

Democratic Effects of Institutional Reform in Local Government

In 2002 the Dutch national legislator introduced a new Local Government Act in the Netherlands. This new act addressed two issues. First, it tried to improve the democratic accountability in Dutch local government by empowering the council vis-a-vis the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and strengthening underdeveloped control mechanisms that the council can use to hold the Board to account. Second, the legislator also hoped to contribute to the improvement of the representative function of the council. By increasing the responsiveness of councillors to citizens the new legislation hoped to enhance the democratic legitimacy of local government.

In this study it is asked whether the Dutch Local Government Act 2002 was successful. Did it contribute to increased accountability and responsiveness in local government?

This book not only shows that at least in some respects the Dutch act was indeed successful but also provides insight in the selection- and recruitment mechanisms that produced these changes.

ISBN 978 90 365 2874 0

Democratic Effects of Institutional Reform in Local Government

The case of the Dutch Local Government Act 2002

Merel de Groot

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De Groot



UITNODIGING

Voor het bijwonen van de openbare verdediging van het proefschrift

Democratic Effects of Institutional Reform in Local Government

The case of the Dutch Local Government Act 2002

door Merel de Groot

op vrijdag 23 oktober 2009 om 15.00 uur, in zaal 2 van de Spiegel van de Universiteit Twente.

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Democratic Effects of Institutional Reform in Local Government

**The case of the Dutch Local Government Act
2002**

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Democratic Effects of Institutional Reform in Local Government. The case of
the Dutch Local Government Act 2002.

PhD thesis, University of Twente, The Netherlands, 2009.

ISBN: 978 90 365 2874 0

Cover Picture: P.J. de Groot

Printed by: PrintPartners Ipskamp, Enschede, The Netherlands, 2009

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2002**

DISSERTATION

to obtain
the degree of doctor at the University of Twente,
under the authority of the rector magnificus,
prof. dr. H. Brinksma,
on account of the decision of the graduation committee,
to be publicly defended
on Friday 23rd October 2009 at 15.00 hrs

by

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Abbreviations

In alphabetical order:

BMA	Board of Mayor and Aldermen
DET	Decline in Electoral Turnout
ET	Electoral Turnout
LGA	Local Government Act
MAELG	Municipal Assemblies in European Local Governance
PBC	Perceived Behavioural Control
PDG	'Project Duale Gemeenten': a research project by the University of Twente and Partners & Pröpper
PO-fit	Person-Organisation fit
RBV	Resource Based View
REM-model	Resourceful Evaluative Maximising model
SGBO	Research and consulting agency of VNG
SN	Subjective Norm
S&S	Smith and Sasaki
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
UEP	Upper Echelons Perspective
VNG	Association of Dutch Municipalities

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1 Introduction

The end of the twentieth century was a period of local government reforms in many European countries (Kersting and Vetter 2003). Steyvers et al (2005: 11) observe that ‘throughout Europe a wind of political and institutional change seems to be blowing through municipalities’. These reforms are sometimes interpreted as efforts to adapt the political system to changes in the social and political environment (see Fuchs and Klingemann 1995a: 4). The reforms are diverse in nature. At least two important directions can be distinguished. The first direction concerns reforms that broaden the scope for active citizen participation, such as referendums and interactive governance. The second direction entails reforms that improve representative democracy. This dissertation is about efforts to the latter, taken in the Netherlands.

1.1 Developments and problems in local government

Arguments for local government reforms typically refer to a presumed need to adapt to changes in the environment of local government. Before we discuss the reforms it will therefore be useful to review the nature of these developments. These developments refer to several trends that have taken place throughout the Western world (see Denters 2005; Fuchs and Klingemann 1995a: 4, 5; Fuchs and Klingemann 1995b: 438; Kersting and Vetter 2003: 11-12; Denters and Rose 2005b: 256). The developments mainly entail changes in the governing system, but there are also some developments with regard to the citizens.

With respect to changes in the arena of local government, one development is the increasing range of responsibilities and the professionalisation of local government. Some countries by tradition have a broad range of responsibilities (for example the US or Switzerland); other countries have in recent years witnessed a broadening scope of their local governments’ responsibilities (e.g. France, Italy, Poland, and the Netherlands; see Hesse and Sharpe 1990/1991: 612; Ansell and Gingrich 2003; Denters and Rose 2005a; Denters 2005). These

responsibilities mostly relate to personal, client oriented welfare state functions (Hesse and Sharpe 1991: 607).

Other changes that affected the arena of local government are urbanisation, globalisation, and Europeanisation. These developments contributed to an increasingly complex multi-level polity and made it more difficult to draw clear boundary lines with respect to tasks, responsibilities, and actors (Denters and Rose 2005b: 246).

At the same time, in many countries we have witnessed concurrent hollowing out of local government and the rise of quasi private organisations that perform local public responsibilities. This development is also described as the shift from local government to local governance¹ (see John 2001: 174; Denters and Rose 2005b: 261). Kersting and Vetter (2003) describe management reform strategies like outsourcing and privatisation in various European countries² (see also Denters and Rose 2005b: 248-253). Local governments seem to depend more and more on other local and regional organisations for service delivery and policy-making (Denters and Rose 2005b: 253). The exact manifestation of the shift towards governance depends upon the national context in which the shift takes place (Denters and Rose 2005b: 253, 261; see also John 2001).

With regard to changes in the arena of citizens, local governments across Europe are being confronted with increased cynicism of citizens about politicians, parties and political institutions (John 2001: 160; Dalton et al 2003b: 250). Since the beginning of the 1970s – the post-industrialisation period – social scientists like Inglehart (1977) have observed and described changes in people's value orientations: there is a stronger demand for political participation and openness within the political system. In relation to this value shift, changing forms of political participation can be observed (Kuechler and Dalton 1990: 296-298; Fuchs and Klingemann 1995b; Topf 1995a; 1995b). John (2001: 160-161) claims that there is a trend of falling turnout in local elections (see also Denters and Rose 2005b: 256, 257). At the same time, other forms of participation are increasing (Kersting and Vetter 2003: 11-12; Dalton et al 2003a, 2003b). This change might indicate a decline in the importance of voting as a channel of communication between citizens and their representatives (Denters 2005).

These developments can create several problems for local government. The increase of responsibilities for local government and its professionalisation –

trends such as urbanisation, globalisation and Europeanisation – and the shift towards governance (fragmentation and increased external dependencies) makes local government more complex (Hesse and Sharpe 2001: 612). Complexity might result in problems of transparency, accessibility, accountability, and legitimacy. The decrease in local election turnouts can also be seen as a threat for legitimacy of local government. As a result of all these developments ‘it has become not only harder to meet substantive demands, but also harder to realize and protect fundamental values of democratic policymaking’ (Denters and Rose 2005b: 246).

Consequently, local representative democracy faces a dual challenge (Fuchs and Klingemann 1995a: 4). In terms of performance the involvement of citizens was questioned as well as the functioning of the representative democracy. Larsen (2005) locates the need for more visible, accountable and transparent decision-making systems in local government in several European countries (cf. Denters and Rose 2005b: 257). In reaction to this dual challenge countries made efforts to on the one hand broaden the scope for active citizen participation, and on the other hand improve the representative democracy. We are especially interested in the democratic renewals.

1.2 Institutional reform as a solution

In the introduction of this chapter we mentioned that there are two forms of democratic renewals: one that focuses on broadening the scope for active citizen participation, and the other referring to the improvement of the representative democracy. With regards to citizen participation, local governments in many countries have extended their political opportunity structures³ by the introduction of forms of plebiscitary democracy or by forms of consultation or interactive decision-making (Denters and Rose 2005a; see also Dalton et al. 2003a, 2003b). Countries have tried to deal with the developments in various ways; for instance, improving transparency and accountability by using satisfaction surveys, focus groups (such as in Belgium), and citizen juries (in the UK), or by creating user boards (for example Nordic countries), and the adaptation of Citizen Charters (the UK). Even more reforms have tried to involve citizens in the decision-making process of local government by offering more participatory channels; for instance, consultations, processes of co-

decision or co-production and referenda (Denters and Rose 2005b: 257). To improve representative democracy, countries have undertaken a review of the role of the council in local government. As a result countries redefined the role of the local council. The definition of this new role differs for each country. In some countries the role of the council was strengthened (Belgium), while in other countries the powers of the council were marginalised in favour of a directly elected mayor (Italy). In some countries, attempts have been made to ‘reinvoke a traditional division of labour between the council and the executive branch, based on the distinction between policy and politics’ (Denters and Rose 2005b: 260). This has been done in New Zealand, Australia, Nordic countries, Italy, Germany, and Switzerland. In the Netherlands and the UK attempts have been made to redefine the roles of the council and the executive branch: ‘both countries adopted a model in which councillors are supposed to play a double role, being popular representatives on the one hand, while controlling and scrutinizing the local executives on the other’ (Denters and Rose 2005b: 257, 260).

In this research we are interested in reforms related to the improvement of representative democracy, and not in the reforms concerning citizen participation (for a research on this topic see Boedeltje (2009)). The focus of this research is on the improvement of the local representative democracy in the Netherlands (see for evaluation research in other countries for example Stoker et al. (2003) and Olislagers et al. (2008)).

