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Representation and Socio-Demographic factors

in Local Councils of small, medium and

large cities in Germany and The Netherlands

Bachelor Thesis in

Public Administration

by

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August 23rd 2017

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1. Introduction

"All politics is local."

This claim arguably originates in the 1930s and is applied at times to one or the other initiator. But without doubt it is the most common and wide known saying involving local politics. And it claims a certain significance towards its subject. A significance which seems only to have anecdotal value and does not apply to the majority of the scientific debate. For local politics in general are not exactly the most loved part of political science.

This paper aims yet at the local political level. Which is considered the "lowest" political tier in a country, located beneath the other "real" decision making and law giving levels. Not only due to these restraints the local level is considered to be lacking political power and scope, but at the same time the local level offers some unique features that make it worthwhile looking at.

First and foremost, local politics are more permeable for "normal" people. On the local level it is much easier to become a part of the political process. This can be derived from the generally lower skillset required at the local level of administration. This assertion is strengthened by the huge number of local councillors needed, which exceeds the number of members in all the different national tier parliaments combined by far. Due to this lack of exclusiveness the entry threshold towards local politics supposedly is significantly lower than in other levels of politics.

Although this assumption might turn out as questionable at a closer look and may also be dependent on the size of the local entity. Especially larger municipalities require thoroughly dedicated and trained representatives.[1]

Furthermore, local politicians are some kind of in between worlds. They are generally voluntary politicians that cannot consider their political activities a full time job. Although local politicians are entitled to some means of allowances, most local politicians do have another job at the side. In addition to that, losses in earnings resulting from the numerous hours spent conducting local politics, are to be considered by every politician. This situation is in a way welcomed, for the fact, that local politicians are rooted in a "normal" job, adds up to their ability to potentially stay in touch with the realities and needs of their municipality and its citizens.[2]

Besides having to juggle two different professions, local politicians also have to deal with increasing requirements and professionalization in their field of work that goes along with for example more time that is consumed by their council work.[3] These factors are adding up to the problems and

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[1] Reiser 2006, p. pp. 128
[2] Boogers 2010, p. 55
[3] Boogers 2010, p. 60

difficulties that are present in (local) politics. In addition to that there is a considerable recruitment problem that itself leads to problems, especially when considering the question of representation at the local level[4]. Thus, although a broad representation is desirable, suitable candidates may hardly be available, first and foremost in smaller municipalities, where the ratio of possible candidates and the number of available citizens is lower than in large cities.[5]

Another problem occurs when looking at the representation in the political sphere. We will have to take a closer look at what concepts there are, structuring considerations about representation. Thoughts on representation have been conducted on several occasions, but a name that is to mention is Hanna Pitkin and her 1967 book on "The concept of representation". Following that representation can have different dimensions from which - in this case it might be wise - to distinguish between two. Those two are rather superficial ones, namely the substantive and descriptive representation. According to her, substantive representation means the representative's acting according to the "interests of the represented"[6]. This concept in itself leaves room for debate, a debate that cannot be conducted here. Furthermore, measuring something like different "interests of the represented" also lies far beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the concept itself, in the broad manner it is presented in, should be kept in mind. More adequate and realistically assessable is the dimension of descriptive representation. Again following Pitkin's definition, descriptive representation occurs "when a representative mirrors the characteristics of its constituents"[7]. Implied by this picture is the notion of resemblance, of a certain kind, the representative has towards his constituents. In addition to that the representative is not only "sufficiently like" his constituents but predictably acts like his constituents. Having said that, the concept of descriptive representation is well suited for application to this study, in which characteristics like gender, age, occupation and origin of local politicians are of special interest.

Another aspect that distinguishes the local level from all other political levels is the presence of strictly local parties. Those parties are potentially very different from those that are known at the national level and may be worthwhile looking at more closely. However, for the sake of simplicity we will have to refer to local parties as a whole. Individual differences in local parties will be addressed as relevant, an in depth analysis of single local parties obviously will not be part of it.

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[4] Voerman, Boogers 2014.
http://www.rug.nl/research/portal/files/15896934/2014_Gerrit_Voerman_BZKKandidaatstelling2014.pdf
[5] Cf. table 2,
[6] Pitkin 1967, p. 209
[7] Pitkin 1967, p. 82

The next dimension that will be of importance in this paper is the inter-national approach. We will be looking not only at municipalities of a single country, but compare local politicians in Germany and the Netherlands. Although both these countries can be considered to be relatively similar in many respects[8], there are structural and even socio-demographic differences. Structurally local elections in the Netherlands, for example, are held at the same time, whereas in Germany they are connected to the different federal states. The federal structure in Germany however poses complications to the comparison, as there are potentially sixteen different laws on local elections. That is why we will concentrate on only a single federal state, North-Rhine-Westphalia. Both the Netherlands and NRW are almost equal with respect to population (both around 17 million[9]), for further institutional details see chapter 3 on the institutional context.

As it is not possible to include every existing municipality in this study, we will concentrate on three single municipalities each in the Netherlands and NRW. While it is a common approach to make these selected municipalities comparable, we will follow the opposite route and look at municipalities of fundamentally different sizes. Included will be small, medium and large cities. As there will be obvious differences in the socio-demographic composition of the different sized municipalities, their actual effects on representation might be worth looking at.

Combining all the above mentioned aspects this study will be led by adhering closely to the following research question:

In how far do municipal sizes and different political ideologies in Germany and the Netherlands influence the composition of local councils in the dimensions of age, gender, occupation and origin and thereby affect descriptive representation?

The comparison of the above mentioned dimensions will be conducted by looking at socio demographic data found in compulsory candidate lists. Those are compiled beforehand each election in the Netherlands as well as in Germany. Those lists should enable us to analyse local politicians with respect to their age, gender, origin and occupation besides their political career.

All of the above combined, should be sufficient to make thorough assertions about the state of descriptive representation on the local level in Germany and the Netherlands. In addition to that this study is an approach to widen the empirical basis for analysis of local politics in Germany and the Netherlands. Main subject of the approach are the registered candidates for the local council

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[8] Blömker 2010, p. 72
[9] Landesbetrieb Information und Technik NRW 2015 / Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2016a

elections in 2014 in the Netherlands and the German federal state of North-Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) which actually got voted into office. All references on "German" structures, processes and results are therefore limited to the federal state of focus, if not stated otherwise.

In order to answer the research question socio-demographic data on local election candidates in German and Dutch municipalities has been collected. However, the collection of the desired data was not as comprehensive as expected. Mostly due to restrictions of data privacy that were not expected beforehand. Difficulties encountered during the process are described in chapter 5.1.

2. Theoretical framework

In this paper we will take a closer look at the establishment of the lowest political tier in Germany and the Netherlands, namely the municipal administration in the German "Gemeinden", respectively Dutch "gemeentes". This chapter is concerned with the institutional context of German and Dutch municipalities, pointing out the similarities and differences in the structural organisation of local administration. A brief look at existing literature on the topic will be taken at the beginning and the chapter concludes with a set of hypotheses on the subject that are to be tested in the consequent chapters.

2.1. Local Representation and Legitimation

Local politics can be considered a hotbed for the higher levels of political representation.[10] Political elites often make their first steps[11] at the local level and local politics generally are made in close vicinity to their electorate. Oftentimes the electorate itself even becomes politically engaged on the local level and by that kind of participation closes the gap between people and administration potentially affecting all democratic levels.[12]

At this point it is necessary to take a closer look at the term of representation a little more and beyond the thoughts already presented before.

Although there cannot be an exhaustive discussion of the term in this paper we will consider a certain connection between representation and legitimation. According to Fritz Scharpf, there are two perspectives that lead to democratic legitimacy. On the one hand there is the "Output

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[10] Secker 2000, p. 296
[11] Reiser 2006, pp. 177–178
[12] Kersting 2004, pp. 227–234

Legitimacy" achieved by "efficient" as well as "effective" political actions. On the other hand, there is "Input Legitimacy" achieved through "citizen integration and participation".[13] Here we will focus on the "input legitimacy" and how it is employed through characteristics of the elected councillors that individually contribute to legitimacy through the concept of descriptive representation, which is described as follows.

Representative forms of government derive their legitimation from the fact that a small numbers of representatives make decisions concerning the reality of many people that they represent. Implying that the representatives act in the interest of the people they represent.[14]

Important to mention at this point is the concept of representation of ideas and interests. A problem concerning the representation of interests is that it is rather hard to measure and pinpoint interests, as these are mostly not present in a physical form, but are vague concepts inside of people's minds. Another approach towards representation is thus to link it to factors that are measurable. Measurable factors in this case are for example the gender of representatives. By considering the gender of representatives and the people they represent we silently acknowledge a link between the measurable dimension of gender and the representation of female or male interest of the governed through the governing. Indicators for the existence of that connection are shown e.g. in Egner/Sweeting/Klok's study on European councillors.[15]

Without wanting to delve deep into the determination of the concept of representation we will assume for this paper that representation and legitimation are connected in a positive way. The better the representation the better the legitimation and the more accepted will political decision be. Furthermore, we assume a link between socio-demographic factors and the presence of interests. Meaning that female representatives take actions that are in the general interest of represented females and so on.

Following the given data for this paper, dimensions of representation taken into account will be age, gender, origin, and occupation. This should enable us to make some annotations on representation and legitimization on the local level in these cases.

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[13] Scharpf 1970, 1999 cited in Vetter, Kersting 2003a, pp. 11–13
[14] Budde 2013. http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/polwiss/forschung/ab_ideengeschichte/mitarbeiter_innen/roth/Working_Papers/Working_Paper_Budde.pdf
[15] Egner et al. 2013, pp. 261–262

2.2. Literature Review

In 2000 Heinrich Best and Maurizio Cotta published a study on Parliamentary Representatives in Europe that takes into account the socio-demographic variance in parliamentary representatives for more than the past 150 years. Best and Cotta but concentrate on researching the highest level of public governance and account for eleven different European states including Germany and the Netherlands. The study takes a look at occupational backgrounds, distribution with respect to gender and regional representation. On the parliamentary level Best and Cotta find a general dominance of higher educated politicians, who oftentimes have an occupational background in public service or, although declining in numbers, law. Furthermore, a certain density of educational staff such as teachers and professors is to be expected according to that data. As well as a lack of blue collar workers, with an exemption in the agricultural sector, which is supposed to be strongest on the conservative end of the political spectrum.[16] On the opposing end, the left wing, a stronger emphasize on e.g. gender equality is to be expected.

As those data operationalized by Best and Cotta derive from a historical analysis that aggregates data of more than 150 years, looking at different nation's highest levels of representation, a certain amount of variation is found within, thus I expect partially different results to be present now on the local level where the involvement in politics is still considered to be less serious and overall less relevant. That might be true with respect to the scope of decisions taken at the local level, that by definition do not exceed that of its municipalities boundaries, as it has been said above, but those decisions should not be seen as less important because they oftentimes also have an immediate effect on the life of its citizens and may at times be even more visible than abstract national regulations.

Reviewing other existing literature on local politics, there seems to be a general lack of widespread empirical data concerning the very people that apply for making up the lowest level of administration in both Germany (NRW) and the Netherlands. That however is not very surprising when looking at the sheer numbers present in this field of interest. Although the local tier has the least political influence in a state, the basis of data is disproportionally big. Several hundred (390) of municipalities exist in the Netherlands by now, an almost equal number is present just in the German federal state of NRW (396)[17] alone. Considering the amount of roughly 100-500 candidates that are proposed for the local election in each city add up to several ten thousand individuals applicable for consideration.

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[16] Best et al. 2000, pp. 161–166
[17] Statista.de. http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1254/umfrage/anzahl-der-gemeinden-in-deutschland-nach-gemeindegroessenklassen/

A complete collection of data on those subjects obviously is difficult and additionally will be rendered obsolete by the time new elections are held, and new individuals strive for political power – in this case every four years. Furthermore, candidates in elections are not the ones that ultimately will be in power, further reducing genuine interest on the subject. Most of those candidates will never be entitled to any political office and thus won't enter the political arena and become subjects of interest for further study and scientific comparison.

With that being said, nevertheless there are concepts and beliefs of who the people are that are considered fit to take responsibility in local administration. In Germany, for example, Karl-Heinz Naßmacher came forward with widely accepted and oftentimes reused data in the 1970s. He has emerged findings on the social structure of local councillors and their workload, among others. He therein found a predominance of the societal mid-tier and a lack of large scale entrepreneurs, as well as workers and minor employees of the private sector. Considering self-employment Naßmacher also mentioned the absence of retailers, craftspeople and physicians. Contortions in the age structure and the distribution of genders were considered less remarkable. Whilst this gives us an impression on the topic at hand, the data Naßmacher used, is derived from looking at just a single city – Wuppertal[18] and is not really up to date at this point in time.

A larger data basis is presented for example in a study by Marion Reiser[19]. She conducted interviews and analysed surveys on local politicians with respect to their occupation besides their political office. She makes out a dilemma in the formally honorary status of the councillors and their actually invested time that oftentimes exceeds the amount of hours spent in their "real" job. These circumstances should favour a certain type of local councillor. However, Reiser finds an overrepresentation of the mid-aged councillors, an almost balanced ratio of genders and a variety of occupations. These findings contradict the concept of occupational classes and instead hint at the personal availability of each individual councillor as a condition for local council work.[20] In the very detailed description she nevertheless concentrated on four large German cities only. Especially with respect to the social structure Reiser identified fundamental differences, that prohibit easy explanations and suggest structural differences in the composition of each individual city council. In our approach we will therefore test similar data, but will also account for city sizes, in order to strengthen the findings of Marion Reiser or to identify tendencies that maybe found in differently sized municipalities.

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[18] Naßmacher 1973
[19] Reiser 2006
[20] Reiser 2006, pp. 141–157

However, another approach by Göhlert, Holtmann, Krappidel and Reiser from 2008 quite extensively looks at councillors affiliated with local parties. For the first time[21] a consecutive study on all German municipalities has been done there considering to an extent similar factors as we are about to consider. Reiser et. al. determines a quite heterogeneous German landscape of local parties and put forward a first typology of those. The very detailed reflections on local parties can't be subject here though, as they stretch far beyond the scope of this text.

Marcel Boogers also contributed to the above mentioned book with an approach towards Dutch local parties. He brings forward an even more elaborate categorization and concludes that local parties might prototype modernised party organisation, rather than representing an anomaly from it.[22] Taking from this, local parties will be presented as an original category in itself. And although the mentioned studies would suggest a more detailed look at local parties, such an endeavour won't fit into the outline of this text.

