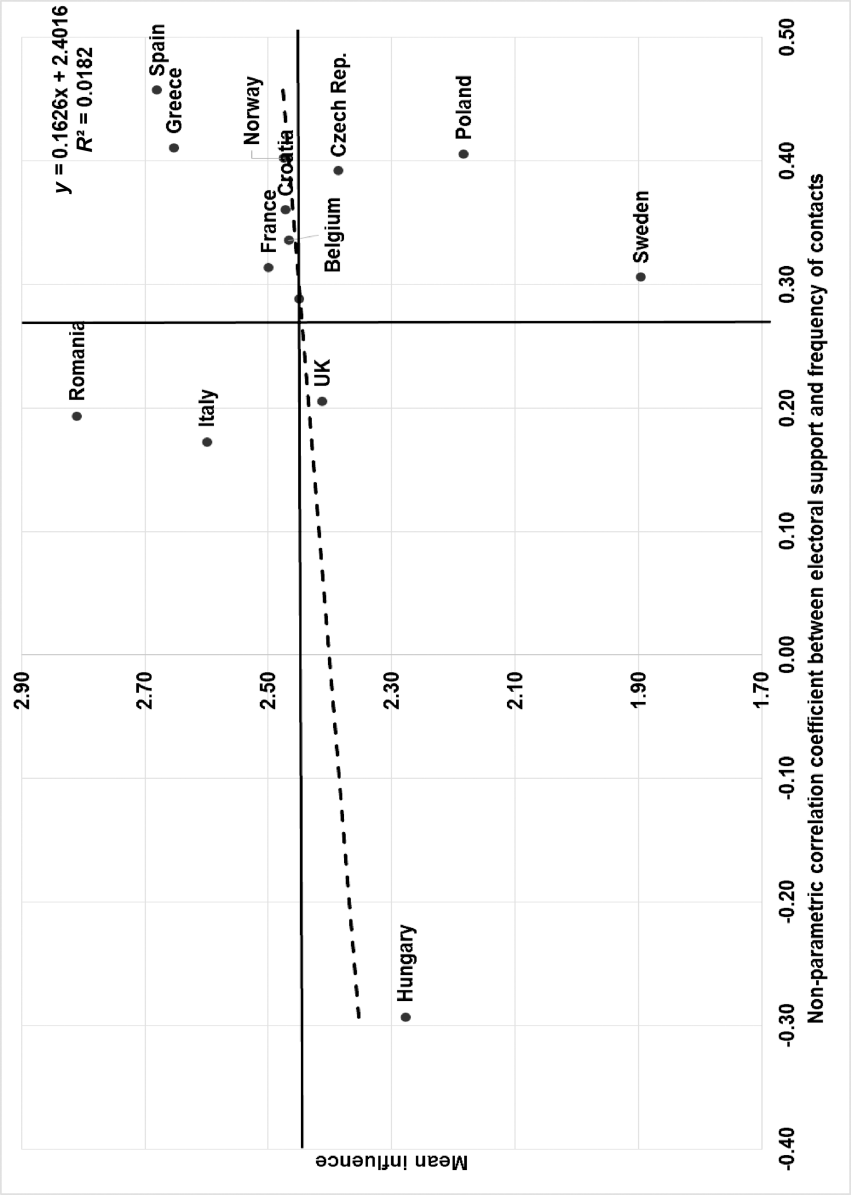


Figure 11.5 Perceived influence of sectoral interests and correlation between electoral support and frequency of contacts

AuQ05

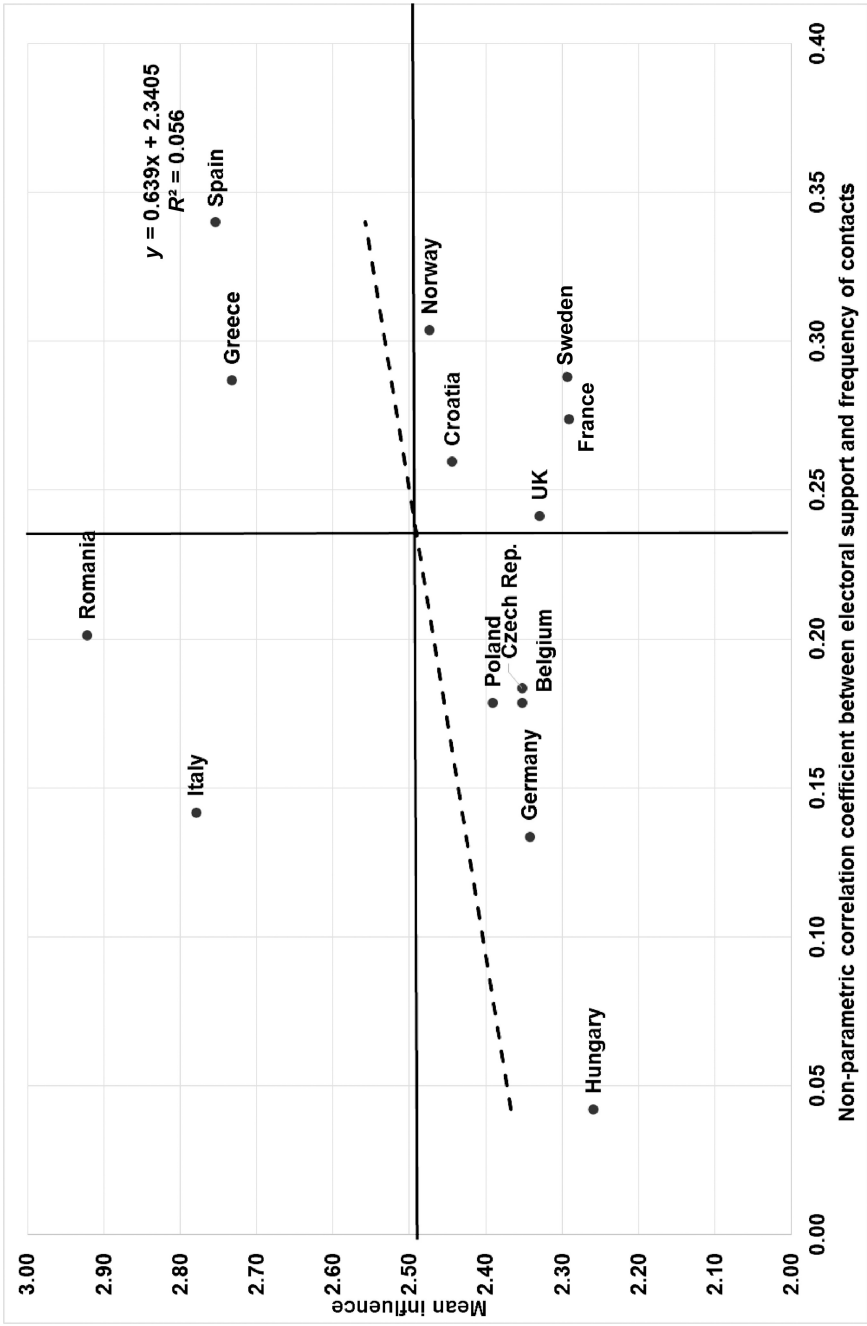


Figure 11.6 Perceived influence of civic actors and correlation between electoral support and frequency of contacts

starting with high electoral support that begets a relatively high frequency of contacts, which leads to a strong influence of civic actors, as perceived by respondents. Both these countries belong to the *strong leader* form, while local governments are short of resources and therefore local leaders have strong motives for cooperation with civic actors, especially concerning provision of social services (Navarro 2015, Hlepas 2015).

Conclusions

Empirical findings about the perceptions of influence have reflected the patterns of different horizontal power relations at the second tier of local government as categorised in the Mouritzen/Svara (2002) typology and adapted by Heinelt and Bertrana (2011) for the second tier of local government. Distinct positions in horizontal power relations are reflected in perceptions of ordinary councillors, county presidents and CEOs, concerning the influence of different actors at the second tier of local government. Executive leaders (administrative CEOs and the county president) perform distinctive roles and do not share the same perceptions with ordinary councillors, who focus less on specific actors and rather refer to disperse and less-intensive influence of non-governmental actors. Then again, primacy of politics and governmental actors over county activities has been confirmed by all groups of respondents in all European countries. On one hand, business interests seem to be less influential at the county level than governance theories would anticipate. On the other, we would not leave out the possibility of reporting bias, since some respondents could probably overestimate the role of politicians or consider that downgrading the actual influence of business interests is more appropriate and 'politically correct'. Finally, the range and the importance of county competence affecting business and sectoral interests seem to be rather limited in most European countries (Heinelt and Bertrana 2011). Lobbying would therefore tend to unfold other levels of government, where high-stake decisions are made (Keating and Wilson 2014).

The analysis of the frequency of contacts that the respondents declare to have with different actors has clearly shown that elected politicians with executive functions (presidents and CEOs) have more frequent contact with wider sets of actors than ordinary councillors.

Our analysis has revealed bonds of elected politicians to different actors. Empirical findings show a relationship between electoral support to politicians and frequency of their contacts in most cases. Finally, in some countries, a 'circle of power reproduction' is confirmed, starting with a high electoral support that begets a relatively high frequency of contacts, which leads to a strong influence of civic actors.

Notes

- 1 The authors would like to thank Thanos Chantzaras, a PhD student at the University of Athens, for his help concerning statistical analysis of the empirical data.
- 2 Journalists can be subsumed to the second group because they are acting in the public sphere as carriers of publicity in the domain of public dialogue and deliberation. See Habermas (1991: 206–210).

- 3 Statistical significance of differences between the values of these four types of local government has been confirmed through the following methods. First, the ANOVA test was performed. If this test showed statistical significance, post hoc tests followed for pairwise comparison and more specifically the Games-Howell test, since samples had uneven sizes and uneven variations.
- 4 Only responses of the 94 Norwegian councillors were used because only four CEOs and three presidents participated in the survey.
- 5 However, there may be differences if single countries would have been considered clearly dependent on concrete sectors (e.g. tourism).
- 6 Since frequency of contacts will furthermore be combined to perceptions about influence and no variables about perceptions of party influence over county activities existed in the questionnaires, there is one more reason for leaving out party actors.
- 7 We are applying the Spearman non-parametric correlation. The Spearman correlation evaluates the monotonic relationship between two continuous or ordinal variables. In a monotonic relationship the variables tend to change together but not necessarily at a constant rate.
- 8 This correlation expresses the intensity of the monotonic relationship between the two variables 'frequency of contacts' and 'electoral support'. In case of a positive relationship, when the value of the one variable (e.g. support) increases, the value of the other variable (e.g. contacts) also increases, and the opposite, while under a negative relationship an increase in one variable is accompanied by a decrease of the value of the other variable, and vice versa. In a monotonic relationship, however, the variables tend to change together, but not necessarily at a constant way. The value of the correlation coefficient ranges between -1 and $+1$. As the value of the coefficient tends to 1 in absolute terms, the relationship becomes stronger, while a near 0 value indicates the absence of a (linear) relationship between the two variables.
- 9 E.g. in the case of $y = 0.234x + 2.399$, $R^2 = 0.229$: y = value of influence, x = value of correlation of electoral support/frequency of contacts, $0.234 = b$ coefficient of x , 2.399 = intercept of the regression line

When x (i.e. the correlation between electoral support and frequency of contacts) is near 0 , which means that no (linear) relationship exists between electoral support and the frequency of contacts, the perceived influence will on average reach 2.399 , i.e. the point where the line of linear regression intersects the axis y .

B coefficient represents the difference in the predicted value of y (perceived influence) for each one-unit difference in x (value of correlation between electoral support and frequency of contacts (*ceteris paribus*), i.e. it is the slope of the regression line. In other words, the bigger its value the stronger the change of perceived influence will be by a shift in the strength of the relationship (value of correlation) between the electoral support and the frequency of contacts.

The more the set of observations of the scatter plot fall near the regression line, the stronger the (linear) relationship between perceived influence and the correlation of electoral support and frequency of contacts will be, and the higher the value of the correlation coefficient.

R^2 is the coefficient of determination. It is equal to the squared value of the correlation coefficient and it expresses how accurate a linear relationship (the regression line) represents the data of the graph (e.g. if $R^2 = 0.229$, the applied linear model explains 22.9 per cent of the variability of perceived influence).

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12 The political career of county councillors in Europe

Examining the internal logic of professionalization and comparative country patterns

*Xavier Bertrana, Jaume Magre, Joan Manel Sánchez,
Kristof Steyvers, Tony Valcke and Tom Verhelst*

Introduction

How do county councillors in Europe move in, through and out of their political office? Following Aars *et al.* (2012: 64), we define political careers as ‘the various roads leading from initial recruitment to eventual derecruitment’. As such the political career commences once elected citizens who have successfully completed their recruitment process develop patterns of mobility within and between positions in the political realm (Marvick 1972).

Previous comparative research projects have already shed light on the political career development of politicians at the first tier of local government (see Kjaer 2006 for mayors; Aars *et al.* 2012 and Verhelst *et al.* 2013 for municipal councillors). Yet the second local government tier (i.e. the counties or their equivalents) has only received scant attention in academic research hitherto – despite being at the centre of many sub-national state reforms in Europe recently (Bertrana and Heinelt 2011a). Scrutinizing the political career of politicians in the core institution of the second tier thus could provide valuable information about this government level. Besides, research on politicians from the first local government tier has also indicated that the way in which (some aspects of) political careers evolve partly determines political orientations and policy preferences in office (Bäck 2006; Steyvers and Verhelst 2012). Hence, we might assume that the characteristics of the political careers in the county councils under study (to some extent) matter for the counties’ policy choices in the end as well.

Throughout the chapter we will apply the theoretical concept of professionalization to structure our analysis. In the context of a political career, the concept of professionalization refers to the gradual development of a pattern of conduct with area-specific standards and routines (Cotta and Best 2000). According to the classic notion, the councillor office is a layperson’s affair in which amateur office holders comprise the council on the basis of equality (Mouritzen and Svava 2002). Politics should not be a separate sphere of society, as moving in and out of the council is relatively easy from almost any subfield of society. The principles of representation, permeability, amateurism and rotation in office ensure the

necessary representative links between the political system and society at large. In practice, however, the changing and challenging modern governance context might call for a more professional career model in which expertise, exclusiveness and responsiveness come to outweigh equality and representation as prevailing principles and routines. Ultimately, the councillor office might then become ‘a “career” or even a “profession”, overturning the traditional image of voluntary or amateur local government representatives devoting themselves to the service of the public cause’ (Guérin and Kerrouche 2008: 180). Obviously, both models probably coexist in different degrees within and across county councils in Europe. Therefore we rather envisage the layperson and professional model as two ideal types situated on the end of a continuum, with different degrees of variance in between.

Furthermore and in spite of the seemingly straightforward notion of a ‘professional political career’, professionalization is still a multilayered concept which is to be operationalised through more specific dimensions and corresponding indicators. We choose to deconstruct political careers in four dimensions which depict the career development from its beginning to the end: focus, scope, locus and sequence (Kjær 2006; Verhelst *et al.* 2013). The former two dimensions refer to the time, dedication, duration and outlook of the current office in the county council. The latter two dimensions then expand our image by including preceding experience and subsequent ambitions in other political offices in and outside the second tier of local government. As such, our analysis will not only assess the substance of a political career in the county council as such, but it will also interpret the role of (a career in) the county council within the wider political constellation of modern multi-level governance, in which different government layers coexist and interact.

The chapter continues as follows. First, we set out the analytical framework that will structure the empirical scrutiny of councillors’ careers. The framework introduces our four analytical dimensions of the councillor career and operationalises them applying specific items of the questionnaire to substantiate the ideal-typical features of the layperson–professional continuum per dimension. Meanwhile, corresponding hypotheses are introduced to capture a potential internal path-dependent logic of professionalization in the councillor career at the individual level. Additionally, we outline the comparative framework of our career study at the cross-national level, following the position of the second tier in the vertical power relations of each country (see Bertrana and Heinelt 2011b). Second, the empirical part of the study analyses the political careers of the county councillors across Europe along the lines of the layperson–professional continuum per dimension. In addition to singling out general trends in the research population, testing our individual hypotheses will allow for more in-depth insights into the internal logic of professionalization. The subsequent comparative analysis will further substantiate the key findings of this analysis by searching for their structural/contextual origins. The findings are summarised in the concluding section of the chapter.

Analytical framework

Political careers are thus understood as patterns of positional mobility within and between the various layers of the political realm. Two important analytical implications follow from this conception. First, each tenure of any given office (i.e. *position*) should be considered as a temporal phase in a potentially wider dynamic. Careers are created and reshaped through the various routes leading from initial recruitment (as the foundational selection process for inclusion among elected office holders as political elites) up to eventual derecruitment (where individuals renounce candidacy or face deselection) out of politics (Blondel and Müller-Rommel 2007; Aars *et al.* 2012). Second, individuals may bring highly divergent experiences and outlooks into office, but the notion of a career assumes that dominant tendencies in mobility (i.e. *patterns*) can indeed be discerned. Some will (want to) stay a short period in politics as a backbencher and/or focused on one specific office, whilst others will (aim to) develop a lifetime vocation in more pronounced executive and/or higher office. Careers are comprised of more or less typical sequences of events and associated with area-specific standards and routines (Eulau *et al.* 1961; Cotta and Best 2000).

Following from these assumptions, we will analyse the current office of county councillor as it unfolds from its beginning towards its termination including, considerations on the possibility of a preceding and consecutive political career. Based on the general literature and its specific application to the realm of local government, we scrutinize four dimensions with regard to political careers at the second tier of local government: focus, scope, locus and sequence (Kjær 2006; Verhelst *et al.* 2013). Each dimension refers to a number of specific characteristics included in the various items of our questionnaire. As outlined earlier, to organise our findings we will refer to the ideal-typical layperson–professional dichotomy to grasp recurrences in the nature and the form of these respective characteristics (Steyvers and Verhelst 2012). Our analytical framework is summarised in Table 12.1 and further substantiated in this chapter.

We thus start from four allegedly important career dimensions. A first central tenet in our conceptualisation is that within and between each pair of dimensions the indicators of professionalization tend to reinforce one another at the individual level. Hence, a number of individual hypotheses are forwarded to clarify our assumptions and structure the empirical part of this chapter. A second main

Table 12.1 Dimensions of layperson and professional career development

<i>Career dimension</i>	<i>Layperson</i>	<i>Professional</i>
Focus	part-time	full-time
Scope	novice, discrete	seasoned, non-discrete (static or progressive)
Locus	internal (alternative)	external (integrated)
Sequence	base (local)	manifest (supra-local)

Source: own composition by the authors

assumption is that systematic differences in vertical power relations of counties in various country settings (captured in subsequent types of county systems) affect the political career of the county councillor and the degree of professionalization. Therefore, comparative analyses will build further upon the main insights from the individual-level counterparts.

Career dimensions and comparing individual-level professionalization

The first two dimensions are predominantly centred on the current mandate as county councillor at the second tier of local government.

Career focus refers to the extent to which the political mandate is exclusive in terms of time and dedication. This dimension is clearly associated with the Weberian notion of politics as a vocation in which individuals primarily live *off* instead of *for* politics. The conception of politics as a profession would be reflected by the time spent in the exercise of office to the detriment of alternative occupational activities. Evidently, the most clearly professional focus would occur where politics actually substitutes other gainful employment and office holding becomes a full-time activity. Alternatively, the amateur concept of the layperson model sees occupying a political mandate as a part-time activity usually combined with another (non-political) profession (Guérin and Kerrouche 2008). The data do not allow us to determine whether the mandate of *county councillor* as such is exercised as full-time profession.¹ However based on the question ‘Are you a full-time politician?’ we can more generally distinguish between full-time and part-time politicians. The professional category will thus most likely be comprised of councillors who either hold an executive mandate at the second-tier level (as in systems with fused powers embedding the executive in the legislature) or accumulate their council mandate with another elected office (provided dual mandate-holding is legally allowed and/or politically acceptable). Finally, we can assume that the degree to which office holding replaces alternative occupational activity will be reflected in the time spent on county-related activities (as measured on a weekly basis by the question ‘How many hours on average do you spend on county-related activities within a week?’). Therefore, we hypothesise that *full-time politicians will spend significantly more hours per week on county-related activities* (H1).

