

Geographical representation in local government:

Evidence from Danish city councils

Abstract

Geographical representation in political assemblies is based on politicians' affiliation with distinct localities. The paper asks whether such patterns of representation exist and affect politician behaviour on Danish city councils. Using large-scale amalgamations of 239 municipalities into 66 new ones in 2007 and a dataset containing data on 1014 politicians from 225 of the former municipalities, we form expectations about which standing committees politicians would likely join according to the theory of geographical representation. Consistent with the hypotheses, we show that politicians are more likely to join the committee responsible for the policy issues of schools if their former municipalities have a relatively lower population density than the other former municipalities that were amalgamated into a new municipality. The findings suggest that the new municipalities, at least in the short term, may have found it difficult to become homogenous units.

Introduction

It is commonly assumed that the single most important characteristic dividing politicians in Scandinavian city councils is their party affiliation (Blom-Hansen, Monkerud & Sørensen 2006; Manin 1997). A less common assertion is that there is another divide between politicians sitting on different committees (Serritzlew 2003, 329-32; Vabo 2005). The paper asks if in addition to these divisions we should also look for a geographical divide based on city councillors' affiliation with subareas within the municipalities in which they are elected.

Though largely neglected in the established literature on local government, the question is nevertheless important because it relates to a central dilemma in the literature on representation. Are politicians supposed to act in accordance with the interests of the citizens of the whole geographical area in which their political assembly has decision-making power, or are they rather to act in accordance with local interests (Pitkin 1967, 145; Kjær 2000, 245)? One argument is that politicians are bound by the mandate given them by their constituents, and hence, they should do what their constituents want. If politicians' constituents are found in distinct localities they should therefore act in accordance with local interests. On the other hand, Edmund Burke in a famous quotation rejects this argument by emphasizing that politicians ought to serve the will of the people as a whole in order to obtain the general good (Pitkin 1967, 171). Similarly, it may have serious economic consequences if politicians engage in logrolling in order to serve local interests at the expense of the community at large (Hernes 1984, 163).

There are probably at least two reasons that the research question has not been examined systematically until now. First, it may be argued that geographical representation is primarily relevant in political systems characterized by election in single member constituencies, which is for instance the case in elections to the English Parliament as well as to the US Congress (Esaiaasson 1999, 110; Valen, Narud & Hardarson 2000, 107). In comparison, local governments using single district elections is a least likely case to find evidence of geographical representation in the political assembly. However, it is an empirical question whether geographical representation patterns are present in such systems. Second, a thorough investigation of the question requires that politicians' affiliation with distinct localities can be identified, and that there are clear demographic or socioeconomic differences between localities within the same municipality. It is often not possible to meet these requirements if the research object is a political system with single district elections.

We solve these problems by using the recent local government reform in Denmark. In 2007, 239 of Denmark's 271 municipalities were amalgamated into 66 new units. The reform enables us to identify which of the former municipalities the politicians come from, as well as which interests they would tend to serve if they are loyal to a distinct locality. In line with similar research on national assemblies (Adler & Lapinskin 1997, 901-907; Richman 2008, 331), the research question is addressed by looking at the linkage between the affiliation of individual politicians to a former municipality and their committee affiliation in the city council in the new municipality. We suggest that politicians from former municipalities whose schools are in danger of permanent closure are more likely to sit on the schools committee in order to affect the policy on this issue. We elaborate on this claim in the sections below. A new dataset on 1014 city councillors from 225 of the old municipalities is used in the analysis. The paper proceeds with a discussion of the sources of geographical representation and a review of the literature on geographical representation, emphasizing Danish city council research. This is followed by a discussion of the design of the study and the question of how to measure geographical representation. The last sections contain the empirical analysis and the conclusion.