1.3 Institutional reform in the Netherlands

For a long time local government in the Netherlands displayed continuity at the institutional level. Its basic logic was written down in the Constitution of 1848 and the Local Government Act of 1851. Section 1 of the Local Government Act 1851 stated that each municipality was to have a council, a Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BMA) and a mayor. The council was elected every four years by the residents of the municipality. The number of councillors depended on the city size. Aldermen were chosen by the council, and the mayor by the king or queen. Formally the council had the primacy to make (policy) decisions and govern the municipality. The board was there to execute the council’s decisions. Since it was the council’s task to make decisions and the BMA was seen as a mere

‘executive committee’ of the council with little discretion in decision making, strong control mechanisms did not exist. The status of BMA as essentially an executive committee of the council was expressed by the fact that aldermen were member of both the council and the board. In practice, however, as a result of this double role aldermen enjoyed significant influence in the local party and party council groups. Though aldermen were not officially ‘captain of the ship’, they certainly determined the municipal ‘sailing course’ in many cases. This is also referred to as the ‘executive dominance’.

In the Netherlands policy makers and legislators also had to deal with the dual challenge that local government was facing. In the Netherlands, local government reforms first focused on improving service delivery and subsequently on democratic renewals (cf. output versus input legitimacy; Hendriks and Tops 1999). In the eighties the focus was on efficiency and productivity (New Public Management), but at the end of the eighties the New Public Management reforms were criticised: ‘changes were too internally focused and too little attention was given to citizens and society’ (Hendriks and Tops 1999: 137). As a result, more attention was paid to political and administrative reform projects that focused on the relationship between citizens and local government (Gilsing 1994; Depla 1995).

The institutional reforms of local democracy entailed both reforms concerning active citizen involvement (such as new arrangements for interactive decision making and local referendums), and reforms to improve the representative system (such as timing of municipal elections preferential vote). The Dutch institutional reforms try to bring the realm of politics closer to the citizenry and to make it more interesting for the residents (Hendriks and Tops 1999: 138). The first type of reforms tries to incorporate elements of a direct democracy in our representative system, while the second type aims to reinforce the representative democracy (cf. Gilsing 1994: 26)⁴.

Until 2002, local government was structured according to the same principle as stated by the first LGA in 1851. However, over time this structure and the practice of local government encountered problems. Those problems related to both the internal and the external role of councillors. The councillor’s internal role refers to the delegation of responsibilities from the municipal council to the municipal executive (BMA) and is about the controlling and scrutinising function of the council. In the council-board relation, the councillor should act as a scrutiniser. The councillor’s external role refers to the delegation

of responsibilities of citizens to the municipal council and concentrates on the representative function of the council. In the citizen-council relation, the councillor should function as a representative. A problem with regard to the councillor's internal role is that aldermen were also members of the council and as a result had the difficult task of controlling themselves. The executive dominance hollowed out the legislative and executive primacy of the council. Councillors had a strong internal focus: they were mainly occupied with their task in the City Hall and not so much with their task outside the City Hall. Over the years, the socio-political changes in the environment of local government (see section 1.1) exacerbated these problems, putting pressure on the internal and external role of local councillors in the Netherlands.

Between 1851 and 2002, several attempts were made to strengthen the original system. However, over time, there were increasing doubts as to whether adaptations of the traditional system would suffice and more radical reforms were considered.

The new Dutch Local Government Act that was implemented in 2002 can be seen as a major transformation of the institutional structure for local government. The LGA 2002 influences the position of a variety of actors in local government: the council, the board, the system of committees, and the relationship between these different organs. This institutional reform separates the council and the board from each other. The composition, functions and authorities of the council and the board were changed in order to realise a clearer division of powers (and reduce the executive dominance in council matters). The council should define the main goals of the municipality, while the BMA should make more detailed policy decisions. Consequently, it becomes necessary for the council to control the board.

The main goal of this institutional reform was to improve the quality of local government and democracy. More specific goals were to (1) strengthen the position of the council as the most important local political forum, and (2) strengthen the representative function of the council (Explanatory Memorandum 2000-2001). The first goal is the primary goal of the LGA 2002 and relates to the improvement of the internal role of councillors. An additional aim is to reduce the executive dominance in council matters. The second goal is about the improvement of the external role of councillors.

The legislator expected that by implementing the LGA 2002 and introducing a complementary socialisation program councillors could be

enabled and motivated to improve their internal and external performance. By providing councillors with instruments and support to execute their internal and external roles, the performance of both roles should be improved. However, most of the new instruments contribute to the performance of the internal role of councillors. Legislators also tried to change the culture in municipal councils, and in doing so, they hoped that councillors would also become more willing to show the desired behaviour.

1.4 Problem definition and research questions

The introduction of the Dutch Local Government Act 2002 is a good example of an *institutional reform*. Every public or private organisation (or political organ) has an institutional structure. Institutions make clear what actors are prohibited to do and what they are allowed to do in certain situations (Ostrom 2005). In the literature many descriptions of institutions are given (for example, Levi 1990: 405; March and Olsen 1984, 1989; Lowndes and Wilson 2001: 632). In this research we will use the definition of North (1990): institutions are ‘the rules of the game in society’ that ‘define and limit the set of choices of individuals’ (North 1990: 3). In our definition we will limit ourselves to institutional structure in terms of formal elements⁵ (official rules that are written down). Rules can be defined as ‘shared prescriptions (must, must not, or may) that are mutually understood and predictably enforced in particular situations by agents responsible for monitoring conduct and for imposing sanctions’ (Ostrom 1999: 37). Therefore, institutions shape the behaviour of actors and the performance of organisations (Genschel 1997). Changes in institutions are likely to have consequences for the actors’ behaviour and organisations’ performance.

Institutions might change in time unintentionally (evolve in response to changes in the environment), but it is also possible that institutions are intentionally changed by strategic action (Lowndes and Wilson 2001: 632; Goodin 1996). In this research we are interested in the Dutch LGA 2002 as an example of such a deliberate change. An intentional (planned) change in the institutional structure can be used to encourage or constrain specific behaviour (Levi 1990: 406). This implies a two-stage process. First there needs to be a shift in values (at least in the eyes of the legislator): an invalidation of the old

situation and a general idea about the desired change (clarification of new values). In our case, there is a desire to improve local democracy. Second, in order to achieve this, the norms and rules of the game have to be altered (institutional reform). The Dutch LGA 2002 is such an institutional reform. The (new) institutional structure shapes and constrains the individuals' preferences and behaviour (Lowndes and Wilson 2001: 632). This means that by implementing an institutional reform, actors within the institution are encouraged and enabled to show certain types of (desired) behaviour.

Nevertheless, striving to change behaviour by using institutional change is not an easy task. The literature on the effects of institutional reforms provides clear warnings against unrealistic optimism regarding the actual impact of institutional reforms (Denters 2005). Therefore, it is impossible to be sure of the outcomes of an institutional change in advance, and the outcomes rarely satisfy the prior intentions of the initiators (Scharpf 1986; March and Olsen 1989: 65; Lowndes and Wilson 2001: 634). There are some considerable constraints in using institutional change to achieve specific behavioural changes. One problem is that the benefits of institutional change will need some time to be realised (Scharpf 1986; Genschel 1997). The learning costs needed for institutional change may provoke withdrawal. In the literature this is also referred to as 'the constraints of path dependence': what happens today is influenced by the past (North 1990; Putnam et al 1993; Pierson 2000; Lowndes and Wilson 2001: 642). Reinstitutionalisation can be quite difficult: new institutional structures are 'likely to be resisted (or 'hijacked') by those who benefit from existing arrangements or see new rules as hostile to their interests' (Lowndes and Wilson 2001: 643; see Genschel 1997 on 'political constraints').

Therefore, the idea behind institutional reforms might be attractive, but achieving a behavioural change by use of a new institutional structure is not all that easy. Nevertheless, research shows that institutional structures (within which a focal behaviour is situated) can influence the behavioural intentions of actors (see for example the research of Bock et al (2005)).

In this research we want to know if the introduction of the LGA 2002 as an example of institutional reform does indeed influence actors' behaviour and contributes to the quality of local democracy. In more specific terms, the anticipated democratic effects of the LGA 2002 pertain to the roles of the councillor as a representative and a scrutiniser. As described earlier, the LGA

2002 mainly contributes to the performance of the internal role of councillors. Besides this, the LGA 2002 also aims to improve the performance of the external role of councillors. We are interested in the democratic effects for councillors (individual level) as well as for the councils (collective level). We are also interested in explaining the possible occurrence of democratic effects: how can the LGA 2002 engender democratic effects, and which factors influence this relationship? Therefore, our preliminary problem definition is:

What are the democratic effects of the 2002 institutional reform in Dutch local government and how can we explain any such effects?

After discussing our theoretical framework (chapters 2-4) we will be able to formulate a more precise problem definition and specific research questions as well.

1.5 Relevance

The relevance of this research can be summarised by four points. First of all, this research is an evaluation of the LGA 2002: the democratic effects of the Dutch LGA 2002 for the council are studied. Second, this research has a far wider relevance: not only are the problems that the LGA 2002 tries to deal with international, but similar institutional reforms are implemented in other countries as well. Thirdly, and even more generally, this research elaborates on the possible effects of institutional change. In the discussion of this topic we provide both a clear overview of the literature and a thorough application of 'behaviour' and 'organisational change' literature on institutional reforms. Fourthly, the research is also relevant from a methodological point of view. We are able to evaluate the effects of an institutional reform for a longer period of time (usually this is only possible for a short period), and also for a large sample (in contrast to case studies).