Career scope refers to the conception of the current mandate in terms of duration and outlook. The first aspect is indicated by the seniority in office (as measured by the question ‘For how many years have you been a county councillor?’). Standardising the number of years as a county councillor by legally determined tenures with the time of data collection as a benchmark, we may discern the novice from the more seasoned mandate holder. To this end we take the distinction between first-term councillors and their more experienced counterparts as a rule of thumb for categorisation. Assuming that generational circulation will be fairly constant across political systems and counties, those in their second or subsequent mandate could be considered as more professional councillors. The latter category will predominantly refer to incumbent-legislators having successfully sought re-election. It also

hints at the possibility to develop (within-mandate) an in-house apprenticeship of the standards and routines of the councillor office exemplifying the importance of acquiring and confirming political status and achievement in the continuous cycle of political recruitment. The possibility of mandate-related training provides specialised first-hand knowledge of and experiences in the political realities of the second tier of local government reinforcing the political professionalization of the county councillor office (Aars *et al.* 2012).

Future political ambitions are often considered to be the second aspect of career scope (Black 1970). Following Schlesinger's seminal ambition theory of politics (1966) we may discern between the layperson-like discrete direction (where current individual office holders do not primarily and actively seek re-election and aggregate turnover is expected to be relatively high) and their non-discrete more professionalised counterparts. With regard to the description of the latter group, those with static ambitions (seeking re-election in their current mandate) should be distinguished from their progressive counterparts (who see the current mandate as a spring board for upward mobility to positions perceived as higher on the political career ladder). This classic trifold categorisation is captured in the question 'For the time being, what are you planning to do at the end of the present position?'

Following Eliassen and Pedersen (1978) we expect that *those who seek a long-term career in politics* (indicated by non-discrete ambitions) *will dedicate significantly more time to county-related activities* (H2a). In addition, we assume that focus and scope interact and mutually strengthen political professionalization. Therefore, we hypothesise that *more seasoned mandate-holders will significantly more often be full-time politicians* (H2b), *spend significantly more hours per week on county-related activities* (H2c) and *will significantly more often hold non-discrete political ambitions* (H2d). The last two dimensions of our analytical framework allow us to position the mandate as a county councillor and the overall second tier of local government within the wider and temporal unfolding of political careers in multi-level governance.

Career locus refers to the distinction (re-categorising the different mandates mentioned in the question 'How did your political career evolve?') between the so-called internal and external political realm (Hibbing 1993; Kjær 2006).² The internal career circuit exists within the orbit of the second tier of local government itself, either as a councillor and/or a member of the executive. The external alternative consists of mandates at the first tier of local and/or upper tiers of government (e.g. regional, state, national, federal or European). Here also, a division can be made between legislative and executive mandates. We argue that the layperson model of career development is associated with the more exclusively internal circuit. This type of office holder will have experiences within the more confined space of the second tier of local government. For more professional politicians, the location of their careers will be more diverse, including first-tier local and/or upper-tier government terms preceding the current mandate as a county councillor. The literature specifies that the difference between layperson and professional careers is also associated with the distinction between respectively alternative career paths (where a fairly strong divide exists between the second tier of local government and alternative political realms characterised by the absence of

movements between the various arenas) and integrated career paths (where such movements are more commonplace; arguing that ambitious politicians will seize the different opportunities available to maximise the chance to live off politics for a substantial part of their career; see Stolz 2003). In our analysis we will, however, focus on the difference between an internal and external career locus, which is more straightforward. Thus we expect *full-time politicians* (H3a) and *those with progressive ambitions* (H3b) to *have significantly more often an external career locus*.³

The last dimension probes into the *career sequence* of county councillors. This can be captured by reconstructing the order of elected positions to and/or through the current mandate establishing the shape of political advancement from a horizontal (between the legislative and the executive) and/or a vertical (between the levels of government) perspective (re-categorising again the mandates mentioned in the question ‘How did your political career evolve?’). Here, we are mainly concerned with the latter without neglecting the former. We could argue that the layperson model of career development would be characterised by councillors for whom the county council mandate has been the base office (i.e. their first entrance into an elected position). In addition, for these councillors, the county would be part of a local career system in which the similarities of the electoral base, the substance of office and/or the commonality of the political arena stimulate movements between the first and second tier of local government. Here also, differing patterns may be discerned between the classic (using the first-tier legislative mandate as a stepping stone for a second-tier counterpart) and inverse (using a second-tier legislative mandate as leverage for a first-tier executive counterpart) springboard. Alternatively, in the professional model, the mandate of county councillor will serve as a manifest office (i.e. which is not the first elected mandate but the one preceding a counterpart situated higher in the political hierarchy). For those councillors, the second tier of local government is situated within a wider ranging supra-local career system where movement between the tiers of local government and their upper level counterparts is more commonplace. These councillors will have had, are currently occupying or actively pursue mandates at the regional (or state), national (or federal) or European level. Here the logic of the classic springboard (from local to regional, national or supranational and from legislative to executive) tends to prevail (Schlesinger 1966; Kjær 2006; Bochert and Stolz 2011). However, given the fact that only a few councillors have had supra-local mandates at the regional/national or European levels of government (4.4 per cent), or aspire to such ambitions (5.5 per cent), we will not further develop this hypothesis in our analysis. We will expect only that *full-time politicians will have significantly more often a career sequence in which the county council mandate is manifest* (H4).

Career dimensions and comparing aggregate-level professionalization

In addition to scrutinising councillors’ careers at the individual level, we are also interested in finding comparative country patterns across our data set. Specific opportunity structures and country settings could turn second-tier politics into a

career of its own right, particularly in connection with municipal politics. If county councillors have distinct career interests and paths from other politicians, then what contextual factors can explain this?

It is clear that we expect professionalization to vary across the 14 European countries included in the data set, because factors that affect professionalization are unevenly distributed among them. At the heart of our comparative analysis is the idea that if the second tier of local government is more influential in the multi-level government system of each country it will also be more attractive to persons who pursue a professionalized political career; in other words, these persons will be more inclined to live off politics, triggered by the institutional circumstances. From this perspective, following Aars *et al.* (2012), we can assume that cross-country variation in the levels of professionalization will tend to be stronger in systems where (the second tier of) local government is considered as an important provider of public services. To evaluate this relevance in a comparative perspective, we need to assess the different country contexts. Bertrana and Heinelt (2011b: 318–319; 2013) have developed a promising framework that we can use to that end. The framework integrates institutional factors from the different countries under study with general features of the political system at the county level related to vertical power relations. The latter are assessed on the basis of the differences in the ‘capacity’ and ‘supervision’ of the second tier of local government in relation to upper levels of government and the level below the second tier, i.e. the municipalities.⁴ Despite marked differences in both dimensions, it is possible to distinguish four broadly defined country groups in terms of vertical power relations.⁵

Strong local fiscal and politico-administrative ‘capacities’ combined with moderate levels of supervision and control are the distinctive features of the Swedish *landsting*. They operate exclusively as ‘pure’ territorial units of local self-government in a highly decentralised unitary country – a characteristic that applies to Norway as well.

Table 12.2 Vertical power relations characterising the second level of local government in European countries

<i>Types</i>	<i>Countries</i>
High institutional capacity and moderate supervision (Nordic countries)	Norway Sweden
High or moderate capacity and strong supervision (Middle-European countries)	Belgium Germany
Moderate or weak capacity and moderate or weak supervision (Southern and Eastern European countries)	France Croatia Czech Rep. Greece Hungary Italy Spain Poland
Strong dependency on and supervision by central government	Romania

Source: Composition by the authors on the basis of Bertrana and Heinelt (2011b).

The second variant is associated with Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, where the second tier of local government has a dual role as a territorial unit of local self-government and, at the same time, a (multipurpose) territorial (central) state administration, thus developing a distinctive role as institutional interface between multiple levels of government. In our study, the Belgian provinces and the German *Landkreise* show different levels of ‘capacity’, yet they are subject to stronger supervision and control from upper levels of government than the Nordic countries. Furthermore, although their ‘capacity’ in relation to municipalities differs, the ‘dual role’ of the second tier in these countries leads towards higher levels of supervision over the municipalities than in other countries. Exceptions in this respect are the Belgian provinces, which follow similar patterns as the second level of local government in Southern European countries.

The third variant follows what may be called a *municipalised second tier*. The second tier of local government in France, Greece, Italy and Spain shares a common past and a common future with its moderate to weak ‘capacity’ in relation to upper levels of government and municipalities, but high levels of (formal and informal) discretion due to moderate supervision and control by upper levels of government in practice. The same applies to Hungary and Poland which resemble the Southern European countries in terms of ‘capacities’ with higher levels of supervision from upper levels of government, and could be expected from the Czech Republic and the Croatian cases. The most noteworthy difference between of the Southern European countries and their Eastern European counterparts is the lower level of financial autonomy and discretion found in these Eastern European countries.

Finally, there are the Romanian *judete* that cannot be placed in any of these groups. Although the second level of local government shows a relatively strong position in the vertical allocation of resources, it is more dependent on, and strongly supervised and controlled by, central government than in any of the other countries covered by this project, thus developing stronger supervisory powers over municipalities as well.

Empirical findings on the political career path of county councillors

Following on from the theoretical overview, the aim of this empirical section is twofold. First, it outlines the main features of the political career development of county councillors at the individual level according to the logic of professionalization. Second, it reveals the similarities of county councillors’ political careers across the European Union countries included in our study, as well as the differences according to the position of the second tier of local government within the 14 multi-level environments of this research project. To organise the analyses, both parts include testing the hypotheses about the four dimensions of the career development of county councillors formulated in the second section.

Career dimensions and individual-level professionalization

One of the most striking features of second-tier councillors is the low level of political professionalization in terms of career *focus* (see Table 12.3). In fact, nearly three out of four county councillors consider themselves ‘part-time politicians’, spending 20 hours per week on average in county-related activities. Hence only a minority of the councillor population qualifies as a politician fulfilling his or her office as a true profession. Furthermore, we hypothesised that these full-time politicians will spend significantly more hours per week on county-related activities, reinforcing their professional career focus (H1). If we analyse the hours per week dedicated to county-related activities according to the full- or part-time occupation of the political office (see Table 12.4), we can observe a significant difference between full-time and part-time councillors – even if the difference is probably lower than could be expected. On average county councillors who are full-time politicians spend 29.8 hours in their second-tier office, while their part-time counterparts spend 22.1 hours. A possible reason for this relatively limited difference could be the dedication of full-time politicians to other elected offices, for instance at the municipal level, or to party politics.⁶

Other variables related to the *scope* of county councillors’ political career show more evidence of professionalization in general terms. County councillors have a seniority in office of 8.6 years on average. This figure represents approximately two mandates in most countries, if we take into account that most countries have a local mandate of four years (the exceptions are Belgium, France, Greece and Italy where local mandates have a duration of 5 or 6 years, and Germany where it depends on the *Länder*).⁷ As such, 58 per cent of our councillors qualify as seasoned office holders. Furthermore, regarding future political ambitions, most councillors indicate that they seek re-election in their current mandate or, to a lesser degree, perceive this mandate as a springboard for mobility to positions considered as higher on their political career or, in other words, with a higher status in the political system. County councillors seeking for re-election at the second-tier authority, thus

Table 12.3 Professionalization in the political career of county councillors in Europe

Career focus	
Occupation	26.6 per cent full-time politician
Time dedication	20 hours/week
Career scope	
Seniority	58 per cent seasoned
Future ambition	83.5 per cent static or progressive
Career locus	
Realm	68.5 per cent external
Career sequence	
Position of county office in political career	58.2 per cent manifest

Source: Second Tier Survey

Table 12.4 The logic of professionalization in the political career of county councillors in Europe

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Independent level</i>	<i>Dependent level</i>	<i>Test value/significance</i>
H1	full-time part-time	29.8 hours/week 22.1 hours/week	$t = 17.4708$, $df = 938.628$, $p < 2.2e-16$
H2a	non-discrete ambition	17 hours/week 16.1 hours/week	$t = -1.4719$, $df = 2,268.611$, $p = 0.1412$
H2b	discrete ambition seasoned novice	29.6 per cent full-time 24.9 per cent full-time	Cramér's $V = 0.052$, $p = 0.022992$ $df = 1$ $X^2 = 5.1691$
H2c	seasoned novice	17 hours/week 15 hours/week	$t = -4.8006$, $df = 3,889.881$, $p = 1.641e-06$
H2d	seasoned novice	71.7 per cent non- discrete ambitions 76.9 per cent non- discrete ambitions	Cramér's $V = 0.059$, $p = 0.00018758$ $df = 1$ $X^2 = 13.952$
H3a	full-time part-time	86.1 per cent external career locus 73.2 per cent external career locus	Cramér's $V = 0.132$, $p = 4.2327e-09$ $df = 1$ $X^2 = 34.514$
H3b	progressive ambition	67.5 per cent external career locus	Cramér's $V = 0.038$, $p = 0.012191$ $df = 1$
	non-progressive ambition	72.3 per cent external career locus	$X^2 = 6.2829$
H4	full-time part-time	74.3 per cent manifest office 61.2 per cent manifest office	Cramér's $V = 0.122$, $p = 6.6759e-08$ $df = 1$ $X^2 = 29.157$

Source: composition by the authors

showing static ambitions, represent 57 per cent of the total population, while 26.6 per cent show a progressive ambition not only to upper levels of government (5.5 per cent), but also to the municipalities (7.2 per cent) or, more surprisingly, other political mandates (8.8 per cent) which were not further defined.

According to the logic of internal professionalization in the political career, we were particularly interested in knowing whether focus and scope interact and mutually strengthen political professionalization or not. However, regarding this question, the evidence confirming our hypotheses is rather limited (even though most relations are significant – see Table 12.4). On one hand, those who seek a long-term career in politics (indicated by non-discrete ambitions) do not dedicate significantly more time to county-related activities (H2a). In fact, the difference is just 17 hours per week on average, against 16.1. On the other hand, the political experience of county councillors at the second tier of local government, analysed in terms of seniority, has only limited impact in terms of the full- or part-time

dedication to politics, the time dedication to the office, or discrete or non-discrete political ambitions of the councillors (H2b, c and d). More precisely, regarding the hypotheses established in the previous section:

- H2b: 24.9 per cent of the county councillors who are in their first mandate are full-timers, while this percentage only grows to a 29.6 per cent in subsequent mandates.
- H2c: County councillors in their first mandate devote approximately 15 hours per week to their office on average, with more-seasoned county councillors devoting 17 hours per week.⁸
- H2d: 77 per cent of county councillors in their first mandate show non-discrete ambitions while this percentage decreases to 72 per cent in the case of more-seasoned county councillors.

To analyse the career *locus*, which will allow us to explore the councillor mandate within the wider and temporal unfolding of political careers in multi-level governance, we have re-categorised the different elected mandates assumed by county councillors before reaching the second tier of local government. More than half of the county councillors (58.5 per cent) have acceded to their office from a municipal elected office, while a little bit more than one-third (31.5 per cent) have entered directly to the second tier of local government and 9.6 per cent have assumed both elected mandates simultaneously. In this sense most county councillors have an external career locus, although it is clearly limited to the municipal level. By contrast, the number of county councillors ‘landing’ at the second tier from upper levels of government in the development of their political career is simply negligible.⁹

Again, if we subsequently observe whether these patterns relate to the other aspects of the political career of county councillors, constituting an internal logic of professionalization, we find unexpected and rather weak (yet significant) patterns. On one hand, full-time politicians show a clearer tendency to have an external career locus (H3a) because 86.1 per cent of full-time councillors share this feature, while this percentage decreases to 73.2 per cent in the case of part-time county councillors. On the other, county councillors with static ambitions show a clearer trend to an external career locus than those with progressive political ambitions – which could be surprising. However, the differences are not really strong (H3b): 67.5 per cent of county councillors with progressive ambitions have an external career locus, while this percentage grows to 72.3 per cent in the case of county councillors with ‘non-progressive’ or static ambitions.

Finally, the second tier of local government above all seems to be a relevant political layer in the *local* government system of each country. In particular, our analysis of the county councillors’ political career shows a clear pattern pointing to a classic *cursus honorum* going predominantly from the first to the second tier of local government as the main feature of the career *sequence*. Moreover, the idea of an autonomous local government system is further confirmed by the very limited amount of councillors at the second tier who have experience in higher levels of

government, or want to continue their political career at upper levels of government.¹⁰ Besides, neither in this case the results of our analyses allow us to show very convincing evidence about the interrelated impact of the different indicators of county councillors' career development in terms of political professionalization. Most county councillors share a manifest office, in percentages that are relatively higher in the case of full-time politicians (74.3 per cent) in comparison to their part-time counterparts (61.2 per cent) as we hypothesized in H4.

Aggregate levels of professionalization according to the political career path of county councillors across Europe

Moving from the individual to the aggregate level, to what extent can cross-country patterns, as defined by the vertical relations in the countries under study, account for our general findings? First, the autonomy of the local government system in the career path of county councillors is clearly reproduced in the different countries included in our analysis. The municipal level is the most relevant layer of recruitment of county councillors in all the countries, with the exception of Greece, Poland and Romania where most county councillors have had direct access to the second tier of local government. However, besides this, common trend considerable variation between the countries can be observed in Table 12.5.

Almost all Spanish provincial councillors were previously elected at the municipal level because these elected mandates are indirectly elected by and among the municipal councillors according to electoral results after municipal elections have taken place (see Bertrana *et al.* 2011).¹¹ In the Czech Republic and France the percentage of county councillors 'rooted' at the municipal level lowers to 80 per cent but is still

Table 12.5 Previous elected post (percentage)

Country	Direct access to the second tier of local government	Municipal level	Simultaneous access to both levels of local government	Other
Belgium	28.1	59.1	12.2	0.7
Croatia	40.6	53.9	4.2	1.3
Czech Rep.	15.5	79.8	4.8	0.0
England	38.3	56.3	5.5	0.0
France	11.5	81.5	6.6	0.3
Germany	24.9	61.2	13.3	0.6
Greece	52.6	45.5	0.5	1.4
Hungary	43.0	49.4	7.6	0.0
Italy	33.3	61.5	5.1	0.0
Norway	20.9	62.8	15.8	0.5
Poland	56.4	33.7	9.9	0.0
Romania	66.0	31.3	1.4	1.4
Spain	0.0	97.7	0.0	2.3
Sweden	28.0	58.9	12.8	0.3
Total	31.5	58.5	9.6	0.4

Source: Second Tier Survey

very relevant, as happens in the cases of Belgium, Germany, Sweden and Norway (70 to 80 per cent). Finally, in the rest of countries approximately 60 to 65 per cent of county councillors have acceded to their mandate from a previous one at the municipal level, or have been elected at both levels simultaneously – if we leave aside the cases of Greece, Poland and Romania, where direct access to the second tier of local government predominates as we have already mentioned.

Obviously, we can also distinguish the cases of consecutive or simultaneous election to the municipalities and the second tier of local government. As can be observed in Table 12.5, the cases of simultaneous election never rise above 16 per cent. For that reason, the *cursus honorum* mentioned earlier can be further described by taking into account a common pattern which points to the relevance of consecutive mandates at the municipal and second-tier levels of local government in the countries included in our analysis. Even the cases of Greece, Poland and Romania (where ‘direct access’ to the second tier is higher, as we have already explained), show the relevance of the ‘municipal recruitment’ of county councillors and, at the same time, the predominance of consecutive mandates at both levels of local government over a simultaneous election.

Another different question is what kind of elected office at the municipalities is more relevant for gaining access to the second tier of local government, either when county councillors have assumed a previous elected mandate at the municipal level or when the access is simultaneous. If we include only these categories in our analysis, we can observe that most county councillors are or have been members of the municipal council (77.2 per cent), while the rest of them are or have been members of the political executive of the municipalities (12.5 per cent) or mayors (10.3 per cent; see Table 12.6). In absolute terms this variation is logical because the contingent of municipal councillors in each country is much

Table 12.6 Previous elected post at the municipalities (percentage)

Country	Mayor	Executive	Council
Belgium	4.2	17.1	78.7
Croatia	5.0	0.0	95.0
Czech Rep.	15.5	19.7	64.8
England	0.0	3.8	96.2
France	20.6	23.7	55.7
Germany	11.3	8.4	80.3
Greece	2.1	4.2	93.8
Hungary	15.6	0.0	84.4
Italy	2.6	7.7	89.7
Norway	0.0	23.7	76.3
Poland	9.1	18.2	72.7
Romania	4.2	4.2	91.7
Spain	20.7	17.2	62.1
Sweden	0.8	17.4	81.8
Total	10.3	12.5	77.2

Source: Second Tier Survey

higher than the contingent of members of the executives or mayors, but in relative terms the internal political hierarchy at the municipal level seems to be clearly intertwined with the access to the second tier of local government. Furthermore, if we analyse this variable from a comparative perspective there are important variations across countries, as shown in Table 12.6.