Geographical representation in political assemblies

Geographical affiliation may affect the behaviour of politicians in political assemblies for several reasons. The common argument in the American-centred literature is that politicians focus on representing the interests of the constituencies that voted for them (Adler & Lapinski 1997, 898). In the American context this would mean the constituency in the district that elected the politician. One conspicuous variant of this argument states that politicians are re-election-oriented, and that this very orientation is the reason why they try to act in accordance with the wishes of their constituencies (Mayhew 1974, 16; Fenno 1978). Finally, politicians may have a local identity that

affects how they conceptualize their job. Specifically, they may tend to have more knowledge about problems of particular urgency to their home communities and likewise to have closer relations with people living near their own address (see Putnam (1966) for related arguments about citizens in general). Hence, they may develop preferences for solving problems of importance to their own community, even at the expense of other communities.

In contrast to the American case, the idea that there is a link between geographical affiliation and behaviour has only rarely been applied to European parliaments (see, however, Converse & Pierce 1986; Roth 1996; Esaiasson 1999; Valen, Narud & Hardarson 2000). The reason is probably the diverse institutional settings. Unlike the US Congress, European parliaments are usually characterized by stronger parties, multimember districts, and a variety of proportional representation system. All these institutional characteristics are thought to curb the impact of geographical background on politicians' behaviour because of tight party discipline, and because it may be more difficult for constituents to identify a specific politician as their representative in such systems (Valen, Narud & Hardarson 2000, 107). The only two cross-country studies of the question based on European data found some support for the hypothesis in one case (Valen, Narud & Hardarson 2000), while it was rejected in the other (Esaiasson 1999, 132-3). Thus, it remains an open question whether geographical representation is important outside the US and similar institutional contexts.

With regard to the elections to the Danish city councils every four years, the city councils share all the characteristics mentioned above that, according to theory, are thought to curb the effect of geographical affiliation in national parliaments. In addition to these institutional features, the city councillors are all elected in the same single district, thus rendering the presence of geographical representation rather unlikely. Yet, there is empirical evidence that Danish local politicians do in fact represent and act in accordance with the preferences of subareas within their municipality.

First, some local level parties are named after a distinct locality in their municipality, thereby indicating that they have a special interest in this area (Pedersen 1995, 64; Pilegaard & Bækgaard 2006, 82). Second, case studies have shown that geographical affiliation is actually sometimes important for the behaviour of politicians. For instance, Pedersen (1995) shows that in 1993 politicians in Blaabjerg municipality were very conscious of their affiliation with distinct localities within their municipality and did indeed try to further the interests of these localities, one example being politicians from the least populated areas supporting a proposal to renovate the roads in these areas even though the proposal was made by a competing party (p. 59). Pedersen's study also shows that these localities correspond to municipalities that were amalgamated into Blaabjerg in the first Danish local government reform in 1970 (Pedersen 1995, 64). It seems as if local cultural traditions may live on and impact political life in new municipalities years after amalgamations have taken place (Elklit & Pedersen 1995, 217f). Similarly, case studies on the 2005 elections to the city councils suggest that local party organizations tried to ensure equal representation from different communities represented on the party list (Elklit & Pedersen 2006).

Third, in the only large-scale study of the question in Danish municipalities, 82 percent of the Danish mayors reported that they thought their fellow city councillors contributed in a positive or a very positive way to the demands and interests of local communities (Berg & Kjær 2005, 72). The formulation of the question in this survey is unfortunately rather vague and does not reveal whether community interests are important compared to other interests, what it means to act in accordance with community interests, and whether some politicians are more likely to do so than others. In conclusion, studies on the impact of geographical affiliation on the behaviour of Danish local government politicians are rare and do not contribute systematic evidence on the prevalence of the phenomenon. Yet, there is evidence to suggest that it might actually be of some importance.

The case of the Danish local government reform

Two important questions must be faced studying geographical representation, namely how to link politicians to distinct localities and how to determine which locality characteristics constitute the basis of such patterns of representation. These questions are especially challenging to meet when focusing on local political units. Due to the use of single district elections, politicians' affiliation to distinct localities and the interests of these localities cannot be determined. Unique conditions, however, make the Danish case particularly suitable in this respect. In 2007, Danish local governments experienced major changes in that 239 of the existing municipalities were amalgamated into 66 new ones (Pilegaard & Baekgaard 2006, 83). These amalgamations enable us to determine the localities with which the politicians in the new municipalities are affiliated, namely their former municipalities, as well as the differences between these localities. Elections to the city councils in the new municipalities were already held in November 2005. However, in the transition period from the election in 2005 and until January 2007, the city councils elected in 2001 remained in office, while a number of so-called amalgamation committees, consisting of politicians elected in 2005, were preparing the future amalgamations (Ministry of the Interior 2004, 12f).