In the Netherlands the situation is comparable. For example, Denters and van der Kolk have studied seven Dutch municipalities in the 1990s. They again mostly concentrated on big cities, the smallest of them being Zwolle with around 100,000 citizens.[23] They e.g. found relatively high rates of female participation in local councils (between 17 and 52 percent) that were slightly higher than the country-average at the time (22%). Denters and Kolk propose confessional parties and smaller emancipation effects in rural areas causal for this. Furthermore, they find an overrepresentation of middle ages in local councils. Younger and older people are hence underrepresented on the local level. In the case of occupation besides the local office, Denters and Kolk find an overrepresentation of officials and self-employed workers. Not employed councillors are underrepresented in comparison with the overall population. Denters and Kolk look at several other indicators, but origin of local councillors not being one of them. Here we find an angle to broaden the findings presented by the aforementioned authors. They conclude, that according to demographics, local councils "do not mirror the local population truly"[24].

Inter-national approaches on the topic are often conducted on a broad European perspective. An example of a comprehensive look at the local councillors in Europe is made e.g. by Egner/Sweeting/Klok in 2013, who focus on establishing a broad view on councillors in a variety of

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[21] Göhlert et al. 2008, p. 127
[22] Boogers 2008, pp. 165–166
[23] van der Kolk, Denters op. 1993
[24] Leijenaar, Niemöller op. 1993, p. 32

European states. This particular study has been conducted via questionnaires and focusses to large parts on the perception of local council work by the respective councillors. Touching focussing points of this text only on the surface and going way deeper in assessing the individual opinions of councillors on various topics across a substantial number of European states. The largest share of congruence in the work of Egner et. al. is on the question of gender, it lightly touches the role of parties on the local level and assesses representation achieved through councillors on the local level. On the latter point it is David Karlsson who finds evidence for the hypothesis of social representation. A concept that argues a preference of deliberate representation of social groups the councillors belongs to in the first place.[25] Overrepresentation on different social groups in councils might thus be problematic for the deliverance of local politics. Eran Razin has occupied himself with the party affiliation of local politicians in Europe and finds that national parties play a predominant role in European local politics.[26] However, Razin opposes national parties only to non-partisan councillors, which he with exceptions locates in the European south. The existence of local parties is not mentioned nor elaborated on in this text. Alibegovic, Slijepcevic and Sipic elaborate on the possible existence of a gender gap in local politics. They make out that there is a difference in political preferences set by male and female councillors. According to the finding presented, traditionally female policies are social issues, physical concerns and development concerns. Male preferred local policies revolve around the attraction and development of economic activities. All in all, Alibegovic, Slijepcevic and Sipic judge female influence in (local) politics as beneficial and desirable, ending with the introduction of a "critical mass" for females to be able to influence local decision making. This critical mass is set around 30%. Further elaborations on this topic will be presented in chapter 7.

Another one would be the study of Kersting/Vetter from 2003 which sets its focus on local government reforms across key nations in Europe. They conclude on the need of pressure through input- or output-legitimacy for local government reforms to happen.[27] A finding that might prove interesting when more closely assessing the topic of representation later.

Mareike Blömer has put forward a rather lone approach on the comparison of Dutch and German local politics in 2010. Basis for her study are two medium sized cities, but in focus are rather structures and processes examined at the grounds of specific local projects rather than the composition of the councils and their politicians. So the study is just formally beneficial for the approach at hand.

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[25] Karlsson 2013, pp. 117–118
[26] Razin 2013, pp. 59–62
[27] Vetter, Kersting 2003b, pp. 347–349

Topics that have gotten a fair share of consideration, in part as shown above, are the presence of women and minorities in politics. However, the examination of female participation on the local level has seen a high in the 1980s. For the Netherlands the association of Dutch municipalities published a study on women in local politics in 1986 and Marianne Horstkötter did the same for Germany in 1988. Both coming to the conclusion, that the 70s and 80s brought a raise in female participation, but both hoping for a continued trend towards evening out the genders in local politics even more.

Minorities and less privileged groups tendentially are subject of consideration on a large, national or supranational scale as in e.g. Celis and Wauters' publication from 2010. Herein they analyse the Belgian parliamentarians and find some evidence for the persistence of norms that stand against the goal of diversity. According to these findings, the inclusion of parliamentarians from a blue-collar or migrant background does not necessary result in the change of cemented parliamentary norms, but oftentimes in the adaption of these norms by said politicians[28]. Following this, substantive representation seems not to be able to achieve actual representation per se. However, it does surely not do harm to the topic of representation and should thus still be considered as a desirable political feature that is worth looking into.

The angle this study wants to take is, as said earlier, a comparative approach on two nations' local politicians on the basis of several differently sized municipalities, thus taking into account fundamentally varying structural pre-sets between rural and urban communities. In addition to that a comparison on gender, occupation, age and origin in that combination is bound to set apart this approach from previous ones. On top of that the quantitative approach seems to be unique regarding the described indicators and measurements.

With that being said, the scope of this work doesn't allow for an exhaustive approach neither, thus also we will concentrate on a handful of municipalities. In addition to that due to suboptimal data availability we will have to narrowed the subject even more, and will concentrate not on all candidates but solely on those elected for councillors in the end. See chapter 6.1 for a detailed description on that.

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[28] Celis, Wauters 2010

3. Institutional Context

At an initial glance, both European Countries – Germany and the Netherlands – are more or less similarly structured. Leaving the supranational tier, the European level aside, there is firstly, the most important and capable national political level. Just below in Germany there are the "Bundesländer" as the second political tier, with the equivalent of "provincies" in the Netherlands. Although it is important to notice that the Netherlands are considered a unitary country[29] in which the "provincies" neither have a legislative competence nor the ability to play a role in national legislation[30]. In contrast to that Germany is a federally organised entity, the levels of government are superficially similar, but the "Bundesländer" in Germany do have separate constitutions, legislative competences and do play a role on the national level in the second legislative chamber the "Bundesrat"[31].

In addition to that, the political level in focus of this text, the local level, also rests on different foundations in the Netherlands and in Germany. Whereas formally the German "Gemeinden" are subjects of their respective federal state in the Netherlands, municipalities are directly accountable to the national government. That is why Dutch municipal administrations are mostly dependent on national decision making[32] and thus merely entitled to implement national legislation into the municipal realities. There is no formal guarantee for self-administration of local communities, like there is in Germany, expressed through article 28 of the German constitution (Grundgesetz). Secondly Dutch municipalities, just as their German counterparts, play a role as a "democratic forum"[33] for local communities. And thirdly they act as a leading institution for local community facilities such as energy and waste disposal.[34]

The situation in Germany differs, as shown above, and continues to be different when looking at the local level. Where Dutch municipalities are dependent on national decision, German municipalities are more connected to their respective "Landesregierung", the government of the federal state the local entity is located in.[35] Thus local politics as determined in local constitutions in Germany differ from federal state to federal state. However, there has been a certain degree of harmonization after the reunification of west and east Germany, resulting in direct election of mayors and an overall prevalence of the "Süddeutsche Ratsverfassung" which is in place in the majority of German federal states now.[36] However NRW is still clinging to the system of closed election lists, opposed to the

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[29] Denters, Rose 2005, p. 11
[30] Lepszy, Wilp 2009, p. 441 f.
[31] Ismayr 2009, p. 552 f.
[32] Derksen 1994, p. 118 f.
[33] Derksen 1994, p. 118
[34] Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek 1998, p. 26
[35] Wehling 1994, p. 10
[36] Blömker 2010, p. 105

cumulating and splitting votes via open lists that today is the preferred method of election in most of the German federal states[37].

What can be noted down at this point is that the political system in federal Germany tends to be more complex and hard to fully understand[38] when it comes to the federal or local sphere, oftentimes referred to as a result of "Politikverflechtung". Introduced by Fritz W. Scharpf, the term describes the "interwovenness" of political institutions. This is in contrast to the Dutch system in which its unitary nature comes with a comparatively simple structure when it comes to the description of its second and third levels of political action. This is due to the conformity of the provinces and municipalities' structure that apply to every entity across the nation alike.

However, it has to be said at this point that neither in Germany nor in the Netherlands the local political tier in comparison to (the regional and) national levels have state-like qualities.[39] Moreover municipalities in Germany as well as the Netherlands distinguish themselves through a strong focus on administrative competences[40] and responsibilities[41].

A problem that arises when it comes to research in the local dimension, is the already mentioned, vast number of cases that qualify for reflection. In Germany there is, as of now, a total of 11,116[42] municipalities. Reducing the observation to just the federal state of North-Rhine Westphalia, there are still 396 municipalities to take into account. Although the number of municipalities is declining and has dropped from 2,365 (NRW) in the 1960s we can see that it is almost impossible to consistently analyse processes on the local level in all its manifestations.

Looking at the Netherlands the problem is much smaller, but still there are 390[43] municipalities in all of the Netherlands. The numbers are also continuously declining and have been halved in the last 50 years.

Nevertheless, analysing all of these municipalities is not likely to be manageable in a finite timeframe without a huge and highly impractical amount of data gathering. So, obviously in this text we have to concentrate on a smaller number of municipalities, selected mostly on terms of size. We will have a look at small, medium and large cities in Germany and the Netherlands. There will be three Dutch

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[37] Zicht 1999. http://www.wahlrecht.de/kommunal/index.htm
[38] Wehling 1994, p. 10
[39] Tillman, Berthold cited by Tillman, Berthold cited by Horstkötter 1990, p. 32
[40] Horstkötter 1990, p. 33
[41] Vetter, Kersting 2003b, pp. 347–349
[42] Statista.de. http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1254/umfrage/anzahl-der-gemeinden-in-deutschland-nach-gemeindegroessenklassen/
[43] Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2016. https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2016/01/aantal-gemeenten-in-2016-daalt-naar-390

municipalities and three German municipalities that we will have a closer look at. These are described briefly in chapter 6.

3.1. Local Council Elections in the Netherlands and Germany (NRW)

A compact overview of the structural differences and similarities regarding local elections in Germany and the Netherlands can be seen in this table.

Table 1 - Synopsis local elections

	NRW	NL
interval	every 5 years	every 4 years
legal basis	Kommunalwahlgesetz NRW	Gemeentewet
applicable to	all municipalities of the federal state	all municipalities (nationwide)
council size	20-90	9-45
councillors' payment	unpaid	unpaid
allowances for local political work according to size of municipality	300-1,000€ or more / month[44]	200-2,200€ or more / month[45]

In the Netherlands local councillors are elected for a period of four years. In NRW local elections grant a mandate for a period of five years. In 2014 elections were held both in NRW and the Netherlands. These elections provide the data basis for this study. The legal basis as already described above is different and relates back to federal state law in Germany and national law in the Netherlands. That implies the given distinction of this paper that the view on Germany only reflects one federal state, whereas in the Netherlands local election rules are applied to all municipalities in the same way and elections are held at the same time and all over the country.

The size of local councils is dependent on the population in the respective municipality. In general, larger municipalities have larger councils. But there are some significant differences in the numbers when comparing Germany and the Netherlands.

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[44] EntschVO, 2014

[45] Directie Arbeidszaken Publieke Sector 2013. https://redactie.z24.nl/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/bezoldiging-en-ambtstoelage-burgemeesters-wedde-en-onkosten-vergoeding-wethouders-onkosten-verg.pdf

Table 2 - Council sizes

NRW		NL	
councillors	population	councillors	population
		9	< 3,001
20	< 5,000	11	3,001 – 6,000
26	5,001 - 8,000	13	6,001 - 10,000
32	8,001 - 15,000	15	10,001 - 15,000
		17	15,001 - 20,000
		19	20,001 - 25,000
38	15,001 - 30,000	21	25,001 - 30,000
		23	30,001 - 35,000
		25	35,001 - 40,000
		27	40,001 - 45,000
44	30,001 - 50,000	29	45,001 - 50,000
		31	50,001 - 60,000
		33	60,001 - 70,000
		35	70,001 - 80,000
50	50,001 - 100,000	37	80,001 - 100,000
		39	100,001 - 200,000
58	100,001 - 250,000	45	> 200,000
66	250,001 - 400,000		
74	400,001 - 550,000		
82	550,001 - 700,000		
90	> 700,000		

Ministerium für Inneres und Justiz des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1998 / Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 1992

As shown in the above table, the intervals at which the councils get more seats are much smaller in the Netherlands. The minimum and maximum number of councillors is half of that in German councils. The maximum council size is reached at a population of above 200,000 inhabitants in the Netherlands, whereas in Germany the peak is not reached until above 700,000 inhabitants. In the Netherlands local councils always have an odd number of members, in Germany the numbers are always even.

What we can learn from this is that the general number of local council members in the Netherlands is smaller than in Germany. At the far ends of the spectrum differences are most extreme. So the smallest as well as the largest Dutch cities have to get along with a council half the size of their German equivalents. That means the larger the cities get the more people are represented by each council member, with the percentage deviating in Germany and the Netherlands at the far ends of the spectrum.[46]

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[46] Boogers 2010, p. 54

Another interesting fact in this is, that Dutch councils by definition always have uneven numbers of councillors. This is to foster decision making and making deadlock situations less probable.[47] Potentially Dutch local councils thus have an institutional advantage towards their German counterparts.

In contrast to that Wilp and Lepszy e.g. establish a significantly lower amount of room for genuine local decision making in the Netherlands when compared to Germany.[48] Recent developments in the configuration of Dutch local politics however show certain development as local politics in the Netherlands are subject of ongoing discussions and change. [49]

In Germany as well as in the Netherlands local politicians are accepting honorary appointments when being voted into the council. There are no actual salaries local councillors are entitled to, but nevertheless they are compensated through means of allowances. These allowances depend on the size of the respective municipality, but oftentimes don't support a full income. In Germany the range is from around 300€ per month in the smallest municipalities to around 1,000€ in the biggest municipalities. In the Netherlands allowances also start at around 300€ per month, but get up to more than 2,200€ per month in large cities.[50] In addition to that, losses of earnings and other expenses are partially refunded and conference fees are added to the income through base allowances. So in both the Netherlands and Germany local politicians especially in smaller municipalities need to have other means of subsistence beside those allowances. Only in the biggest Dutch cities councillors are realistically able to make a living of the income earned through political work. This is a problem in the recruitment of local politicians as the position in a local council oftentimes is quite time consuming and requires averagely 15 to 20 hours per week[51].

In addition to that, local politicians are having to deal with increasing requirements and professionalization in their work that goes along with for example more time consumed through their council work.[52] All these factors are adding up to another problem, the question of representation. As presented in Boogers findings, the composition of local council is rather one-sided,[53] favouring white males at the age of around 50.[54] Interference with the concept of representation have been addressed in chapter 2.1.