In Croatia, Greece, Italy, Romania and England county councillors with some kind of experience at the political executive of the municipalities are around less than 10 per cent of county councillors previously or simultaneously elected at the municipal level.¹² In Hungary this percentage grows to 15.6 per cent (curiously, all of them mayors). In Belgium and Germany, together with Norway and Sweden, it is generally around 20 per cent, while in Poland it is nearly 30 per cent. Finally, in the Czech Republic, France and Spain it exceeds 35 per cent.

In the countries where this percentage is higher, the access to relevant political posts at the municipality eases the access to the second tier of local government, thus pointing simultaneously to the interrelationship between the internal *cursus honorum* at the municipal level and the *cursus honorum* at both levels of local government. However, what is probably more interesting is that countries where municipal recruitment amongst the county councillors is higher also show a clearer tendency towards recruitment from the political executive of the municipalities or even the mayoralty. By contrast, in those countries where the municipal recruitment tends to be relatively lower, elected members of the municipalities are increasingly recruited from the municipal councils.

In the cases of the Czech Republic, France and Spain, where the percentage of county councillors recruited from the municipalities is higher than in the rest of the countries, those recruited from political executive posts follow the same trend. Then comes a group of countries formed by Belgium, Germany, Norway and Sweden with lower values in both variables. Finally, there is a group formed by Greece, Italy, Croatia, Hungary and Romania where this trend is even clearer. We could also group the case of England within these countries because it is also just below the average in relation to the percentage of county councillors recruited from the municipalities and, at the same time, the country where less county councillors occupy or have occupied executive mandates at the district/municipal level. By contrast, the Polish case is difficult to classify into these groups of countries because it follows an inverse pattern in both variables: it is the only country where the percentage of county councillors recruited from the municipalities is one of the lowest amongst the countries included in our study and, at the same time, the percentage of these political elites recruited from political executive mandates at the municipal level is relatively high (one out of three approximately).

As could be expected, our data about the electoral mandate in which county councillors reach the second tier is quite consistent with this grouping of countries (see Table 12.7). The Czech Republic, France and Spain are the only countries where most county councillors have acceded to their position at the second tier of local government as the second or even as the third elected mandate after having some kind of political experience at the municipal level according to the data explained earlier. The German case also reproduces this pattern, but to a lesser

Table 12.7 County councillors by numbers of elected mandates (percentage)

Country	Numbers of elected mandates				
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth or more
Belgium	40.1	38.2	17.8	3.6	0.3
Croatia	46.0	39.0	13.3	1.3	0.3
Czech Rep.	20.2	38.1	31.0	10.7	0.0
England	44.1	24.4	23.6	6.3	1.6
France	18.8	28.6	27.9	17.0	7.6
Germany	38.5	43.1	14.1	3.6	0.8
Greece	58.7	21.7	13.2	6.4	0.0
Hungary	50.6	44.3	5.1	0.0	0.0
Italy	38.8	31.9	26.7	2.6	0.0
Norway	35.4	32.3	23.3	7.6	1.4
Poland	69.8	18.8	5.2	3.1	3.1
Romania	69.7	28.2	1.4	0.7	0.0
Spain	0.0	50.9	32.0	15.4	1.7
Sweden	42.0	32.5	21.0	3.9	0.5
Total	41.8	34.4	16.6	5.4	1.8

Source: Second Tier Survey

degree. For that reason, it could be grouped with Belgium, where the percentage of councillors reaching the second tier of local government either as their first elected mandate or as the second are very similar, as happens with Norway and Sweden (although in the Swedish case 'direct access' to the counties as the first elected mandate is clearly higher). Croatia, Hungary and Italy intensify this trend and, standing out above these countries in relation to the percentage of county councillors acceding at the second-tier authorities as their first elected mandate, together with the English county councillors (despite that the Italian and the British cases show a hybrid pattern in relation to this variable because provincial or county councillors show a clear trend towards longer political careers before being elected at the second tier). Finally, in the Greek, Polish and Romanian cases 60 to 70 per cent of county councillors have acceded to the second tier of local government as their first elected mandate.

This tentative grouping of countries is relatively consistent with the typology of the second tier of local government developed by Bertrana and Heinelt (2011b). These authors distinguished four broadly defined variations of these local authorities in the vertical power relations of the different countries. As we have explained before, in their analysis, two of these variations corresponded to the Nordic-Middle European countries (Denmark and Sweden, and Belgium and Germany respectively) which shared a clearer pattern to a 'nationalised' local government structure, with the respective counties or provinces acting as a relevant agent in the provision of public services or even assuming a dual role as a local self-government and a territorial state administration, as happens in the Belgian and German cases. The third variation corresponded to a so-called municipalised second tier, which

included all Southern and Eastern European countries included in their book with the exception of Romanian *judete*, which were grouped together with Turkey (a country excluded from this research project) in the fourth variation (distinguished by Bertrana and Heinelt 2011b: 318–319).

What is particularly surprising, according to our data, is that the countries belonging to the ‘municipalised second tier’ (including Croatia and the Czech Republic) show the most extreme differences according to the variables analysed here. The Czech Republic, France and Spain share the highest levels of municipal recruitment and, at the same time, the highest levels of recruitment amongst the members of the political executives of the municipalities or the mayors. By contrast, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy or Romania (plus England) share the lowest levels of ‘municipal recruitment’ and the lowest levels of recruitment amongst the political executives of the municipalities. In fact, as we have already explained, Greece and Romania are the only countries where most county councillors gain access to their elected mandates without previous experience at the municipal level, together with Poland where the levels of municipal recruitment are relatively low, but the percentage of county councillors who are recruited from the first tier of local government political executives is amongst the highest.

It is difficult to explain these variations in the patterns of recruitment and the political careers of the county councillors by taking into account other institutional variables related to the horizontal power relations in the local government systems of the countries analysed. There are some interesting common features in both groups that could help us to understand the relative autonomy of the second tier of local government in relation to the municipal level in the Southern and Eastern European countries analysed (for example, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy or Romania share the direct election of the mayors and/or the county presidents, in contrast with Spain, France or the Czech Republic), but neither explain the variations across all the groups nor all the variations in each group.

We can only hypothesise that the ‘municipalised second tier’ – as an authority captured by municipal party political strongholds that we still observe in the Czech Republic, France or Spain – could have been transformed in a more autonomous second level of local government from the perspective of the local party political careers in Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania and Poland, where it is decoupled from municipal political power. On the other hand the degree of ‘nationalisation’ to be found (in the sense of Sellers and Lidström 2007: 611–612) in the local government structures of Belgium and Germany as well as of Norway and Sweden could explain the existence of more nuanced *local* career paths in these countries which nevertheless form a relatively consistent group from a comparative perspective.

In this sense, we have taken a step forward in our knowledge about these political elites by showing the autonomy of local levels of government in the career evolution of county councillors. This conclusion is based on the fact that (1) these political elites have acceded this level of local government either directly or from a previous municipal experience in almost all the cases and (2) their access is quite straightforward if we take into account that more than 75 per cent of these political elites of all the countries included in our study have acceded to the second tier of local government as their first or their second elected mandate, with the only

exception of the Czech Republic, French, Spanish and Italian cases where this percentage is just a little bit lower.

Cross-national analysis shows relevant variations in the levels of municipal recruitment in the political careers of county councillors and their interrelationship with the internal political career (or *cursus honorum*) at the municipal level in the countries included in our analysis. However these variations do not disprove this main feature of county councillors' career path. In fact, according to our data, this preliminary conclusion can only be reasserted if we take into account that (1) membership in the county councils is not a relevant point of arrival from upper levels of government in the political careers of our respondents (in fact, the percentage of county councillors landing at the second tier from upper levels of government never exceeds a mere 2 per cent) and (2) the cases of accumulation of mandates or elected offices between the second tier of local government and upper levels of government are too low even to be taken into account according to our data.

In fact, when it comes to their future ambitions, most county councillors want to continue in their position (a little bit less than 60 per cent). This is probably not surprising because these political elites are prone to develop what could be characterised as an *autonomous political career* at the local level. What is more interesting is that county councillors from Belgium, Germany, Sweden, England and, above all, France and Poland have a higher propensity to expect some stability in their post,¹³ while those from the rest of Eastern and Southern European countries have a higher propensity to prefer to continue their political career in other elected or political mandates. Both variables follow an inverse order relation, as can be seen in Table 12.8 (for that reason, the percentage of county councillors who want

Table 12.8 Future political ambition (percentage)

	<i>Continue as in my position</i>	<i>Continue my political career at . . .</i>					<i>Quit politics</i>
		<i>Not specified</i>	<i>The county level</i>	<i>The municipal level</i>	<i>Higher level</i>	<i>None of the above</i>	
Belgium	53.7	1.6	0.3	11.3	1.3	12.9	18.8
Croatia	46.7	2.2	0.6	3.5	7.4	22.0	17.6
Czech Rep.	42.4	2.4	2.4	14.1	3.5	15.3	20.0
England	52.6	35.3	—	—	—	—	12.0
France	61.9	17.0	—	—	—	—	21.1
Germany	65.0	0.0	0.6	7.4	2.3	6.9	17.9
Greece	40.7	3.4	0.5	7.2	10.1	19.1	19.1
Hungary	48.1	0.0	1.3	8.9	31.7	0.0	10.1
Italy	22.2	0.9	3.4	12.8	19.7	18.0	23.1
Norway	—	—	23.4	6.4	23.4	46.8	—
Poland	71.3	0.0	0.9	6.5	5.6	6.5	9.3
Romania	30.2	0.0	5.6	8.7	22.2	18.3	15.1
Spain	34.7	0.0	2.4	31.8	6.5	11.2	13.5
Sweden	52.1	0.0	3.2	2.8	7.4	18.4	16.1
Total	57.0	3.8	1.3	7.2	5.5	8.8	16.5

Source: Second Tier Survey

to quit politics in the different countries is quite stable and shows minor variations, mainly ranging from 10 to 20 per cent).¹⁴

A different question is whether county councillors would like to continue their political career at the same county (for example, assuming political executive responsibilities), at the municipal level or at upper levels of government. If we take into account *only* those Eastern and Southern European countries where county councillors show a higher propensity to continue their political career, we can see that they can be grouped in two (see Table 12.8). The only country where most county councillors would like to continue their political career at the municipal level is Spain (probably as mayors or members of the political executive because all of them are municipal councillors). However the percentage of county councillors with future expectations towards the municipal level is also relatively high in the Czech Republic. In contrast, the Italian, Hungarian or Romanian county councillors (and, to a lesser extent, the Croatian or the Greek ones) show a stronger future ambition to continue their political career at upper levels of government: the locus of their career seems to be at the regional and/or national level.

As our reader can see, both groups of countries are more or less the same, as we defined when explaining the degree of decoupling of county councillors' political careers in relation to the municipal level of government. The only exceptions are France and Poland. However, the Polish case is already a singular case regarding the patterns of its county councillors' access to the second tier. The French case, which is characterised by its large share of county councillors who would like to keep their mandate at the *départements*, seems to suggest that the second tier of local government has a specific position in the multi-level government system of France as a relevant point of arrival of municipal elites, in comparison with the Czech Republic and to a greater extent Spain where the second tier of local government seems to be *also* a sound platform to access executive positions or mayoralties at the municipal level the other way round.

In these three cases county councillors' political careers are coupled with careers at the municipal level. By contrast, the decoupling of both levels of government in relation to the political career of these political elites seems to characterise the rest of Southern and Eastern European countries – in particular, county councillors from Hungary, Romania and Italy, or Croatia and Greece, whose expectations of a future political career at upper levels of government are higher.

Finally, county councillors from the remaining countries are those with a stronger will to continue in their mandate. The Belgian and the German councillors are more focused to the municipal level when they want to continue their political career, the Swedish ones to the national level of government. However county councillors from these countries share a relative position between the two extremes defined by Southern and Eastern European countries which is also consistent in relation to their future political ambition.

If we order the countries according to (1) the percentage of county councillors recruited from municipal elected mandates, (2) the percentage of county councillors recruited from political executive posts at the municipal level and (3) the percentage of county councillors who want to continue their political career depending

on their will to do it at municipal or higher levels of government, three main groups emerge:

1. The first one would include the Czech Republic, France or Spain. It could be characterised by the strongest interrelationship between the political careers of county councillors and municipal political careers.
2. This interrelationship becomes weaker in Belgium, Germany, Sweden or Norway. In these countries, the percentage of county councillors recruited from the municipal level (and from political executive posts at the municipal level) is more or less on the average, but they show the strongest will to continue in their post despite the differences explained earlier.
3. Finally, in the rest of Southern and Eastern European Countries, with the exception of Poland, the decoupling between both levels of local government in relation to the political career of their political elites is the greatest. Access to the second tier tends to be direct to a large degree, is more independent of the development of an internal political career at the municipal level and county councillors show a clear propensity to seek a future career development at upper levels of government (especially in Hungary, Italy or Romania). As we have seen, the English case could be also grouped with these countries. By contrast, Poland is a unique case because (1) and (2) follow an inverse relationship.

These groupings of countries make sense to explain the main variations showed by the cross-national analysis. However, we should not forget that the variables analysed in this section reconfirm the high degree of autonomy of the local levels of government in the career evolution of county councillors. In this section we have pointed out that this conclusion is based on the fact that (1) they have acceded this level of local government either directly or from a previous municipal experience in almost all the cases and (2) their access is fast and straightforward in general terms. Now we could add a point (3) explaining that most of them would like to continue in their post and a relevant percentage of those who would like to continue their political career in most cases would like to do it at the municipal level.

Finally, we were also interested in knowing whether or not these career dimensions regarding sequence and scope interact and mutually strengthen the focus, thus contributing to political professionalization. As we have explained before, *only one* out of four county councillors consider themselves full-time politicians and, from this perspective, could be qualified as truly professional politicians (see Table 12.9). However cross-national examination of the data shows again relevant variations in the countries included in our analysis.¹⁵

Spain is the only country where most provincial councillors are full-time politicians (69.1 per cent) due to the fact that they *always* have a double representative mandate, but the Czech Republic and French county councillors also show a tendency towards political professionalization (a little bit less than 50 per cent) that is clearer than other countries. Then come the English (40.7 per cent), the Nordic (20 to 25 per cent) and the Belgian (18.3 per cent) county councillors. In

Table 12.9 Full-time politicians (percentage)

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Belgium	18.3	81.7
Croatia	3.5	96.6
Czech Republic	48.2	51.8
England	40.7	59.3
France	46.2	53.9
Greece	7.2	92.8
Italy	2.3	97.7
Norway	25.3	74.7
Romania	5.4	94.6
Spain	69.1	30.9
Sweden	21.6	78.4
Total	26.6	73.4

Source: Second Tier Survey

the rest of the countries (mainly Southern and Eastern European countries like Croatia, Greece, Italy or Romania), part-time (or amateur) politicians are more than 90 per cent.

Again, there seems to be some kind of relationship between the degree of what we called ‘municipal recruitment’ (particularly amongst executive politicians) and the degree of political professionalization of county councillors, which probably points to multiple office holding at the local levels of government of these political elites as the main reason behind their full/part-time dedication.¹⁶ In those countries where the career path at both levels of government seems to be more clearly intertwined, the levels of political professionalization of county councillors are higher. This factor seems to be more relevant than others related to the differences in the relative positioning of the second tier of local government in the vertical relations of power.

Conclusion

In this contribution we have analysed the political career of county councillors in Europe, including reflections on the possibility of a preceding and consecutive political career in a multi-level context. Applying the findings from the general literature on professionalization, we scrutinized four dimensions with regard to political careers at the second tier: focus, scope, locus and sequence.

Our analysis referred to the ideal-typical layperson–professional dichotomy in an attempt to grasp the nature of professionalization at the second-tier level. On a general level, we noticed clear signs of a professional career scope regarding seniority and future ambitions – even though in terms of focus (i.e. occupation and time dedication) the councillors’ career would still be classified as a layperson’s affair. Furthermore, while the combined results from career locus and sequence might hint at substantial degrees of professionalization as well, a closer look revealed above all a largely separate local career system in which councillors

often gain external experience at the municipal level before entering the county council. Moreover, we expected that the different indicators of professionalization within and between the four dimensions would reinforce one another at the individual level. However, this expectation has been confirmed to a very limited extent only. Across the four analytical dimensions, the results of our analysis offer only scarce evidence pointing towards a strong internal logic of professionalization in the political career development of second-tier councillors in Europe. It is for follow-up research to verify whether this internal logic is enhanced once the general degree of professionalization in the political career increases over time – or rather to adjust the model by incorporating different indicators and possible relations to gain more insights in the development of the political career at the individual level.

By contrast, systematic differences in vertical power relations of counties in various country settings seem to affect the degree of county councillor professionalization to a higher extent. Although the typology on the second-tier level developed by Bertrana and Heinelt (2011b) hardly proved to be useful for our analyses, a refined grouping of countries defined on the basis of their work shows that countries where the levels of municipal recruitment amongst the county councillors are higher also show a clearer tendency towards recruitment from the political executive of the municipalities or even the mayoralty, and hence to political professionalization. This pattern reinforces the idea of the second-tier level offering fertile ground for a career path in its own right in the context of an autonomous local political sphere where the different levels of local government interact as a relevant feature of political localism in some countries like France, Spain or the Czech Republic. In these cases county councillors' political careers are coupled with careers at the municipal level. By contrast, the decoupling of both levels of government in relation to the political career of these political elites seems to characterise the rest of Southern and Eastern European countries. Finally, the degree of 'nationalisation' in the local government structures of Belgium and Germany on the one hand, and Norway and Sweden on the other (in the sense of Bertrana and Heinelt 2011b or Sellers and Lidström 2007: 611–612), could explain the existence of more nuanced *local* career paths, which nevertheless are consistent with a relatively autonomous local government system more integrated in the multi-level government system of these countries.

Notes

- 1 Given the position of the second tier of local government in general and the particular mandate of councillor in particular, it is safe to assume however that this would refer only to a relatively small share of our population, with the potential exception of a number of executive mandates.
- 2 In this question, county councillors had to indicate the order of elected or appointed positions held during their political career at municipal, county, regional/state, national or European level.
- 3 Whereas the expectations for part-time politicians and those that have discrete future ambitions are likely the reverse, less straightforward hypotheses can be made for seasoned mandate holders or those with static ambitions. Depending on the type of

councillor we deem the assumption of an internal career locus (those determined from the start to develop a career within the second tier of local government) equally convincing as that of an external counterpart (e.g. municipal councillors that may find the scope or style of the second tier more satisfying).

- 4 These authors also included 14 countries in their book. In comparison with this project, they included Denmark (where counties were abolished and replaced by regions in a reform that took effect on 1 January 2007; see Mouritzen 2011), the Netherlands and Turkey, but they excluded Croatia, Norway and the Czech Republic.
- 5 These authors also took into account the horizontal power relations following Mouritzen and Svava (2002). The countries analysed in this chapter include the 'strong political leader' form in the countries characterised by a 'municipalised second tier' (and also in Germany), the 'collective leadership' form in Belgium, the 'leadership by committee' or 'committee leader form' in Sweden and some of the Eastern European countries included in the research project, and, finally, the Norwegian 'council-manager' system of horizontal relations. For that reason, we have focused on vertical power relations. If we had included both dimensions, there would be seven groups. Following Aars *et al.* (2012), we can assume that professionalization tends to be stronger in systems where councils are relatively strong as compared to members of the executive. Horizontal power relations could also trigger persons who want to pursue a professional political career, at least in some countries. However, for practical reasons our contribution will focus on vertical relations.
- 6 For an extensive analysis of this relation, see Ryšavý and Čermák, Chapter 13 in this book.
- 7 With the exception of the English ones that have remained in their posts three mandates (12.4 years) on average. We have to be cautious when interpreting these data because the standard deviation is quite high in most countries. Furthermore, in order to develop cross-national analysis we should take into account the existence of different electoral cycles, minor variations in the years in which the surveys were carried out and other institutional factors (eg. the French *départements* renew half of the council every three years).
- 8 It could be surprising that the average time spent on the councillor office is considerably higher for full-time and part-time councillors (30 and 22 hours per week) than for the research population in terms of future ambition and experience (figures between 15 and 17 hours per week). However, this is due to many missing cases for the 'full-time vs part-time councillor' question. See Note 14.
- 9 We have also analysed the external locus of county councillors' political career by not only taking into account their previous elected post, but also the cases of accumulation of mandates once they have been elected at the second tier of local government. However, the differences are quite low (approximately 5 per cent).
- 10 On one hand, there are only 248 county councillors (without weighting in this case) who have occupied elected posts at upper levels of government. On the other, 273 want to continue their political career at upper levels of government.
- 11 More precisely: 97.7 per cent. The other 2.3 per cent are councillors that before being chosen at the provincial level were elected at upper levels of government despite they were still occupying a municipal elected post (otherwise they could not have been chosen to be councillors at the second tier of local government).
- 12 During the explanation, we have decided to group the previous political post at the municipal level in two main categories. On the one hand we have grouped former members of the municipal council without taking into account if they were the presidents of this political body or not. On the other we have grouped former members of the political executive, without distinguishing the mayors. The reason is that the institutional setting in the countries included in the book is very diverse and this makes it extremely difficult to draw comparative conclusions at such a concrete level of analysis. For example, it is even difficult to refer to the mayoralty as a relevant political post in

- some countries. Or the post of the president of the municipal council can be occupied by the mayor like in Spain or can be simply an honorary post.
- 13 As can be seen in Table 12.8, unfortunately the surveys from France and the England did not disaggregate this variable. In the case of Norway just the contrary happened because the survey did not include the possibility of 'continue as in my position' or 'quit politics'. For both reasons, these countries are excluded in some parts of the career scope analysis.
 - 14 The most extreme position in relation to this variable is Italy (23.1 per cent). However, we must take into account the Italian case is exceptional because when the survey was conducted there was an on-going reform of the Second Tier of Local Government in order to establish an indirect system of election (similar to that existing in Spain) which probably made the option of "continuing in the same position" simply unfeasible for the Italian provincial councillors.
 - 15 Data for this variable is missing for Germany, Poland and Hungary.
 - 16 This matters more than other variables related to the scope, such as seniority. For example, Spanish county councillors have some of the lowest seniority in office, with 4.6 years on average (standard deviation = 5.2) like the Czech Republic councillors (6.9 with a standard deviation = 3.4), in contrast with the French *conseillers généraux* (12.6 with a standard deviation = 9).