1.6 Structure of the book

The second chapter will elaborate on the new Local Government Act: the problems and goals are discussed, as well as the LGA 2002 as a means to solve these problems. The third chapter focuses on the two main concepts of this research: the external and internal role of the council, which we will relate to its responsiveness and accountability tasks. Chapter 4 provides a closer look at the relationship between institutional change and the behaviour of individual councillors. This will be done by using Ajzen and Fishbein's behaviour theory. The methodology and operationalisation of the main concepts are the subjects of chapters 5 and 6. After these chapters, the empirical part of this research is presented. In chapter 7 the implementation of the LGA 2002 is discussed, as well as changes in the council's (and the councillors') attitude(s), behaviour, and perceived executive dominance. In chapter 8 the theoretical (behavioural) model will be tested for four types of behaviour. In the final chapter we will come to a conclusion and answer our research question. A short discussion on the use (and usefulness) of institutional reforms is included as well.

2 The Local Government Act 2002

This study focuses on a new institutional structure for Dutch municipalities. The Local Government Act is the product of a deliberate intervention of goal-seeking agents (Goodin 1996: 25). In this chapter, the goals of these agents (policy makers, legislators) are discussed, as well as the details of the new Local Government Act. The primary aim of the LGA 2002 was to improve the councillor's performance of his internal role. An additional aim was to improve the performance of the external role of the councillors. How the LGA 2002 should improve the performance of both tasks is explained in the 'policy theory' of this institutional reform. The policy theory is comprised of (1) the report of the Royal Commission Elzinga, and (2) the Explanatory Memorandum. The reform policy is comprised of the Local Government Act 2002 (formal rules) and the socialisation program (*VernieuwingsImpuls*).

2.1 Local government before 2002

Before we discuss the LGA 2002, we need to examine the institutional structure of local government before 2002. Berger and Luckmann (1966: 52) describe the importance of this very well:

'Institutions always have a history, of which they are the products. It is impossible to understand an institution adequately without an understanding of the historical process in which it was produced.'

In this book a sharp distinction is made between local government before 2002 (the 'old' institutional structure) and after 2002 (the 'new' institutional structure). In order to understand the situation before 2002 we will discuss the origin of the Dutch LGA.

The most important dates to consider when studying the Local Government Act are 1848 and 1851. In 1848, the Dutch Constitution was renewed, stating amongst other things that the council was the head of the municipality and had

to be directly elected by its residents (Dölle and Elzinga 2004: 18-19). In the next years, the Prime Minister Thorbecke drafted bills for a new Electoral Law and a Local Government Act. In 1851, the first Local Government Act was enacted. The LGA of 1851 laid down the foundations for the contemporary Dutch system of local government. It was mainly based on two principles: first, the direct election¹ of a municipal council² every four years, and second, the legislative and executive primacy of the council in the governance of the local community (Denters 2005; Toonen 1991: 292-297; Dölle and Elzinga 2004: 19-21). The Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BMA) was given the responsibility for executing the council's decisions.

Formally, the council had (undivided) political primacy and functioned as head of the municipality. This means that the council had the authority to make political, legislative and executive decisions and was also accountable for those decisions. The council and board were seen as integrated parts of an organic whole. The relation between the council and the BMA was based on subordination: one organ has most of the authorities, while the powers of the other organ are derived from the 'superior' organ (Elzinga 1989: 224; Derksen 1996: 35).³ The council elected the aldermen from their own ranks, and the council could also dismiss them. The mayor was appointed by central government based on a shortlist drawn up by a committee from the council.⁴

Almost immediately after the introduction of the first Local Government Act in 1851, the relation between the council and the board were problematic; the primacy of the council was merely a fiction. Several problems could be observed: the council was inadequately able to influence or direct the policy of the BMA; councillors of coalition parties had more influence on municipal policy than councillors of opposition parties; and the council was not always able to delegate less important matters to the board, which therefore made the councillors' job too demanding (by hampering the council in performing its main tasks) (Royal Commission Elzinga 2000: 56).

Several attempts were made within the institutional framework of the LGA 1851 to strengthen the position of the council and 'revive' the original idea behind the LGA of 1851. In 1910, the Royal Commission Heemskerk noticed that the exclusive task of the council to govern the municipality was under pressure due to the increasing responsibilities of municipalities. In 1918, the Royal Commission Oppenheim (and Royal Commission Ruys de

Beerenbrouck) came to a similar conclusion and underlined the need to redefine the roles of the council and the board. The commission was of the opinion that shifting certain (governing) authorities of the council to the board would increase the influence of the council because it would increase the overview that the council has over the municipality. However, the commission's proposal did not result in changes in the Local Government Act. In 1931, the Local Government Act was revised; the position of aldermen was strengthened (they were no longer merely assistants to the mayor, but were members of the board together with the mayor), and it was now possible to delegate authorities of the council to the board (within certain limits). After that, no major changes took place for decades. In 1969, the Royal Commission Cals/Donner was asked to serve in an advisory role in a general review of the constitution. The commission underlined again the primacy of the council: the council was the head of the municipality. However, no new measures were proposed; the original system stayed preserved (see Royal Commission Elzinga 2000: 45-61). In 1974, the Commission Merx (established in 1972) formulated an advice on the position of local councillors. The position of the council as head of the municipality should be reinforced, not by radical formal changes, but by underlining certain aspects of the councillor's job. The council should be more involved in the decision-making process (making the process more transparent and systematic), by adopting more strategic and integral procedures, and by delegating tasks of the council to the board (so that the council could focus on the formulation of the main policy principles and guidelines) (Commission Merx 1974). After several long discussions, the constitution was finally revised in 1983. However, except for a few changes affecting local government (for instance, the appointment of the mayor) the original system at the local level remained intact (Dölle and Elzinga 2004). In 1994, government tried to revitalize the traditional model and strengthen the position of the council and its members by reviewing the Local Government Act (started in 1992). In this revision, the position of the council was strengthened by giving the council the task of formulating policy principles and guidelines. However, there were no fundamental changes, and the structure of the LGA (as stated in the LGA 1851) remained more or less the same (Dölle and Elzinga 2004: 33-48).

Though the Local Government Act got through some general changes, the foundation of the system was preserved: the council still had legislative and

executive primacy (Dölle and Elzinga 2004: 24-27). In the next section, we will see how this theory differed from actual practices.

2.2 Developments

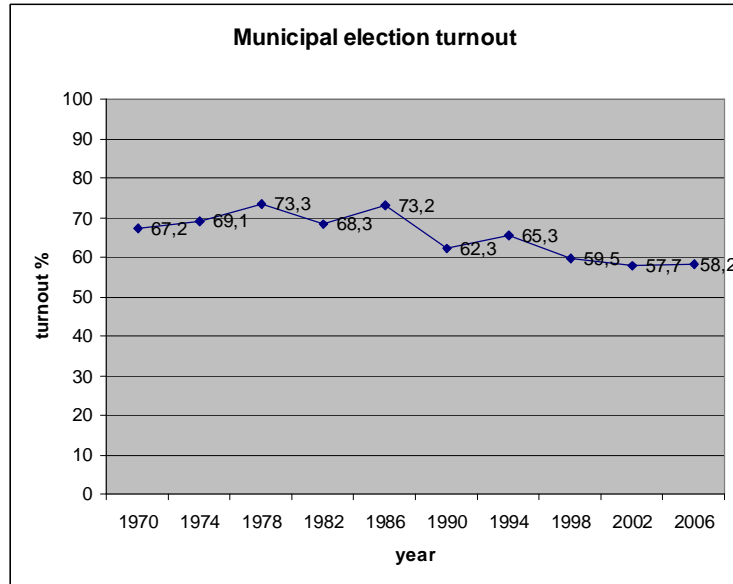
Institutions change in response to their environments. They change when ‘citizens and leaders alike come to perceive that the institutions designed to serve them are failing to do so’ (Simeon 2001: 145). In chapter one, we discussed several international trends that put pressure on local governments. In this section, we will concentrate on developments that influenced the local government in the Netherlands. We can distinguish between developments that have had an influence on the performance of councillors in their external activities, and developments that have had an influence on their performance in their internal activities. We will examine developments affecting the relation between citizens and the council, and developments affecting the relation between the council and the board (see Figure 2.1).

There are several developments that influence the councillor’s performance in the execution of his external activities. One trend that needs to be mentioned here is the *emancipation of citizens* who no longer need the council to voice their opinions but who can often speak for themselves. Citizens also have new wishes and demands concerning topics such as political participation and the content of political themes (Koole 1996: 173-174). Since the 1960s, improvements in communication and education have generated the rise of more critical citizens. Citizens began to freely call attention to and question the under-performance of the political system, in particular the core institutions of representative democracy (Norris 1999: 26-27, 269; see also Fuchs and Klingemann 1995a; 1995b; Denters et al 2005). Since that era to the present time, citizens have expressed their demands for direct-democratic changes. In other words, citizens are better able to get involved in political decision making, and furthermore, they want to get involved (cf. Boedeltje 2009).