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[47] ???
[48] Lepszy, Wilp 2009, p. 442
[49] Lepszy, Wilp 2009, p. 442
[50] cf. table 1
[51] Boogers 2010, p. p. 55
[52] Boogers 2010, p. 60
[53] Boogers 2010, p. 61
[54] Boogers 2010, p. 54

4. Hypotheses

Now that we have laid a basic foundation for the examination of local elections and their similarities and differences in the Netherlands and Germany, we can move on towards the interpretation of the collected data.

In order to structure the analysis, we'll work out a set of hypotheses that result from the existing literature, the kind of data at hand and the structural findings presented before. We will do that by recapitulating what we know so far and develop correspondent hypotheses from it.

By looking at municipalities that were selected mainly for their size, we have our first dimension for analysis. Size in this case is solely grounded in the population of the respective municipalities, explained in further detail before, in chapter 3.

With increasing size, we expect some characteristics to change accordingly. There might be a drain of young people in smaller municipalities, leaving home for higher education in usually bigger cities which respectively might profit from a larger source of younger inhabitants. The number of women and foreign citizens is expected to be higher in bigger cities, too. These expectations are already partially backed by e.g. Göhlert et al. who found that the percentage of women in (German) parties actually tends to increase according to municipality size. Although on the other hand this seems not to be the case for independent local parties, which actually were at the centre of interest of the said study[55].

Getting back to the literature reviewed earlier, we found that the municipality size played a rather subjugated role in research so far. With a few exceptions like Kersting and Gabriel that conducted a broad approach on political participation in 2014 including 27 German cities of various sizes[56]. In that Kersting finds that city sizes play a role when it comes to the development of a heterogeneous party landscape, especially the formation of local parties seems to be affected by the communities' size.[57]

Lastly, as bigger cities are more likely to house higher tier political institutions, this could result in a larger number of civil servants being active in actual local politics. So we come to a first set of hypotheses incorporating possible effects of municipal size on our dependent variables (see 5.1.2):

> *H1: The bigger the municipality, the more, young politicians are active.*
>
> *H2: The bigger the municipality, the more female politicians are present.*

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[55] Göhlert et al. 2008, pp. 137–140
[56] Bertelsmann Stiftung, Staatsministerium Baden-Württemberg 2014, p. 175
[57] Kersting 2002, p. 145

H3: The bigger the municipality the more politicians are born outside its borders.

H4: The bigger the municipality the more politicians are employed in the civil service sector.

Another angle we will take to approach the data will be to assess the parties present on the local level. Those who represent their bigger national counterparts will be put into a coordinate system from left to right and authoritarian to libertarian.

When it comes to the distribution of list spaces left/libertarian parties tend to focus more on equal assignment across genders. In Germany the SPD and the Greens have - in part - established a system that gives 50% of the list spaces to women[58]. In addition to that, Inglehart and Norris (2003) argue that there is a tendency for women to gravitate towards supporting parties of the left.[59] However, if those measures and preferences have sufficient effect on the elected councillors and the amount of women present in actual politics, leaves to be answered. But for establishing our hypotheses, we will assume that there are more female politicians on the left/libertarian side of the spectrum.

According to the Dutch FORUM organisation the number of allochthonous politicians is highest in the PvdA and GroenLinks. Conservative parties tend to attract less foreigners in this case. However, the least foreign politicians are found in the most left party, the SP[60].

Marion Reiser found among various others a connection between the occupation of local politicians in the private sector and the CDU in Germany[61]. Although the data in this case was not fully resilient we will take all of the above as a basis for this set of hypotheses:

H5: The more left / libertarian the parties, the more politicians are female.

H6: The more left / libertarian the party, the younger the politicians.

H7: The more left/libertarian the party, the more politicians are born outside the municipality.

H8: The more left / libertarian the party, the less politicians are occupied in the public sector.

Judging by these hypotheses, it should help to discover if there are any trends or demographic difference throughout the party spectrum. Or perhaps strengthen evidence on the that party affiliation does not matter that much on the local level after all. Both views are present in political sciences, as we can see when e.g. Norbert Kersting strikingly cites an undisclosed local politician, who

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[58] SPD-Parteivorstand 2014, p. 19 and Grüne NRW 2012. https://gruene-nrw.de/partei/satzungen-und-co/frauenstatut/

[59] Alibegovic et al. 2013, p. 184

[60] FORUM Instituut voor multicultureele vraagstukken 2010.
http://www.mighealth.net/nl/images/c/ce/Politiek.pdf

[61] Reiser 2006, pp. 148–154

thinks it might be more important to know about the very people on the local level: "sitting together on milk cans, saying what has to be said, not needing any parties".[62] On the other hand there is e.g. Eran Razins who claims that parties still play a predominant role in European local politics.[63]

Assessing the political landscape on a local level we furthermore need to address a unique characteristic of the lowest political tier which is the existence of independent local parties. Those parties do not have an equivalent mother party and are genuinely formed on various grounds and incentives. That makes them unique entities that either one would deserve a closer look. It also makes local parties a difficult subject to analyse lumped together into a single category. Especially the Dutch have a colourful landscape of local parties in which we find for example a Muslim party, one-man-shows or several parties with concern for the elderly. Nevertheless, Voerman and Boogers find that the social structure of local parties resembles the average values of all other parties[64]. Notable differences in the structure of local parties are found by Göhlert. et al, that constitute a higher level of local politicians in self-employed positions and although generally low in numbers, blue-collar workers seem to be more inclined to take political action via local parties. Due to the nature of local parties being closely tied to their specific municipalities, this might favour people that themselves are historically rooted in that municipality. This potentially could result in lower numbers of migrants in local parties, although for example Voerman and Boogers who examined local parties have not been able to confirm this on a grand scale.

However, we will take these thoughts and according to that assemble the following set of assumptions for local parties:

H9: Local parties have a lower percentage of female politicians than the other parties.

H10: Local parties have a different age structure than the other political parties.

H11: Local parties have less politicians that are born outside the municipality than the other parties.

H12: Local parties have more politicians that are self-employed than the other parties.

There is a last angle we will be able to approach here and it is concerned with the cross national differences on the local level between Germany (NRW) and the Netherlands. So, considering the colonial history of the Netherlands article 10 of the "gemeentewet" that grants passive voting rights to non-citizens as long as they have been living in the Netherlands for more than five years, we might

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[62] Kersting 2002, p. 139
[63] Razin 2013, p. 61
[64] Voerman, Boogers 2014, p. 24.
http://www.rug.nl/research/portal/files/15896934/2014_Gerrit_Voerman_BZKKandidaatstelling2014.pdf

assume that migration plays a larger role in Dutch local councils also. Germany on the other hand grants voting rights only to German legal citizens.[65] That assumption is strengthened further by national statistics. According to these statistics, the ratio of natives to foreigners is roughly 5:1 in the Netherlands[66] and 12:1 in Germany (10:1 in NRW)[67]. Making the Netherlands home to as much as two times more foreigners compared to the overall population.[68]

Women are another minority in political circles and it is no other on the local level. Admittedly, since from the 1970s on there has been an increase in efforts to open up politics for women, that until then already had the chance to elect and be elected (since 1919 in the Netherlands, 1949 in Germany), but the rate of women really active in (local) politics was still meagre[69]. Until the 1980 rates of women in politics climbed up towards around 25%.[70] Efforts to get even more women into (local) politics are present both in the Netherlands and in Germany. The Greens and the SPD in Germany compile their candidate lists so that they feature both men and women in equal parts.[71] That however is not the case for all political parties. Nevertheless, we will assume that the share of female councillors has increased and should be above the 1980 rate of around 25%. Although recent findings made by Boogers still show a rather one-sided composition of local councils,[72] favouring white males at the age of around 50.[73]

Also we can find that the median age in the population in the Netherlands[74] is 3-4 years lower than in Germany[75].

On the question of occupation, we find hints for light structural differences for example in the first and second sector, that is still stronger in Germany and the third sector that looks to be stronger in the Netherlands.[76] In line with that it is imaginable that differences exist in the categories of non-employment, self-employment and civil service occupations. However, squeezing that into a hypothesis in line with the others seems not to be feasible and thus we will leave this category out for now and see what the analysis of the data brings.

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[65] § 7 Kommunalwahlgesetz NRW, 1998
[66] Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2017c.
http://statline.cbs.nl/statweb/publication/?vw=t&dm=slnl&pa=37296ned&d1=0-2,8-13,19-21,25-35,52-56,68&d2=0,10,20,30,40,50,60,64-65&hd=151214-1132&hdr=g1&stb=t
[67] Statistisches Bundesamt 2014.
https://www.destatis.de/DE/Methoden/Zensus_/Downloads/1B_EinwohnerzahlNationalitaet.html
[68] Altrock 2008
[69] Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten, 's-Gravenhage 1986, p. 10 ff.
[70] Horstkötter 1990, p. 17 ff.
[71] SPD-Parteivorstand 2014 / Grüne NRW 2012. https://gruene-nrw.de/partei/satzungen-und-co/frauenstatut/
[72] Boogers 2010, p. 61
[73] Boogers 2010, p. 54
[74] statista.com 2010. https://www.statista.com/statistics/276734/median-age-of-the-netherlands-population/
[75] statista.com 2010. https://www.statista.com/statistics/624303/average-age-of-the-population-in-germany/
[76] Baethge, Wilkens 2001, p. 24

Thus we conclude with this last set of hypotheses:

H13: German local politicians are older than Dutch local politicians.

H14: There are more women in Dutch local councils than German councils.

H15: There are more politicians with a foreign birthplace in the Netherlands than in Germany.

Answering these hypotheses should help to learn if there are structural differences, apart from the institutional framework, that distinguish German and Dutch local politics from another.

Additionally, we will widen the basis of data once more and try and get a grip on the concept of representation in local politics. In order to achieve that we will oppose the data we got from the candidate lists with social data reflecting the municipalities as a whole. We will compare the distribution of genders, the age, origin and occupations found in the different municipalities with those of their council members. This way we will come up with insight on how well the population is represented on those special terms.

In order to test and answer the given hypotheses in this chapter socio-demographic data from compulsory candidate lists are to be analysed. Constraints in the gathering of the data had an impact on the outline of this paper and will briefly be addressed in the following chapter.

5. Methodology

The applied method will be a quantitative analysis of the councillors' socio-demographic characteristics that are found in part on the compulsory election lists or has been gathered via personal inquiries, described in the Appendix.

We will perform cross tabulations of the dependent and independent variables each, initially analyse the raw percentages and statistically secure the analysis by adding the calculation of the respective chi-squared values to assess whether statistical connections can be found or not.

On the topic of representation, we will contrast population data with the data found in the respective councils and compare their ratios to one another to get an angle on how well certain groups are represented across the different councils.

5.1. Data collection

Socio-demographic data on local council candidates in the Netherlands and in Germany is supposed to be the basis of this paper. The final selection of subjects in this paper though was derived in one part from the limited availability of it. The initial subject of analysis was to be candidates nominated for the local election for the "gemeenteraad" and "Gemeinderat", the local councils in the Netherlands and Germany.

Data availability in Germany was not an issue in particular.

Prior to the election lists of candidates are assembled and made public through the official journal ("Amtsblatt"). Those lists include data covering full names, age, gender, party affiliation, current job positions and place of birth.

In the Netherlands aggregating a substantial amount of data turned out to be more difficult than expected.

At first, candidate lists are a requirement for elections in the Netherlands, as well as in Germany. Valid candidate lists need to be handed in to the "centraal stembureau" by the applying parties.[77] Making those lists public on the other hand is a matter of local practices and thus a different process in all of the Netherlands. In the process of data gathering for this study entirely different reactions have been encountered. De Hague for example set up an entire homepage dedicated to providing information on all candidates in the local election. The administration in Vaals makes those information public by lying it out in the town hall. Other local administrations were overall hesitant to put out information on candidates with respect to privacy concerns.

The amount of data necessary to put forward into candidate lists in the Netherlands is not as substantial as in Germany. In the Netherlands the needed data covers only names, age, party affiliation and place of residence. Data on job positions and origin is not required for the composition of candidate lists and thus is just not available on a large scale. In addition to that, public availability of these lists also varies. The Hague for example agglomerates this data in whole at the city's homepage[78]. For the analysis at hand only Almelo has made their candidate list available. Other municipality administrations have been hesitant with respect to the personal data protection act, the "wet bescherming persoonsgegevens". Vaals for example made the candidate lists public by putting them out for inspection in the town hall.[79] Interesting at this point is to keep in mind that the act is derived from an EU-guideline, applicable for all EU-Member states. The process of implementation in

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[77] Kieswet, 1989, Art. H 1

[78] Gemeente Den Haag. http://denhaag.allekandidaten.nl/

[79] Gemeente Vaals. http://www.vaals.nl/actueel/nieuws_3639/item/openbare-kennisgeving-zittingen-centraal-stembureau-en-hoofdstembureau_13891.html

this case seems to have resulted in considerably different outcomes regarding Germany and the Netherlands.

In addition to the differentiated and partly insufficient modes of display of the candidate lists; the data collected for the lists has not been as comprehensive as in Germany. Besides the candidates' names only information on gender and age are provided by the Dutch candidate lists. That means that data on the candidates' origins and occupation are not gathered at all in the election process and thus are not available for a broad analysis in this study. That is the main reason for limiting this approach to three Dutch cities and to keep things even, three cities in Germany.

Nevertheless, as an approach to collect at least a portion of the desired data of Dutch local councils, individual contacts have been gathered using social media platforms and party- as well as council-homepages and direct contact with councils, party and municipal administrations. For more than two thirds of all the individuals present on lists of candidates either email addresses, or LinkedIn-profiles or twitter and facebook accounts could have been found and verified. More than 250 candidates have been contacted either via e-mail or direct message via facebook[80].

Unfortunately, social media in general doesn't allow for excessive direct messaging towards "unknown" contacts. And even individual contact via email didn't prove to be effective in acquiring the significant amount of data missing in the lists. All methods combined not even 10% of the contacted persons have provided an answer let alone sent information on the desired data. Again interesting to see is, that most of the answers that actually arrived were from candidates that have managed to be successful in the elections and at that point had been active in local politics. Candidates that only appeared on the lists, but have not been elected, in general didn't answer or in some cases pleaded for not being part of the survey at all. This might be a hint towards the problem of recruiting personnel in the Netherlands that, according to various publications seems to pose more and more problems.[81]

However, as this is just speculation it nevertheless has implications on this paper. In order to cope with the incomplete data available for Dutch municipalities the scope of the paper will be limited to only the elected candidates, the actual councillors.

For those, the desired data was in the majority of cases publicly available or could have been gathered in one of the above described ways.

As a matter of fact, the number of cases decreases heavily and is thus most likely not representative.