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13 Political professionalization of county councillors in Europe

Dan Ryšavý and Daniel Čermák

Introduction

Modern democratic politics walks side by side with professionalization (i.e. a process whereby politics is evolving into an occupation). On one hand, democracy requires time: when no income is derived from politics, it is in danger of turning into an oligarchy. On the other hand, attempts to make a steady source of income from politics (Weber 1919) can easily develop into social closure, hence threatening the democracy, as such (Borchert 2008).¹

In line with studies that go as far back as the well-known lecture *Politik als Beruf* (Weber 1919), in this chapter we discuss those who live not only *for* but also *off* politics at the level of *kraje*, *powiaty*, *judete*, *županije* and other second tiers of local government authorities. We are interested in how much time the representatives who work in politics full time dedicate to county affairs and what factors influence whether or not a layperson becomes a political professional. We are working from the assumption that the form and scope of professionalization are important characteristics of the second tier of local government, which is significantly and reciprocally interlinked with the stability or transformation of this level of multi-level government. We pay special attention to the cases of countries where incongruences between the time invested in county politics and a declared (non) full-time status can be found.

This book explores the many ways in which the councillors, political executives and leading bureaucrats of provinces, counties, *départements*, *Landkreise*, etc. perceive their roles, how they behave and how they respond to the ongoing rescaling of statehood that contests the upper tier of local government. Looking at the second tiers of local government from the angle of key players, we choose the perspective of those who – through their action or lack thereof – are able to either accelerate or more or less successfully navigate changes in this layer of multi-level government. However, they would be some of the first personally affected by these changes, should reforms result in alterations in the structure of political opportunities for ambitious politicians (Schlesinger 1966).²

Theory and research of political professionalization

Max Weber's lecture *Politik als Beruf* (1919) is considered a classic text in the social sciences. What made it famous was primarily Weber's distinction between an 'ethic of conviction' and an 'ethic of responsibility'. The reception of the text in the Anglo-Saxon world has been made easier by the 1946 translation provided by Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. The more extensive and elaborated first part of the lecture, where Weber expanded on his political professionalization theory, has received far less attention. According to Borchert (2007: 67), there are three hypotheses that stand in the centre here: (1) the modern professional politician is historically a new type of politician, characterised by (a) being dedicated full time to politics and (b) living both *for* and *off* politics; (2) political professionalization is a product of democratisation and bureaucratisation; (3) competing political parties are becoming the institutional epicentre of a professional politics. Interpreting politics as a profession means uncovering latent conflict between professionalism that leads to the formation of a political class and representative democracy.

In many ways, modern politics corresponds with the characteristics of a profession as defined by the sociology of professions (see e.g. Goode 1957; Abbott 1981), oftentimes to a larger extent compared to a number of more classic professions. In the case of politics, it is very difficult to estimate reward based on performance. Politicians also exercise a rather high level of self-regulation. In line with such self-regulation, elected politicians often designate the positions in politics that would be executed as full-fledged employment and the reward for which politicians in such positions would be eligible. Professionalised politics logically runs into conflict with the demands of the theory of democracy; it also alienates politics from citizens. This is one of the reasons politicians do not make much show of the fact they derive their living through politics. It can briefly be stated that politics is a 'precarious' profession (Borchert 2003).³ The process of democratisation created time demands on politicians, and thereby, the need for an income derived from politics (Borchert 2008: 272). It is apparent, especially on the parliamentary level, that without the introduction of salaries for politicians, the social opening of the political sphere could not be possible and democracy based on the participation of a wide range of social groups would starve out. As for local governments, there are tendencies toward the professionalisation of local executives (Aderholt *et al.* 2009; Guérin and Kerrouche 2008; Reiser 2006; Ryšavý 2013b; Steyvers and Verhelst 2012). The ongoing professionalisation at the state level in federations and regions in regionalised states has been reflected in the growing number of studies on the political careers of regional elites (e.g. Borchert and Stolz 2011 and the 2011 special issue of *Regional and Federal Studies*, 2, Vanlangenaeker *et al.* 2013; Dodeigne 2014). Establishment or empowerment at the regional level of governance in a number of countries considerably changed the scope and form of the structure of political opportunities (Schlesinger 1966). However, studies of multi-level political careers do not cover the second tier of local government in federal or regionalised states and are also underrepresented in the case of countries with only one level of government between municipalities and national parliaments (Ryšavý, forthcoming).

In Heinelt and Bertrana (2011), the topic of professionalisation has been mentioned rather marginally in relation to the county presidents (*Landrat*) in Germany and the members of the county executives in Belgium, Italy and the United Kingdom. In Germany, the *Landrat* gained the status of full-time civil servants (Heinelt and Egner 2011: 111). Martin (2011: 95) has stated that ‘the role of leader and other cabinet members in a county council in the UK is now usually seen as a full-time one and allowances increasingly reflect this’. Similarly, most of the Italian presidents and the *assessori* are professional politicians (Baccetti 2011: 170) and professionalisation also pertains to the members of the provincial executive in Belgium (Valcke *et al.* 2011: 37). These cases are most likely not exceptions, as elected positions in the second tier of local government are seen as career opportunities in other countries, as well. Borchert (2008) understands diffusion within political systems to be one of the main tendencies of political professionalization. Despite particular differences, it can be concluded that professionalization is associated mainly with members of county executive organs, much as at the municipal level.

Hypotheses and data

The international survey on county councillors is a unique source of information that can serve for testing the two general hypotheses resulting from the previous summary. The first hypothesis expects path dependency of professionalization at the second tier of local government resulting out of different institutional and historical factors. The second hypothesis envisages that the incongruence between professionalization at the individual level and professionalization of an office or institution is a sign of some kind of transitory state.

There may be political amateurs taking over a professionalised office, or there may be political professionals coming into an office that has not yet been professionalised. While these instances are rather rare, they do occur, and most often signal a transitory state that usually is resolved by way of professionalization of the as yet amateur side. [. . .] The reverse situation of politicians who pursue politics full-time while the position they hold is not yet adequately reimbursed is usually part of a historical (rather than an individual) process of transition.

(Borchert 2008: 271)

As noted in the introductory section, this chapter primarily seeks to analyse the professionalization of the second tier of local government institutions. By *political professionalization*, we basically mean the process that has turned politics into an occupation. Increasing time demands produce the need for an income being derived from politics (Borchert 2008). However, neither the survey of county councillors nor other sources provide complete, as well as comparable, data indicating which offices of the second tier of local governments are connected with financial sources that would justify labelling those positions as professionalised. Nevertheless,

it is possible to draw conclusions indirectly from the statements of individual county councillors.

We focus on two indicators of political professionalization, which could be said to be classic and connected: first, the time spent in the exercise of office, showing how the role in local government replaces the normal professional activity; and second, the level of financial remuneration of politicians (see e.g. Guérin and Kerrouche 2008; Reiser 2006; Stolz 2009; Holtkamp 2011). In the case of the county councillors' survey, two variables could do well at playing the role of the mentioned indicators: first, the question 'Are you a full-time politician?', which was placed at the end of the questionnaire, and, among other things, differentiated those people who answered the question on present occupation ('No') and who were not asked about occupational status ('Yes'). A positive answer to the question indicates that there is a 'professionalised' office being occupied by a county councillor. However, he or she may not be a 'county professional'. The second variable is the answer to the question: 'How many hours on average do you spend on county-related activities within a week?' The time devoted to county affairs is understood here as a direct indicator of living *for* county politics, but also as an indirect indicator of living *off* county politics.⁴ It represents an indirect measure of professionalization on the individual level. It is presumed that those who dedicate a lot of time to county politics most likely do not spend that much time in paid employment. They are either reimbursed for their commitment or receive resources otherwise. Those without financial remuneration can include either retired people and people on parental leave, as examples, or those who find themselves in a state of 'hidden professionalization' (Borchert 2008: 271; see also Reiser 2006). If this is the case, we are probably dealing with the previously mentioned transitional situation, which is characterised by an institutional level of professionalization, rather than individual. We suppose that the proposed or realised reforms of the second tier of local government influencing the scope and shape of opportunity structure for ambitious politicians represents a source or expression of these transitional states; councillors more or less consciously reflect them.

In the case of the first hypothesis, the combination of both indicators in the form of a typology will be used for estimating the form and scope of the professionalization of councillors at the second tier of local government. Other features (mainly institutional) are tested as factors resulting in the differences in the scope of professionalization among the individual councillors from the countries included in the study. As a next step, the discrepancy between the two chosen indicators will be analysed in relation to the second hypothesis. The presence of those who invest their time without proper remuneration or those who are full-time politicians mostly oriented outside county affairs will be analysed and contextualised.

Last, but not least, the limitations of the survey data being used should be noted. First, the primary focus will be on county councillors, regardless of their other functions, because the survey data does not indicate precisely which functions the particular representative performed at the time of the survey. Second, in addition to problems related to the low response rate, not all councillors answered the question regarding time. The abstention rate varied widely among the different countries,

with a minimum level in Norway and the Czech Republic (all answered), a median level in Croatia and Poland (11 per cent abstained) and the extreme case of Greece (63 per cent).⁵ As for the second key question indicating whether the respondent is a full-time politician or not, there is, unfortunately, data missing for three countries (Germany, Hungary, and Poland). Nevertheless, based on the literature and our own analysis, it can be expected that the range of full-time positions in county councils is limited, at least in the cases of Germany and Poland, while professionalization is much more likely a matter of the upper level of government, such as the *Länder* in Germany (see Borchert and Stolz 2011) or the *województwa* in Poland. The other countries do not manifest such high abstention regarding the question on time spent on county-related activities. In most cases, the missing answers did not exceed a ratio of 5 per cent, while the highest was in Romania (17 per cent).

How much time do county representatives spend doing county politics?

In the first step, we analyse the total time the representatives in the individual countries spend on county-related activities. We study the distribution of frequencies and the inclination or irregularities (more peaks in the histogram). The categorisation of countries represents a secondary step.

After the answers to the question on time spent on county affairs were integrated into categories (modal interval) of five hours each (1–5 hours, 5.1–10 hours and so on, up to 60.1 or more),⁶ it was revealed that in most countries (specifically, nine out of 14) county councillors spent between 5.1 and 10 hours a week on this task (see Table 13.1). The second most frequent category is usually not all that

Table 13.1 Time invested in county affairs by county councillors by different time intervals

Country	Number of respondents	Modal interval		2nd most common interval	How many hours a week? (per cent)		
		Hours	Per cent		1–10 hours	10.1–30 hours	> 30 hours
Spain	163	5 to 10	15	35 to 40	18	33	49
England	132	25 to 30	18	10 to 15	8	53	39
France	263	15 to 20	16	5 to 10	16	48	37
Greece	86	15 to 20	20	5 to 10	29	44	27
Romania	168	5 to 10	23	10 to 15	26	51	23
Italy	123	10 to 15	18	5 to 10	20	57	23
Norway	217	5 to 10	20	10 to 15	28	52	20
Sweden	1,136	5 to 10	30	1 to 5	54	31	16
Hungary	87	5 to 10	26	1 to 5	47	38	15
Czech Rep.	85	5 to 10	29	1 to 5	57	29	14
Belgium	276	5 to 10	33	1 to 5	55	36	10
Poland	106	5 to 10	38	1 to 5	59	34	7
Croatia	293	1 to 5	35	5 to 10	66	28	6
Germany	1,305	5 to 10	36	1 to 5	64	34	3

Source: Second Tier Survey

far from the most-mentioned category. Only a minority of councillors reported spending more than 30 hours per week on county affairs, with the exception of Spain, where many county councillors dedicate between 35.1 and 40 hours to their function as a political representative at this level of government. The second step of the analysis concentrated on those councillors who had declared that the time they spend on county affairs is either (a) less than 10 hours a week, (b) between 10.1 to 30 hours a week or (c) more than 30 hours a week.⁷ In Table 13.1, the countries are divided into four groups according to the proportion of respondents who declared they invested more than 30 hours a week in county affairs. The first group includes countries where this applied for more than 30 per cent of the councillors (Spain, England, France); in the second group of countries, this applies for around 25 per cent (Greece, Romania, Italy); in the third group, for between 10 to 20 per cent (Norway, Sweden, Hungary and the Czech Republic); the fourth group, for less than 10 per cent (Belgium, Poland, Croatia and Germany).⁸ As the rate of representatives who claim to spend more than 30 hours a week on county affairs increases, the percentage of those councillors who spend between 5.1 and 10 hours in exercising their mandate decreases.⁹

The distribution of the countries into four groups appears to be non-random. The first two groups include England and the countries in Southern Europe. Less time investment was declared by councillors from federal or quasi-federal political systems such as Germany and Belgium (i.e. countries with more than one government level between the national and municipal) and the New Democracies of Eastern-Central Europe where decentralisation quite recently took place (Croatia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary) and often with a delay and an emphasis on the reestablishment of self-government at the municipal level as one of the first institutional changes after the year 1989 (see e.g. Illner 1997; 2002). Nordic countries are placed between these groups of European countries. This pattern resembles the distinction between countries made by Loughlin *et al.* (2011). It seems that countries with similar state traditions also approximate the studied indicator, i.e. the ratio of representatives devoting more than 30 hours per week to county activities. There are a number of partial factors that play a role here, such as different job descriptions, the form of remuneration (lump sum versus reimbursement of time spent on council and committee meetings, etc.), the way they divide their time between their own employment and in the elected position, etc.

When we measure the level of professionalization at the second tier of local government by the proportion of councillors who are spending nearly a full-time work week on county affairs (specifically, more than 30 hours per week), we are able to identify differences between countries and must reflect on the reasons for these differences. One reason for a high percentage of county councillors with such a workload could be the way of becoming a political representative at this level of local government. This particularly applies to Spain, where 'the seats of the provincial councils are distributed between the political parties in accordance with the results of the elections to the municipal councils within the boundaries of the province' (Bertrana *et al.* 2011: 229). The reason for a much lower

percentage of such councillors could be a political system in which a meso-level determines the size of county councils, form of their organs, etc. (Belgium, Germany). Finally, the historical development of the institutional setup seems to matter, as shown by the young institutions of local and regional governments in the new democracies of Eastern Europe.

Four types of county councillors

The next part of the chapter will first focus on the differences in the proportions of county councillors in the individual countries who declared they carry out their function as a full-time job. Subsequently, we will outline a typology of county councillors' professionalization by using both responses to time invested into county affairs and full-time status.

As for the full-time question, the highest proportion of this type of politician was reported for Spain (68 per cent), median (22 per cent) for Sweden, and the smallest for Italy and Croatia (2–3 per cent; see Table 13.2, Column B). When comparing these data with those on the time invested in county affairs (Table 13.2, Column A), it is apparent that the first group of countries shows a high proportion of those with 30 or more hours of county work, as well as a high proportion of full-time politicians. The second group unambiguously shows a discrepancy in the relatively frequent incidence of busy representatives on the one hand, and the low percentage of declared full-time politicians on the other. An opposite example of a discrepancy is illustrated by the cases of the Czech Republic and Spain, where the proportion of those representatives who claimed to be full-time politicians

Table 13.2 Measuring the professionalization of county councillors by (A) declared time invested in county affairs and (B) declared status as a full-time politician

Country	(A) > 30 hours	(B) full-time per cent	Difference between B and A
Spain	49	68	19
England	39	41	1
France	37	46	10
Greece	27	7	-20
Romania	23	5	-18
Italy	23	2	-21
Norway	20	25	6
Sweden	16	22	6
Hungary	15	Missing data	
Czech Rep.	14	48	34
Belgium	10	18	9
Poland	7	Missing data	
Croatia	6	3	-3
Germany	3	Missing data	

Source: Second Tier Survey

significantly exceeded the number of those who stated they put in more than 30 hours a week for the county. In other countries, the difference between the values of these two indicators did not exceed 10 percentage points.

The calculation of the differences in Table 13.2 is merely indicative, as it is based on two different variables, two percentages with different roots. On one hand, full-time politicians do not have to invest their time primarily in county affairs, and, on the other, there are a number of those who declare they spend a lot of time working for the county, but are not reimbursed for this. However, by combining these two indicators, we get a typology of county councillors, as shown in Figure 13.1. There are full-time councillors who are mainly focused on county affairs, i.e. those who reported a full-time position and high time investment, hereinafter referred to as *full-time county councillors*. On the opposite extreme are *laypeople*, i.e. those who devote up to 30 hours a week to county affairs and simultaneously declare they are not full-time politicians. The incongruence of a high amount of time spent without full-time status is characteristic of *time-investors*. And finally, there is another form of full-time county councillor: specifically, those who declare they are full-time county councillors, but nevertheless do not focus on county affairs (i.e. they reported that they devote 30 hours a week or less to county affairs). This type of county councillor, hereinafter referred to as *outward oriented full-time councillors*, probably spends more time on politics outside the county.

In this study, we analyse professionalization at the individual level, as well as at the institutional. The typology described earlier includes two congruent types that represent opposite poles: *laypersons* and *full-time county politicians*. We will look into the factors that increase or decrease the chances of the representatives falling under one of these types in the following part of this section. Attention will later centre on the two incongruent types: the *time investors* and *outward oriented full-time councillors*. Based on our theory, the presence of *time investors* represents evidence of the

		Full-Time	
		No	Yes
Hours per week	> 30 hours per week	Time Investors	Full-Time County Councillors
	< 30 hours per week	Laypeople	Outward Oriented Full-Time Councillors

Figure 13.1 Typology of councillors according to the time devoted to county affairs and the self-declared full-time status

transitory state of the institution rather than the individual's decision. The representation of *outward oriented full-time* politicians should indicate the existence of personal interconnectedness to various levels of government. Nevertheless, there could be many other explanations for the occurrence of both incongruent types.

Before we take a closer look at the profile of county councillors in the individual countries, we will highlight the general differences in attitudes toward the selected questions regarding professional careers on the individual and institutional level (see Table 13.3). On the individual level, this is a matter of future career prospects and the self-evaluation of one's own influence over county affairs. In the first case, we have concentrated on the ratio of those who are determined to leave politics once their current mandate ends.¹⁰ In other words, we are interested in those representatives who declare discrete ambitions according to the typology of Schlesinger (1966). Although the individual types are not very different, we can see that both types of full-time politicians less often consider ending their political careers. Contrarily, it was *time investors* who most often mentioned leaving.

The state of professionalization, both explicit as well as hidden, can also be indicated by the self-perception of the representatives in regard to the influence they have over county activities.¹¹ Is the influence a result of efforts the representatives devote to activities in their counties, or is inherent in gaining or maintaining a full-time post? It is apparent that the representatives who declared themselves more influential dedicated more time to activities in their post as county councillor. In the case of our typology, this means *full-time county councillors* and *time investors* claimed to have high influence over county affairs more often than *laypersons* and *outward oriented full-time* politicians.