In relation to this development, there is a change in *participation channels*. The turnout at local elections is decreasing (see Figure 2.1) and at the same time there is an increase in (the use of) new participation instruments (Royal Commission Elzinga 2000). Starting in the 1960s, citizens have frequently participated in demonstrations and protests, and from the 1970s on, new

participation channels such as hearings and participatory meetings have been used (Boedeltje 2009). In the more recent past, other forms of participation have been developed, such as interactive decision making processes, local referenda, and citizen juries.

Figure 2.1: Election turnout in Dutch municipal elections



Source: Netherlands Statistics

A third development that might influence the relation between citizens and the council is the transformed *role of political parties* and a decrease in *political party members* (Royal Commission Elzinga 2000). With regard to the new role of political parties, there has been a rise in local parties, and an increase in electoral support for non-traditional and protest parties. Looked at another way, there has been declining support for established political parties at the local level (Gilsing 1994). After the Second World War, local parties occupied around 20 percent of all council seats.⁵ The influence of the local parties decreased in the 1960s (a trend that continued during the 1970s and 1980s) because of secularisation and an increase in the scale of municipalities (national parties were better able to get a share in these municipalities, and thus the electoral threshold was increased) (Boogers et al 2006). Starting from the 1990s, the influence of local parties strongly increased: the number of votes on

local parties increased from 13,3% in 1990 to 26,3% in 2002 (the average number of local parties in the municipal elections increased from 1.3 in 1990 to 1.7 in 2002) (Boogers et al 2006). At the same time, the number of political (national) party members decreased: in 1948 this number was 755.167, in 2002 290.488. During this time, the size of the electorate was more than doubled (Voerman and Van Schuur 2009).

There were several other developments affecting the councillors' performance in the execution of their internal activities. A first important development that needs to be mentioned was the increase in *responsibilities* of the local government over the years. Initially, in 1851, the main tasks of local government concerned the infrastructure, public safety and public hygiene. However, industrialisation, population growth, and urgent social problems made new policy necessary in areas such as education, health care and public housing. The rise of the welfare state and the prominent role of municipalities in enabling that rise, which took place amidst the growing complexity of policy intervention and in an increasingly complex society, resulted in an extension of municipal tasks in general (Denters et al 2005).

Another (related) development that put pressure on the councillor's performance of internal activities was the call for the *professionalisation* of the councillor's job: 'the increasing responsibilities of local government and the growing complexity of public policymaking made the job of a councillor much more demanding both in time needed and the skills' (Denters et al 2005: 21). A good example of the trend towards professionalisation of the council was the enormous growth of the local civil service. Although cutbacks and privatisations led to a reduction, the number of civil servants at the local level in 1999 was still incredibly high compared to 1899, respectively 175.000 and 24.700 (Van der Meer en Roborgh 1993: 77; Ministry of the Interior 2002). However, being a councillor remains a part-time job⁶. Consequently, councillors operate as 'diligent amateurs in an increasingly professionalized world' (Denters 2005: 423).

The increase in responsibilities and professionalisation were also affected by the *increasing scale* of municipalities due to population growth and national amalgamation policies. The average number of inhabitants in a municipality increased between 1905 and 2002 from 5.000 to 32.469 (Netherlands Statistics). Especially from the 1960s onward, municipal size increased. In addition to this trend, the number of municipalities decreased because of amalgamation

policies. In 1905, there were 1121 municipalities, but in 2002 there were ‘only’ 496. These developments put even more pressure on local councils for councilors to fulfill their responsibilities with greater professionalism.

A fourth development that influenced changes in the councillor’s performance of his role, mainly in his internal activities, was the *shift from government to governance*: ‘from a model where decisions are made by a central authority to another where fragmentation and pluralism turn decision making into an exercise in influence and relation’ (Brugué and Vallès 2005: 222). Besides leaving its marks at the national level of government, this trend also affected the local level⁷ (e.g. John 2001; Stoker 2004; Denters and Rose 2005a/2005b; Denters 2005).

A consequence of the trends affecting the relation between the council and the board (for instance, the trend toward professionalisation) was a *shift of power* of the council vis-à-vis the executive branch. Even though the council had legislative and executive primacy according to the LGA of 1851, in practice the council had a far less prominent role, and the board was the centre of local power⁸ (Ringeling 1989: 115; Denters and De Jong 1992; Gilsing 1994: 8; Derksen 1996: 45; Denters 2005). ‘Because of its political weight, its information advantage, its access to all relevant municipal decision-making arenas and its central position therein, and last but not least the professional support of its staff, relations between the board and ordinary councillors were typically heavily tilted in favour of the former’ (Denters 2005: 425, see also Derksen 1996). National government contributed to the executive dominance by its inclination to bypass the council in favor of the BMA. This bypass was done in several ways. First, municipal tasks were increasingly restricted to the implementation of national programs. These delegated responsibilities were mainly given to the board rather than to the council, thereby eroding the primacy of the council in executive matters. Another bypass took place in the way municipal financing was handled. Since 1929, the national government had financed municipalities using nationally raised taxes, thereby putting constraints on the council’s money distribution. As a result, the power of councillors to guide the board was substantially reduced (Derksen 1996: 45; Denters et al 2005).

2.3 Two main problems

Due to these developments, local government was seen by the national legislator as an institution with many problems. In this section, we will discuss these problems by relating them to the external and internal relations of the council. The perception and problem definition of the Royal Commission Elzinga (2000) will be discussed. Their problem definition has been adopted by the legislator (see section 2.4).

A first problem is connected with the emancipation of citizens, the shift in participation channels, and the changing role of political parties. These developments affected the relation between the council and citizens and may have resulted in a *decrease in the level of legitimacy* (Fuchs and Klingeman 1995b; cf. Boedeltje 2009). Citizens put more pressure on local government, and at the same time, the representative system showed some deficiencies: turnout at local elections was decreasing along with membership in political parties. As Rallings and Thrasher noted concerning low electoral turnout, ‘local councillors find it difficult to argue that they have a strong electoral mandate when they have been elected by only a small minority of the adult population’ (1997: 46). Scientists, politicians and journalists had different opinions about the reason(s)⁹ why there was such low turnout at the municipal elections. However, this low turnout created the feeling that there was a legitimacy problem, and the representative local democracy was challenged (Denters et al 2005). The declining profile of political parties also put pressure on the relations between the citizens and the council, because political parties have an important function in representative democracy (Royal Commission Elzinga 2000). In addition to this, the Royal Commission Elzinga describes that because of the unclear role division between the council and the board, and the entanglement of their functions, the recognisability of local government was low for citizens. Overall, these developments resulted in a local government that was considered less accessible for citizens (Boedeltje 2009). The level of legitimacy was thought to be decreasing (at least according to the legislator).

A second problem had to do with the relation between the council and the board. The increase in responsibilities, the need for professionalisation of councillors, and the shift from government to governance eroded the traditional model and its emphasis on the *primacy of the council* (Gilsing 1994: 8). Ansell and Gingrich (2003) explain that such decentralisation, or the increase of

responsibilities for local government, may 'diffuse responsibility, decrease the lines of accountability, and create complexity that decreases the transparency of the process' (2003: 161). The professionalisation of the job 'tended to erode the political accountability of the councillors to their constituents' (Denters et al 2005: 22). Furthermore, the shift from government to governance always raises the issue of securing transparency and democratic accountability. It implies more complex decision making; therefore, it is harder for representatives to control policy decisions and more difficult for citizens (or interest groups) to hold officials responsible for public policy making and public service delivery. Lines of command and control are diffuse, which makes the decision making unclear for citizens; they are left wondering who makes decisions about what, and who is ultimately responsible? (John 2001: 16). The shift towards governance 'puts pressure on the principle of local authorities as general-purpose governments and further erodes the assumed primacy of the council in the governance of the local community' (Denters 2005: 426).

Besides several trends that put pressure on the primacy of the council, the fact that there was a difference between the formal primacy of the council and the executive dominance in practice contributed to the problem (the Royal Commission Elzinga mentioned this difference as one of the main difficulties). This needs to be explained.

Since the council formally had the primacy and authority to make all the decisions, the council had an underdeveloped control mechanism, which made the actual executive dominance problematic. As Denters et al put it, 'the exercise of these executive powers by the BMA was largely unchecked, as councillors were unwilling and unable to scrutinise the BMA due to the lack of legal means to control and scrutinise' (2005: 22-23). While the council had to do without several control measures and support functions, the BMA had the support of an extensive bureaucratic apparatus. Besides their problematic controlling task, councillors also encountered difficulties in their efforts to steer the board. In contrast to board members, who were professionals, councillors were laypeople, 'amateurs' overloaded with policy documents. Furthermore, policy proposals were prepared by the board; often these proposals were very detailed, and normally they did not include any alternatives¹⁰. Because of their lack of options, the council had no choice; it was unlikely they would oppose the board's plans. Because of this limitation, councillors were unable to execute their 'steering' task. The primacy of the council was even further undermined

by the considerable (indirect) influence of the board in council decisions. This was partly the result of party group discipline¹¹ and the strong influence of aldermen on the decision-making in their party groups. Aldermen as members of the party group (before 2002) exerted influence on the decision making process: they frequently propagated a view in accordance with the board's policy. The strong influence of the alderman was not only related to his status as party leader, but also the result of his information advantage. Coalition party groups were often accused of not being critical towards the board's policy and of being kept on a leash by the board (see Royal Commission Elzinga 2000).