The new municipalities were created in different ways. The number of former municipalities that were amalgamated into new units vary greatly, from 2 to 7, and while some new municipalities consist of former municipalities of about the same size, more than 60 percent of the new municipalities contain a former municipality with over 50 % more inhabitants than the amalgamation partner with the second-largest population (Blom-Hansen, Elklit & Serritzlew 2006, 20). However, a common characteristic across municipal borders is that the amalgamations generated a lot of debate with regard to the necessity and possible disadvantages of the reform (see, for instance, Blom-Hansen, Serritzlew & Skjæveland 2004, 16). Up to the municipal election in 2005, it was intensely discussed whether politicians from former relatively large municipalities

would have an advantage over smaller amalgamation partners (Kjær 2007, 134). Figure 1, however, reveals that there is actually a slight tendency that politicians from smaller municipalities are overrepresented on the new city councils as the ratio between the former municipality's share of city councillors in the new city council and the share of inhabitants in the new municipality tend to decline with the population size of the former municipality:

Figure 1 about here

The city councils in the new municipalities comprise between 25 and 31 members. Elections to the city councils are held every four years. Politicians running for election represent parties on the ballot, and the parties are generally thought to discipline their members tightly (Hansen & Ejersbo 2002: 741). Thus, previous research on Danish municipal politics has typically focused on the impact of parties on policy (see, for instance, Pallesen 2004; Blom-Hansen, Monkerud & Sørensen 2006). City councillors are elected proportionally using D'Hondts method. After an election, the parties in the new city council determine the number of standing committees, the number of members in each committee, how tasks are to be distributed among the committees, and who are to be mayor and committee chairmen. In 2007, Danish municipalities have between 2 and 14 standing committees with a mean value of 6.03 (Municipal yearbook 2008; see Baekgaard 2009 for a more detailed description of the Danish committee form of government).

Measuring geographical representation

In addition to the question of how to link politicians to localities, another important issue is how to measure the geographical variations in behaviour across politicians. Previous studies on national parliaments have shown that single analytical measurements of geographical representation are

highly unlikely to cover all relevant aspects of the topic (Achen 1978). Beginning with the classical study by Miller and Stokes (1963), one major tradition is concerned with the question of responsiveness and therefore links politicians' personal views and actions to the preferences of their constituencies. This approach is very demanding with regard to the gathering of data.

Another tradition focuses on the differences in preferences and behaviour between the floor and the committees. In these studies, geographical divergence is measured by looking at differences in constituency characteristics such as cross-district differences in the share of people employed in the agricultural sector in the politicians' home districts and how these characteristics are related to politicians' committee memberships. A central precondition in this tradition is that politicians deliberately self-select to committees based on constituency characteristics (Sprague 2008, 311f). This approach is useful for our purposes for several reasons. First, the committees are in charge of the day-to-day administration of a wide range of services such as public schools, day care, elderly care, roads, social services, and local environmental protection. Geographical representation can therefore be measured by analyzing the extent to which politicians are more likely to sit on committees responsible for policy issues of high salience to their old municipality than would occur in a random distribution among committees.

Second, the city councillors see the standing committees as some of the most important players in the policy-making process. Thus, 61.3 and 59.3 per cent of a sample taken in 2008 and containing answer from 1347 Danish city councillors report that committee chairmen and the majority in standing committees, respectively, have great influence on municipal budgets, while 25.1 per cent state that the committees are so dominant compared to the city council at large that it harms coordination across committee jurisdictions (Baekgaard 2008, 12; 15). The city councillor viewpoints probably constitute a quite realistic description of committee power in Danish city councils. The committees are both independent decision makers and may also have agenda-setting

power as the committee members due to specialization within committees acquire an information advantage over non-members. Thus, the question if committees are in fact representative of the overall views of the floor is probably important for the policy conducted because policy outcomes are likely to differ depending on whether politicians deliberately self-select to committees or not.