In the survey, county councillors also expressed their view on possible reforms to the second tier of local government (see Heinelt, Chapter 8 in this book).¹² From the perspective of professionalization, the most interesting proved to be seeing how

Table 13.3 Different types of county councillors by their attitudes towards their future career, self-perception of influence and institutional settings (column percentages)

	Percentage				Total weighted
	<i>Laypersons</i>	<i>Time Investors</i>	<i>Outward Oriented Full-Time Councillors</i>	<i>Full-Time County Councillors</i>	
I would like to quit politics (a)	19	23	15	15	310
High influence (b)	26	39	25	49	539
County Merging (c)	36	26	23	23	560
Agree Reduction of the representatives (d)	32	21	23	23	503
Fraud and corruption (e)	47	43	25	30	747

Source: Second Tier Survey

Notes: Data are weighted across the country shares. Agree = sum of percentages for the options 'agree' and 'strongly agree' on a five-point scale.

the different types of representatives expressed their views on the two possibilities most closely tied to the availability of full-time positions in the second tier of local government – how they supported or rejected the merging of counties and reductions in the numbers of representatives. On one hand, as the representatives not engaged in politics full-time nor paying that much attention to county affairs, *laypersons* were bigger fans of these straightforward solutions. Proponents of county merges or cuts involving the numbers of representatives can more frequently be found among them. On the other hand, full-time politicians and those who invest tens of hours to county affairs (*time investors*) are usually opponents of such measures.

Finally, Table 13.3 presents the attitudes of county councillors connected with the evaluation of institutional performance: namely, how effective the second tier of local government is and whom it primarily serves. This can be shown by the different responses to the statement ‘Fraud and corruption are increasingly threatening the efficacy of local government,’ as depicted in the table.¹³ A relatively low proportion of full-time politicians identify with this statement. To the contrary, those representatives for whom political activity does not represent full-time employment are far more critical.

Profiles of county councillors in European countries and what they reveal

In the analyses that follow, we work with the typology of county councillors introduced in Figure 13.1. We will first show the distribution of the individual types in the studied countries and identify possible differences among them. Subsequently, we will focus on two opposite types: *laypersons* and *county full-time* politicians, where (with the use of multivariate statistical models) we will focus on the institutional, and to some extent, also on the individual, characteristics that are connected with the level of representation of the mentioned types in the individual countries.

Directing our attention to Table 13.4, we can see that in the majority of countries the county councils represent a political organ of *laypersons*.¹⁴ Only in Spain, France and England do *laypersons* represent a minority of county councillors. To the contrary, nine out of 10 county councillors in Croatia fall under the category of *laypersons*. Individual countries also differ considerably in terms of the representation of the type labelled *full-time county councillor*, i.e. the type that best matches a professionalised form of local government at the second tier. The highest proportion of *full-time county* politicians can be found in Spain, followed at some distance by England, with approximately one-fourth of these councillors. In the cases of the Czech Republic, France, Norway and Sweden, the abovementioned category represents approximately one-eighth of all county councillors; the proportion is even lower in the remaining countries. The representation of *time investors* is often indirectly dependent on the proportion of *full-time county councillors*. This is well illustrated in the examples of Greece, Romania and Italy. However it can be said that the percentage of *time investors* is not connected with the distribution of *laypersons* in the individual countries. *Outward oriented full-time councillors* show the highest

Table 13.4 Four types of county councillors by country (row percentage)

	Per cent of				total number of councillors included
	Laypersons	Time investors	Outward oriented full-time councillors	Full-time county councillors	
Spain	26	7	25	42	163
France	28	25	36	12	253
England	46	14	15	25	128
Czech Rep.	51	1	35	13	85
Greece	67	27	6	0	83
Norway	70	6	11	13	216
Romania	74	21	1	4	145
Sweden	75	3	10	13	1,117
Italy	76	22	2	1	123
Belgium	76	5	15	4	257
Croatia	92	5	3	0	285

Source: Second Tier Survey

Note: The most frequent category among non-laypersons categories (time investors, outward oriented full-time, and full-time county) are marked in bold.

representation in countries that are characterised by high fragmentation of municipalities, meaning each county has a large number of municipalities. Specifically, this is the case in the Czech Republic and France.¹⁵

The differences in the types of county councillors, as shown in Table 13.4, could be the result of a variety of factors that can be differentiated as either individual or institutional. We will now analyse how these factors impact on the composition of county councillors in the individual countries. This can be done by creating two multivariate analytical models, where the dependent variables will be those that define the type of county councillor(s). These are two binary variables; the first is being a *layperson* or not, while the second is being a *full-time county politician* or not. As these represent binary dependent variables, the most appropriate method to use appears to be binary logistic regression. The following list indicates the institutional variables included in the calculation of the two binary logistic regression models as independent variables.

1. *Diffusion*: One of the tendencies of professionalization is its diffusion within political systems, i.e. to other territorial levels of government (Borchert 2008: 274). A smaller diffusion can be expected in countries with a short history of democratisation and local government. It is primarily a matter of differentiating post-communist countries from established democracies. The analysis worked with Loughlin's typology (Loughlin *et al.* 2011): the New Democracies (Croatia, the Czech Republic, Romania), the Southern European States (France, Greece, Italy, Spain), the Nordic States (Norway, Sweden), the Rhineland States (Belgium). We have the necessary data for only

these countries; therefore, it was possible to include only them in the models (see page XXX).

2. *Pool eligible*: We suppose that the full-time positions at the second level of local government are often filled by politicians with previous experience in a professionalised political office at the municipal level. Since professionalisation at the municipal level is usually limited to local executives, we measure the availability of these pre-county experiences as the number of mayors in every county. More precisely, the indicator is represented by a logarithm of the number of municipalities falling under one county (for more information, see Lidström and Roos, Chapter 2 in this book).
3. *Number of inhabitants*: The model uses a natural logarithm of the number of inhabitants in the individual county. We presuppose that there will be a higher proportion of professionals among the representatives of the more populated counties. As the size of a county increases, so too does the amount of sources, as well as an increased amount and complexity of matters that counties govern and on which the representatives must make decisions.
4. *Vertical position*: This variable differentiates countries based on whether there is another level of government (a regional or state level) between the two levels of local government and national level. The number of levels affects the number of available full-time offices in a country (more levels, more electable positions). Nonetheless, the attractiveness of full-time positions can increase in proximity to the national level.

Apart from the institutional variables which show characteristics associated with specificities of the individual countries or individual counties, the multidimensional models included the following two independent individual variables as well:

1. *Position*: This variable shows the degree of experience of councillors based on the number of electable positions they have held during their career.¹⁶
2. *Elected as a candidate of*: This variable shows if the councillor was nominated as a candidate of a national party or whether they have run individually, or as a candidate for a county-specific party. In the case of being nominated as a candidate of a national party, a bigger coalition potential can be expected and, therefore, easier access to full-time positions in executive organs of local government.¹⁷ This might not be universally valid, as there are countries (such as Germany) where the influence of national politics is enforced on the level of federal states, while strong 'independent' political groups exist at both levels of local government (Reiser and Holtmann 2008).

Table 13.5 presents the outcomes of the two multivariate models that show which factors are connected with the fact that the county councillor either is or is not a *full-time county* politician or whether they are or are not *laypersons*. Some of the variables (*vertical position* and *elected as candidate*) have proved to be significant in only one of the models, while not being useful in the other, nor did they contribute to the explanatory power of the entire model.

Table 13.5 How to explain difference in the composition of county councillors between countries? Outputs of binary logistic regression models

Name of variable	Value	Model 1 – <i>layperson</i>		Model 2 – <i>full-time county politician</i>	
		Sig	Exp. (B)	Sig	Exp. (B)
Number of inhabitants	ln of value	0.015	0.85	0.019	1.29
Pool eligible	ln of value	0.000	0.11	0.000	4.08
Positions	number of positions	0.034	0.91	0.001	1.26
Vertical position	• only two tiers of local government	0.020	0.38	X	X
	• existence of regional/ state level (ref.)	.	.	X	X
Loughlin typology	• New Democracies	0.022	3.59	0.969	0.97
	• Southern European states	0.256	0.71	0.533	1.49
	• Nordic states	0.207	0.53	0.001	8.58
	• Rhineland states (ref.)	.	.	.	.
Elected as a candidate	• individual or independent	X	X	0.27	1.744
	• national party	X	X	0.04	2.146
	• county-specific party (ref.)	X	X	.	.
Nagelkerke R^2			0.248		0.101

Source: Second Tier Survey

Note: The dependent variable in Model 1 is *layperson* or not (ref.). The dependent variable in Model 2 is full-time county politician or not (ref.). X means that variable was not included in the model.

Data are weighted across the country shares. Reference categories are marked with dots.

The first of the introduced models (Model 1 – *layperson*) reveals which factors affect the chances of the individual county councillors to become (or remain) *laypersons*. Regarding the individual characteristics, the experience gained by working in politics proved to be important (measured by the number of electable positions previously held by the councillor). The more experienced the councillor, the smaller their chance of becoming a *layperson*. On the county level, the ‘pool eligible’ factor proved to be very impactful. The same applies to a lesser extent, but still quite significantly, to the number of inhabitants of the county. It turns out that the fewer municipalities under the jurisdiction of a county and the fewer inhabitants the county has, the better the chance of a councillor to become a *layperson*. The chance of belonging to the *laypersons* category is predetermined by the existence of a regional or state level in the respective country. If this is the case, the chance that a county councillor falls under the category of *laypersons* increases almost threefold. In regard to the national context, it is also true that the chance of becoming a *layperson* for county councillors from post-communist countries (the New Democracies) is almost four times higher compared to county councillors from Belgium (the only representative of the Rhineland states). Moreover, this chance is five times higher compared to the Southern European states and nearly seven times higher in comparison with the Nordic states.

The other calculated model (Model 2 – *full-time county politician*) tells us which factors influence the chances of individual county councillors becoming (or remaining) a *full-time county politician*. When looking at the individual characteristics, the number of electable positions the representative had held in the past also played an important role here as well. In this case, however, as the number of positions increases, so too does the chance of being a *full-time county politician*. In contrast to the previous model, the variable indicating if and for which political party the county councillor was running also proved to have an impact. If councillors were nominated by a national party, they had twice the chance of being *full-time county councillors*, compared with a candidate of a county-specific party. The structural characteristics of the county also play a role: as the number of inhabitants and municipalities in an individual county increases, the chance of becoming a *full-time county politician* also considerably increases. On the national level, it turned out to be important whether or not the county councillor is in the Nordic states. In comparison with county councillors of other countries, the candidates from Nordic states have a significantly higher chance of becoming a *full-time county politician*. The chance is nine times higher in comparison with Belgium (the Rhineland state) and the New Democracies, while almost six times higher when compared with the group of Southern European states.

Generally, after calculating the influence of the analysed variables, the models indicate that it is crucial whether the councillor is from a county with a large number of municipalities. The bigger the county, the higher their chances of being a *full-time county politician*, and the opposite: the lower the chance of being a *layperson*. The number of municipalities in a county is connected with the number of inhabitants in the county, which is a variable that performs similarly in the models, but does not have such a big impact on the dependable variables. The assumption about the impact of previous experience on the municipal level on political professionalisation was confirmed. Equally so, the experience of politicians measured by the number of electable positions they had held also influenced their professionalisation. The more positions they had held in the past, the bigger their chances were of being *full-time county politicians*. Conversely, the smaller their number of previous positions, the bigger their chance of becoming *laypersons*.

After factoring in the influence of the remaining variables, not only did the individual experience of politicians or physical parameters of the counties prove to be significant in terms of the professionalization of councillors at the second level of local government, but also the institutional context of the individual countries. The fact of whether a county councillor is or is not a *layperson* is influenced by the multi-level government arrangement of the individual countries. In the countries with a regional or a state level, there is a bigger chance for a county councillor to become a *layperson* in comparison with countries where this level is non-existent. The institutional context is also determined by the type of political system; in our case, we have used the Loughlin typology (Loughlin *et al.* 2011). It is evident from the models that the chance of being a *layperson* is especially higher in the case of county councillors from the New Democracies of Eastern Europe and, conversely, the chance of being a *full-time county politician* is highest for county councillors of the Nordic states.

All of these factors are relevant for the country with the highest proportion of *laypersons*, which is Croatia. Not only does Croatia belong to the New Democracies, but it also has few municipalities per county, has the lowest number of inhabitants per county on average, lacks a regional/state level and has poorly experienced county councillors in terms of the number of electable positions held in the past. In contrast, the country with the highest proportion of *full-time county politicians* is Spain, with very strong counties in terms of population and a relatively high number of municipalities and county councillors with outstanding experience in terms of the number of previously held electable positions; in the majority of cases, these councillors were elected for national parties.

To summarise the findings of the previous analyses, it can be said that the studied countries differ by the level and form of political professionalization. We find countries with a very high proportion of *laypersons* among county councillors (e.g. Croatia), but also countries in which the proportion of *full-time county politicians* is not so insignificant (e.g. Spain), or transitory types located somewhere between the two mentioned types (e.g. the Czech Republic, France, Greece). Using multivariate models helped to show that these differences are influenced by both the individual political experience of county councillors, the size of the counties (in respect to population as well as the number of municipalities) and the institutional setting in the individual countries.

County councillors in the space of political professionalization

In the previous section we analysed the factors that help in clarifying why one person does not engage very much in county affairs (*laypersons*), while another dedicates a lot of time to it and makes a living by doing so (*full-time county councillors*). We will now compare the levels and forms of professionalization in the different countries. For these purposes, a two-dimensional space based on two key variables was created, in which the individual countries are located based on the distributions of the individual types of councillors. This space was created to reflect the level of congruence of the two variables that identify the level of professionalization (see Figure 13.2). The horizontal axis shows whether those who dedicate more than 30 hours a week to work for the county in the particular country comprise a larger degree of full-time politicians (positive values) or not (negative values). The vertical axis indicates whether those who declared themselves full-time politicians devote more than 30 hours a week (positive values) to county politics, or not (negative values). The secondary diagonal goes from the area of low incidence of *full-time county politicians* (Full-Time County – in Figure 13.2) to the area of high incidence of this type (Full-Time County +++). The main diagonal starts at the upper left corner, i.e. the area with relatively high representation of *time investors*, and ends in the lower right corner, in the area characterised by the presence of *outward oriented full-time councillors*.

The size of the circles associated with the individual countries in Figure 13.2 corresponds to the proportion of respondents that either devote more than 30 hours

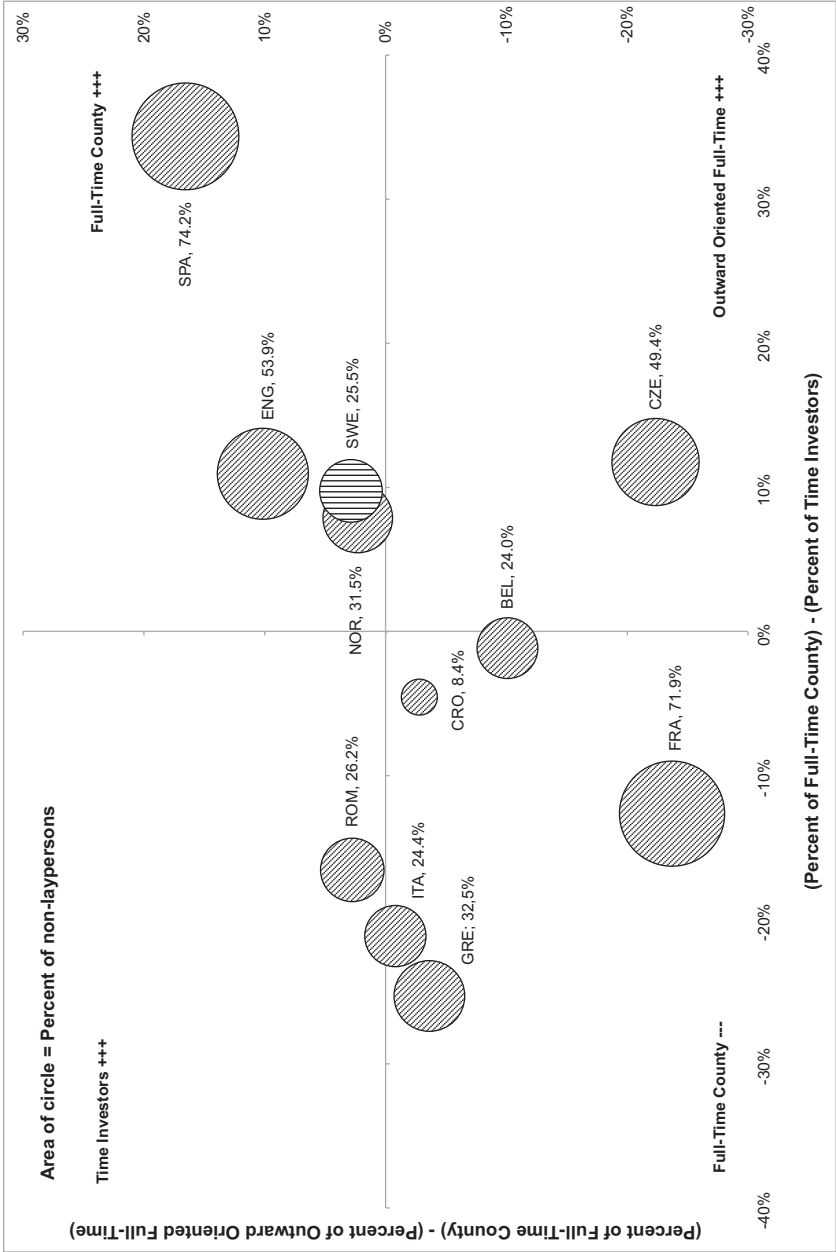


Figure 13.2 Eleven European countries in the space of professionalization at the second tier of local government
Source: The Second Tier Survey (2014) and the authors' computations

of their time to the county or have declared themselves to be professionals. In other words: this figure indicates all county councillors after deducting *laypersons*.

That there are considerable differences between countries in terms of the involvement of councillors in county affairs is apparent. For example, on one hand, Croatian county councils consist of about 40–50 representatives, but only one of every 20 of these councillors spends more than 30 hours a week on county affairs, and every 30th claimed to be a full-time professional. On the other hand, only about one-fourth of their colleagues in Spain would qualify as *laypersons*.

The location of most of the countries in Figure 13.2 approximates a line that represents a positive correlation between both axes. Closest to the line are those countries where the difference between the two main indicators of professionalization does not exceed 10 per cent (see Table 13.2). Closest to the ‘Full-Time County +++’ pole is Spain; farthest is France. In both countries, only a minority of respondents corresponded with the *laypersons* type, even though the results of the binary regression analysis (Table 13.4) suggest something else, i.e. that county councillors from countries with two levels of local government as well as functioning regional governments have a better chance of fitting into the *laypersons* type. However, the odds of being a *layperson* are influenced by a number of other factors. In particular, both France and Spain find themselves among the countries with a relatively high number of municipalities in the individual counties (i.e. a positive occurrence of the ‘pool eligible’ factor) and relatively experienced politicians (measured by average number of positions held), which lower the chances of becoming or remaining *laypersons*. This effect seems to be strongly manifested in the generally low proportion of laypersons in France and Spain. The location in Figure 13.2 is determined by the fact that, in France – unlike in Spain – we are more likely to encounter *time investors* or *outward oriented full-time* politicians, rather than the *full-time county* councillor type.

The noticeable outliers mentioned are located outside the area adjacent to the secondary diagonal: these were represented by a group of three countries, where it again and again appears that time spent on county affairs is not a subject of remuneration (Greece, Italy, Romania). Particularly these three countries can support or falsify the second hypothesis stipulated in the introduction to this chapter. This hypothesis concerns the correlation between the incongruence between professionalization at the individual level and professionalization of an office or institution. In other words, they can prove the validity of Borchert’s thesis that the ‘situation of politicians who pursue politics full-time while the position they hold is not yet adequately reimbursed is usually part of a historical (rather than an individual) process of transition’ (2008: 271). A different case is the Czech Republic, where the *time investor* type is nearly non-existent and the *outward oriented full-time councillor* type is more widespread than *full-time county councillors*. With this type of incongruence one can more easily envisage a long-continuing trend. Moreover, the Czech Republic is one of the countries where local government was only re-established after 1989 and the constitution of the second tier of local government was delayed until the end of the millennium (Illner 2002; Ryšavý 2013a). These outliers will be discussed in more detail in the rest of the chapter.