All this undermines the idea of the LGA 1851 and puts pressure on the internal task of the council (Derksen 1996: 46-47; Elzinga 1989: 227-228; Gilsing 1994: 8).

Based on our discussion so far, we can now say that the desire (and the need) existed to make local government more accessible and to attain a clear role division between the council and the board. The primacy of the council should be restored, however, in a different way than stated in the LGA 1851. Several attempts to achieve this aim within the 'old' institutional structure failed. Therefore, the legislator felt forced to change the institutional structure of the Dutch local government.

2.4 The Local Government Act 2002

In September 1998, a Royal Commission on Local Government Reform was established by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The Royal Commission Elzinga (named after its chairperson) was given the task to formulate an advice on a new model for municipal government, based on a clear, balanced separation of powers between the council and the BMA. Their task was to redefine the roles of the council vis-à-vis the executive offices rather than simply reinstate the traditional model¹². The Royal Commission published its main recommendations in January 2000. They were taken into consideration and new legislation was being prepared. The new legislation was accepted on February 2002 (just before the next municipal elections in March 2002).

The reform policy of the LGA 2002 entailed two major parts (or efforts): a change in formal rules (which we defined in chapter one as the institutional structure of local government) and a focus on cultural change. The national

legislator not only set out to change the formal model of local government but also tried to change the political culture amongst municipal councillors and other actors in local government by starting a Local Government Innovation Program (*Vernieuwingsimpuls*). The ideas behind the new institutional structure are explained in two policy documents: the report of the Royal Commission Elzinga, and the Explanatory Memorandum (parliamentary document in addition to the LGA 2002). Both documents also emphasized the need to combine institutional reform with an Innovation Program. In this section, we will first discuss the goals of the institutional reform, and subsequently we will elaborate on the formal changes and the Innovation Program of the 2002 reform.

2.4.1 Goals

The initiators of the institutional reform had several goals in mind. The main goal was the improvement of the quality of local democracy. More specific goals were to: (1) strengthen the position of the council as the most important local political forum, and (2) strengthen the representative function of the council (Explanatory Memorandum 2000-2001). The first goal was the primary goal of the LGA 2002, and is related to the improvement of the councillor's performance in his internal task. The second goal was about the improvement of the councillor's performance in his external role.

The first goal – strengthening the position of the council as the most important local political forum – pertained to the problem of the primacy of the council (see section 2.3). For the reformers this goal meant strengthening the role of the councillor as scrutiniser. One of the prime objectives in relation to this goal was to establish a division of powers between the council from the board, and consequently to loosen the relation between the alderman and party council groups (meaning, trying to break his domination in the council). The second goal focused on the relation between citizens and council, and addressed the problem of democratic legitimacy (see section 2.3). The aim was to strengthen the representative role of the councillor: the councillor should be more open for citizens' demands and needs (Explanatory Memorandum 2000-2001; Royal Commission Elzinga 2000).

2.4.2 *Formal changes*

What did the new LGA entail? The formal measures can be divided into three types; there were rules relating to: (1) the positions of actors, (2) their formal power, and (3) support functions set up for the council (see Table 2.1). We will now explain these three types of rules one by one, and relate them to the external and internal activities of councillors.

In contrast to the 'old' institutional structure (having one dominant organ), the new institutional structure in 2002 stated that the council and board should constitute two separate powers to exist next to each other, with each having their own original authorities (Elzinga 1989: 224; Derksen 1996: 35).¹³ This was different from the old situation where all executive powers were derived from the council. The LGA 2002 set out to establish the council and board as two separate powers. First of all this has implications for the rules defining the position of actors in the local arena (cf. Ostrom et al 1994). Changes in position rules pertained to several relations: the relation between a) the council and the board, b) the board and the coalition, and c) on the one hand the alderman and on the other hand the council (committee) and party group. An important change in terms of position was the abolition of the double role of aldermen: they could no longer retain membership of the council after their election as aldermen. In addition, they could no longer chair council committees and no longer had the right to be present in these committees¹⁴. Furthermore, aldermen no longer needed to be recruited from inside the council; they could be recruited from the outside of both the council and the municipality.

The second type of rules in the LGA 2002 was written to empower the council and improve its performance in the execution of mainly his internal activities. These rules empower the council by providing it with a wide array of means to control and scrutinise the executive offices. For example, the council was given the rights of initiative and amendment, and the rights of obtaining information (parliamentary questions, interpellation and parliamentary inquiry). The delegation of governing authorities to the board enabled councillors to spend more time to their roles as representative and scrutiniser. According to the policy theory councillors should pay more attention to their external role (represent citizens). By shifting governing authorities¹⁵ to the board space is created for councillors to spend time at their external role. With regard to their performance in internal activities: they should pay more attention to controlling and steering the board, and no longer govern the municipality. The BMA should

make final decisions on administrative matters within the limits set by the council.

In order to enable councillors to perform their tasks, the last type of rules aimed at strengthening the professional support of the council. Examples of these rules were the introduction of a council clerk¹⁶, a Court of Audit¹⁷ and the right to administrative support and advice. These rules were aimed at improving the councillor's performance in his external and internal duties. For instance, the council clerk could assist councillors in writing motions, but he could also invite citizens to be guest speakers at the council meeting. In addition, the increase in support might enable councillors to spend more time outside the City Hall (and thus be more effective in performing his external duties).

Table 2.1: The 2002 reforms: most important measures

Type of measure:	Short description:
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthened independence by abolishing the double role of the Aldermen - Aldermen no longer chair council committees
Formal powers of councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delegation of governing authorities to the board - Obligation for Mayor and BMA to inform council actively on all that may be deemed relevant for the council to perform its duties - Rights of control for councillors (initiative; amendment) - Information rights (parliamentary questions; interpellation; parliamentary inquiry) - New budgetary instruments for the council
Support functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of Council Clerk - Introduction of local Court of Audit - Right of administrative support and advice

(cf. Denters 2005: 431)

How do these formal changes affect the most important actors in the local political arena? In order to discuss the consequences for the various arenas, we will use Ostrom's typology of rules. Ostrom distinguishes seven types of rules, five of which we will discuss in this section:

1. *Position rules specify a set of positions and how many participants are to hold each position.*
2. *Boundary rules specify how participants enter or leave these positions.*

3. *Authority rules specify which set of actions is assigned to which position at each node of a decision tree.*
4. *Scope rules specify the set of outcomes that may be affected, including whether outcomes are intermediate or final.*
5. *Information rules specify the information available to each position at a decision mode.*

Source: Ostrom et al. (1994)

These rules will be used to describe the formal changes (due to the implementation of the LGA 2002) in four arenas of local government: the council, council committees, the BMA and party council groups.

The Council

Most changes took place in the council arena. As mentioned above, an important new rule was that aldermen were no longer members of the council (position and boundary rule). The council and its members received several new rights in order to strengthen the controlling task (authority rules): the right of initiative and amendment, the right for support from civil servants, the right to ask the board written or oral questions, the right of interpellation and the right of parliamentary inquiry. At the same time, the scope of the rules was changed. The council was no longer involved in (detailed) policy making. Instead, the council should concentrate on formulating general principles and guidelines in order to steer and control the executives. This function was made more explicit in the new law. Another important right for the council was that the board should actively inform the council, and the council could request that research had to be done (information rule). In the new institutional structure these information rules were important. In contrast to the old structure the council did not have the advantage of being (reasonably) informed: the council was no longer involved in policy decisions. After 2002, this was a task for the board, so the council had the right to be actively informed.

Council committees

Only a few changes occurred in the arena of council committees (at least in terms of formal changes). The aldermen and mayor were no longer allowed to be (official) members of a council committee (boundary rule): as a result the alderman is no longer chair of the committee, instead only a councillor could

chair the committee (position and boundary rule). By introducing the ‘new style’ council committees (art. 82 LGA) the scope rule also changed. Council committees are now an advisory organ for the council and not for the board. The committees support the decision-making of the council and not that of the board. Moreover, the committees have the same function as the council and its members: representing citizens, and steering and controlling the board (Dölle and Elzinga 2004: 464).

The BMA

As stated in the new Local Government Act 2002, aldermen were allowed to be appointed from outside the council and even from outside the municipality (boundary rule). Councillors could still become aldermen, but in doing so they had to give up their council seat (boundary/position rule). Moreover, we also see an important change in scope rules. After implementation of this Act, the board was now officially charged the executive primacy. Concerning the authority rules, not much had changed, at least not for the board. However, the new law strengthened the position of the mayor by giving him some new authorities. The mayor had a duty to protect the unity of the board policy (LGA, art. 53a section 1); he was entitled to add topics to the agenda of board meetings (LGA, art. 53a section 2); and he was allowed to propose a topic for debate (LGA, art. 53a section 3). Another important change that concerned the board was the change in information rules. The board was obliged to actively inform the council and to conduct research if requested to do so by the council.