Third, it is rather unclear to what extent politicians are able to self-select to their preferred committees in Danish city councils. After an election, committee seats are distributed proportionally between parties, while the within-party distribution is handled internally by each party. Compared to the US Congress (see Congressional Research Service 2003), no written rules exist governing how this internal distribution should take place. However, there are good reasons to believe that the party leaders consider their members' committee preferences when distributing the seats. The success of political leaders very much depends on their fellow party members' satisfaction with the leadership and it does happen - although infrequently - in cases of disagreement with the party line, that Danish city councillors either vote against the party line or change party during the election period (Leach & Wilson 2000, 52; Berg & Kjær 2007, 103-5). On the other hand one can argue that the median politicians have no incentive to let politicians with extreme interests and preferences select to committees where they have an opportunity to skew the policy away from the wishes of the median politician (Krehbiel 1992). Hence, a null finding may reflect that the median politicians carefully take such considerations into account when committee seats are distributed.

Finally, it is possible to estimate which committees politicians likely self-select to. Up to the election in 2005, the topic of public schools was hotly debated, because many people in small municipalities were afraid that their local schools would be closed after the amalgamations. One of the main arguments in favour of amalgamations was indeed the increased possibilities of obtaining economies of scale in the new municipalities by closing small and ineffective service-providing units (Ministry of the Interior 2004, 9). Since such units tend to have relatively few users (Blom-

Hansen 2004), and are typically found in less densely populated areas, that fear seemed valid. For a small local community it is no doubt a problem if the local school is closed because Danish schools are often the centres of cultural life. Schools in numerous small towns function as community centres where for instance lectures and other civic functions are held outside school hours. Hence, without the school the cultural life will tend to perish.

Moreover, school closures mean a loss of local jobs and that families with children will tend to look for somewhere else to live (Danish Technological Institute 2008, 7-9; this report does not, however, find that school closures cause families with children to leave an area). Hence, we expect politicians from former municipalities in which the risk of future school closures were perceived as being relatively high to self-select to the committee responsible for this issue in order to be effective in furthering the interest of their home locality.

Accordingly, the question is how to measure where the risk of school closures is relatively highest. An interesting measure of politicians' desire to sit on a certain committee for geographical reasons is the ratio between the population density in their former municipality and that in the new amalgamated municipality. The reason is that schools are probably more likely to be in danger of closure if they are located in a former municipality with a lower population density than the amalgamation partners because at the outset, densely populated areas are more natural centres for collecting municipal services. We therefore expect a negative correlation on the individual level between the relative population density and the likelihood of sitting on the committee responsible for the school issue. It might be argued that the relative population sizes of the former municipalities compared to those of their amalgamation partners are the more relevant factors. Indeed, many pre-amalgamation discussions concerned the issue of population size (see, for instance, Houlberg 2000; Ministry of the Interior 2004, 10), while the issue of population density was largely ignored. In this investigation, however, the relative population density seems the better

measure because relative population size is not in itself a sufficient indicator of the perceived needs of an old municipality. For example, a former municipality may have a relatively small population size compared to its amalgamation partners. This population may, however, be concentrated within a small area, and it is therefore unlikely that municipal services will be closed because the population necessary to maintain an economically sound system already lives close by, and it will also very likely engender harsh opposition if the politicians choose to do so. The relative population size is nevertheless included as a control in the analyses. Both structural variables appear in natural logarithmic form in the analysis because changes in these variables are expected to affect the likelihood to sit on a committee the most when starting with a small value. The reason is that once municipalities reach a certain relative population size or population density, school closures will only be of marginal importance on the political agenda in the politicians' home municipalities, and further changes in the explanatory variables are therefore likely to have only a marginal effect on the likelihood of a politician sitting on the school committee. Hence, the coefficients in the analysis should be interpreted as the change in the likelihood of sitting on such committees in relation to a relative change in the relative population density and the relative population size (Gujarati 2003, 181).