What does the existence of *time investors* signal?

In four of the 11 countries – Greece, France, Italy and Romania – the proportion of representatives labelled *time investors* exceeded one-fifth (see Table 13.3). With the exception of France, this was the most frequent of the three non-laypersons categories. Does this prove the existence of a transitory state, as suggested by Borchert (2008) and our second hypothesis? Could this type of incongruence represent a by-product or a consequence of the changes that the second tier of local government in the mentioned countries has been undergoing, or is it explainable in a different way?

According to the comparative study of Bertrana and Heinelt (2013), the mentioned countries are not any of those in which the second tier of local government has shown a high capacity to resist structural reforms. Whilst ‘the current economic and fiscal crisis has opened a “window of opportunity” to realise reforms which would have been difficult to implement under *normal* circumstances’ (Bertrana and Heinelt 2013: 83–4), Greece and Italy have been among the first to move away from the traditional strategy of territorial reforms in Southern European countries. Among other things, this strategy was concerned with helping small municipalities handle their tasks, specifically through the second tier of local government.

Moreover, in respect to the professionalization of county politicians, it is important that the launched reforms had, in a considerable way, influenced the possibilities of making a living by doing politics. The recent Kallikrates reform (2010–11) in Greece led to the merger of municipalities and a ‘moving up’ of the second tier of local government to the former regional level (see Hlepas 2012) – and thereby to a considerable reduction of full-time posts. After delays caused by quickly changing governments, a reform strategy is also starting to gain ground in Italy that weakens or even abolishes provinces (Bolgherini 2014). However, France has not been experiencing such strong deflection from the ‘Southern European Strategy’ after the change in the presidential office.¹⁸

Bertrana and Heinelt (2013) exclude Romania from the group of other Eastern European countries represented by Poland and Hungary, due to a different form of the second tier of local government, as well as ongoing reforms that have not in any way weakened the high degree of the country’s centralisation. The mentioned study does not include Croatia. Although the *time investor* type was only marginally represented among the Croatian councillors, it was, nevertheless, more frequent than both types of full-time politicians together (see Table 13.3). There has been an ongoing debate in academia for years regarding appropriate reforms that would, among other things, include the process of merging into larger entities (e.g. Dulabic 2011; Kopric 2010). The contemporary county representations do not seem to stand against such intentions. However, the current government is carrying out the reforms with apparent reluctance.

To summarise, it appears that in the range of countries characterised by a relatively large proportion of councillors of the *time investor* type, the second tier of local government currently finds itself in a transitory state due to ongoing reforms and, also, diverting from models that were common in these countries over a long period

of time. However, these statements would not reveal much about a possible causal relation or the general nature of the relationship between a certain county councillor's profile and the transformation of the institution in which they are acting. It is for this reason why we will try to explicate the high representation of the *time investor* type based on our own survey among representatives.

We will first concentrate on any possible biases caused by the tool used; namely, who answered 'yes' to the question 'Are you a full-time politician?' and why. For example, we know that most of the Italian county presidents and the *assessories* are professional politicians (Bacceti 2011: 170), however, only one of eight interviewed county presidents declared that they were a full-time politician, and it was a very rare answer among *assessories* (two out of 59).¹⁹ One possible reason for this in the case of Italy and also France is the stipulation that financial resources provided for financial compensation for the exercise of an office or mandate are not a salary or wage (Guérin and Kerrouche 2008: 189 and 190). The answers from the French county presidents were, indeed, similar to those of the Italians; there was only one positive answer from the seven interviewed. However, contrary to the Italians, almost half of the French provincial councillors declared full-time engagement in politics. It appears as if the same question may have been answered by a number of the respondents according to the formal definition, while for others, the question represented an assessment of their de facto economic and professional positions.

It is not possible from the survey of councillors to find out precisely how long the representatives have manifested the features of *time investors*. This could mean a transitory phase in a political career enabling an ambitious local politician to more easily reach their desired position, i.e. a stepping stone towards the national parliament. Such an interpretation is offered by Stănuș *et al.* (2009) in the case of Romania. Approximately one-third of the county councillors elected in 2004 renounced their position in the following 12 months, either because they were elected as an MP or because they were appointed to an executive position at the national or local level. In such cases, the time dedicated to county affairs becomes an investment incorporated into one's political career plans.

The relatively high representation of *time investors* could also be interpreted as a consequence of a situation in which the salary of persons dedicating a lot of time to county affairs comes from other sources that do not require paid work outside of politics. First, these persons could be economically inactive individuals – and, indeed, a majority of French councillors belonging to the *time investor* type (80 per cent) come from a group of students and retired or unemployed people. Second, these persons could be financially independent, self-employed or actual employers (entrepreneurs, owners). The latter often applies to Romanian councillors. However, neither the categories alone nor the sum of both categories – economically inactive and (self) employers – together make up more than half of the Romanian, Greek or Italian *time investors*, as is the case of France.²⁰ The suggested explanation is most likely only in the case of France.

Based on the survey, it is far more difficult to prove an expansion of the so-called hidden professionalization among the *time investors* (Reiser 2006). This would mean politicians gain support from political parties, interest groups, public institutions,

etc. At least an approximate indication can be extracted from the selected questions on attitudes mentioned earlier in connection with the four types of representatives.

The first of these questions is represented by the evaluation of one's own influence over county activities. We assume hidden professionalization applies only to those representatives who have something to offer. Influence over the decision-making process in counties can represent such leverage. In only one of the 14 countries covered by the survey did more than half of the *time investors* indicate their influence to be 'very high' or 'high': this was Italy.²¹ In France and Romania, one-third of the representatives of the same type evaluated themselves this way, while in Greece, it was even less. We should pay special attention to the difference between Italy and Greece. In Greece, the survey of county councillors took place after the implementation of reforms; these were so abrupt that they most likely significantly reduced the extent of hidden professionalization, or at least temporarily reduced it, while the networks that were built over a long time were either disturbed or disrupted altogether. The Italian councillors, unlike others, mostly appreciated changes such as the merging of provinces, i.e. the strategy that was elected and enforced in Greece. Half of the representatives agreed with this, while the possible reduction in members of assemblies was well regarded by a smaller number.

The existence of informal rewards of different kinds can also be inferred from the evaluation of the situation in which the local government finds itself. More precisely, more than three-quarters of the councillors in the three mentioned countries agreed with the statement 'Fraud and corruption are increasingly threatening the efficacy of local government.' In other countries, the proportion of those who agreed with this did not exceed 55 per cent. Reputation cannot be built in one day. Therefore, it is unsurprising there was no difference between Italy and Greece in this case.

Nevertheless, if county politicians represent the select elite, their perception of corruption was in agreement with public opinion, as at other political levels. This is supported by a strong correlation between an agreement with the mentioned statement and the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International (see Figure 13.3).

A consensus between councillors and the public is not enough for an enforcement of changes that would turn things to the better. This can be successfully avoided by those who – either allegedly or in reality – are affected by it. Even if there is nothing much to lose, taking into account the measured availability of fully paid positions, planned and discussed changes can be postponed if willingness on the part of the key actors (the national governments especially) is lacking (Croatia). Nonetheless, neither did any quick shift in the assessment of local government occur in such countries where specific circumstances ('windows of opportunity') led to swift radical changes (Greece).

To summarise, the described explanations call for caution when interpreting the incongruence of the individual and institutional levels of professionalisation indicated here by the presence of the *time investor* type representing the direct proof of

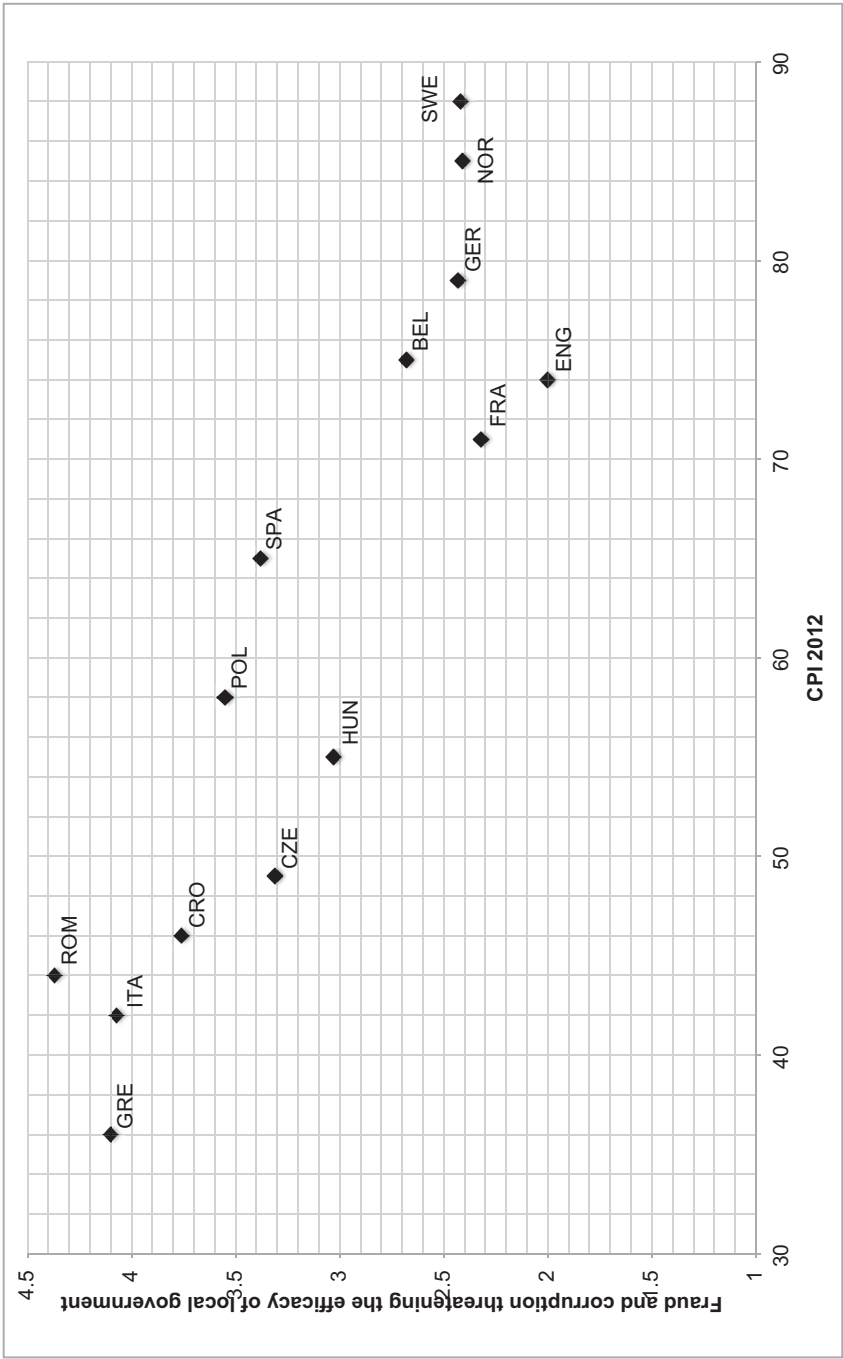


Figure 13.3 Correlation between the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and the evaluation of the corruption in local government
Source: Corruption Perceptions Index 2012; Second Tier Survey (2014) prompt, 'Fraud and corruption are increasingly threatening the efficacy of local and county government.'
Note: Spearman's rho = -0.84. Corruption vs. mean on a five-point scale.

the transitory state. Although reforms could change the structure of opportunities for ambitious politicians, alternative explanations for the presence of *time investors* should also be taken into account.

In some cases, it is possible to explain the incongruence through the socio-demographic profile of representatives (e.g. the high rate of economically inactive in France); in other cases, it could be the effect of a different understanding (or simply a misunderstanding) of the key question in the questionnaire (e.g. Italy). Incongruence of individual and professional status can become a permanent feature if it is accompanied by so-called hidden professionalization. Its existence is proven indirectly, for example, by a widely shared perception of the local government being threatened by fraud and corruption. Despite the mentioned doubts and alternative explanations (see e.g. Bertrana and Heinelt 2013), the study of the extent and nature of professionalization at the second tier of local government partially supports the second hypothesis.

Conclusion

National studies describing the character and changes of the second tier of local government in Europe (Heinelt and Bertrana 2011) often point out that this level of government is one of the weakest, and furthermore, often exposed to the pressures of ongoing debates and reform plans on the rescaling of statehood. Despite this, for many politicians, it is worth spending their time there. For some, it represents a fruitful source of regular income, while others occupy professionalised positions in other levels of government, which makes the work in county bodies a secondary or complementary activity for them.

In this chapter, we have pointed out that it is primarily individuals with previous experience in politics who are fully dedicated to county affairs. The chance of becoming a *full-time county* politician grows not only with the increasing number of inhabitants, but also with the increasing number of municipalities in the counties. Conversely, the presence of a regional or state level of government increases the chances of county councillors remaining *laypersons*, i.e. those who make their living by doing something else and dedicating less time to county politics compared to their 'professional' colleagues. Whilst the pool of eligible candidates for professionalised positions in county organs is saturated primarily by municipal politicians, a recruitment system is approved by politicians from the national or state level; they may try to constrain access to county organs. This has been indirectly supported by one of the findings that suggest the chance of becoming a *full-time county* politician increases with candidacy for one of the national political parties. The continuous diffusion of professionalization within the political system has been proven by the smaller occurrence of this phenomenon in the second tier of local government in the New Democracies.

Apart from *laypersons*, we have identified a considerable number of councillors at the second tier of local government who do not comply with the original idea of purposive rationality of professional exercise of the office. We have labelled *time investors* those who spend a lot of time on county affairs without full-time status. On

one hand, in France, these people are mostly pensioners who are committed in this way to *départemental* politics. On the other hand, the relatively high representation of *time investors* in Greece and Italy was most likely connected with the transitory state the second tier of local government in these countries was going through at the time of the survey.

How the ongoing reforms will change the profile of county councillors remains a question for other research. A more permanent presence of not-so-insignificant numbers of *time investors* may be possible with further expansion of a so-called hidden professionalization, which can include different informal rewards. However, this would require special research methods. We assume that hidden professionalization can threaten the efficacy of local government. The fact is that in countries with a high representation of *time investors*, both councillors and the public perceive local government as increasingly threatened by fraud and corruption.

Finally, we repeat that the process of professionalization is connected with democratisation, and, over the course of time, its diffusion within political systems comes about (Borchert 2008). The extent and form of professionalization at the second tier of local government in New Democracies of Central and Eastern Europe are, therefore, more affected by changes on the national political scene rather than by reforms that directly involve the second tier of local government. The first example would be Croatia, where the reforms discussed by experts are not supported by the contemporary government. Electing Klaus Iohannis, a successful mayor of Sibiu, into the Romanian president's office in autumn 2014, might constitute an opportunity to shuffle the country politics of county councillors who were most likely to agree with the statement 'Fraud and corruption are increasingly threatening the efficacy of local government.' As for the Czech Republic, at the time that the survey of councillors was being conducted, there was a series of scandals symbolised by one of the county presidents being arrested and taken into custody under bribery charges. A few months later, after the county elections in autumn 2012, almost a quarter century after the Velvet Revolution, the Communist party established itself as the main partner of the Social Democrats in county governments (Ryšavý 2013a). A year later, in the pre-term parliamentary elections, the new political grouping of the large-scale businessman and also recent press magnate, Andrej Babiš, had success by addressing its voters with the slogan 'We are not politicians. We work hard.' If politics is a profession, it is a precarious one indeed (Borchert 2003).

Notes

- 1 This chapter was a result of the research project *Regional councils in a European perspective* funded by the Czech Science Foundation (P404/12/0714).
- 2 The most noticeable example from recent times would be the abolition of 14 counties in Denmark in 2007 (Mouritzen 2011), or the case of Greece, where the second tier has been 'moved' up to the regional level (Hlepas 2012). To the contrary, the quite recently established institutions of the second tier of local government in countries such as Poland or the Czech Republic exhibit a relatively high level of stability (Bertrana and Heinelt 2013; Ryšavý 2013a).

- 3 Political professionalisation was the subject of the research project *Politik als Beruf. Die politische Klasse und die Modernisierung demokratischer Institutionen* funded by the *Volkswagenstiftung*. The outcomes of this study comprise elaborated and actualised concepts of profession, political class and models of multi-level political careers, as well as analyses of political professionalisation on both the central and sub-national level (see e.g. Borchert 2003; Edinger and Patzelt 2010; Reiser 2006; Stolz 2009). Therefore, a whole new area which enriched the historical research of the professionalisation of parliamentary politics was uncovered, first investigating Western democracies (Best and Cotta 2000; Cotta and Best 2007), while later including the parliaments of the New Democracies as well (Best and Edinger 2003; Semenova *et al.* 2013).
- 4 Alongside the total amount of time declared by councillors, the councillors were to state how many hours they spend on seven different tasks, such as council meetings, party meetings, public debates, their own preparation, etc.
- 5 The respondents from Greece more frequently answered the question about the time invested in particular matters. In other cases, it was the other way around.
- 6 The overall number of cases with *zero* answer was 15. These cases were omitted from the analysis.
- 7 For German municipal councillors, Holtkamp (2011: 109) concentrated on those who spend more than 15 and more than 30 hours a week. Guérin and Kerrouche (2008: 193) used three categories for Wallonian municipal councillors, mayors and their deputies: less than 16 hours, 17–32 hours and more than 32 hours a week.
- 8 If the total amount of time as stated by the respondents was not taken into account, but instead, the results from the sum of the seven partial data linked to various activities was calculated, the overall range between the two extreme cases – Spain and Germany – would not change much. The ranking of countries would significantly differ for the first two groups. One can distinguish a group of countries in which the proportion of representatives spending more than 30 hours a week in total on the seven activities exceeded 40 per cent. This group includes Spain, Italy and Greece. A second group of countries consists of England, France and Sweden, where between 25 per cent and 40 per cent of second-tier councillors dedicate more than 30 hours a week to the seven activities. As for the New Democracies, the proportions of such committed politicians range from 9 per cent in Croatia to 21 per cent in Romania. Norway is located in the middle, while the lowest proportions of very busy representatives can be identified for Belgium (7 per cent) and Germany (5 per cent).
- 9 The Pearson correlation coefficient between these two variables for the 14 countries reached the value of 0.9.
- 10 Councillors were asked the following question: ‘For the time being, what are you planning to do at the end of the present position?’ The percentages of politicians who claimed ‘I would like to quit politics’ can be found in Table 13.3.
- 11 Councillors were asked ‘On the basis of your experience as a councillor in this county, and independently of the formal procedures, how much influence do you have over county activities?’ Answers were given on a scale from ‘very high’ to ‘none’.
- 12 Councillors were asked the following question: ‘How desirable or undesirable do you consider the following reforms, irrespective of whether such reforms have been introduced in your county?’ Among others, the proposed reforms were: ‘Merging counties.’ (c); ‘Reducing the number of council members’ (d). Answers were given on a scale from ‘highly desirable’ to ‘highly undesirable’. The percentages in Table 13.3 represent the sum of ‘highly desirable’ and ‘desirable’.
- 13 The question was: ‘How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?– Fraud and corruption are increasingly threatening the efficacy of local government.’ Answers were given on a scale from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. The percentages in Table 13.3 represent the sum of ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’.
- 14 The data in the table could be biased by self-selection. However, we do not have detailed evidence of how the different types of representatives in individual countries differed in their willingness to answer our questions.

- 15 Countries such as Spain or Italy also have a rather fragmented territorial structure. However, many municipal politicians in Spain are also engaged full-time in provinces. Every Italian province comprises dozens of municipalities, but, in the case of the Czech Republic and France, they are hundreds.
- 16 The variable was created by the transformation of the variables indicating positions that the respondent has held during his or her political career.
- 17 Councillors were asked the following question: 'In the last election, were you elected as a candidate . . .'. The offered answers were as follows: 'for a national party', 'for a county-specific group or party' and 'as an individual or independent'.
- 18 In Spain, the contemporary reform efforts could, to the contrary, lead to an empowerment of the second tier of local government, although up till now the role of the provinces has been weakened by the growing power of municipalities and regions (Bertrana *et al.* 2011, Bolgherini 2014). Altogether separate attention should be given to the role that county councillors play in this development, as they do, in fact, receive reimbursement for their work in provincial councils.
- 19 In the case of the Romanian county president, the ratio was three of five; in Greece, five of eight. It represents a majority, but from a small number of cases.
- 20 Let us leave aside the question of what it means that many members of county councils are retired people or entrepreneurs.
- 21 For comparison, it should be noted that the same influence was claimed by two-thirds of the *assessori* who make up the *Giunta Provinciale*, the executive organ outside of council selected by the provincial president.