Party council groups

In the new Local Government Act, party groups were not explicitly named. New rules on the level of party groups were up to the party groups themselves. Parties could choose to change their statutes.¹⁸ However, the LGA 2002 may have had an indirect influence on the party groups: since aldermen are no longer members of the council it is no longer self-evident that they should participate in the meetings of their party’s council group.

Conclusions

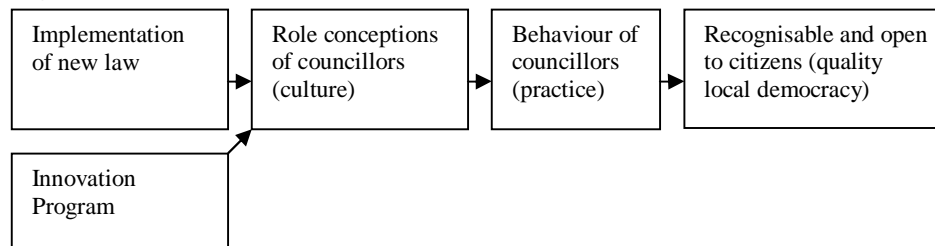
We can now draw three conclusions. A first conclusion is that with the introduction of the LGA 2002, a reduction of the positional power of the aldermen was brought about. A second conclusion is that because of the LGA

2002, the council may have lost ground in terms of its formal powers (lost its executive primacy); however, the council actually may have gained some influence with respect to effective controls and the introduction of a council clerk and a Court of Audit (Denters 2005). A third conclusion is that the formal changes of the LGA 2002 mainly affected the relation between the council and the board (internal relation). There were no direct changes in the formal relation with citizens.

2.4.3 Innovation Program

The national legislator expected that institutional or structural change would lead to new role conceptions for councillors and thus a cultural change for the council. This new culture was expected to result in changed behaviour (Figure 2.2). The separation of institutional positions and authorities (structural changes) might support and accelerate cultural change (Royal Commission Elzinga 2000: 451). However, the reformers realised that the introduction of new rules might not be enough to change the municipalities' culture. Therefore, in order to achieve cultural change, the national legislator acknowledged the need for a 'socialisation' program complementary to the structural reform. The Royal Commission Elzinga advocated a program aimed at changing the local political culture in the councils. This cultural change would be needed to bring about the desired changes in the councillors' behaviour.

Figure 2.2: Desired effects of the new Local Government Act



(cf. Denters et al 2001)

The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations provided a four-year budget for an ambitious Local Government Innovation Program. The development and execution of this program involved several important actors such as the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG), various political

parties, and the professional associations of mayors and chief-executive officers in local government. The program provided for a wide range of activities, including the publication of a regular newsletter and guidebooks on the practical implications of the reforms, conferences for councillors and other target groups, training modules, facilities for counselling and advice, and research to monitor the implementation of the reforms. Furthermore, the program provided a new *Profile for Councillors, Aldermen and Mayor* which recruiters could use to select new council candidates. In this profile different competencies of councillors working in the new institutional structure are described. Another important contribution of this program was an Internet platform. A Web site was introduced to reinforce and propagate the Innovation Program by providing municipalities with information and support, and exchanging ideas for renewal and best practices. Furthermore, current initiatives enhancing a cultural change were mapped out and made accessible. Though the Innovation Program paid attention to both the external and internal duties of the council, the main focus was on the council's internal responsibilities.

The main aim of the program under the new legislative regime was to motivate councillors to change their perception of their role as well as their behaviour and therefore place a higher priority on their representative and scrutiny functions (Royal Commission Elzinga 2000; Vernieuwingsimpuls 2000). Nevertheless, the expectation of the reformers (as pictured in Figure 2.3) was subject to several presumptions (chapter 4 elaborates further on this).

In the next subsection we will discuss the implementation procedures of both the formal rules and the Innovation Program.

2.4.4 Implementation procedures

There is no uniform implementation procedure of the LGA 2002 for municipalities. This regards both the implementation of the formal rules and the Innovation Program.

For understanding the implementation process we can distinguish between mandatory and optional formal rules. The mandatory formal rules had to be implemented before an official date. Some of the rules came immediately into effect when the new LGA was enacted in 2002. The implementation of other rules could be done at a later stage, but still before a specific mandatory deadline. Take for instance the introduction of a council clerk: in each

municipality, a council clerk had to be appointed before March 2003. A Court of Audit needed to be installed before 2006. There were many reasons why the ministry employed a number of different (mandatory) implementation data. One reason was that the decision to introduce the LGA 2002 was taken in a short timeframe. To implement some of the rules more time would be needed; for instance, with the Court of Audit, it was the municipality's responsibility to decide on the structure as well as on the designation of its members. This would take some time. Another reason was that by gradually implementing the LGA 2002, municipalities would allow municipalities some discretion in implementing this new structure and stay more or less in control of the implementation procedure.

Concerning the Innovation Program, it was up to the municipality and local councillors to determine how much they would get involved in this program. Taking part in courses or conferences and reading guidebooks provided by the national Web site should happen on the councillors' own initiative. In some municipalities these initiatives were supported by the council clerk. The Innovation Program functioned for four years and was replaced in 2007 by a more general program (*Actieprogramma*)¹⁹.

2.5 How was the institutional change expected to work?

In this section we will explain how the LGA 2002 was expected to contribute to the goals of improving the councillors' performance as representative and scrutiniser. The LGA 2002 was expected to contribute in two different ways to the task performance of councillors. One way was by *enabling* councillors to execute their task. The other way was to increase the *willingness* of councillors to perform their task. Since the LGA 2002 had a strong focus on internal measures, we will first discuss how the councillors' performance in their internal task was expected to improve. However, external effects were also expected; therefore, we will also discuss the contribution of the LGA 2002 to the councillors' performance in their external task.

We will first discuss how the LGA 2002 contributed to the councillor's performance of his *internal duties* by 'enabling'. The institutional reform improved the councillor's ability to perform his internal responsibilities by

providing more resources such as time and instruments. The reformers hoped to create more time for councillors to spend on their main tasks by limiting and structuring the councillor's job. The council would no longer be involved in the tasks of governing and therefore would have more time to spend on activities to control the executives. Furthermore, the LGA 2002 introduced several new instruments that enabled councillors to perform their controlling task (see section 2.4.2). Moreover, because aldermen were no longer members of the council or serving in council committees, the councillors were better able to independently control (and steer) the board, and thus to be more critical. Moreover, the Innovation Program provides several guidebooks for councillors on how they can execute their internal tasks, and the program also offers training courses for councillors to help them become more effective at executing their internal tasks.

The institutional reform should also increase the 'willingness' of councillors to focus more on their internal duties. The attention that the LGA 2002 gave to the primary formal position and (internal) role of the council would possibly contribute to the councillors' willingness to focus on their internal role. The strong focus of the LGA 2002 on the facilitation of the council's internal task reinforces this effect. The Innovation Program can also be seen as an effort to stimulate the willingness of councillors to do a good job as a scrutiniser. Furthermore, by adopting a specific recruitment profile for (new) councillors (advocated by the reform), the chances that the council would contain members that were convinced of the importance of internal activities would be increased as well.

By improving the councillors' ability in performing their internal activities, the reformers also hoped to decrease executive dominance in council matters. This effect would be further strengthened by no longer allowing aldermen to be members of the council (committee); therefore, they would also have less influence on the council, and hence on council decisions. Again, the recruitment of councillors would help to reduce executive dominance.

With regard to the impact of the institutional reform on the councillors' performance of their *external duties* the main argument is that expected changes in the internal relationship (council and the board) will also change the external relationship between local politics and local society (Explanatory Memorandum

2000-2001). In other words, the new Local Government Act would not only change the nature and intensity of contacts between councillors and members of the board but also, more indirectly, change the relation between councillors and (groups of) citizens (Vernieuwingsimpuls 2005: 17-18). Again, the contribution of the LGA 2002 to the councillors' performance of their external activities can be divided into (1) enabling councillors to perform their task, (2) and increasing the willingness of councillors to perform their task.

We will first discuss how councillors were better enabled to perform their external activities. Because of the LGA 2002, councillors would have more time to invest in their representative duties. Because governmental tasks would be delegated to the board, the councillors would have more time to establish contacts with citizens outside the City Hall, which would enable councillors to spot problems at an early stage, translate those into political visions and introduce them in the political arena (Royal Commission Elzinga 2000: 347). Allotting more time for councillors to spend on their representative role could also increase the *accessibility* of local politicians. The reformers expected that increased accessibility would make it easier for citizens' ideas, wishes and problems to reach the political agenda. This accessibility would also be enhanced further by the increased *transparency* of decision-making processes (due to the council being separated from the board). Within the new structure, citizens clearly should be better able to understand whom they should turn to with their questions, demands or comments. This would help local councillors to perform their external tasks.

In contrast to the internal tasks, the LGA 2002 does not provide the councillor with more (formal) instruments to fulfill their representative role. However, the purpose of the Innovation Program was to stimulate municipalities to start initiatives that would help councillors be good representatives. Examples of such initiatives are (see www.vernieuwingsimpuls.nl²⁰):

- Invite citizens to become a member of a council committee. In this way they could help small party groups with the workload, and help councillors to create policy that would correspond to the wishes and expectations of the citizens.
- Invite citizens to speak in a (council) committee meeting, and let them criticise and question municipal policy.