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[80] see Appendix
[81] Boogers 2010, pp. 83–86

5.1.1. Independent variables

As independent variables we will first classify the countries as a subject. As we are looking at Germany and the Netherlands the country variable has two manifestations.

The second independent variable is the municipalities' size. Following the classification of the "Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung" there are three different city sizes. City sizes are defined by the number of their inhabitants.

Table 3 - Classification municipality sizes

small-towns	5.000 - 20.000 inhabitants
medium-sized-towns	20.000 - 100.000 inhabitants
large cities	more than 100.000 inhabitants

Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung

In this paper we will be looking at two cities for each category. One in each case is a Dutch and the other one a German city.

The second independent variable is the parties present in the different municipalities. As we are looking at the local level there are different kinds of parties. On the one hand there are those that are equivalently present on other administrative levels. On the other hand, there are strictly local parties, that are only present in the respective municipalities. Those represent the first category of parties. All other parties will be categorized by the "political compass" as well as the "kieskompas" (see Appendix 12.2). These concepts are presented in a coordinate system with an x-axis measuring economic attitudes and ranges from left to right and a y-axis measuring social attitudes ranging from authoritarian to libertarian. All non-local parties have been categorized by the political-compass organization and those findings will be used here. Non-local parties therefore will be considered either as left/libertarian or right/authoritarian. This gives us a total of three different categories with "local" being the third one. Furthermore, we will assess any findings on the question of national differences along the way.

5.1.2. Dependent variables

The dependent variables in this study are age, gender, origin and occupation of the councillors elected in the local elections of 2014 in NRW and the Netherlands.

The age of the candidates can be measured on a metric scale. We could have aimed for the analysis of specific age categories, but with cross tabulations in mind most likely will get bloated tables that

either won't be very comprehensive or won't deliver better results than the analysis of mean values, to which we will stick here.

Gender is a twofold variable that will be categorized as male and female.

Looking at the origin of the candidates, categorization is advised once again. As possible values are every single city on the globe. We will therefore use three different categories, assessing the birthplace in comparison to the city the candidates are politically active in. The three categories range from born in the city in question, to born in the country the city belongs to and lastly a category for all candidates that were born outside the country in question.

Looking at the occupation we encounter similar circumstances as before. Possible values for occupations are numerous, so simplifying the results is advices. However, the public data on the municipalities' populations is structured according to the Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC2008) and thus will be used here, too, for comparability. Categories for unemployed and self-employed councillors will be added to that as those are considered to hold an interesting value in the comparison of councillors as well. This arrangement should enable us furthermore to assess the factor of representation to an extent.

5.2. Coding scheme

The only statistics you can trust are those you falsified yourself, nevertheless we will present some of the coding and structural decisions made while working on the dataset at hand and the additional data used in the representation section by the CBS and through the Census 2011.

5.3. Main data set

Gender and party affiliation

Coding the different variables was not particular challenging for the initial variables, gender and party affiliation, which held no surprises or obscurities.

Age

The date on which the councillors' age has been set was the day of the respective election. If no exact birth date has been provided, the age given in the election lists has been chosen.

Origin

Coding the place of birth held minor complications in two cases:

The first case is a 73 years old German women that was born in Stettin. Since her birthday was in 1931, at this time Stettin was a part of the German Reich and she was therefore categorized as "born in Germany". There is one case of a 68 years old German man, who states to have been born in Dolnik (Schönthal) in the former German Silesia. His birthday is march 11th 1946, well after the Second World War had ended and this part of Silesia had fallen to Poland, thus he has been categorized as "born abroad".

Occupation

Coding the different occupations posed the biggest problems and possibly introduced coding errors and/or ambiguities.

We first defined six different classes for the possible outcomes of occupation. In addition to the four broadest categories of the Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC2008), first and second sector, commercial services and non-commercial services, we defined a category for self-employment and one for those councillors that don't conduct any job-occupation besides their mandate. A tabular description is given in the appendix, chapter 12.3.

Included in the latter category are genuinely unemployed persons, students, pensioners and housewives.

The second category is about self-employment and it naturally includes everyone that stated an occupation as self-employed. Also included were craftsmen that stated a master status, architects, physicians and lawyers.

The third category incorporates agricultural and mining work, also known as the first sector employment. However, there are merely a few cases that qualify for this category and those are all agriculturists.

Category four describes occupations in the production of goods. Put into this category have been occupations like an artist/plastic shaper, a wood mechanic, a diploma chemist or a welder.

Category five and six are reserved for service employees. Category five includes all commercial service workers, the sixth is for non-commercial services.

Examples for category five are software developers, editors, different salaried employees, advisors and managers.

The last category is for civil servants and other types of state near employees like aldermen and other municipal, ministerial or party employees, educational or university staff, medical and military personnel.

5.4. Representation data

The first problem encountered in gathering data on the whole population of the examined municipalities is about finding a single source for as many entities as possible. With the national division introduced in this examination came a natural distinction as no source for population data for Germany and the Netherlands could be found.

For the Dutch data the "Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek" (CBS) has developed to be the goto source.

The CBS provides extensive data on all kinds of statistical features, customizable to various needs, which proved more than useful. shortcomings are still found as some of the data is not very accurate. Most employment related values e.g. are presented not as percentages but as thousandths of actual numbers with only a single decimal digit. That poses problems mostly for values with small amounts and values that were calculated from multiple of those rounded numbers. This is where slight inaccuracies most likely have been introduced. However, those do not nullify the observation as in the end we use only ratios of the calculated percentages and thus we really only need approximations. Missing values in the CBS statistics, especially in the lower counts were in this case more harmful instead.

On the German cities we used statistical data from the "Zensus 2011" that provided similarly structured and sufficiently diverse data on all municipalities in question. Problems lay here in the already mentioned lack of data entries, commonly in the low counting categories. Another difference towards the CBS data was in the presentation of the age related data. Here only 5-year-categories were provided to e.g. calculate average age and similar values. Then again, occupational data had not to be approximated as with the CBS data, but initially existed as percentages.

6. Municipality profiles

In this chapter we will briefly look at the core features of the selected municipalities and address the state of data collection in those.

6.1. The Netherlands

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the collection of data on local council election candidates has posed some unexpected problems. Nevertheless, there have been considerations that were tried to

hold on to while gathering the desired data. The most important one was to find municipalities that reflect a certain spectrum. That means it was tried to include municipalities of different sizes. The number boiled down to three after several inquiries for data where not met. The three municipalities, that provided the most of the desired data, are described in the following sections of this chapter as well as the data basis that has been lain for these municipalities.

6.1.1. The Hague

The Hague (s'Gravenhage) is the third largest city in the Netherlands, located in the province of South Holland and its capital city. The city is a centre for several international as well as Dutch institutions. The international court of justice is located there, as well as European institutions such as Eurojust and Europol. The Hague is also the city where the Dutch Parliament is located and where the king resides. More than 520,000 people live in The Hague and in this study it represents the category of large cities of the Netherlands with a growing population[82]. The municipal council has 45 members, which is the maximum number of local councillors legally possible in the Netherlands.

The full amount of data is available for the councillors of The Hague only for party affiliation, age and gender. 8 out of 45 councillors' occupation is unknown representing a dataset of 82%. For the question of origin there is data from 13 of the 45 councillors, representing only 29% of the total.

6.1.2. Almelo

Almelo is located in the province of Overijssel and represents a medium sized municipality in this study. With over 72,000 inhabitants it qualifies for a council size of 35 members. Which is in fact the fourth largest number of councillors possible according to the regulations of the "gemeentewet" and thus in terms of council size would have to be considered a rather large municipality. Nevertheless, the administration of Almelo was the only one that provided the asked for election lists without hesitation. So in terms of the overall restricted data availability Almelo had to be taken into account.

For Almelo we have full data on all of the 35 councillors' party affiliations, gender and occupation. The age of 24 of the councillors is known, representing 69%, but only six places of birth are known, comprising 17% of the total.

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[82] Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2016.
http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=37230NED&D1=17-18,20&D2=57-60,63-65,67-71,73,75-77,81-82,84-86,88-91,93-97,100-594&D3=l&LA=EN&HDR=T&STB=G1,G2&VW=T

6.1.3. Vaals

Vaals is located in the province of Limburg and has a direct connection to the German city of Aachen. Vaals has just under 10,000 inhabitants and thus a council size of 13 members. The location close to the German-Dutch border has an effect on the town's composition of citizens and the percentage of citizens from Germany is very high with around 25%. In addition to this, Vaals is the first Dutch town that had German politicians active in its local politics. The first German council member in a Dutch city has been elected in 2006 and from then on Vaals has had Germans in its council and therefore taking a continuously active role in local decision making.[83]

The data basis for Vaals is twofold. We have full data on all of the thirteen the councillors' party affiliations, gender and occupation. There is but little known concerning the age and origin of Vaals' councillors with only two items present in the age category (15%) and four of thirteen in the origin category representing 30%.

6.2. Germany (NRW)

In Germany, which in this paper is represented by the federal state of North-Rhine-Westphalia, the situation with regard to data availability is considerably better. As mentioned, earlier data sources for this study are the election lists available through the respective cities' official journal. Those list comprise of information about party affiliation, gender, age, place of birth and occupation. Those data are available for the entirety of all candidates in Münster, Gronau and Winterberg.

6.2.1. Münster

Münster is located in the North of NRW and represents the centre of the "Münsterland". More than 305,000 people live in Münster and the city is considered a centre for public service ("Beamtenstadt")[84]. That is because Münster is home to several administrative institutions like the German pension insurance and the constitutional court for NRW. In this comparison Münster is the counterpart to The Hague, which is a little bigger in terms of population, but has a similar structure of administrative institution., Although The Hague, of course, plays on a different level considered its international importance.

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[83] Wardenbach 2006. https://www.uni-muenster.de/NiederlandeNet/nl-wissen/politik/vertiefung/gemeindewahlen06/deutscher.html
[84] Presseamt Münster 2007. http://www.muenster.de/stadt/presseservice/pressemeldungen/web/frontend/show/671668

6.2.2. Gronau

Gronau is located in the most north-western Part of NRW at the border to the Netherlands and the German federal state of Lower Saxony. Gronau has just about 47,000 inhabitants and is home to the German-Dutch municipal association called EUREGIO.

6.2.3. Winterberg

Winterberg is located on the eastern border of NRW and abutting Hesse. It has a population of nearly 13,000 people and thus a council size of 32 members. It is located in the Rothaar Mountains and well known as a centre for winter sports.

7. Representation in local councils

In this section we will put in contrast our observations on local council members with the respective municipalities' population values. According to the definitions of descriptive representation and its implications on legitimization as shown in chapter 2.1 we will then be able to assess both values for all six municipalities in this study. In order to do this, we will put the individual percentages for each independent variable face to face in the overall population of each municipality and the percentage in the respective councils. In addition to that we will calculate ratios of both values to get an indicator for the quality of representation. According to the suggestions made by international institutions[85] and e.g. presented by Krennerich (see the following paragraph) we set the turning point at ratios of above 0.6 indicating "significant representation". From 0.8 upwards the degree of representation is "balanced", reaching full representation at 1.0. Overrepresentation will be indicated by ratios above 1.2.

7.1. Gender

What can be noted in this part is that the population of all municipalities is divided almost equally between male and female citizens. With one exception the proportion of women is just above 50%. Münster has the highest rate of female citizens with just above 52%.

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[85] Alibegovic et al. 2013, p. 199

Table 4 – Descriptive representation: Gender

	Women (population)	Women (council)	ratio (council/population)
Winterberg	50.15%	3.1%	0.06
Gronau	50.6%	15.0%	0.30
Münster	52.28%	33.3%	0.64
Vaals	50.66%	30.8%	0.61
Almelo	50.31%	22.9%	0.46
The Hague	50.62%	33.3%	0.66
			average: 0.46

Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2016b / Information und Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen Geschäftsbereich Statistik 2014

In contrast to the rather homogenous distribution in the populace, female participation rates in the respective local councils are more diverse. The highest rates are at 33.3% in both Münster and The Hague. The lowest rates are found in two German cities, Gronau with 15% and Winterberg with just 3% female participation. So overall representation of females in local councils seems to be higher in the Netherlands than in Germany, where there is much to be desired regarding two thirds of the cases in this study. Following the definition by Michael Krennerich a "balanced-representation" that grants equally entitled participation of genders in parliamentary decision-making is only achieved at 40%. Krennerich however suggests a base rate of 30-35% of female participation to have a significant effect on the process of decision making.[86] All municipalities thus are below the threshold of "balanced-representation". However, half of them are in the 30-35% area and nevertheless potentially provide meaningful inclusion of women into their local councils. On the other side, three municipalities show a significant lack of female participation and thus are bound to also lack legitimation on the grounds of gender representation to variable extents from medium to very low legitimation. The average ratio is at 0.46, also way below the aspired minimum ratio of 0.66.

7.2. Age

Assessing the age of local councillors with respect to the age of the population in a municipality requires some basic thoughts on the distribution of the subjects first. In order to come to meaningful exclamations on the legitimation and state of representation the average age and the median values are calculated by adding in the ages of every person living in the municipality. The sample thus includes persons under the age of 18 as well as those that are older than 75 years. Those people however don't have access to the council in the first place. The younger share is simply not electable by regulation in the applicable voting laws. People above the age of 75 are generally not considered

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[86] Krennerich, pp. 54–56

to be of "working age" and thus are in most cases not politically active neither. With this in mind we have to accept, that the average values are calculated on slightly different grounds. This choice was made with respect to the nature of the data on the German municipalities. That is why for this comparison only the values for the Dutch municipalities' population have been calculated on individual age information, the German values were taken from aggregated data which does not allow implications on the distribution.

Table 5 – Descriptive representation: age structure

	median age (population)	median age (council)	mean age (population)	mean age (council)	age difference
Winterberg	48.3	50.5	46,1	49,13	3,03
Gronau	43.1	51.5	41,7	50,25	8,55
Münster	39	49	41,1	48,82	7,72
Vaals	49.5	48	47,2	48	0,8
Almelo	40.5	47	40,4	48,57	8,17
The Hague	36.5	41	38,2	41,62	3,42

Information und Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen Geschäftsbereich Statistik 2014 / Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2016b

However, the two age groups of under aged individuals and those above the working age seem to cancel each other out in most of the cases. In The Hague and Almelo, the average age of both groups is 38.7 years and 46.2 years. The total population's averages respectively are at 38.2 and 40.4 years. So there is almost no difference detectable for The Hague and only a slight deviation of around 6 years in Almelo. This is due to the fact that the younger generation outnumbers the older one in these cases by a factor of 3 to 4.

The picture turns out to be completely different in Almelo where the younger generation is not as numerous and only 1.25 times larger than the oldest part of the population. The average age of these people comes down to 86 years in this case. This means a difference of almost 40 years towards the average age values of the population eligible for council positions, thus potentially skewing the distribution.