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14 Family, ambition, local rootedness and party

A study of the activation and apprenticeships of the county councillor in Europe

Eric Kerrouche and Corentin Poyet

Introduction: studying activation and apprenticeships within political recruitment

Although politics becomes increasingly a ‘career’ or even a ‘profession’, most citizens are not predestined for political office. The political recruitment process does not operate in any random way: in their passage to power, elected representatives have often benefited from various circumstances (e.g. the upbringing in a political family, a recognized reputation in the locality), personal predispositions (like ambition) or specific legal provisions (such as towards specific group, women etc.; Prewitt 1970; Budge and Farlie 1975; Norris 1997). All these elements are intertwined aspects of political recruitment, ‘the process by which citizens are mobilized into politics’ (Brady *et al.* 1999: 153). This chapter, which is directly inspired by a previous publication on the same subject, but for municipal councillors (Verhelst and Kerrouche 2012), focuses on two phases of this process at the local level: the activation and apprenticeships of councillors-to-be, turning ‘eligible’ citizens (Abéles 1989) into aspirants willing and ready to run for office. In our perspective, activation on one hand refers to the incitement towards, and awakening interest in politics through the primary socialization in the family/local environment and the combination of different motivations. Apprenticeships, on the other hand, refer to the acquisition of specific political skills in networks from associational and political life. Activation and apprenticeships may determine candidates’ passages to power by adding up to, or compensating for the basic and most documented resource of eligible citizens, i.e. a favourable and distinctive social background (Levine and Hyde 1977; Steyvers and Reynaert 2006).

As in the other chapters of this book, our perspective is comparative – which is the best way to enrich the already existing literature on political recruitment (Jacob 1962; Levine and Hyde 1977) in avoiding a fragmented view of this topic in Europe (Patzelt 1999). In this respect, we fall in line with efforts in recent years to build a better comprehensive knowledge base in comparative research on political recruitment. The study of Cotta and Best (2000) focussing on the recruitment of national MPs in several European countries, the work on ‘The European Mayor’ (2006) in which Bäck and his colleagues (Bäck, Heinelt, and Magnier 2006) comparatively

scrutinised the recruitment of mayors in Europe or the survey on municipal councillors in Europe in which Egner *et al.* (2013) did the same for this specific population have been many milestones to a better and systematic understanding of political recruitment. This chapter adds a new layer dedicated to county councillors in Europe.¹ However, we find the exact same limitations than for our previous study on municipal councillors due to our specific research interest. Indeed, once again, the survey exclusively addressed elected councillors. Thus candidates failing to take the ultimate step in the recruitment process are not included. Similarly, focussing solely on the supply side of recruitment excludes the opinions and motives of the established actors at the demand side of recruitment, even if we can imagine that the elected candidates are a fair reflection of what is expected by those 'selectorates' (Norris 1997). Further, the cross-sectional nature of the data set enables us to discuss and classify the activation and apprenticeships of our respondents but does not allow addressing recruitment from a longitudinal perspective. Finally, the data represent auto-evaluations from councillors, as such some subjectivity (distortions due to time passing by, social desirability) might have occurred during response.

Bearing in mind these qualifications, the chapter takes a descriptive and an explanatory approach by empirically outlining the activation and apprenticeships of county councillors in Europe. First, it presents a general assessment of the matter in a comparative perspective, overcoming the 'patchwork approach' that has marked so much of European recruitment research (Patzelt 1999: 265). Second, it assesses activation and apprenticeship as particular stages of the broader process of political recruitment. Accordingly, this explanatory section scrutinises the impact of councillors' social base and the opportunity structure of local government in Europe upon activation and apprenticeships. Whereas the former acts as the basic and preceding resource for citizens in recruitment, the latter determines the general context in which political recruitment unfolds (Norris 1997).

'Professionalization' is the guiding concept to organize our data and findings. Professionalization is claimed to have transformed the legislative elite in most Western societies across all political levels (including local), this shift towards professionalization being, to differing degrees, reinforced by the changing legal framework (Guérin and Kerrouche 2006). As such it appears to be an effective concept to study political elites from a comparative perspective (Eliassen and Pedersen 1978; Fox and Lawless 2005). For centuries the layperson councillor served as benchmark for representative (local) democracies. Elected citizens, empowered to act on behalf of the locality, formed the base of democratic government (Mouritzen and Svava 2002). Yet the traditional image of voluntary or amateur local government representatives devoting themselves to the service of the public cause has been gradually given up, to the detriment of professionalised representatives due to evolutions in the context of local politics (e.g. local governance with its increasing complexity of decision making; Guérin and Kerrouche 2008). Professionalization incorporates several distinctive dimensions. A common dimension denotes the political career or occupation of elected councillors in office (Eliassen and Pedersen 1978; Cotta and Best 2000; Guérin and Kerrouche 2008). This chapter, however, is concerned

with early stages of professionalization, i.e. professionalization in the preceding process of political recruitment. It refers to the ‘change in recruitment patterns of the legislative elite’ (Eliassen and Pedersen 1978: 291). According to Cotta and Best (2000), professionalised political recruitment contains both a social and a political dimension. Whereas the former might imply typical social characteristics such as coming from a political family, the latter represents the growing importance of political status in recruitment – usually embedded in the sphere of party politics (see also Eliassen and Pedersen 1978). In addition, we argue that professionalization implies a personal aspect that relates to the adaptation of an individual to his or her potential functions as a local elected representative. It is embodied by councillors’ ambition or motivational system.

Layperson or professional? A descriptive analysis of activation and apprenticeships

Blood ties – political families as the social component of professionalization

Families are not only the place of primary socialisation; they are also the container where political experience is shaped (Percheron 1987). As such, the family unit is a medium to understand political participation. As pointed out by Fox and Lawless (2005), ‘inherited’ interest in political affairs oftentimes accounts for the decision to enter politics, regardless of socio-demographic background or personality. The most ancient effect of the upbringing in a political family consists of the so-called political dynasty effect where mandates are (indirectly) passed on from one family member to another (Prewitt 1970; Patriat and Parodi 1992). This situation has been studied in many contexts when the mandate itself became an inheritance at the municipal (Le Bart 1994), regional (Darviche *et al.* 1995) or county level (Criqui 1992). Although political dynasties in this strict and narrow sense still occur, they are gradually declining over time whilst their absolute impact is diminishing as well (Van Liefferinge and Steyvers 2008). The modern interpretation of political families stresses their impact as an activating factor in recruitment. In this sense families activate people’s political capital by exposing them to political information and stimuli, inciting an interest in or passion for politics (Prewitt 1970). Moreover, the feeling of citizenship grows particularly well in the environment of a highly politicised family as well (Fox and Lawless 2005). According to Fox and Lawless (2005: 653), ‘early political exposure generates lasting effects that are independent and cannot be entirely compensated for by being politically active as an adult.’ As such, family life acts as the primary agent of political socialisation (Eulau 1962; Braud 1996; Muxel 2001). Additionally, political families affect the outcome of political recruitment later on as well by facilitating and advancing the career of candidates from a politicised family (Van Liefferinge and Steyvers 2008).

In the research design of the questionnaire, coming from a ‘political family’ represents one social component of professionalised recruitment opposing

Table 14.1 Second-tier councillors in Europe belonging to political families (in per cent)²

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Belgium	33.0
Croatia	25.0
Czech Rep.	33.0
England	26.6
France	64.9
Germany	30.7
Greece	22.2
Norway	56.3
Poland	16.0
Romania	27.4
Spain	26.1
Sweden	40.0
total (<i>N</i> = 4,305)	32.0

Source: Second Tier Survey

candidates with this particular background to others who cannot benefit from the same advantage. The variable 'political family' was operationalized through the question: 'In the two last generations, were any of your close relatives elected for a political function?'

As Table 14.1 shows, almost one-third (32 per cent) of the European second-tier councillor population in general has been socialised in a political family. This figure, which is higher than the percentage which was found in the survey on municipal councillors (28 per cent), falls in line with the general proportion of dynastic following across contemporary political systems (Van Liefferinge and Steyvers 2008). Thus, coming from a political family remains a non-negligible modality in the recruitment process of second-tier councillors in Europe. Three countries are situated well above this average. In France about two-thirds of the councillors come from a political family. The percentage is lower but still substantial in Scandinavian countries, with Sweden at 40 per cent and Norway at 56.3 per cent. In these three countries political recruitment seems much more determined and restricted by the empowering and activating influence of the upbringing in a political family. For the Scandinavian countries, the results are a confirmation of the findings on municipal councillors (the percentages were 43.5 for Sweden and 55.1 for Norway). The French percentage for its part corroborates the specificity of the county councillor population in France (Roy 2008). Nonetheless, when those three countries are excluded, the overall majority of county councillors in Europe has been activated towards politics elsewhere. The proportion of dynastic following is weak in Southern European countries (Greece, 22.2 per cent; Croatia, 25 per cent; and Spain, 26.9 per cent), as well as in England (26.6 per cent). Poland is a particular outlier, with no convincing explanation for its low score (16 per cent).

Family and ambition: the personal component of professionalization

Coming from a political family is not the only way eligible citizens are activated towards politics: studies of political recruitment should consider the attitudes, expectations and plans of councillors to be as intrinsic personal elements of professionalization. In this respect it is important to pay attention to the circumstances surrounding the candidate at the time of his or her decision (Schlesinger 1966).

Motivation and ambition underlie the initial decision to run for office (Norris 1997; Schlesinger 1966: 1). Fox and Lawless (2005: 643) define this type of political motivation as the '*nascent ambition*, the embryonic or potential interest in office seeking that precedes the actual decision to enter a specific political contest.' In other words, although eligible citizens might profit from specific resources (such as social base and networks, family, education and local resources) they still have to *be willing* to engage in politics as well. In a previous article on municipal councillors (Verhelst and Kerrouche 2012), three traditional ways to study political ambition or motivation discerned by Meadowcroft were put forward (2001). The first is to follow into the footsteps of Schlesinger, the founding father of ambition theory (Blac 1972; Levine and Hyde 1977; Aars and Offerdal 1998). He claimed that potential candidates are rational '*office seekers*' who adjust their actions to the changing circumstances of the recruitment pattern in order to seek personal benefits. Consequently, they gradually develop the ambition that matches the demands of the pursued political office and/or higher office (Black 1972). The second way is to apply the social psychology model developed by Laswell (1948), which depicts the politician as a special kind of personality driven by the quest for power and status. Both approaches, however, have been criticised for their lack of empirical support, paying the way for a third avenue to study the initial ambition. The inductive or empirical school simply asks candidates in person to assess their nascent ambition. As such 'political motivation' is conceptualised in an empirically measurable way. On the downside, because of its subjectivity, the approach seems particularly prone to the distortions mentioned in our introduction. Still, Schlozman, Verba and Brady (1995) state that this is the most appropriate method if it is used carefully and is accompanied by methodological elucidation.

Political motivation has a strong relation with the process of professionalisation (Black 1970). Still, in research of efficiency for the survey, some questions available for the study on municipal councillors were been dropped from the questionnaire on county councillors. We had to adapt our approach and indirectly operationalise political motivation through three items using some theoretical insights coming from the body of research from the empirical school.

First, we distinguish between self-centred and altruistic motives (Eulau *et al.* 1961). Schlozman, Verba and Brady (1995: 7) stated that: 'There is a significant difference between citizens whose activity is motivated by a desire to further their careers [. . .] and those whose gratification emanates from the feeling of having helped others or having made the community a better place to live.' It is thus possible to oppose the 'citizen duty' motive and the 'political career' motive. The former refers to the ideal-typical councillors 'devoting themselves to the service of the public cause' (Guérin and Kerrouche 2008: 180). The latter motive represents the professional councillor who consciously strives for a career in politics.

Other motives need to be taken into account. Specific issue motivations may increase candidate's likelihood to participate politically. Issue passion spurs political activism (Fox and Lawless 2005). Strong policy goals have been shown to serve as substantial motivating factors for candidates with no previous political experience (Canon 1990). Candidates may pursue an elective office in order to influence and implement specific policy issues, and local politics might be the pre-eminent political level due to the high direct visibility of policy output.

The final motive is the particular motivation to represent the political party. Since parties have become important selection agents in recruitment (Eliassen and Pedersen 1978; Norris 1997; Kenig 2009), some candidates will acknowledge their influence on their behaviour.

Our questionnaire indirectly captured this theoretical continuum of professionalization with three items related to the question 'How important do you believe the following tasks are for a councillor to perform?' Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the motives on a five-point scale (1 = not important at all; 5 = very important). It is thus possible to have a schematic continuum ranging from layperson side to professional side, the score and the polarity being different for each item, as shown in Figure 14.1.

Even if the picture is less precise than for the study on municipal councillors,³ Table 14.2 illustrates that the average county councillor in Europe is rather inspired by motives on the layperson side. The most important motive relates to the ideological drive behind the pursuit of office. More than 92 per cent of our research population aspired to public office in order to influence the main goals of county activity, and 86.4 per cent of them wanted to represent requests and issues emerging from local society. Motives on the 'professional side' of the continuum generate less support, without being negligible: about two-thirds of the councillor population (64.8 per cent) acknowledged party duty as an important element of their motivation. With those limited indicators, we can support the idea that county councillors mainly correspond to the layperson ideal-type, being more inspired community workers with the will to influence the county activity specific policy issues and a general political interest in mind. Still, it is not possible to ignore parties' influence for more than 60 per cent of the councillor population.

This global picture conceals strong discrepancies between the countries under scrutiny. First, the layperson motive 'Representing the requests and issues emerging

question	maximum and minimum score in favour of a	
	layman	professional
Representing the requests and issues emerging from local society	5	1
Taking part in defining the main goals of county activity	5	1
Taking part in implementing the program of the political party/movement	1	5

Figure 14.1 Schematic continuum from layperson side to professional side

Source: Second Tier Survey

Table 14.2 Political motivations of county councillors in Europe

Country	<i>'Taking part in defining the main goals of county activity'</i>		<i>'Taking part in implementing the program of the political party/movement'</i>		<i>'Representing the requests and issues emerging from local society'</i>	
	Mean	Per cent of councillors with a score of 4 or 5	Mean	Per cent of councillors with a score of 4 or 5	Mean	Per cent of councillors with a score of 4 or 5
Belgium	4.0 (1)	75.5	4.0 (0.9)	77.5	4.0 (1)	73.5
Croatia	4.2 (0.9)	82.3	3.7 (1)	58.0	4.3 (0.8)	86.0
Czech Rep.	4.1 (0.7)	84.6	3.9 (0.7)	70.0	3.9 (0.8)	70.0
England	4.5 (0.8)	87.8	4.0 (1)	70.7	4.7 (0.5)	97.0
France	4.7 (0.5)	98.8	2.8 (1.1)	26.8	4.3 (0.8)	88.0
Germany	4.7 (0.5)	97.8	3.9 (0.9)	72.2	4.1 (0.8)	79.8
Greece	4.2 (1)	80.0	3.7 (1.2)	60.0	4.3 (0.9)	80.6
Hungary	4.9 (0.5)	100.0	3.9 (1)	68.0	4.7 (0.6)	98.1
Italy	4.8 (0.6)	95.7	4.0 (0.9)	71.3	4.7 (0.6)	94.6
Norway	4.6 (0.6)	94.8	4.4 (0.7)	94.8	4.1 (0.8)	82.4
Poland	4.2 (1)	75.4	3.4 (1)	37.6	4.7 (0.6)	92.8
Romania	4.6 (0.7)	95.0	4.3 (0.8)	88.1	4.6 (0.6)	93.8
Spain	4.8 (0.6)	96.9	4.4 (0.7)	89.2	4.7 (0.7)	92.2
Sweden	4.8 (0.4)	98.6	4.7 (0.5)	97.8	4.5 (0.6)	94.5
Total	4.6 (0.7)	92.4	3.8 (1)	64.8	4.4 (0.8)	86.4

Source: Second Tier Survey.

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from local society' is less important in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany and Norway but appears especially high in countries such as Hungary, England, Sweden, Italy, Romania, and Poland. This preoccupation seems to be disconnected from the type of local government system. Second, issue politics was particularly present in the minds of county councillors in Hungary, France, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Italy and Romania. In Poland (75.4 per cent) and Belgium (75.5 per cent), this motive, if still important, is low compared to other countries (Greece, Croatia and the Czech Republic being in between the two former groups). Party politics is particularly important for councillors in the Scandinavian countries (Sweden and Norway), Spain and Romania. For county councillors in France and Poland, implementing the program of the political party is less important.

***Local community, political party and local supports:
the political component of professionalization***

Besides the socialization in a political family and/or a motivation to run for office, the acquisition of political capital through (political) apprenticeships is an equally important advantage in recruitment (Prewitt 1970). In our perspective, apprenticeships refer to the membership in certain associations, which act as secondary

socialisation agents and can be considered as potential bridges toward a political career. At the same time they may complement and/or compensate for the political capital acquired in the family environment and steer the candidate to office. Such associations may even represent a pool of likely candidates for 'selectorates' eager to find new profiles. In other words, candidates can 'convert' the social capital acquired in those associations into the political arena. Being a member may help them to climb the political ladder.

Since there are no formal schools in which to learn politics, if we except some specific bodies within political parties (Petaux 1994), certain organisations of the (local) community assume the role of informal training school (Kjaer 2006). The learning mechanism of organizations or associations works in a twofold way (Moyser and Parry 1986). On one hand, citizens gain organisational and communicative skills (e.g. debating, speaking in public and negotiating) during their activity in and work for the associations. These skills are both an indirect preparation and indispensable assets in the race for office and the political career later on. On the other hand, associations create the perfect environment to build or expand personal (and political) networks (Becquart-Leclercq 1979). These networks are an obvious head start for candidates when it comes to recruitment and elections as well. Hence, whereas social background, family and motivations pave the way to office, associations are claimed to be the high roads (Balme 1989). Furthermore, associations play an important role in the political life of elected councillors in office as well. Not only do they serve as an input channel for information from local society, they also provide a firm and continuous electoral base for subsequent elections (Moss and Parker 1967).

For laypersons, apprenticeships will be situated in the non-political sphere, represented by associations and organisations in the local community. In order to capture these apprenticeships, we used the answer to the question 'Have you previously been a member or held a position in the following types of organisations?' Three types of organisations were available in the questionnaire: trade union, business/professional association and others. We combined these three items in a variable called 'local community apprenticeships'.⁴

Table 14.3 shows that county councillors in Europe are strongly integrated in the associational life of their local community. Only 15.1 per cent have never been a member of a particular association at all (the percentage was 3.6 per cent for the municipal councillors). The majority of the county councillors in Europe (44.8 per cent, as opposed to 65.7 per cent for the municipal councillors) held an elected or appointed position in at least one association, pointing to a real degree of integration and local commitment (the percentage of former member being 40.1 per cent). This leads us to conclude that layperson apprenticeships in non-political organisations still play an obvious role in the recruitment process of local elected representatives.

Here again differences between European countries are noticeable. In countries such as England, Sweden, Norway and Italy, less than 10 per cent of the councillors were never members of at least one association in the local community. The percentage exceeds 20 per cent for Poland, Romania and Belgium – mostly because in these cases fewer councillors with former elected or appointed positions are to be found. Belgium, Germany, Croatia, Italy, Spain and the Czech

Table 14.3 Local community apprenticeships of county councillors in Europe: membership in a local association (in per cent)

Countries	Never	Former member	Former elected or appointed position
Belgium	23.3	44.4	32.2
Croatia	15.5	46.4	38.2
Czech Rep.	14.5	56.6	28.9
England	-	23.7	76.3
France	14.0	29.0	57.1
Germany	18.8	44.9	36.3
Greece	17.6	25.3	57.1
Hungary	19.5	34.1	46.3
Italy	8.5	46.6	44.9
Norway	5.0	29.7	65.3
Poland	20.3	38.2	41.6
Romania	22.6	32.9	44.5
Spain	19.7	46.7	33.6
Sweden	1.4	33.0	65.6
Total (N = 4,859)	15.1	40.1	44.8

Source: Second Tier Survey

Republic single out with a proportion of former member, which exceeds elected or appointed position. There is an opposite picture in England, Romania, Greece and France. Still in no single country of our study is less than 75 per cent of the councillor population connected to the community through apprenticeships in associational life.