- Invite citizens to be guests in the council as a way of letting them ‘take a look in the kitchen’ so to speak. This will support understanding and the will to participate.
- Start with interactive decision-making processes
- Adopt a new recruitment profile

These initiatives could also increase the willingness of councillors to pay more attention to their external role. The institutional reform also tries to increase the willingness of councillors to focus on their external duties in another way. Because of the separation of the council and the board, political differences between parties would become more obvious and therefore would enlarge the *recognisability* of local politics, parties and politicians. In order for such a representative democracy to function well, citizens need to be able to see differences between parties. This recognisability makes council debates more politically relevant, and as a result, local politics might become more lively; hence, citizens will be more interested and involved in local politics (Vernieuwingsimpuls 2005: 17). As a result, local councillors might be more willing to invest in the performance of their external activities.

We discussed how the councillor’s performance of his internal and external activities was expected to be improved by the LGA 2002. We can conclude that the LGA 2002 directly aimed at improving the councillor’s performance of his the internal role and only indirectly aimed at improving the councillor’s performance of his external role. There were no quantifiable changes and new measures concerning the relationship between citizens and councillors. It was mostly up to the political parties (or the council) to undertake initiatives to improve councillors’ fulfilment of their external duties. The Innovation Program endeavoured to stimulate these efforts.

2.5 Summary

Dutch local government has shifted from a system in which the council and BMA functioned as two parts of one organic whole (based on subordination), to a system in which the council and BMA function side by side, each having their own tasks and realms of authority. The LGA 2002 contains several types of

formal rules related to position, formal powers, and support functions. Some of them were immediately active in 2002, and others would not be implemented until a later stage. Municipalities were encouraged to take up their own initiatives in line with the ideas behind the LGA 2002 (socialisation program). Initiators of the LGA 2002 hoped to achieve several goals. In general, the reformers sought to improve the councillors' performance of their internal and external activities, and to decrease the executive dominance in council matters as well. It was hoped that by changing the institutional structure of local government, a cultural change would be induced, resulting in the changed behaviour of the municipality. It is notable that most of the new measures introduced by the LGA 2002 were aimed at influencing the relation between the council and the board (internal). The relation between citizens and the council (external) was only indirectly influenced.

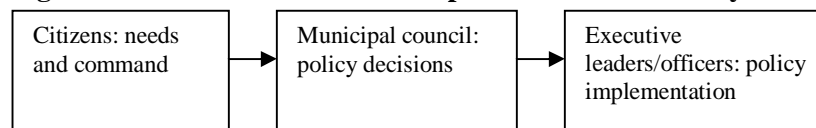
3 Responsiveness and Accountability

We are interested in the democratic effects of the LGA 2002 for the council. The reform policy (new formal rules and Innovation Program) aims to strengthen the councillor as a representative and scrutiniser, and to decrease the executive dominance in council matters. The two roles of the council (as representative and scrutiniser) are essential elements of a representative democracy. The council needs to be responsive to the citizens (external role) and the council must secure accountability from the executive branch (internal role). The LGA 2002 tries to strengthen both roles of the council. Before we look if the councillor's performance of his internal and external role improves, we first need to elaborate on the relations of the council and the two core concepts: responsiveness and accountability.

3.1 Two roles of the council

According to the traditional model of representative democracy, a council is conceived as the crucial link between citizens and the policies implemented by a government (Toonen 1991: 298; Denters 2005) (See figure 3.1). The relation between citizens and the council refers to the external role of the council, and the relation between the council and the board refers to the internal role of the council.

Figure 3.1: Traditional model of representative democracy



Source: Denters 2005

The reform policy pays attention to both the external and internal role of the council. The LGA 2002 is expected to improve the council's performance in both its representing and controlling task. By 'representing' the reformers mean

that the representatives should be alert to citizens' demands and needs. The reform policy tries to achieve a closer connection between representatives and citizens. On the one hand, councillors are encouraged to go outside the City Hall and speak with citizens. On the other hand, the reform policy stimulates local government to become more actively involved in local decision-making processes. The representation does not end with closer contacts, or with learning about citizens' wishes and preferences. Representation can only be meaningful if councillors bring these demands into the political debate. Hence, councillors should influence board policy and put subjects on the agenda that are important *to citizens*. Furthermore, councillors are obliged to explain and justify their decisions to citizens (Explanatory Memorandum 2000–2001).

Another function of the councillor is his role as a scrutiniser; this role refers to the relation between the council and the board. The new law provides several new instruments to support councillors in their internal role. According to the initiators of the LGA 2002 councillors should not be occupied with details or governing tasks. They should debate and decide on white papers and policy documents setting out main goals of the municipal policies, and subsequently supervising the implementation of these policy guidelines and principles by the board. Then it is the task of the council to verify whether the executives act in accordance to this framework. The council holds the board to account for their performance. Overall, councillors should be autonomous (in relation to the board), creative, and more critical (Explanatory Memorandum 2000–2001).

3.1.1 *Representative democracy*

The two roles of the council (external and internal role) are essential elements in a representative democracy. In order to clarify these concepts this section elaborates on 'representative democracy'.

Democracy (initially direct democracy) finds its origin in the days of ancient Greece. In that era, people spoke of democracy for the first time and put it into practice as well¹. Herodotus defined democracy as 'rule by the many' or 'the multitude's rule' (see Pennock 1979). Democracy and representation were considered as two different things. In the republics of antiquity, democracy was interpreted as direct democracy or, government by the people². Representation simply meant 'to make present', 'to manifest', or 'to present again', but 'it had nothing to do with people representing people' (Pitkin 1969: 2). Nevertheless,

the Greeks were familiar with the occurrence of representation (delegation of certain executive functions) to some extent, but this was seen as undemocratic.

However, democracy as defined and applied by the Greeks changed over time. With the emergence of large-scale nation-states, the city-states were made obsolete. A democratic transformation took place: ‘the idea of democracy was transferred from the city-state to the much larger scale of the nation state’ (Dahl 1994: 25). This transformation was made possible by what we call ‘representation’: ‘democracy came to be understood not as an assembly democracy in the city-state but as a representative democracy in the nation-state’ (Dahl 1994: 25). Because of this transformation, a set of new political institutions and practices came into existence.

Nowadays, we speak of *representative democracy*. This change in meaning has its origin in a system of institutions, established in the wake of English, American, and French revolutions (Manin 1997: 1-2; Pitkin 1969: 4). In the 16th century Sir Thomas Smith (1970[1583]) referred for the first time to the parliament of England as representatives. In the 17th century representation became one of the universal ‘Rights of Man’ and was associated with democracy (Pitkin 1969).

But what do we mean by representation? Defining representation is difficult: ‘in spite of many centuries of theoretical effort, we cannot say what representation is ... our conceptions of representation are obsolete’ (Eulau 1978: 13). Pitkin (1967; 1969) offers a broad description of representation, one that is generally accepted. She describes representation as ‘making present of something absent – but not making it literally present. It must be made present indirectly, through an intermediary’ (Pitkin 1969).³

The concept of representation can be clarified by using the agency theory. According to the agency theory one actor, the agent, acts on behalf of another, the principal. The agent is supposed to implement the preferences and interests of the principal, who has the power to sanction or reward the agent (Fearon 1999; Maravall 1999). The council is the agent for the citizens and therefore, it should act on their behalf. The council needs to listen to the wishes and interests of the citizens and express those in the political debate or place them on the council’s agenda. This is the external role of the councillor. With regard to the internal relation, the council functions as the principal for the board: the council should define the main goals for municipal activities, make these clear to the

board and control for the execution. In case of bad performance the council can sanction the board (for instance by a vote of no confidence).

Therefore, the two roles of the council – external and internal - form the basis of representative democracy. In democratic terms, these roles refer to the importance of a responsive and accountable local government. The definitions of responsiveness and accountability often have an overlap⁴. This overlap can be quite confusing; therefore, we decided to differentiate between the responsiveness and accountability in terms of the external and internal activities of councillors.

3.2 Responsiveness: the concept

In this section we will conceptualise responsiveness. We should start by saying that there are different views on the meaning of ‘responsive behaviour’. These views are related to two rather different normative conceptions of democracy: the collectivistic and individualistic theories of democracy.

The *collectivistic*⁵ (French or continental) conception of democracy sees representative democracy as a surrogate for direct democracy. Representation is ‘an approximation of government by the people made technically necessary by the physical impossibility of gathering together the citizens of large states’ (Manin 1997: 2). In this sense representative democracy is ‘a sorry substitute for the real thing’ (Dahl 1982: 13; cf. Rosenbaum 1978; Barber 1984). According to this conception, the identity between representatives and represented is very important. The emphasis is on participatory democracy, and (political) equality. If the system requires representatives (as a necessary evil) then they have to function as *delegates*: reflecting their constituencies’ opinion (cf. Eulau & Wahlke 1978; see also Wahlke & Eulau 1962). The representative should do what his constituents want, and be bound by mandates or instructions from them (Pitkin 1967: 145).

The *individualistic*⁶ (liberal or Anglo-Saxon) tradition focuses on representation as a preferable system and a form of democracy. It entails the separation of powers, checks and balances, and individual liberty. Not the will of the people, but the general interest is most important. The rights of minorities also play a significant role. According to this conception, only politicians should deal with politics, yet when there are problems with direct personal

interest, citizens can take action. In this view, political participation is instrumental (Thomassen 1991). According to Madison (1787: 6) the function of representation⁷ is:

‘to refine and enlarge the public views by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. Under such a regulation, it may well happen that the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves...’