With that being said, a quick look at the mean and median age values reveals a certain dependency. The Hague has the overall youngest population and also their councillors are the youngest of the sample. Münster, also a city with a rather young populace on the contrary has councillors that up to ten years older according to the median values.

In general, we see that German local councillors are relatively homogenous in age, with an average around 50 years. Their Dutch colleagues are a little younger with values around 48 years in Almelo

and Vaals. The Hague makes the difference here with its councillors being quite young and in average around 41 years old.

We also can see, that the average age of the populace is higher in the small communities whereas this does not apply to the average age of the councillors. Again, The Hague being an exception here.

With respect to descriptive representation we find that it seems to be nearly perfect for the smaller municipalities and is reducing the larger (and thus, seemingly, younger) the community gets. So as we can find small shortcomings in descriptive representation does that imply a lack of legitimation with respect to the age of councillors? This cannot be answered satisfyingly on the grounds of the analysed data. There is no large difference in the average values, but as no councillors under the age of 18 exist, the number of councillors under 30 is most interesting as it could be argued that only these councillors could accurately represent the younger population. A general misrepresentation according to age however, cannot be found here.

7.3. Origin

Analysing the migrant backgrounds of local councillors, we first have to deal with a major setback in the collection of data for this sample. At least for the Dutch part of it, the data is almost not existent. Whereas the data on other independent variables could be gathered quite easily through publicly available information, the question of the respective origins and birthplaces had to be answered individually. Those individual answers were but rather scarce and in its entirety did not qualify for a substantial quantitative analysis. That's why we cannot present usable data on that topic for the Dutch councillors. However, comparing the migrant backgrounds in the overall Dutch population reveals a notable fact. In the chosen municipalities there is a significant difference in the rate of foreigners. Where in Germany the largest share is found in Gronau with almost 14% of the population being born in another country, it is by far outnumbered in the Dutch communities. The lowest value here is held by Almelo with 24.6%. But interestingly Vaals and The Hague both have a rate of almost and just above 50% of people with foreign backgrounds. These rates are most likely not achieved in the local councils in the Dutch cities we look at, but again the data is just not appropriate enough to ground that theory thoroughly.

Table 6 – Descriptive representation: Origins

	foreigners (population)	foreigners (council)	ratio (council/population)
Winterberg	4.57%	0%	0.00
Gronau	13.75%	5%	0.36
Münster	7.98%	6.9%	0.86
Vaals	48.2%	n/a	n/a
Almelo	24.6%	n/a	n/a
The Hague	50.4%	n/a	n/a
			average: 0.41

Wegweiser Kommune 2014 / Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2017d

For the three German municipalities we can constitute a moderate underrepresentation of foreigners in councils from the low average ratio of 0.4.

Applying the concept of descriptive representation to these values leaves us with the impression, that there is no proper representation in the case of Winterberg. In Gronau there is some degree of representation, however the relative number of migrants in the population is almost 3 times larger than in the local council. Only for Münster the rates almost match up, offering the highest level of descriptive representation in this comparison.

The following part is from a Dutch statistical publication and adds some new implications.

One in five inhabitants allochthonous

On January 1st 2010 there were 3.36 million allochthonous inhabitants in the Netherlands. This is close to one in five inhabitants. 1.86 of these were from non-western descent and 1.5 million from western descent. Fifteen years ago migrants from western countries still accounted for the majority of migrants. In 2000 the relation turned upside down. In the provinces of North- and South-Holland, almost 28 percent of the inhabitants were allochthonous. The municipality with the largest share of migrant inhabitants was Amsterdam. Almost half of the inhabitants there came from another country. Two thirds of these were from non-western descent. The municipality with the second largest share of migrant population was Vaals, but in contrast to Amsterdam almost all of the immigrants there were from western descent. The municipalities with the largest share of native inhabitants were Urk and Staphorst with both having a rate of 97 percent native population.
(Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2011, p. 8)

What we can take away from this is that the number of migrants is on the rise in the Netherlands, The Hague is now at the level Amsterdam was on in 2010. And with Vaals we have actually picked a

municipality with one of the largest share of immigrants in the population. It also is the first Dutch city that elected a German into its local council.[87]

Another point to mention is the line that is drawn in Dutch statistics on migration. In that small portion of text and also in the statistics available through the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek there is a clear distinction between western and non-western migrants.

This distinction, on a closer look, seems quite deliberate, but raises the question of the applicability of the concept of descriptive representation in the first place. Beginning with the aforementioned distinction, we will have to ask, how well western migrants would feel being represented by non-western migrants or vice versa. We could take this one even further and ask if a French community would feel represented through say, Italian councillors and so forth. We could split up the groups of migrants easily down towards their nationalities and by that ignore different local heritages.

So despite the fact, that data came back on us on the question of migrants' representation, the concept of descriptive representation itself might be at a point here, where it does not mean too much anymore.

7.4. Occupation

Analysing the rates of self-employment in the population and the councils respectively, brings up a mixed bag of impressions. At first it can be noticed that the numbers in both the smallest municipalities compare quite well. In Winterberg the rate in the council is slightly higher, in Vaals it is slightly smaller. The Hague on the other hand is the only municipality in which the rate of self-employed persons is lower in the council than in the population. This again is countered by Almelo, where the rate is more than doubled in the council. In all other municipalities examined here the rate of self-employed councillors is around 1.5 times higher than in the overall population.

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[87] Wardenbach 2006. https://www.uni-muenster.de/NiederlandeNet/nl-wissen/politik/vertiefung/gemeindewahlen06/deutscher.html

Table 7 – Descriptive representation: Self-employment

	self-employment (working population)	self-employment (councillors)	ratio (council/population)
Winterberg	9.1%	9.4%	1.03
Gronau	9.5%	15.0%	1.58
Münster	12.4%	19.4%	1.56
Vaals	25%	23.1%	0.92
Almelo	14.3%	34.4%	2.41
The Hague	17.5%	13.3%	0.76
			average: 1.38

Information und Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen Geschäftsbereich Statistik 2014 / Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2017a

So concluding this section we can say that there is a tendency to be seen for self-employed people to be active in local politics. As far as descriptive representation goes these are fairly well represented across the board, with an inclination towards overrepresentation on the councillors' end. This is backed up by the average ratio of 1.38 we can say there is a general, moderate to large overrepresentation of self-employed persons in the local councils.

Table 8 – Descriptive representation: Employment in the civil-service-sector

	civil-service empl. (working population)	civil-service empl. (councillors)	ratio (council/population)
Winterberg	25.8%	21.9%	0.85
Gronau	27.5%	47.5%	1.73
Münster	44.2%	33.3%	0.75
Vaals	31.6%	46.2%	1.46
Almelo	37.2%	28.6%	0.77
The Hague	48.9%	65.0%	1.33
			average: 1.15

Information und Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen Geschäftsbereich Statistik 2014 / Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2017d

In this comparison we bring face to face the workers and councillors employed in the non-commercial service sector. We can first notice that there is a general well representation of civil-service employees. Half of the municipalities have a rather balanced situation concerning the

representation through the council with a ratio from 0.76 to 1.03. The other half of the municipalities have a notable overrepresentation of councillors from the non-commercial-service sector compared to the respective populations. Working out a pattern for this distribution is thus not advised for we can see that the highest ratio is found in the mid-sized German city and in both the largest and the smallest Dutch city. Nevertheless, for our sample we can state that the average ratio is at 1.15 showing a light overrepresentation of civil-service employees across all municipalities.

Engaging in local politics thus on general seems to be quite attractive to the civil-service sector confirming the findings already presented here and in previous literature.

What can be noted at this point is that local council work seems to be well suited for people that are either self-employed or part of the civil service sector. This finds expression in the generally high representation ratios calculated here. Both economical groups are either well or overrepresented in the examined municipalities.

All other groups are tendentially underrepresented to different degrees, which we will show in the following paragraphs, that refer mostly to table 9 and the additional tables in section 12.4. of the appendix.

Table 9 – Descriptive representation: councillors: population, all economic sectors

	not employed	self-employed	first sector	second sector	comm. services	non-comm. services
Winterberg	0.47	1.03	1.03	0.46	0.86	0.85
Gronau	0.15	1.58	n/a	0.16	0.63	1.73
Münster	0.60	1.56	n/a	0.12	0.55	0.75
Ø-German M.	0.41	1.39	1.03	0.25	0.68	1.11
Vaals	0.30	0.92	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.46
Almelo	0.38	2.41	0	0.00	0.64	0.77
The Hague	0.45	0.76	0	0.56	0.11	1.33
Ø-Dutch M.	0.38	1.36	0.00	0.28	0.38	1.19
Ø-total	0.39	1.38	0.34	0.26	0.56	1.15

Information und Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen Geschäftsbereich Statistik 2014 / Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2017a. 2017b. 2017c. 2017d

The category into which we sorted a moderate amount of the councillors is the commercial services. In the respective population the rate was around 40% of people working in commercial services.

Three municipalities, Almelo, Gronau and Münster have a rate of councillors occupied in this sector at around 25% equalling a ratio of around 0.6 standing for substantial representation. In Winterberg

the ratio is even higher, scoring 0.86 on representation of commercial service employees. Vaals and The Hague however, score remarkably low results in this category, with 7.7% and 5.0% of their councillors being occupied in this sector. For Vaals the population data was unreliable, but for The Hague it means a substantial underrepresentation, scoring a ratio of just 0,11.

The next category to assess is "Not employed". This one has had its complications regarding coding decisions. The population score has been calculated subtracting the age categories from 0-15 years as it is handled likewise in all statistical sources. This makes sense in the light that under aged councillors are not possible, but leaves out e.g. 16 and 17 year olds in the calculation of representation. Furthermore, this category encompasses not only truly unemployed persons, but also e.g. students, housewives and people with unpaid positions. Having said that, most municipalities' councils comprise around 15% of people from this category. The number is slightly higher in Münster with 19.4% and a lot lower in Gronau with only 5%. The rates in the respective populations are more homogenous, around 33%. Vaals is an exception with 51% of population not partaking in any paid work. Acceptable representation thus is only found in Münster with a score of 0.6, all other municipalities have this category underrepresented with rates of 0.3 to 0.4. Gronau expectably score worst in this, with a ratio of only 0.15. The average score (0.39) indicates an overall underrepresentation of not employed people in local councils.

The least represented economic sectors in this comparison are the classic first and second sector occupations, agricultural and industrial occupations.
Assessing the second sector first, we notice a comparably low overall number of councillors that are occupied in this sector. The highest value is found in Winterberg, where 12.5% of the councillors are actively working in the industry. In all other municipalities the numbers are between 0% and 10%, that is 1-2 councillors respectively. Looking at the second sector employment in the overall population we can see that the highest values are found in the small and mid-sized municipalities. For Vaals we have no reliable data, but The Hague and Münster score the lowest values with 4.5% and 12.1%. This on the other hand means, that the ratio indicating the quality of representation is best in The Hague where on both ends low percentages meet each other and score a ratio of 0.56 in the end. This is followed by Winterberg, where the relatively strong second sector is almost decently represented in the council as well, scoring a ratio of 0.46. All other municipalities are below 0.2 showing a clear lack of representation in these councils. The average ratio of 0.34 for all municipalities underlines this general impression.

The most problematic category was the first sector occupation as absolute numbers here were particularly low. This reflects in the high number of missing values (table 9). Population data was not available in three cases. Almelo and The Hague have agricultural rates of below 1%, but no councillor actually rooted in this sector. Only in Winterberg there is a relatively high number of 3% of the population working in agriculture and in fact the town's council features a councillor of this occupational background, reflecting as perfect representation with a ratio of 1.03. This is why the average ratio for all municipalities is not that abysmally low and ends up at 0.34. Notable in this case is that only the German municipalities have councillors with agricultural background, none were actually found in the Dutch municipalities. Closing this section, we can state that representation of the agricultural sector is not great overall, but the sector itself has shrunken so much that it plays no significant role in neither of the municipalities we examined.

8. Hypotheses testing

In this chapter we will analyse the councillors of said municipalities according to their socio-demographic profiles. This will eventually enable us to answer the hypotheses proposed in chapter 4. The analysis is further structured according to the independent variables "Municipal size" and "Political Orientation" as introduced in chapter 5.1.1.

8.1. Municipal size

In this chapter we will analyse the independent variables with respect to the dependent variable "city size". We will try and assess if the figures change with the respective municipal size and if we can find statistical connections that can be linked to it.

8.1.1. Gender

H2: The bigger the municipality, the more female politicians are present.
The data on gender distribution is the most sufficient, with no missing values at all. And at a first glance the corresponding hypothesis can easily be accepted for all cases present. We find that 11% of all councillors in small municipalities are female. The number rises to 18% in the medium sized municipalities and to 33% in the larger ones.

Calculating statistical independence (Chi²) we find a highly significant probability of dependence of the two variables municipal size and gender with a low contingency of C = 0.2.

Table 10 – Municipal size: Gender distribution

N = 237 // * = α 0.05 / ** = α 0.01 / *** = α 0.001			
size	municipality	male	female
small	Winterberg	96.9% (31)	3.1% (1)
	Vaals	69.2% (9)	30.8% (4)
		88.9% (40) ***	11.1% (5) ***
medium	Gronau	85.0% (34)	15.0% (6)
	Almelo	77.1% (27)	22.9% (8)
		81.3% (61) ***	18.7% (14) ***
large	Münster	66.7% (48)	33.3% (24)
	The Hague	66.7% (30)	33.3% (15)
		66.7% (78) ***	33.3% (39) ***
NL municipalities		71.0% (66)	29.0% (27)
NRW municipalities		78.5% (113)	21.5% (31)

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The picture shifts as we compare the Dutch and German values. On the Dutch side we find 31% of the councillors in the smallest municipality to be female, similar to the rate in The Hague, where 33% of the council is female. The lowest value actually is held by the medium sized Almelo, with its council only seating 23% female councillors. Calculating Chi-squared we can no longer find a statistically significant dependence. H2 is thus only accepted for the German municipalities.

H14: There are more women in Dutch local councils than German councils.
In the German municipalities big discrepancies in the incorporation of female politicians is found. The smallest city only has one female councillor, opposed by 30 male ones. 15% of the mid-sized cities' councils are female and again as in the Netherlands, the biggest city has the largest amount of women participating in local politics, ranging around 33%.
Statistical significance is high in this case contingency is even bigger with a coefficient of 0.3.

Hypothesis 2 can thus only be accepted for the German cities. The Dutch values for female participation in the smallest and the largest city are almost equal, whereas only the middle sized one shows a lower percentage of females, leading to a rejection of Hypothesis 2, while incorporating the Dutch municipalities. Nevertheless, we find a visible difference in the gender distribution in the German and Dutch municipalities, suggesting a slightly more balanced situation in the Netherlands.