Analysis

In addition to relative population size, a number of other controls are included in the analyses. First, several individual characteristics are included that may affect politicians' interest in sitting on different committees. It is plausible that younger people, for instance, may be more interested in sitting on the school committee, while older people may be more interested in elderly care issues. Similarly, politicians' choice of committee is probably also dictated by their professional background and membership of a committee working with the same topics in the previous election

period. Such experiences may both reduce the workload of sitting on committees and make the politician in question a more obvious choice for a committee post than other party members. Gender is also included in the analysis because previous investigations show that politicians' spending preferences are affected by their gender (Serritzlew 2003, 337).

Moreover, other individual characteristics may affect politicians' ability to self-select to committees. For instance, a seat on the attractive and important finance committee may render it less likely that a politician seeks a seat on other committees, because it would cause dissatisfaction within the party if one person got all the attractive seats. In addition, politicians with high status within their party are presumably more likely to get the committee seats they want. Three proxies for politician status are included: the share of a party's votes that a politician receives, seniority in the city council, and placement on the ballot. The first two variables are transformed using the natural logarithm because increases in the share of party votes and seniority are expected to have a positive but declining effect on the likelihood that a politician gets a particular committee seat.

Also, politicians from municipalities that were small compared to their amalgamation partners may have been given more committee seats in order to ensure representation from all former municipalities in as many of the new committees as possible. There is empirical evidence that such considerations actually matter in Danish city council politics (Jensen & Kjær 1997, 102f). If a councillor sit on more committees than others, his odds of sitting on a certain committee will also be higher. Hence, we include the number of committee seats of each politician in the model.

Finally, two party and committee characteristics are included in the analysis. The larger the number of committee seats on a committee in relation to the total number of committee seats in a given municipality, the greater the likelihood that a politician becomes a member of the committee purely by chance. Accordingly, a variable denoting the share of a sector committee's seats of the total number of committee seats available is also included. Moreover, it is unclear whether a party's

number of politicians per committee affects the likelihood that its members self-select to certain committees. Hence, a variable is included to account for the ratio between the number of party members and the number of standing committees. Additional analyses show that excluding this variable only change the results marginally. Descriptive data on the explanatory and the dependent variables can be found in the appendix along with a description of data sources.

In order to test the validity of the claim that politicians from less densely populated former municipalities are particularly likely to self-select to committees responsible for schools, separate analyses are also conducted focusing on geographical representation on committees responsible for day care, elderly care or roads, as well as the finance committee. As for the day care committee, day care centres are not important for local cultural life, and alternatives to public day care centres are generally easy to find. Hence, compared to schools day care is not likely to be an important topic in geographical terms compared to schools. In recent years, elderly care has increasingly been carried out as home care, and thus life in the former municipalities is no longer as dependent on elderly care facilities as they used to be. Likewise, roads require maintenance in all municipalities regardless of political convictions and this issue will therefore probably be of about equal concern to all politicians. Finally, the finance committee is far more powerful than all the standing committees and seats on this committee are therefore presumably much coveted. However, there is no reason to believe that the attractiveness of this committee should vary across politicians from different former municipalities. The jurisdiction of each committee was established by collecting the compulsory statutes from all municipalities on the tasks and compositions of their committees.

Table 1 about here

The results reported in Table 1 are largely as expected. Increased relative population density reduces the odds of sitting on the school committee significantly. In other words, politicians from relatively less densely populated former municipalities are more likely to sit on the school committees. Somewhat surprisingly, a similar but less strong effect of relative population density is found with regard to the likelihood of sitting on the committee responsible for the day care issue. One plausible explanation may be that the policy issues of schools and day care are highly interconnected and in many municipalities one single committee is responsible for both policy areas. The relative population density contributes considerably to the explanatory power in both cases as the McFadden R^2 increases by 8.2 percent and 5.1 percent, respectively, when the variable is included in the analyses compared to models from which the variable is excluded. Moreover, we do not find significant effects of the variable on the odds of sitting on the committees responsible for elderly care, and roads, or the finance committee. This finding corroborates the hypothesis that the self-selecting patterns of politicians from less densely populated former municipalities only differ from those of politicians from former municipalities with dense populations with regard to committees responsible for municipal service areas in which municipal amalgamations are perceived as increasing the risk of closures. Moreover, while the relative population density significantly affects the odds of getting a seat on the school and day care committees, no such effect is found with regard to the relative population size. Hence, structural characteristics do seem to be important, but in this case the emphasis should not be on size, which has been used in most other analyses on the effects of the Danish local government reform.