Local supports are another essential component of local ‘eligibility’ because social networking is one of the conditions for a political career (Abéles 1989). These local supports may be connected to the involvement of the candidate in the community, be it in voluntary associations, religious or professional circles. The more those supports, acquired over time, are important, the more they provide strong foundations for a potential political career (Fenno 1978). The amount of support is also an indirect measure of local rootedness of the candidate, the underlying hypotheses being that the more support a candidate gets, the more ‘eligible’ by different segments of the population that person is recognised. The questionnaire allowed us to build a scale of local support prior to the last election,⁵ using the question ‘As a candidate in the last election, to what extent did you have the support of the following groups?’ All the items available – namely the party at the county level, national politician(s) and representatives of trade union(s), farmers, fishers, industrial enterprises, the construction/real estate sector, trade-services enterprises, the tourism sector; the media; the church and other religious groups as well as other local associations, groups and social movements – were included in the scale (with the exception of ‘national organ(s) of your party’ because above all local rootedness should be measured). For each kind of support, a score of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very great) was possible. Since 11 items were available, the maximum possible score was

55. Using the data, we ended up with an additive scale going from 0 to 44, which was afterwards recoded in a four-point scale. According to these measurements ($N = 2,856$):

- 26.2 per cent of the county councillors had low local support
- 26.5 per cent had high local support
- 18.6 per cent scored with a value of 2
- 25.7 per cent had a value of 3

There are again strong discrepancies between European countries, as illustrated in Table 14.4.

Local support is especially low in England, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France and Sweden. Conversely, it is important in Norway, Hungary and Romania. Since the average mean of local support is 2.5, it leads us to conclude that if this aspect is non-negligible, it is less essential than others.

Political party is another distinctive channel of the associational life. Membership in a political party is often considered to be the irreplaceable stepping stone towards a political mandate (Prewitt 1970; Moyser and Parry 1986; Lazarus 2008). Local elective representatives are often recruited amongst the party ranks, because the partisan organisation (a) continues to be the essential pool of candidates and (b) has an essential role in the selection process and select candidates that have the (alleged) qualities to be elected (Eliassen and Pedersen 1978; Norris and Lovenduski 1993; Meadowcroft 2001). In this respect, 'political party apprenticeship' is the prominent conceptualization of the political component of professionalization in recruitment. The variable indicates the percentage of councillors that were a party member *before* their first elective local mandate. As such it represents councillors who have been recruited in the professional environment of the party ranks.⁶

Table 14.4 Local support of county councillors in Europe

Countries	Mean	Standard deviation
Belgium	2.0	1
Croatia	3.0	1
Czech Rep.	2.2	1
England	1.6	0.8
France	2.2	1
Greece	2.7	1.1
Hungary	3.2	0.9
Italy	2.7	1.2
Norway	3.1	0.9
Poland	2.4	1.2
Romania	3.3	0.9
Spain	3.0	1
Sweden	2.3	1
Total ($N = 2,856$)	2.5	1.2

Source: Second Tier Survey.

Table 14.5 Political party apprenticeships of local councillors in Europe: party members before their first elective local mandate (in per cent)

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Non party members</i>	<i>Party members</i>
Belgium	5.9	94.1
Croatia	14.6	85.4
Czech Rep.	37.3	62.7
England	6.3	93.8
France	8.1	91.9
Germany	18.8	81.2
Greece	2.8	97.2
Hungary	27.7	72.3
Italy	5.4	94.6
Norway	62.0	38.0
Poland	9.4	90.6
Romania	11.3	88.7
Spain	1.4	98.6
Sweden	9.9	90.1
total (N=4,499)	6.3	93.8

Source: Second Tier Survey.

Given the huge proportion of county councillors socialised in parties' ranks before their election, Table 14.5 illustrates, if such were necessary: (a) the strength of party influence, (b) their anchorage at the local level and (b) their strong impact upon recruitment. Generally 93.8 per cent of the European county councillor population was a party member before his or her first election (compared to 77.4 per cent for the municipal councillors). In the Southern countries such as Spain, Greece and Italy party membership takes almost absolutist proportions. This is also the case for Belgium, the United Kingdom, France, Poland and Sweden (with percentages ranging from 90 to 94). However, Norway (especially), the Czech Republic and Hungary are characterised by a fairly low rate of party membership. Still we can argue that party politics is a fundamental apprenticeship for at least a substantial part of the councillor population in each country of the study.

To sum up, if local involvement in associational life remains an important aspect of apprenticeships (but to a lesser extent than for municipal councillors), the implication in the political arena has a higher impact, which tends to marginalising also the local rootedness measured by the level of support.

Activation and apprenticeships in European local governance: A multivariate analysis

Defining variables and hypothesis

The first sections of this chapter dealt with the questions of activation and apprenticeship in European local government. As argued in the introduction, both activation and apprenticeship are phases of a wider process of political recruitment

which is composed of several interconnected phases (Norris 1997). Hence, our purpose is now to investigate the importance of activation and apprenticeship regarding several factors influencing political recruitment processes. We will show how particular characteristics might influence the shape of activation and apprenticeship; the process to be 'recruitable' may result from different patterns. Political recruitment is strongly related to the institutional framework in which potential candidates operate (Aars and Offerdal 1998; Nay 2001; Siavelis and Morgenstern 2012). In this chapter we thus select two characteristics of the second-tier local government system which would affect both activation and apprenticeship: local government system at the county level and size of the county (H1, H2 and H3). Beyond these structural features, we also investigate the effect of three individual factors, namely ideology of county councillors, their function and their social base. Finally, we also assess the impact of social characteristics – namely age, gender and profession (H4, H5 and H6).

Despite general trends in the descriptive analyses, both activation and apprenticeship of county councillors follow various patterns. Similarities may occur within groups of countries sharing similar features. Hence it is interesting to systematically investigate the effect of *institutional factors* on activation and apprenticeship. The literature highlights various typologies of local government systems (Lidström 1998) based on different aspects. According to Stoker (2010: 208), two kinds of typologies focusing on historical or present day criteria are dominant. As argued by Lidström (1998: 103), the most cited typology is proposed by Hesse and Sharpe (1991). In addition, other scholars provide similar classifications with a more European perspective (Batley and Stoker 1991; John 2001; Page 1991; Page and Goldsmith 1987). These typologies distinguish three groups based upon the vertical relations between local and central governments: Anglo (high autonomy without constitutional status), North and Middle European (high autonomy with a constitutional status) and Franco groups (limited autonomy with a constitutional status). As a development of the first typology, Denters and Rose (2005) added a distinction between federal and unitary systems. Similarly, Heinelt and Hlepas (2006) added a group, Central and East European countries, due to their similar backgrounds and recent process of decentralization. A second typology is based on the *horizontal relations at the local level of governance* referring to the institutionally determined day-to-day practice of local politics (Mouritzen and Svava 2002). Four types of local government may be distinguished: the *strong political leader*, the *committee-leader*, the *collective* and the *council-manager* form. In this chapter, the second typology (i.e. the one developed by Mouritzen and Svava 2002) is assessed upon activation and apprenticeship. According to this typology, we may state the first two hypotheses:

1. If the institutional set-up of a county is characterised by the committee-leader form (or the council-manager form), then it will lead to a recruitment toward professional path.
2. If county works with the collective-leader or the strong president form, then political recruitment will rather be characterised by the prevalence of lay-person rule.

Hypothesis 3 concerns the *size of the county*. Unfortunately, we do not have precise data about the electoral districts, although this is generally the key factor explaining legislators and representatives' behaviours and attitudes (Carey and Shugart 1995; Dudzinska *et al.* 2014; Poyet 2014; Studlar and Welch 1991; Tremblay 2007). In order to tackle this problem, we decided to define to what extent a county is more or less urbanized through its number of inhabitants. As argued by Eliassen and Pedersen (1978, 291), urbanisation leads to a growing professionalization of local mandates because of the complexity of politics linked to this evolution (Denters and Rose 2005). Thus our expectation is:

3. The more urbanized the county is, the more the professional path of recruitment will be fostered.

Candidate recruitment does not follow the same rules in left- and right-wing parties. As shown by Lundell (2004) as well as by Rahat and Hazan (2001), different practices coexist in the same country and depend mainly on the party itself rather than on cultural or institutionalized practices. In other words: *party politics matter*. Previous analyses of municipal councillors or MPs showed a dichotomy between left and right parties. The former tend to apply the American model of primaries, letting members of the party decide who will run for particular elections (Costa and Kerrouche 2007; Garraud 1989). On one hand, this very inclusive method of recruitment would encourage potential candidate to be involved in the party politics. On the other hand, candidates of right-wing parties rely more on their own social background and tend to be more independent (Garraud 1989). Thus we can expect

4. If a candidate situates him- or herself on the left of the ideological continuum, then he or she would have favoured a recruitment through the professional path.

As argued by Black (1972) and Schlesinger (1994), the main goal of an individual involved in politics is to attain a political office. Strøm (1997) goes further by showing that individuals pursue goals one by one. Only the completion of one goal will generate and launch the pursuit of the following one. In his theory an executive position is hierarchically higher than a councillor position. Being elected at such a position requires specific skills which differ from the previous stage. According to Strøm (1997), candidates who have experienced socialization through their political party and through local organization will be favoured. Hypothesis 5 may be stated as follows:

5. If potential candidate tend to reach an executive office, then he or she will be inspired by professional motives and mainly party duty.

Favourable *social bases* operate as resources for potential candidates (Meadowcroft 2001). In other words, in context of growing professionalisation of local

politics (Brugué and Vallès 2005), academic degrees or highly skilled professions become central elements of political recruitment (Cotta and Best 2000). Hence, potential candidates without advantageous social base may have to compensate this disadvantage. Activation and apprenticeship will then work as tool to build eligibility. Our final hypothesis is:

6. The less favourable the social base is, the more important activation and apprenticeship will be.

Results

In order to examine the effect of the previous factors we ran multiple binary logistic regressions upon activation and apprenticeship. Results are displayed in the following tables.

First of all, the high number of significant results indicates that both institutional and individual factors matter in defining differences in activation and apprenticeship. In addition, some models have rather high Nagelkerke R^2 , meaning that the models are robust.

The hypotheses about the type of government system cannot be completely corroborated. County councillors from the council-manager group frequently come from a political family. Socialisation in a political environment is thus more important for this group than the others, including the committee-leader group. In terms of motivation, the pattern is unclear. According to our hypotheses, members of the committee-leaders and the council-managers group tend to give importance to the implementation of the programme of their political party (party duty). This is the only item that provides a significant difference between the groups. It has to be noticed that, according to our expectations, the general interest is not a motivation for councillors elected in a council-manager system but this is the case for those elected in a committee leader system. Thus, the importance of being socialised in a political family is significant and corroborates the hypotheses but the question of motivations remains rather uncertain. The pattern is clearer when we investigate apprenticeship: a very large part of members of the committee-leader and the council-managers group were members of their political party before their mandate at the county council. In addition, the same groups are much more involved in local community than are councillors from the collective leaders and strong leader groups. The sense of party duty of the former tends to be confirmed by the item measuring the political support, which is higher for them than for the latter group. These results confirm the first and second hypotheses: the council-manager and the committee-leader system tend to favour a recruitment of professionals, potential candidates who are involved in the political scene of their county. If the results are clear for apprenticeship variables, they are not for activation variables. Therefore, hypotheses 1 and 2 cannot be totally confirmed.

The size of county matters. Hypothesis 3 is corroborated by almost all variables. Again, our hypothesis is confirmed for variables measuring apprenticeship.

Table 14.6a The impact of the opportunity structure and social base on activation and apprenticeships, a multivariate regression analysis

Apprenticeship			Activation (1)				
Political party	Member of local organisations	Local support	Political support (incl. trade union)	Local economy support	Media support	Political family	
Committee-leader	3.066 (0.618)***	2.347 (.690)***	-0.440 (0.188)**	0.819 (0.201)***	-0.897 (0.195)***	-0.369 (0.193)*	-0.229 (0.190)
Collective leaders	-0.464 (0.145)***	-0.306 (0.184)*	-0.855 (0.144)***	-.971 (0.139)***	-0.613 (0.139)***	-1.053 (0.148)***	-0.847 (0.152)***
Council-manager	3.102 (0.912)***	10.416 (0.657)**	0.528 (0.295)*	1.651 (0.375)***	0.241 (0.274)	0.651	0.543 (0.270)**
Size of county	0.423 (0.080)***	0.018 (0.100)	-0.336 (0.076)***	0.033 (0.074)	-0.339 (0.073)***	-0.104 (0.076)	0.389 (0.081)***
Left-right scale	-0.071 (0.020)***	-0.008 (0.024)	0.025 (0.018)	-0.048 (0.018)***	0.067 (0.018)***	0.024 (0.018)	-0.052 (0.020)***
President/executive	0.713 (0.218)***	0.915 (0.297)***	1.662 (0.197)***	1.658 (0.192)***	1.439 (0.184)***	0.702 (0.150)***	-1.348 (0.623)**
Woman	0.267 (0.161)*	0.206 (0.191)	0.054 (0.128)	0.168 (0.133)	-0.058 (0.125)	0.094 (0.129)	0.502 (0.143)***
Employee	-0.308 (0.116)***	-0.127 (0.142)	0.097 (0.103)	0.065 (0.103)	-0.001 (0.100)	-0.078 (0.103)	-0.348 (0.124)***
Age	-0.003 (0.005)	0.007 (0.006)	-0.021 (0.004)***	-0.012 (0.004)***	-0.018 (0.004)***	-0.021 (0.004)***	-0.004 (0.005)
Nagelkerke R ²	0.219	0.058	0.127	0.192	0.117	0.098	0.177
N	2,203	2,330	2,166	2,234	2,246	2,280	2,248

Source: Second Tier Survey

***, $p \leq 0.01$; **, $p \leq 0.05$; *, $p \leq 0.1$. All coefficients are beta (standard errors in parentheses).

Table 14.6b The impact of the opportunity structure and social base on activation and apprenticeships, a multivariate regression analysis

	<i>activation (2)</i>		
	<i>defining the main goals of county activity</i>	<i>implementing the program of the political party/movement</i>	<i>Representing the requests and issues emerging from local society</i>
committee-leader form	0.973 (0.238)***	1.854 (0.203)***	-0.389 (0.180)**
collective leaders	-0.769 (0.132)***	-0.425 (0.142)***	-0.060 (0.132)
council-manager form	-0.237 (0.270)	0.633 (0.264)**	-1.656 (0.284)***
size of county	0.126 (0.071)*	0.133 (0.074)*	-0.234 (0.069)***
left-right scale	-0.016 (0.017)	0.077 (0.018)***	0.043 (0.017)**
president/executive	5.367 (1.206)***	-0.771 (0.179)***	-0.044 (0.148)
woman	0.331 (0.133)**	0.379 (0.126)***	0.045 (0.123)
employee	0.332 (0.101)***	0.221 (0.103)**	-0.206 (0.095)**
age	0.004 (0.004)	-0.015 (0.004)***	-0.020 (0.004)***
Nagelkerke R ²	0.218	0.144	0.063
N	2,435	2,435	2,434

Source: Second Tier Survey

***, $p \leq 0.01$; **, $p \leq 0.05$; *, $p \leq 0.1$. All coefficients are beta (standard errors in parentheses).

In addition, here the pattern is also clearer for those measuring activation. Councillors elected in highly populated counties benefit more often of being socialised in a political family and through a political commitment. Because potential candidates are more numerous in these counties, these skills may act as resources in order to go out of the *crowd*. Hence, we argue that more than a question of professionalization due to a growing complexity, being involved in politics and in local organization at an early stage is a strategic resource that facilitates the changeover from a potential to an eligible candidate. However, the coefficients for models measuring the support of local economic organizations are negative, thus rejecting the hypothesis. This means that in large counties, local involvement is mainly connected to the political arena. Councillors coming from large counties also have more professionalised motivations oriented towards party duty instead of individual issues and general interest. The former confirm our hypothesis but not the latter.

Ideology does not matter as much as the previous factors. We therefore cannot corroborate hypothesis 4. However, some factors lead to interesting results. Contrary to our expectations, county councillors placing themselves on the left side of the ideological spectrum tend to have motivations oriented toward the general interest and individual issues, meaning that recruitment through the layperson path is privilege in their case. On the contrary, party duty is more frequent among members of county council from the right flank of the continuum. However, political socialisation, both familial and partisan, is more important for leftist councillors. In addition, analyses of local ties show that they are more involved in political

organisations, namely parties and trade unions. On the contrary, apprenticeship in the economic sector plays a greater role for rightist councillor.

Contrarily to our expectations (hypothesis 5), presidents or members of the executive board of the county are highly motivated by the general interest instead of party duty. Nevertheless, as hypothesised, they are not driven by representing the requests emerging from the local society. Surprisingly, they do not appear to rely more on the socialisation in the family environment. In line with our expectations, executives seem to benefit from a specific pattern of political recruitment thanks to their very high degree of involvement in civil society and in the political arena. According hypothesis 5, they are, thus, highly professionalised: because their recruitment is more selective, they are encouraged to develop high level of professionalization through involvement in the local and/or political organizations.

Finally, social-base variables – hypothesis 6 - are not highly significant and a global pattern cannot be drawn. Women appear to be firstly socialised in their family. They, thus, profit more often from their familial ties than do men. In addition, they tend to be more interested by general interest and party duty motives. In terms of apprenticeship, women are mainly recruited through their political party. They are, thus, encouraged to enrol in a political organisation (party or union trade). Age is an important predictor. The younger cohorts seem to be above all recruited through the civil society and local organizations (regardless the type). In other words, creating local ties is strongly encouraged for younger cohorts. Their motivations are more oriented towards individual issues and party duty. The analyses of the effect of employment are biased because of the operationalisation of the variable⁷ (In terms of apprenticeship, only recruitment through a political party is significant for employers. As far as activation variables are concerned, employees are motivated by the general interest and party duty. Moreover, being an employer results in a high score on the citizen/civil society motives.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to contribute to the European comparative literature on political recruitment at the local level. More precisely we were interested in two phases of this process, namely activation towards politics and apprenticeship in politics. Both activation and apprenticeship were analysed through the three components of professionalization: the social (political socialization inside the familial environment), personal (motivation) and political (party and civil society). The findings can be summed up as follows.

First, before recruitment itself some requirements appear to be indispensable for a potential eligible candidate. The key factor here is the involvement in a political party. Our results show that almost 80 per cent of county councillors were members of their party before running to the county election. In addition, membership or responsibilities in local organisation(s) seem to be a must, even if the support of these organizations appears to not be important when election time comes. These two factors are strongly interrelated and clearly show that social

network as a whole is important. This means that a successful political career is determined by factors related to social life.

Second, socialisation in political life through familial ties is important but not a requirement. It can act as a resource (mainly for women) but, for the achievement of recruitment, the crucial point remains involvement in the local social life. In terms of motivation, few differences between countries appear. Representing general interest is a motivation for almost all councillors. Party duty follows the same pattern expected for French and Polish councillors. Electoral rules might matter in these cases.

Third, size matters. The size of the county constitutes a good predictor to explain differences in activation and apprenticeship. In rural counties, the support of local economic sector is a must; social recognition seems, thus, more important than in urban counties. On the contrary, in urban counties, being actively involved in a political organisation is necessary. The local government system also matters. The professional path is favoured for recruitment in committee-leader and council-manager systems.

Fourth, individual factors also matter. Leftist councillors benefit more from their engagement in politics and trade unions. On the contrary, the socialisation of right-wing councillor appears to take place independently of the political scene, mainly in the economic sector.

Notes

- 1 Although the project aimed to include an equal share of cases for each country, the response rate variegated quite strongly between the countries under study. Therefore all analyses in this paper were run on the base of a weighted data set, ensuring that each country is represented by an equal share of cases.
- 2 Hungary has been excluded from the table because of the weak number of cases. In addition, data for Italy are missing.
- 3 In the questionnaire on municipal councillors, the main question on that topic was formulated as follows 'When you first accepted to become a candidate, how important were the following reasons?'
- 4 The original questions did not allow us to exactly differentiate between membership of an association prior to the first mandate as a councillor and membership afterwards. Nevertheless we considered that the response 'not now, but before' referred to the time before the election and chose to exclude 'at present'.
- 5 The last election does not mean of course the first election. Nevertheless, according to our calculations, seniority of county councillors does not have an influence on the level of local supports.
- 6 This variable was calculated by the authors on the base of the councillors' years in office and their first affiliation to the political party.
- 7 The variable measures if a county councilor is an employee or an employer regardless the economic sector, the size of the firm, etc. A more precise variable would have been desirable.

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