8.1.2. Age

H1: The bigger the municipality, the more, young politicians are active.

The alleged link between size and age of the council members turns out not to be validated by the data shown in Table 11. Although it has to be noted, that data for the smallest Dutch city, Vaals leaves much to be desired. For Vaals only 2 of 13 councillors provided their age.

Table 11 – Municipal size: Councillors' age

N = 226							
	municipality	mean	N	standard deviation	median	min	max
small	Winterberg	49.13	32	12.717	50.50	21	68
	Vaals	48.00	(missing: 11) 2	12.728	48.00	39	57
		48.57	34		49.25	21	68
medium	Gronau	50.25	40	9.448	51.50	34	75
	Almelo	48.57	35	13.064	47.00	24	74
		49.41	75		49.25	24	75
large	Münster	48.82	72	12.208	49.00	20	73
	The Hague	41.62	45	9.794	41.00	26	70
		45.22	117		45.00	20	73
NL municipalities		44.74	(missing: 11) 82	11.737	43.00	24	74
NRW municipalities		49.28	144	11.566	49.00	20	75

own inquiry / Kandidatenlisten Kommunalwahl 2014

Nevertheless, the largest municipalities indeed seem to have younger councils. The median age ranges between 49 years in the smaller municipalities and 45 years in the largest. However, the spread is biggest in the Dutch municipalities, where median age is between 47 in Almelo and 41 in The Hague. On the German end the median spreads only from 51 years to 49 years and the oldest council is actually in the mid-sized city. The youngest council still belongs to the largest city. An analysis of variances does not provide significant results either.

Hypothesis 1 can thus not be accepted, as the average councillor's age revolves around just under 50 years, with the only exception of The Hague's council.

Table 12 - Councillors' age and nationality
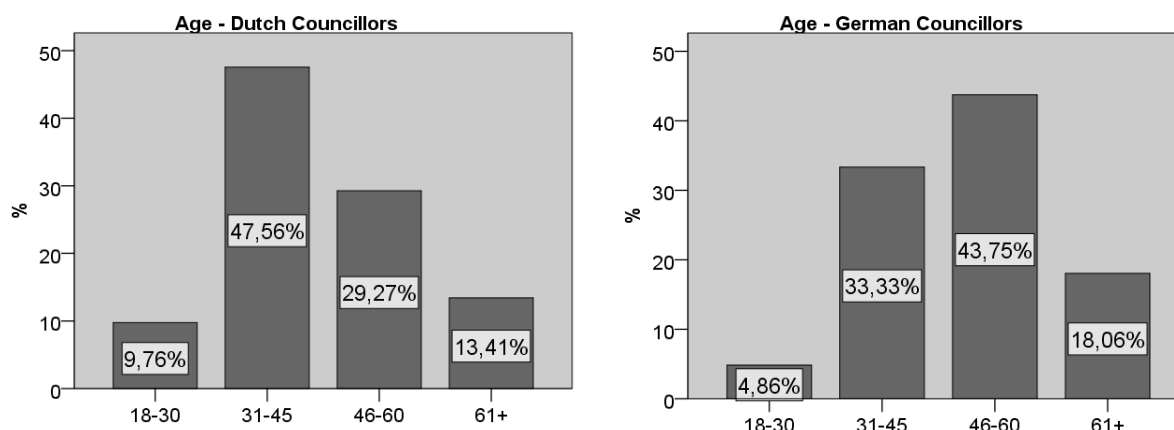
H13: German local politicians are older than Dutch local politicians.

It has already been mentioned that the overall population in Germany is older than the Dutch population. This is reflected in the age of the local politicians, too. The average and median age of the councillors examined here differs by 4.5 and 6 years. However, the outlier here is the council of The Hague which brings the mean down thoroughly for the rest of the Dutch cities. The standard deviation is almost the same for both countries. German politicians occupy both far ends of the age spectrum, accounting for the oldest (75 vs 74) and the youngest (20 vs 24) politicians. But looking at the column-diagrams, we find that actually the percentage of councillors below 30 years of age is twice as large in the Netherlands. Also the middle columns are switched in this display, further indicating the lower overall age of councillors in the Netherlands. Calculating Chi² for the age columns we find a statistically significant relation between nationality and councillors' age.

To close this section off, we cannot find reliable evidence for a general dependence of councillors' age and city size, but there is one between Dutch and German local politicians, confirming hypothesis 13.

8.1.3. Origin

H3: The bigger the municipality the more politicians are born outside its borders.

Assessing the data on the origins of local councillors (Table 13 – Municipal size: Councillors' origins), we have to take a significant lack of information on the Dutch councillors into account, as only about

a quarter of the desired data could have been gathered. Substantial assumptions can hardly be made on these grounds.

For the German cities, where the data is much more consistent, we indeed find a relation between city size and the origin of its politicians. In the smallest municipality three quarters of the councillors were actually born in the municipality. A further 25% are born somewhere else in Germany and none actually are from another country. Those numbers gradually turn around as we look at the other municipalities. The medium sized one has still 60% of its councillors born where they are active in politics. 35% are from somewhere else in Germany and the rate of politicians with a foreign background rises to 5%. In the biggest municipality only 32% of the politicians were actually born there 62.5% are from Germany and the rate of foreign politicians mildly rises towards 7%.

Statistical tests suggest a significant possibility of dependence between municipal size and the origin of councillors.

According to this, Hypothesis 3 can be accepted.

Table 13 – Municipal size: Councillors' origins

N = 144 // * = α 0.05 / ** = α 0.01 / *** = α 0.001				
		place of birth		
size	municipality	municipality	country	abroad
small	Winterberg	56.3% (18)	43.8% (14)	0.0% (0)
	Vaals	25.0% (1)	25.0% (1)	50.0% (2)
		52.8% (19) *	41.7% (15) *	5.6% (2) *
medium	Gronau	60.0% (24)	35.0% (14)	5.0% (2)
	Almelo	83.3% (5)	16.7% (1)	0.0% (0)
		63.0% (29) *	32.6% (15) *	4.3% (2) *
large	Münster	31.9% (23)	62.5% (45)	5.6% (4)
	The Hague	30.8% (4)	46.2% (6)	23.1% (3)
		31.8% (27) *	60.0% (51) *	8.2% (7) *
NL municipalities		43.5% (10) **	34.8% (8) **	21.7% (5) **
NRW municipalities		45.1% (65) **	50.7% (73) **	4.2% (6) **

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8.1.4. Occupation

H4: The bigger the municipality the more politicians are employed in the civil service sector.

Looking at the subject of occupation, the data underlying this study is relatively substantial again with only a handful of missing items. However, the operationalization is to a degree problematic.

Especially on the German side the statements given by the councillors are not always referring to the actual job positions held, but simply state their highest qualification or degree. Most likely this is the case for higher educated councillors. Another point is the composition of the category of non-commercial services, which includes public service officials among other professions such as foundation personnel or health professions. See chapter 5.2 and 12.3 for more detailed information on individual coding decisions.

Table 14 – Municipal size: Councillors' occupations

N = 232 // * = α 0.05 / ** = α 0.01 / *** = α 0.001						
municipality	not employed	self-employed	first sector	second sector	commercial services	non-commercial services
Winterberg	15.6% (5)	9.4% (3)	3.1% (1)	12.5% (4)	37.5% (12)	21.9% (7)
Vaals	15.4% (2)	23.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	7.7% (1)	7.7% (1)	46.2% (6)
small	15.6% (7) *	13.3% (6) *	2.2% (1) *	11.1% (5) *	28.9% (13) *	28.9% (13) *
Gronau	5.0% (2)	15.0% (6)	2.5% (1)	5.0% (2)	25.0% (10)	47.5% (19)
Almelo	14.3% (5)	31.4% (11)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25.7% (9)	28.6% (10)
medium	9.3% (7) *	22.7% (17) *	1.3% (1) *	2.7% (2) *	25.3% (19) *	38.7% (29) *
Münster	19.4% (14)	20.8% (15)	1.4% (1)	1.4% (1)	23.6% (17)	33.3% (24)
The Hague	15.0% (6)	12.5% (5)	0.0% (0)	2.5% (1)	5.0% (2)	65.0% (26)
large	17.9% (20) *	17.9% (20) *	0.9% (1) *	1.8% (2) *	17.0% (19) *	44.6% (50) *
NL municipalities	14.8% (13)	21.6% (19)	0.0% (0)	2.3% (2)	13.6% (12)	47.7% (42)
NRW municipalities	14.6% (21)	16.7% (24)	2.1% (3)	4.9% (7)	27.1% (39)	34.7% (50)

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With that in mind we still can take away a clear picture from the data. And the hypothesis most likely can be accepted. We have 28.9% of public service employees in the small cities, 40% in the medium sized and 46% in the large cities. However, that does only comply with the combined data of both countries. In Germany we find the highest value in the mid-sized city, in the Netherland respectively it is the mid-sized city that scores the lowest value. Besides that, we interestingly find a substantially higher degree of public sector employees in the Netherlands. Compatible to our expectations the rate is highest in The Hague, where governmental institutions are prevalent.

The number of blue-collar workers in councils is expectedly low in Germany and we actually find none in the Netherlands.

8.2. Political orientation

In this chapter we will have a look at the parties present on the local level. For the sake of simplification, we will not look at each individual party, but according to the already made assumptions, at their supposed politically orientation. In line with the assumptions made by the "political compass" we have identified parties in the left/libertarian, right/libertarian and right/authoritarian sector. There were no examples of parties that qualified as left/authoritarian. Local parties are put together into one category. This will not provide most accurate results, but a differentiated look at the numerous local parties cannot be taken here and will be up to further research.

8.2.1. Gender

H5: The more left / libertarian the parties, the more politicians are female.

When comparing gender specifics for the orientation of parties we see more than distinct results. All cases combined we find that the parties categorized as left/libertarian almost achieved a balanced ratio of women and men, while all other parties peak around ~20% of female participation.

Accounting for both countries we can see that women are more active in Dutch politics with a clear decline across the spectrum from left to right. The lowest number of women is present in the local parties, but still the rate never drops below 23%.

German parties are showing more extreme values across the board. While the left/libertarian parties in the cases displayed here achieved a perfect 50% balance the drop-off towards the opposite side of the political spectrum is significant. While the second largest group of women in local politics is held by the right/authoritarian parties, it is not even a fifth of those politicians that are female. In the right/libertarian parties the rate drops below 10% representing only one women in total figures. Politicians organized in local parties are exclusively male in the examined group of German councillors.

However, for both countries combined the numbers show a clear direction. Statistical tests confirm the dependence of both variables. With a highly significant probability of 99.5% there is a connection between party orientation and the distribution of genders across them.

H5 can thus be readily accepted.

Table 15 – Political orientation: Gender distribution

N = 237 // * = α 0.05 / ** = α 0.01 / *** = α 0.001				
	NRW // N = 144		NL // N = 93	
	male	female	male	female
left / libertarian	50.0% (11) **	50.0% (11) **	59.1% (13)	40.9 % (9)
right / libertarian	90.9% (10) **	9.1% (1) **	66.7% (8)	33.3% (4)
right / authoritarian	81.9% (86) **	18.1% (19) **	75.9% (22)	24.1% (7)
local	100.0% (6) **	0.0% (0) **	76.7% (23)	23.3% (7)
	male		female	
all municipalities	75.5% (179)		24.5% (58)	
NL municipalities	71.0% (66)		29.0% (27)	
NRW municipalities	78.5% (113)		21.5% (31)	

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Next we will have a look only at the councillors that are organized in independent local parties. At a first glance we can postulate, that the phenomenon of local parties is more prevalent in the Netherlands than in Germany. Even though the total number of councillors in the Netherlands is only two thirds of the total number of German councillors in this study, the number of councillors that are affiliated with local parties is almost five times higher in the Netherlands. This is partly connected to a particularly successful campaign of the "Haagse Stadspartij" that led to 5 seats in the The Hague council, thus becoming the fourth biggest fraction in that council. The number of different local parties in the Netherlands in general is also particularly higher, with 22 vs. 6 German councillors in the included municipalities.

H9: Local parties have a lower percentage of female politicians than the other parties.

Looking at the rates of females present in either local and other parties, we can see a small difference. While in all other parties combined the rate of female councillors is just above 25%, the rate in the local parties is a little lower at just above 19%. However, the interesting angle again is when we take apart both national values. Only 6 of the total 36 councillors that are organized in a local party are German. Meaning that the number of local councillors is 5 times higher in the Netherlands. This notion is even intensified when we notice, that the overall number of councillors is 1.5 times larger in the German cities. So our impression that local parties play a larger role in the Netherlands is confirmed. But staying at the gender topic we have to notice that out of the 6 local party councillors in the German municipalities actually none are female. So for the German side of

things our hypothesis seems to be to be acceptable, but on the other hand less so for the Dutch municipalities. Here the rate is at 23% which is equal to the other parties in the Netherlands. Looking at the Chi²-values we do not find any significant connection between the party status and the gender of the councillors either.

So in summary, for the test sample we can confirm the hypothesis only for the German parties, but have to keep in mind the lack of statistical relation as well as the relatively small sample that prohibits generalization in this case.

H9 is thus generally not accepted as especially for the Netherlands a large portion of doubt is to be conserved, it could however be accepted for only the German municipalities.

8.2.2. Age

H6: The more left / libertarian the party, the younger the politicians.

Analysing the age of politicians in the different political orientations we don't find large differences at all. The prejudice of the "50-year-old politician" can generally be approved as means and medians indeed revolve around that age. However, combining all the data, the average politicians seems to be a little younger than 50 years, with the exception of the local politicians that are on average 51 years old. Interesting to notice is the lack of young politicians below 30 years in both the right libertarian side of the spectrum as well as in local parties. The youngest politicians are found either in a left/libertarian or a right /authoritarian party. Local parties tend to be frequented by older politicians above 30 years of age for the most part.

An analysis of variances for the average age values does not nearly show a significant dependence between age and the political orientation of local councillors.

Conclusive we can deny a dependence of age and political orientation. Major factors for varying age distributions are most likely to be found elsewhere.

Table 16 – Political orientation: Councillors' age

	mean	N	standard deviation	median	min	max
left / libertarian	45.93	(missing: 1) 43	11.134	46.00	24	70
right / libertarian	48.48	23	13.681	45.00	30	70
right / authoritarian	47.24	(missing: 3) 131	11.726	47.00	20	73
local	51.28	29	11.370	48.00	33	75

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H10: Local parties have an older age structure than the other political parties.