A discussion of alternative explanations

The results reported in Table 1 indicate that there are indeed geographical representation patterns in Danish municipalities. Yet, the results give rise to two related questions that, compared to Table 1,

are addressed in more detail in this section in order to be more precise about the character of these patterns. First, the overrepresentation of politicians from relatively less population dense areas on committees responsible for schools and day care may come about in two ways. Either they have more committee seats than others, or the finding is due to a redistribution process in which politicians from less population dense areas have had to give up other committee seats in return for school and day care committee seats. This question can be answered by analyzing the individual-level effect of the relative population density on the number of committee seats per politician.

Second, the overrepresentation according to theory is caused by politicians systematically self-selecting to the school and day care committees. However, an alternative explanation may be that seats on these committees are unattractive, and that politicians from areas usually in a minority on the city council are not given a choice when committee seats are distributed within parties. This question is somewhat more difficult to answer. If, however, politicians from less dense populated areas are discriminated against, we would expect this finding to crop up much earlier in the political process, that is, when the candidates are nominated. Accordingly, we presume that the individual-level effect of the relative population density on where candidates are placed on the ballot for the municipal election in 2005 may indicate whether some politicians are discriminated against. The results of the analyses are shown in Table 2:

Table 2 about here

Julnes and Mohr (1989) argue that conventional statistical testing focuses on minimizing the risk of type-I errors. But when establishing a no-difference result like the one performed here, a conservative test would in fact require that the level of significance should be raised in order to minimize type-II errors (p. 632). In this case, however, the p-values for the effect of the relative

population density on the dependent variables are very high in both cases. In Model 1, the value is 0.797 and 0.913 in Model 2. These values remain high even if controls are removed from the analysis or others are added. The findings yield two important conclusions. First, there is no evidence that the relative population density affects the number of committee seats per politician. This means that while politicians from less densely populated areas are more likely to sit on the school and day care committees, they are also less likely to sit on other committees. Table 1 showed no significant increases in the odds of sitting on either the finance committee, the roads committee, or the committee for elderly care. The reason may very well be that the underrepresentation of politicians from less densely populated former municipalities is distributed across a wide range of different committees (including, for instance, health care, social services, and culture and sports). Hence, these effects are so small that they do not become significant in our analyses. As shown in Table 1, this finding is supported by the slight but insignificant tendency for increasing odds of sitting on the elderly care, the roads, and the finance committees with increasing relative population density.

Second, the analysis in Model 2 shows that politicians from areas with different relative population densities are equally likely to be placed well on the ballot. To the extent that this result is also valid with regard to the within-party distribution of posts among elected party members, we can state that the greater likelihood of becoming a member of the school and day care committees for politicians from former municipalities with a low relative population density is due to self-selection rather than discrimination. Hence, the findings corroborate the traditional arguments that the distribution of committee seats is a result of deliberate self-selection based on geographical affiliation.

Conclusion

The paper has focused on the manifestation of geographical representation in political assemblies using a system of proportional representation and single district elections. Analyzing the distribution of standing committee seats among Danish city councillors, we find that city councillors from former municipalities with a low relative population density are more likely to sit on committees responsible for the administration of public schools and day care. These findings are largely in accordance with our expectations in that we would expect politicians and citizens from such municipalities to have a strong interest in these matters, especially the issue of schools. Further analyses show that the findings are probably due to politicians deliberately self-selecting to these committees, while giving up seats on other committees. Hence, neither politicians from densely populated former municipalities, nor politicians from municipalities from less densely populated former municipalities are discriminated against because of their geographical affiliation when committee seats are distributed after an election. The tendency to geographical self-selection is just one of many factors that contribute to explaining why councillors sit on certain committees. Yet, the results are fairly strong, bearing in mind that in some of the municipalities a core concern may actually be proportional geographical representation when committee seats are distributed. In this respect, previous research has shown that proportional representation has been an issue in many former municipalities when parties were to select candidates before an election (Jensen & Kjær 1997, 102f). Hence, it seems fair to say that the geographical dimension was important with regard to the distribution of committee seats after the 2005 election.