Analysing the age structure of local and non-local parties we will look at the arithmetic means and median age values. A reflection on categorized age values would have been possible, too, but with respect to the relatively low number of actual local-party-councillors, we will refrain from that and include minimum and maximum values instead.

The mean values actually point towards the acceptance of H10, being 4 years larger in the local-parties opposed to the non-local-parties. However, examination of the median values shows a much more equalized distribution with 46 years for all other parties and 48 years for the independent local parties, suggesting that there are less extreme values found in the local-parties. This is strengthened by the observation of minimum values, which show that there are in fact no local-party-members in councils under the age of 33 opposed by 20 years in all other parties. The maximum, again, is almost equal with 74 for non-local parties and 75 years for the local-party councillors.

For the sample at hand we will confirm H10, but keep in mind the small actual numbers and just note that local parties seem not to be a thing for the youngest politicians.

8.2.3. Origin

H7: The more left/libertarian the party, the more politicians are born outside the municipality.

Data for the analysis of Dutch politicians' origins is insufficient and will be left out of the reckoning (Table 17).

However, the German data is complete and suggests a certain dependency between political orientation and place of birth. A fifth of the left/libertarian politicians is born in another country. Opposed by the right/libertarian parties which don't have any councillors of foreign descent and only three percent in the right/authoritarian parties. Local parties in this study also don't have councillors that were born in another country.

It can be noted that most of the local councillors are born in or in the vicinity of their respective municipality. The highest rates of councillors that are born in the municipality they are politically active in are found in the right/authoritarian and local parties. According to that, left and right / libertarian councillors appear to be more mobile as the vast majority of 73% and 82% of them are not born in the same municipality they are politically active in.

We can conclude that right/authoritarian as well as local party politicians are more likely to be native to the respective municipalities. Left/libertarian parties have the highest rates of migrants and the lowest rate of native councillors.

The statistical Chi²-test reveals, with a probability of more than 99.9% that there is a connection between descent and party orientation that according to the contingency values (C=0.387) is fairly strong.

H7 is therefore confirmed.

For the record it also has to be stated that the total figures are clearly in favour for the right/authoritarian parties in this comparison which make up the biggest part of the councillors in total.

Table 17 – Political orientation: Councillors' origins

N = 167 // * = α 0.05 / ** = α 0.01 / *** = α 0.001						
	NRW // N = 144			NL // N = 23 (missing: 70)		
	municipality	country	abroad	municipality	country	abroad
left / libertarian	9.1% (2) ***	72.7% (16) ***	18.2% (4) ***	37.5% (3)	25.0% (2)	37.5% (3)
right / libertarian	18.2% (2) ***	81.8% (9) ***	0.0% (0) ***	50.0% (1)	50.0% (1)	0.0% (0)
right / authoritarian	54.3% (57) ***	43.8% (46) ***	1.9% (2) ***	80.0% (4)	20.0% (1)	0.0% (0)
local	66.7% (4) ***	33.3% (2) ***	0.0% (0) ***	25.0% (2)	50.0% (4)	25.0% (2)

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H11: Local parties have less politicians that are born outside the municipality than the other parties.

Comparing the different kinds of parties with one another shows similarities between the left and right / libertarian parties as well as the right/authoritarian and local parties. The first group recruits most of its councillors from outside the municipality. The latter is strongly rooted in the respective municipalities. Two thirds of the local party politicians actually are born where their political mandate lies. The other third of the local party councillors is from somewhere else in the country and actually none are from foreign descent.

According to this we will clearly have to accept our hypothesis 11.

However, we have to acknowledge that the distribution of councillors across our proclaimed political spectrum is quite skewed. The majority of suspects falls into the category of right/authoritarian leaving not much room for statistically reliable interpretation for all other categories.

H15: There are more politicians with a foreign birthplace in the Netherlands than in Germany.

As already shown, local councillors are strongly rooted in their respective community. Around 45% of all the elected representatives are born in the municipality they are politically active in. That accounts for the Netherlands as well as for Germany. Councillors with a foreign background are rare in Germany, and only account for 5% of the whole. The collected data suggests a four times larger number in the Netherlands, where almost 22% of the councillors were not born in the Netherlands.

However, as initially mentioned, the category of origin is the least answered in all of the data of this study. Only 25% of all Dutch councillors have revealed their provenance. That's why we cannot take the numbers as notably thorough and despite a strong statistical significance we will have to reject H15, due to the lack of reliable data on the Dutch councillors.

8.2.4. Occupation

H8: The more left / libertarian the party, the less politicians are occupied in the public sector.

When it comes to linking the party orientation to the occupation of its members we really can make up a distinct picture (Table 18).

What we initially can see is that the members of local parties are least probable to be occupied in the blue collar or public sector, but are rather prone to be self-employed.

Another point we can carefully make, is that the least of the left/libertarian politicians are either unemployed or self-employed. Rates for these categories are least for left/libertarian parties.

If we look at the figures separated by country, it is interesting to notice that almost half of the Dutch politicians that are not organized in a local party work in the public sector. In Germany the highest rates of public servants are found in left/libertarian and right/authoritarian parties. Local and right/libertarian parties appear to have no public servants at all.

The Chi²-Test although based on low individual numbers in almost half of the cells turns out to be highly significant, suggesting connection between party orientation and occupation. However, this orientation does not fit the formulated hypothesis, H8 is therefore to reject.

H12: Local parties have more politicians that are self-employed than the other parties.

Looking at only the local parties we find that 33.3% of the German and 34.5% of the Dutch councillors are self-employed. Figures that are not nearly achieved by the councillors of most other parties. Only the right/libertarian parties achieve comparable rates of self-employed councillors. For our sample we can thus accept H12 and verify that local parties seem to be more attractive for independent individuals.

Table 18 – Political orientation: Councillors' occupations

* = α 0.05 / ** = α 0.01 / *** = α 0.001						
	NL & NRW // N = 232					
	not employed	self employed	first sector	second sector	commercial services	non-com. services
left / libertarian	7.0% (3) *	9.3% (4) *	0.0% (0) *	2.3% (1) *	20.9% (9) *	60.5% (26) *
right / libertarian	18.2% (4) *	31.8% (7) *	0.0% (0) *	4.5% (1) *	18.2% (4) *	27.3% (6) *
right / authoritarian	14.4% (19) *	15.2% (20) *	2.3% (3) *	4.5% (6) *	23.5% (31) *	40.2% (53) *
local	22.9% (8) *	34.3% (12) *	0.0% (0) *	2.9% (1) *	20.0% (7) *	20.0% (7) *
total	14.7% (34)	18.5% (43)	1.3% (3)	3.9% (9)	22.0% (51)	39.7% (92)

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Assessing the whole picture now, we find that the first and second sector employment does not play a significant role in local councils. There is no significant difference between the different political orientations. Also the distribution of commercial service employees is relatively similar across all parties at around 20%.

Not employed and self-employed councillors are most likely found in local parties, right/libertarian or right/authoritarian parties. Left/libertarian councillors respectively are the smallest group in these occupational sectors.

That on the other hand means that left/libertarian politicians are in large parts occupied in the civil service (non-commercial) sector. On the second place in this category are right /authoritarian politicians.

These findings are backed by an overall statistical significance between political orientation and occupation.

9. Conclusion

In this chapter we will have a condensed look at what we have found out, evaluate the scientific value of said findings and give an outlook towards desirable further research on the topic.

9.1. Main Findings

We will now address the main findings according to the structure established before. From our findings on representation in local councils, to the question of municipality sizes, to political

orientations across local councils and ending with the cross-national approach between the Netherlands and Germany.

9.1.1. Representation in local councils

When it comes to equal representation in local councils we found that there is only one dimension in which the concept experienced certain measures taken to actually achieve balanced rates of representation. This dimension is the distribution of genders in local councils. As we have shown, in fact mostly leftist parties have established a concrete system to incorporate an equal amount of women into local politics. Those measures have had an effect that is largest in the Dutch municipalities featured here. Two of three Dutch municipalities achieve a "significant" level of representation for women. That is the case only for one German municipality. The other two German municipality show a significant lack of women in their local councils to an extent that there is only one woman opposed by 30 male councillors in one of the councils examined.

What can be taken away here is that representation of women in local councils is an actual topic in political circles. And representation is better and more homogenous in the Netherlands. In the German municipalities examined we have more extreme values from virtually no representation to acceptable levels. However, the development in this case has lost its drive compared to the situation of the late 70s and 80s, when female participation rates rose significantly. Since then the situation seems to have stabilized at a level of at most around 33%. In other words, perfect representation of women in local councils seems to have encountered a kind of glass ceiling, that halts the expansion. On the other hand, leftist parties have shown, that equal distribution of genders on party lists does have a positive effect on and up to the level of perfect representation.

Equal representation thus seems to be possible in local councils, but it needs institutionalized support to be realized. Otherwise female participation in local politics is most likely not to exceed the already achieved base levels around 30%.

The question of age representation is not as controversial. In our examined municipalities we find a relatively homogenous ratio of average ages in the respective councils. The councillors are on average around 50 years old, in fact representing the average age of their municipalities quite well. Surely councillors are between 1 and 9 years older than the populations average, but looking at the example of The Hague which has a relatively young populace, we find that the average age of the councillors is also conformingly lower.

For the German municipalities, it can be said, as the typical age of local councillors is kind of "fixed" that representation according to age is best in older communities. The younger the populace on average, the worse is the age representation in local councils, this is backed by the example of Münster which has a relatively young populace, but the council does not show an equal average age. Assessing averages in this case seems not to deliver meaningful results so when looking at age classes (see Table 12) we notice that the amount of councillors below 30 years of age is relatively low. In the Netherlands those councillors make up almost 10% of all councillors, in Germany it is not even 5% of the councillors that are younger than 30. Considering the whole population, we find that this age groups makes up around 30% of the overall populations. So it could be said that in this age column we see a drastic underrepresentation, however as shown in chapter 7.2 this is subject of statistical selection. Should we look at all citizens from the age of 0 onwards or just look at the working population which starts at the age of 15 onwards or is 18 the boundary, representing the age at which citizens are eligible to be part of the council in the first place? Representation according to age is however not a very urgent matter, but considering problems of finding enough candidates for local elections it might be wise to think ahead and make up concepts of incorporating younger people into the process of local decision making.

Representation of people with foreign backgrounds is a mixed bag. First for this analysis only the German cities provided sufficient information on their councillors' origins, so that no point can be made for the Dutch side. For the German municipalities we find a significant lack of representation in two of three cities. Only Münster's council roughly has a rate of foreigners that matches the overall population achieving a ratio that indicates "balanced" representation. Gronau's council on the other hand has some foreign councillors, but it is not enough to even achieve a basic ratio for significant representation. Foreigners in Winterberg are not even slightly represented in their city council, as in fact not a single councillor has a foreign background. This might be due to the fact that passive voting rights are not granted to foreigners that have not acquired a German citizenship and could be remedied by introducing an election system that resembles the Dutch example, which grant passive voting rights after 5 years of residence in the Netherlands. This might also be beneficial with border municipalities such as Vaals or Gronau in mind. As in Gronau's council there is not a single councillor of Dutch descent, in Vaals however, there are by this time already two councillors of German descent.

Representation with respect to the councillors' occupations has roughly three sides. These are either occupational classes that are substantially underrepresented in local councils, or that are

substantially overrepresented. Thirdly, first sector and second sector occupation generally does not play a significant role in the municipalities examined and accordingly it generally doesn't in the councils. Underrepresentation is thus found in the classes of non-employment and commercial services. Overrepresented are self-employed and non-commercial-service employees, in other words public services. This is not unexpected as local council work arguably has substantial time requirements that are not easy to arrange with inflexible 40 hour weeks.

Possibilities to remedy the situation are limited. Either the status of local politicians is elevated towards a regular occupation that does not require another source of income. That however would harm the connection between local council and citizens.

Another possibility is to try and attract more people from the non-employment spectrum. That is in line with the notion of achieving younger councils by attracting younger people as local politicians, but as well as attracting more women, otherwise occupied as housewives.

9.1.2. Municipality Size

By assessing the data according to municipal sizes we have found different outcomes with respect to our initial hypotheses. At first we have to accept that the directional assumption of "the bigger the more…" does not comply with reality most of the times. However, it is safe to say that city sizes to a degree matters when assessing data comparable to that presented here. In other words, the approach taken by some studies to take a bunch of similar cities and assuming relations found there do transcend over to any other kind of municipality. However, we have to admit at this point that the data underlying this study isn't sufficient in any way, too. To really assess connections between city sizes on a grand scale would have required much more data.

With that said, not all our initial hypotheses have had to be neglected. Some on the other hand had to. At first we have to lay aside the notion that councillors' age is in any way connected to city sizes. Across our data it has indeed been proven, that the decades old findings of 50-year-old local politicians still prove to be true at this point in time. Age simply didn't vary that much and especially not according to city sizes.

Then there is the question of gender distribution in local councils and we find a clear picture supporting our hypothesis. Small municipalities had less female councillors than the largest in our comparison. However, dissection the data for nationalities showed, this only was true for the German side of things. In the three Dutch municipalities the rate of female councillors was on a

comparably high level with a lower point in the mid-sized city. So our hypothesis, while only accepted half ways indicated a structural difference between Germany and the Netherlands that might be worth looking into further.

A case where our hypothesis actually seemed to work out is the question of origin. Although Dutch data had to be neglected, the German data showed a gradual incline in the rate of foreign councillors with increasing city size. However, this has no saying for e.g. the state of representation as shown above.

Lastly taking off at representation again we have found an overrepresentation on public service employees in local councils and also our directional hypothesis on these occupations has been confirmed. But again just for all municipalities combined, looking at the municipalities on themselves shows that the directional hypothesis might have to be falsified.

Nevertheless, again we can't generalize any of our assumptions due to the overall lack of exemplary data, but what can for sure be taken away from the random selection of municipalities is that size should be taken into account in political research.

9.1.3. Political Orientation

On the question of gender distribution, we see our assumptions confirmed. The most balanced distribution is achieved by parties of the left which achieve a perfect balance in the German municipalities and 40% of females in the Dutch municipalities. Parties from the right do significantly worse in equalizing their councillors. Worst of all are the German local parties that have no female councillors at all. Again the most extreme values are found in German municipalities and the Dutch make up their part to flatten things out with the lowest rate of female councillors at 23.3%. Nevertheless, the assumed political preferences of women and the measures taken by the left are having a definite effect.

In the age category of age, we can find no evidence of preference according to the political spectrum. Local councillors are of a homogenous average age from left to right, only in the independent local parties we see a slight increase in age. Local parties thus are not genuinely made up from political "rookies" as it seems.