The findings raise three questions for future research. First, to what extent does the geographical overrepresentation of politicians from less densely populated former municipalities on the schools and day care committees affect policy? In line with the arguments made in this paper, one might expect such committees to be more reluctant to advocate school and day care centre closures than they would be if their members were proportionally representative of the city council. One way to

approach this issue is to investigate whether the school policy in municipalities with highly unrepresentative school committees differs from that of municipalities with representative school committees. Second, from a theoretical perspective, it would be interesting to delve deeper into the underlying causes of geographical overrepresentation. Is it purely caused by re-election oriented politicians, as much of the American literature suggests (Mayhew 1974)? Or is it because politicians are internally motivated to do the best for their home communities? Finally, one might ask whether the geographical dimension is an integral part of Danish city council politics or primarily a result of the municipal amalgamations in 2007. This study has not uncovered certain evidence for long-term persistence of geographical patterns of representation. However, the findings suggest that local politicians are aware of and act in accordance with the interests of their home community, and when compared to the findings in case studies, (Pedersen 1995), such behaviour seems to persist many years after amalgamations have taken place. Hence, geographical affiliation seems to be an important dimension that should be taken into account when studying Danish local government politics.

Appendix

Table 3 about here

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Table 1. The impact of geographical affiliation on committee membership in five committee jurisdiction areas. Logistic regression with cluster robust standard errors^a. Odds ratio.

	Member of committee responsible for:				
	Schools	Day care	Elderly care	Roads	Finance
<i>Individual level characteristics</i>					
Gender (Male = 1)	0.723	0.583	0.540*	3.156**	1.351
Age	0.942**	0.960*	1.023	1.042*	0.993
Education within the sector (Yes = 1)	1.680	0.218*	3.796*	2.430	0.912
Seniority in city council (ln)	0.989	0.812	1.098	1.052	1.325
Member of committee responsible for the issue in 2004 (Yes = 1)	3.909**	3.692**	3.822**	6.832**	3.196**
Member of finance committee	0.396**	0.432**	0.331**	0.383**	--
Number of committee seats	2.251**	2.140**	2.211**	2.478**	1.910**
Share of the party's votes	1.076	0.528	0.431	1.139	3.679
Placement on the ballot (ln)	0.807	0.797	0.903	1.100	0.627*
<i>Party and committee characteristics</i>					
Party seats per standing committee	1.108	1.065	1.049	0.973	1.013
Sector committee seats in percent of total number of committee seats (relative number of committee seats)	1.075	1.088*	1.038	1.110**	1.048
<i>Structural characteristics</i>					
Relative population size (ln)	1.251	1.121	1.061	0.773	1.028
Relative population density (ln)	0.427**	0.539*	1.092	1.198	1.029
N	451	447	450	451	451
Chi ²	82.14**	79.99**	65.29**	109.42**	81.99**
McFadden's R ²	0.196	0.184	0.171	0.232	0.170
McFadden's R ² without relative population density in the model	0.181	0.175	0.170	0.231	0.170

Notes: Entries are odds ratios. Sources: See Table 3 for the sources of each variable.

^a: The standard errors account for clustering between city councillors from the same former municipality. The calculations are based on 182 clusters except for the policy issue of day care, which yields 180 clusters.

Tabel 2. The impact of relative population density on city councilors' total number of committee seats and on their placement on the election ballot. Cluster robust standard errors.^a

	Model 1:	Model 2:
Dependent variable	Number of committee seats	Number on the ballot (ln)
Statistical model	Ordered logistic regression	Ordinary linear regression
Constant		0.480*
Age	-0.014	0.005
Gender (Male = 1)	-0.140	-0.057
Seniority in party	0.010	-0.008*
Number of city councillors	0.066	
Party share of seats	-1.145*	
Placement on ballot (ln)	-0.010	
Share of the party's votes	-1.158**	
Herfindahl's index ^b	-2.928	
Inhabitants in the municipality (100,000's)		-0.511**
Seniority in the city council		-0.030**
Number of politicians from party on the ballot		0.059**
Relative population density	0.077	0.007
Largest VIF-value	2.5	1.7
N	950	955
Chi ²	24.96**	
McFaddens R ²	0.022	
F		71.81**
R ²		0.318

Notes: Entries are regression coefficients. ^a: The standard errors account for clustering between city councillors from the same former municipality. The calculations are based on 225 clusters in both analyses. ^b: Herfindahl's index of fractionalization measures how divided a city council is. High values indicate a city council comprising a few large values, while low values indicate many small parties (Elklit 2005: 45f).

Table 3. Summary statistics on variables used in the analyses.

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	Std.dev.	N	Sources
Gender	0	1	0.742	0.438	1014	Baekgaard (2008)
Age	21	80	54.110	9.552	1007	Baekgaard (2008)
<i>Member of committee 2008:</i>						
- Schools	0	1	0.238	0.426	1014	Municipal yearbook (2008)
- Day care	0	1	0.234	0.423	1014	Municipal yearbook (2008)
- Elderly care	0	1	0.237	0.425	1014	Municipal yearbook (2008)
- Roads	0	1	0.220	0.414	1014	Municipal yearbook (2008)
- Finance	0	1	0.274	0.446	1014	Municipal yearbook (2008)
<i>Education within sector of:</i>						
- Schools	0	1	0.179	0.383	1014	Baekgaard (2008)
- Day care	0	1	0.050	0.219	1014	Baekgaard (2008)
- Elderly care	0	1	0.040	0.197	1014	Baekgaard (2008)
- Roads	0	1	0.019	0.136	1014	Baekgaard (2008)
- Finance	0	1	0.212	0.409	1014	Baekgaard (2008)
Seniority in city council	0	38	10.856	7.867	971	Baekgaard (2008)
<i>Member of committee in 2004:</i>						
- Schools	0	1	0.311	0.463	479	Municipal yearbook (2004)
- Day care	0	1	0.309	0.463	475	Municipal yearbook (2004)
- Elderly care	0	1	0.276	0.448	478	Municipal yearbook (2004)
- Roads	0	1	0.286	0.452	479	Municipal yearbook (2004)
- Finance	0	1	0.493	0.500	479	Municipal yearbook (2004)
Number of committee seats	0	4	1.710	0.682	1014	Municipal yearbook (2008)
Share of party's personal votes	0.003	0.923	0.132	0.173	1014	KMD (2005)
Placement on the ballot	1	32	6.059	5.818	1014	KMD (2005)
Party seats per committee	0	3.75	0.889	0.815	314 ^a	Municipal yearbook (2008)
<i>Relative sector committee seats:</i>						
- Schools	6.422	33.333	14.005	3.410	1014	Municipal yearbook (2008)
- Day care	6.422	33.333	13.956	3.423	1014	Municipal yearbook (2008)
- Elderly care	6.422	33.333	13.558	3.438	1014	Municipal yearbook (2008)
- Roads	6.422	33.333	13.557	3.474	1014	Municipal yearbook (2008)
- Finance	10.092	33.333	17.375	3.792	1014	Municipal yearbook (2008)
Seniority in party	0	52	18.869	11.223	966	Baekgaard (2008)
Number of city councillors	15	31	28.015	2.853	65 ^c	Statistics Denmark (2008)
Herfindahl's index	0.211	0.414	0.315	0.052	65 ^c	Statistics Denmark (2008)
Population size	6939	115415	50074	22010	65 ^c	Statistics Denmark (2008)
Number of politicians from party on the ballot	1	35	18.507	9.093	324 ^a	KMD (2005)
Relative population size	0.055	0.849	0.282	0.183	226 ^b	Municipal yearbook (2004); Ministry of Welfare (2004); (2008).
Relative population density	0.196	7.134	1.087	0.739	226 ^b	Municipal yearbook (2004); Ministry of Welfare (2004); (2008).

Notes: Summary statistics are calculated on the basis of individual data if nothing else is mentioned. ^a: The units are parties in new municipalities. ^b: The units are former municipalities. ^c: The units are new municipalities.