On the topic of we again find our assumptions strengthened. Parties from the left are the least rooted in the actual municipalities. "Homegrown" political support in local councils often is directed towards right/ authoritarian or local parties. Right libertarian party members are more mobile than right/authoritarian politicians, but only in state boundaries. Local politicians with a foreign background are most likely not to be found here, but on the left side of the political spectrum.

Regarding occupations, we again find some political indications around some distinct occupations. The non-commercial sector is strongest in parties of the left and to a lesser degree right/authoritarian parties. Right/libertarian councillors are in the largest part self-employed as well as local party councillors, that are even stronger in this category. Self-employment as well as not being employed is not common among the left, surprisingly. Commercial service, first and second sector employment is equally distributed across the political spectrum.

We can conclude in so far, that political directions overall live up to their expectations.

9.1.4. German vs. Dutch municipalities

 Comparing German and Dutch councils for age, gender, origin and occupation of their councillors reveals more similarities than differences as expected. We find that the age of local councillors is almost the same in all municipalities compared here. We have found an outlier in The Hague which has not only a rather young age structure in its population, but the councillors are younger accordingly.

Also councillors in the German and Dutch cities are distributed similarly across our defined sectors. However Dutch councillors are ahead in self-employment and quite surprisingly even in the non-commercial service sector. German councillors are thus more often occupied in the commercial-service sector and also the first and second sector, which are virtually not existent in the Dutch councils. But the percentages in the latter two sectors are not large in the German municipalities either, never exceeding 5%.

The most striking difference between German and Dutch councils is found in the distribution of male and female councillors. While in the Netherlands female participation in local politics is evenly spread between roughly 20% and 30%, we find a much larger spread in the German councils that ranges from low single digit percentages over 15% in the mid-sized city to 33% in the largest one. So gender representation is seemingly better achieved in the Netherlands.

A comparison of the origin of councillors would have been interesting and presumably shown another field in which we would have thought the Dutch to be ahead. But as of the lack of data on the origins of Dutch councillors, our presumptions will have to be unanswered here.

9.2. Evaluation

We have now had a look at local councils from several different angles. Among others, we have tried and find out if "size matters" in local politics. And even though it would be wishful to put these observations on a broader basis by including more municipalities, we can take away from this that there is much going on in local politics and stark differences are to be assumed not only between cities of the same size but especially when accounting for different sizes. The common scientific strategy of selecting councils of relatively homogenous cities for observation should on these grounds be questioned. For it is obviously seldom possible to convert findings on local councillors from cities around 100.000 inhabitants with those of over a million or under 10.000. This assumption is mainly grounded in the German part of the data as the situation in the Netherlands turned out to have similar values for e.g. female participation or foreigners in local politics in the largest and the smallest city. Nevertheless, accounting for size should be deemed worthwhile.

An example for this is Vaals which is not just another small Dutch city, but has its own distinctive peculiarities - like the vicinity of the German border - that potentially make it stand out from other Dutch cities of that size. However, we are stumbling through the dark here as for this study more data on more small cities is not available.

Discussing available data does not end at this point. While there is very consistent socio-demographic data on all local election candidates in the German cities, on the Dutch side there is not. Neither are there consistent candidate lists publicly available, nor are there compulsory lists of councillors containing more than names, and gender details. Indications on occupation and especially on the origin of Dutch councillors were very hard to come by. In general, these details are not collected systematically and were tried to gather via personal inquiries. This however was just partly successful. On the other hand, details on the German lists were there, but showed a lack of trustworthiness mostly in the occupational column. Many councillors and candidates in German local elections seemed to have stated not an actual occupation, but the highest educational degree instead. A phenomenon that should be subject of investigation on its own.

The other approach that proved less insightful than anticipated was the examination of social-demographics according to political orientation, represented through party affiliation. With the exception of equal gender distribution, that is in fact encouraged only by parties of the left and

leaves much to desire on large parts of the rest of the political spectrum, party affiliation could not be confirmed to have measurable dependencies on other socio-demographic factors.

We could take away from this, that parties don't matter that much on the local level. But if we remind ourselves of the one thing that distinguishes local politics from other tiers of decision making, we have to keep in mind local parties. The landscape of local parties that evolve on various grounds is especially vigorous in the Netherlands. However, for the sake of consistency and simplification we had to treat those like a monolithic entity, which clearly local parties are not. Although this did not matter that much in the German cities, where - typical for North-Rhine-Westphalia – there are but one or two strictly local parties, it had an effect on the Dutch side. Lumping parties that focus on animal rights together with Islamic parties or local protest formations surely obfuscated a differentiated view on the topic.

So although this piece has some flaws, there is still something to be learned from it. What exactly, we will address in the final chapter.

9.3.   On further research

We have started the thesis with a quote: "all politics is local". In a globalizing world this might surely be discussed, however we have found that the local political sphere is worth a look at. Not only do politicians and the people overlap strongly on this level, but political outcomes are experienced best here. In addition to that, political mergers and singular figures spontaneously forming entities of decision making are particularly interesting on a municipality level.

However, the impact of local politics often remains local, too. That does not act in favour of creating much scientific interest as the observable possibilities split up into a multitude of singular cases. So even if we should take away from this that the local level is as diverse as it gets, generalization will always be a scientific objective. Taking that into account, we should advise future researchers on the local level to look at the comparability of different municipalities. A dimension that should be focused on more, is – as shown above - definitely the city size. In the German examples, directional dependencies could have been made out easily. As mentioned before, this could however just be the result of chance. This reservation is strengthened by the fact that the directional dependency didn't show as clearly in the Dutch municipalities. Nevertheless, by looking at the composition of councils from a handful of homogenously large cities does not provide researchers with the ability to make forecasts on e.g. rural politics. For any similar research in the future, broadening the data basis is strongly advised.

As for NRW this is easily achieved by including more of the compulsory candidate lists. Pursuing this approach in the Netherlands should be done in cooperation with either local parties or local administrations. The compilation of data resembling the German lists, is in any case expected to be much more labour intensive.

Local parties are still a blind spot in political research. We have been treating them as a single entity which does reflect reality rather poorly. More meaningful categorization and typology on local parties should be possible, but might prove most interesting in the Netherlands and in other German federal states than NRW.

Most interesting for further research, regarding our set of independent variables, should be first and foremost the gender aspect. Participation of women has risen quickly in the 1970s and 1980s, but seemingly has hit a kind of "glass ceiling" around 30% since then. Trying to find answers to why female participation in spite of thorough attempts to lift it, still falls behind, should be worth the while.

The factor of age seems to be determined at an average of 50 years for local councillors at this point, as our findings almost perfectly resemble previous research from decades ago. Structural reasons grounded in the layout of semi-professional local politics are most likely to kick in here. Accordingly, this is the case for the participation of foreign citizens and the prevalence of certain occupations. The possibilities of introducing change here can and should be grounded on thorough investigations beyond this thesis.

Getting back at our initial train of thought of "all politics being local", there are still ways to go and routes for investigation to pursue – they only have to be trodden.

10.Register of tables

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12. Appendix

12.1. Data collection

Attempts to gather the aspired after data have been taken on in various approaches. After contacting local representatives and (party-) administrations, no satisfying amount of consistent data that fit the desired profile could be aggregated. Therefore, individual inquiries have been sent out to councillors with the request for contribution to the study. The overall response rate was below 10%.

The amount of inquiries is shown in the following table. Examples of the sent inquiries can also be seen beneath.

	Vaals	Almelo	The Hague
e-mails	15	86	62
facebook (dm)	20	34	48

Example e-mail 1:

aanvraag voor wetenschappelijke ondersteuning   Inbox x Bachelorarbeit x

to bcc: D66, bcc: pvda, bcc: vvd, bcc: sp, bcc: groenlinks, bcc: partijvoordedi., bcc: cda, bcc: w.van.soest   May 12

Geachte dames en heren,

ik ben student aan de Universiteit Twente en op de moment bereidt ik mijn bachelor thesis voor.

Voor de thesis zou ik graag kandidaten van de laatste gemeenteraadsverkiezingen in 2014 onderzoeken. Ik zou deze dan vergelijken met kandidaten uit duitse steden.
Ik heb er al lijsten van duitse steden gekregen en ben nu op zoek naar vergelijkbare lijsten van nederlandse steden.

Op deze lijsten er moet als mogelijk de naam, beroep, geboortejaar, geboorteplaats, partij en de uitkomst in de verkiezing staan.

Is het mogelijk zulke lijstjes van uw te verkrijgen of weet uw of en waar deze lijsten te verkrijgen zijn?

Met vriendelijke groet,

Daniel Meyer

Example e-mail 2:

ondersteuning wetenschappelijk onderzoek   Inbox x   Bachelorarbeit x

to bcc: a.timmer, bcc: j.stapel, bcc: l.bolhuis, bcc: mail, bcc: m.wessels, bcc: jorien71, bcc: hzwerink, bcc: r⊡

Jul 5

Geachte kandidaat voor de gemeenteraadsverkiezing 2014,

ik studeer bestuurkunde aan de Universiteiten Twente en Münster en op de moment ben ik bezig met mijn bachelor thesis. Voor dat will ik graag kandidaten van de gemeenteraadsverkiezing 2014 in Duitsland en Nederland vergelijken.

Kandidatengegevens voor duitse steden zijn openbaar op het internet. Maar ik vond dat hetzelfde is niet het geval voor nederlandse steden. Dus will ik u graag verzoeken deze gegevens op vrijwillige basis te verlenen.

Ik ben geinteresseerd aan
    uw geboorteplaats (stad en land)
    en uw beroep / bezigheid op de moment van de verkiezing.

Natuurlijk is de statistisch evaluatie van de gegevens anoniem en namen worden niet openbaar gemaakt door de onderzoek.

Helaas heb ik geen contact gegevens gevonden van een groot deel andere kandidaten. Als het bovendien mogelijk is stur dit mailtje daarom a.u.b door naar andere patij collegas op de kandidatenlijst.

Hartelijk bedankt voor uw coöperatie.

Daniel Meyer

Example facebook direct message:

1 mutual friend: ▓▓▓ ▓▓▓
Worked at D66

Conversation started July 2

Daniel Meyer   7/2, 2:52am
Geachte mevrouw ▓▓▓
ik studeer bestuurkunde aan de Universiteiten en Münster en op de moment ben ik bezig met mijn bachelor thesis. Voor dat will ik graag kandidaten van de gemeenteraadsverkiezing 2014 in Duitsland en Nederland vergelijken.
Kandidatengegevens voor duitse steden zijn openbaar op het internet. Maar ik vond dat hetzelfde is niet het geval voor nederlandse steden.
Dus will ik u graag verzoeken deze gegevens op vrijwillige basis te verlenen.
Ik ben geinteresseerd aan
uw geboorteplaats (stad en land)
en uw beroep / bezigheid op de moment van de verkiezing.
De statistisch evaluatie van de gegevens is anoniem en namen worden niet openbaar gemaakt door de onderzoek.
Stur de antwoord alstublieft graag via facebook of naar daniel.meyer@radioq.de.
Heelemaal bedankt voor uw cooperatie.

Daniel Meyer

12.2. Political compass and Kieskompas

In defining the categorization of the national parties examined in this text, a template proposed by the politicalcompass.org, similar to the "Nolan-chart", has been used. It features four quadrants along two axes. The horizontal axis ranges from left to right and the vertical axis from libertarian to authoritarian. For the Netherlands a similar model by André Krouwel has been adapted that features a similar structure, but its vertical axis is labelled from progressive towards conservative. The first and foremost reason for this is the availability of categorizations for German and Dutch political parties in a comparable manner.

There are however, methodological fallacies regarding the political compass model that should at least be acknowledged at this point.

Since how those measurements in the four-axis chart of the political compass come about, is at least questionable for two major reasons. First the people, responsible for the political compass mostly hide behind a company called Pace News Limited, are not mentioned on the homepage at all and generally hide their identity. Investigations on them show that it might be a project run by two brits, a political journalist and a social history professor. However, neither their personalities nor their methodology is clear at this point. The homepage claims that the underlying information are based on "reports, parliamentary voting records, manifestos and actions that speak louder than words"[88].

12.3. Occupational classification (SIC2008)

The classification used for the occupational analysis is based on the SIC2008 classification of economic activities:

A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	A Agriculture, forestry and fishing
B-F Industry and energy	B Mining and quarrying
	C Manufacturing
	D Electricity and gas supply
	E Water supply and waste management
	F Construction
G-N Commercial services	G Wholesale and retail trade
	H Transportation and storage
	I Accommodation and food serving
	J Information and communication
	K Financial institutions

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[88] Pace News Ltd

	L Renting, buying, selling real estate
	M Other specialised business services
	N Renting and other business support
O-U Noncommercial services	O Public administration and services
	P Education
	Q Health and social work activities
	R Culture, sports and recreation
	S Other service activities

In addition to these categories two additional categories were employed, comprising the following occupations:

not employed	students, pensioners, housewives, unemployed persons
self employed	business proprietors, master craftsmen, lawyers, physicians

12.4. Additional tables: Representation in Local Councils - Occupation

Table 19 - Descriptive Representation: Non Employment

	not employed (population)	not employed (councillors)	ratio (council/population)
Winterberg	33.4%	15.6%	0.47
Gronau	33.2%	5.0%	0.15
Münster	32.6%	19.4%	0.60
Vaals	51.1%	15.4%	0.30
Almelo	37.3%	14.3%	0.38
The Hague	33.5%	15.0%	0.45
			average: 0.39

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Table 20 - Descriptive Representation: First Sector Employment

	first sector (population)	first sector (councillors)	ratio (council/population)
Winterberg	3.0%	3.1%	1.03
Gronau	n/a	2.5%	n/a
Münster	n/a	1.4%	n/a
Vaals	n/a	0.0%	n/a
Almelo	0.1%	0.0%	0
The Hague	0.7%	0.0%	0
			average: 0.34

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Table 21 - Descriptive Representation: Second Sector Employment

	second sector (population)	second sector (councillors)	ratio (council/population)
Winterberg	27.4%	12.5%	0.46
Gronau	32.0%	5.0%	0.16
Münster	12.1%	1.4%	0.12
Vaals	n/a	7.7%	n/a
Almelo	22.7%	0.0%	0.00
The Hague	4.5%	2.5%	0.56
			average: 0.26

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Table 22 -Descriptive Representation: Commercial Service Employment

	commercial services (population)	commercial services (councillors)	ratio (council/population)
Winterberg	43.8%	37.5%	0.86
Gronau	39.7%	25.0%	0.63
Münster	42.9%	23.6%	0.55
Vaals	n/a	7.7%	n/a
Almelo	40.1%	25.7%	0.64
The Hague	46.3%	5.0%	0.11
			average: 0.56

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