Following this point of view, political decision making should be done by people who are well equipped for the task (Schumpeter 1967: 245; Thomassen 1991: 171). Representatives are not a necessary evil but a ‘sine qua non’ for a well-functioning democracy. The representative should function as a *trustee*: following his own beliefs (cf. Eulau and Wahlke 1978; see also Wahlke and Eulau 1962). He should be free to act in ways that seem best to him in pursuit of the citizens’ welfare (Pitkin 1967: 145).

The question of which vision is ‘best’ cannot be answered. Most democracies show characteristics of both traditions. Eulau and Wahlke (1978) state that a good representative is both a delegate and a trustee: the representative is constantly weighting the demands that are made on him against what he knows. Pitkin describes that a combination is possible; representatives can make decisions not directly in accordance with citizens’ preferences as long as they can explain and justify them (Pitkin 1967: 209). Hence, by responsiveness we mean that the councillor should listen to the citizens (their wishes, demands and needs) as well as explain the policy decisions to the citizens.

To give a clear definition of responsiveness three important questions need to be answered: responsive about what, to whom, and how? The answers to these questions determine our criteria for responsiveness. In the end we will be able to formulate a definition for responsiveness, which we will need if we want to say something about the effects of the LGA 2002.

3.2.1 *Responsive about what?*

In discussing responsiveness, an important element to determine is to what aspects councillors should be responsive. With regard to the ‘about what’ question, two decisions have to be made: 1) procedural or material responsiveness, and 2) policy or service responsiveness. We first discuss procedural and material responsiveness, subsequently policy and service responsiveness.

Are we interested in procedural or material responsiveness? *Procedural* responsiveness focuses on the procedures, and refers to the formal and informal activities (what is done?) to increase or establish responsiveness. *Material* responsiveness, on the other hand, relates to the political content: it is about the extent to which citizens’ wishes and demands are translated into the council’s decisions. Are those demands put on the agenda? If so, do they result in real policy?

In this research we decided, like Pitkin (1967), to use a procedural conception of responsiveness⁸. The primary reason for this is that from a democratic point of view, using material responsiveness is both undesirable and impracticable (see Madison 1787; Burke 1906): not every citizen can get what he or she wants, and the means to grant the wishes and demands of citizens are limited. Politics is all about making decisions:

‘Political life is not merely the making of arbitrary choices, nor merely the resultant of bargaining between separate, private wants. It is always a combination of bargaining and compromise where there are irresolute and conflicting commitments, and common deliberation about public policy, to which facts and rational arguments are relevant.’ (Pitkin 1967: 212)

In order to make choices, representatives need to aggregate the citizens’ wishes; however, there is no one best, non-arbitrary, way to aggregate the wishes of the citizens. There are no decision-making rules or models (to aggregate citizens’ wishes into decisions) that meets both a few simple but reasonable demands and delivers unambiguous results (van der Kolk 1997: 30-31). This is the main reason why we prefer a procedural definition of responsiveness.

An additional reason for using a procedural definition is that the measurement of material responsiveness brings along several problems. Therefore, from a methodological point of view, using the procedural definition

of responsiveness is more attractive (see van der Kolk 1997). One such a methodological problem is that in order to determine the level of material responsiveness, we need to compare the policy preferences of citizens to policies endorsed by the representatives. This implies that the wishes of the citizens should be known, but in reality, it appears to be ‘seldom possible to determine objectively what the demanders want’ (Schumaker and Getter 1983: 13).

The other decision with regard to the ‘about what’ question: is to determine our focus of responsiveness in terms of policy and service. *Policy* responsiveness aims at ‘great public issues that agitate the political process’ (Eulau and Karpis 1977: 241). There needs to be a meaningful connection between the voter’s policy preferences or demands and the representative’s official behaviour, activities, views, output, and outcome⁹. Policy responsiveness can also simply be explained as meeting the wishes and desires of the people concerned with policy beliefs and directions (Pitkin 1967; Eulau and Karpis 1977). *Service* responsiveness focuses on ‘the efforts of the representative to secure particularized benefits for individuals or groups in his constituency’ (Eulau and Karpis 1977: 241). Some refer to casework¹⁰ (cf. Krasno 1994: 19; Serra and Moon 1994: 200). It is about service to constituents and assistance to private individuals, businesses, and groups in dealing with the government (e.g. finding the right agency, faster decisions from bureaucrats, exception to rules, or special benefits).

In this research, we hold the position that councillors should be responsive to both policy and service. From a normative point of view, both policy and service demands of citizens should be taken into consideration because citizens have an interest in both types of issues. As a result, responsiveness should also be realised in either of these two domains. Therefore, in measuring responsiveness we will not distinguish between policy and service responsiveness.

3.2.2 *Responsive to and by whom?*

Councillors should develop activities to establish responsiveness. In this subsection, we ask ourselves, responsive to whom and by whom. Earlier we related responsiveness to the external relation of the council: the relation

between citizens and the council. The function of responsiveness is to establish agreement between these two actors. Pitkin (1967) describes that communication is an essential element of responsiveness; the council can only be responsive if the citizens communicate their preferences. Possible conflicts between citizens and councillors need to be prevented. According to Dahl (1989), these conflicts should be prevented using democratic equality: everybody should have the opportunity to express their preferences. Therefore, local government needs to be open and accessible. In Dahl's words (1989: 109):

‘Throughout the process of making binding decisions, citizens ought to have an adequate opportunity, and an equal opportunity, for expressing their preferences as to the final outcome. They must have adequate and equal opportunities for placing questions on the agenda and for expressing reasons for endorsing one outcome rather than another.’

This brings us to the discussion on the *focus of representation*. The focus of representation refers to the question which interest the representative thinks he has to represent and for which group(s) he wants to be a representative. Traditionally the question has been ‘does the representative wants to focus on the general interest (e.g. the municipal interest), or does he wants to focus on his electoral district?’ However, the focus of representation can concern all kinds of interests. Together with the increasing relevance of ‘identity politics’, often the extent to which representatives see themselves as representatives of minorities (in terms of gender, ethnicity, religion, and sexual inclination) is also considered relevant.

From the perspective of democratic equality, we can say that the focus of representation is on the community as a whole and not merely on being responsive to special interests. The council should be responsive to any individual citizens and representatives of any groups of citizens.

We will now define the portion of the question that asks, responsive by whom? In other words, who should act responsive to individual citizens and social organisations? As we described earlier, this is a task of the representatives, but do we look at the councillors as individuals or at the council as the collective? Following the normative theory (Pitkin 1967: 221-225), we are mainly interested in the responsive behaviour of the council as a collective: ‘the

capacity of the system to respond satisfactorily to the collective preferences of its citizens' (Dahl 1994: 28). This is also the focus of the LGA 2002 (derived from normative theory). However, a council can only be responsive if this behaviour takes place at the individual level (necessary condition). Individual councillors go on the street to talk with citizens, have visiting hours and might place specific citizen demands on the council's agenda. Some of these activities might happen on the level of party council groups; for instance, having visiting hours for citizens, or maybe there needs to be agreement in the party group on issues that they try to put on the council's agenda. Nevertheless, the initiative of responsiveness activities rests with individual councillors. Therefore, we will focus on the responsiveness of individual councillors (for a more elaborate discussion on the individual and collective level see chapter 4).

3.2.3 *Responsive: How?*

Since we use a procedural definition of responsiveness, the final question 'how should the council be responsive?' or 'through which means' is especially important. Responsiveness can be dealt with in terms of views about and activities of councillors aimed at establishing a close relationship with citizens.

To establish responsive local government, communication between citizens and councillors must be set as a priority (Pitkin 1967). Communication refers to two elements: (1) Councillors need to listen to citizens, and citizens need to express their demands; (2) In case of conflict (discrepancy on 'what is to be done' between represented and representatives), councillors need to explain the municipal policy and decisions to citizens, and citizens can ask for an explanation (Pitkin 1967: 209).

With regard to the 'listening' part, councillors need to take themselves out of the council chambers and contact citizens in order to get an idea about their wishes and needs. Furthermore, they have to create opportunities for citizens to reach them in case of any specific problems or requests. The Innovation Program tries to stimulate councillors to be more visible and available to citizens and to invite citizens to participate in the decision-making process. Councillors need to get out of the City Hall and meet citizens out in 'the real world' in order to get a good idea about the citizens' wishes and needs. This can take place anywhere: in the waiting row in the supermarket, at a game of the local soccer club, or at the celebration of a birthday. Councillors might also

consciously visit a certain group of citizens. The reason for this might be to hear the perspective of citizens; for instance, the citizens might have valuable input concerning a reconstruction project being discussed. In addition to this, it is also important for citizens to know how they can approach councillors. If citizens have problems or questions, they need to know how to contact councillors. Therefore, councillors need to provide citizens with the opportunity to consult them. The Innovation Program tries to stimulate councillors to think about contact-channels for citizens. One way to establish contacts is by organising visiting hours for citizens with (or without) the party council group. Another possibility would be for councillors to start an Internet forum (weblog) or to initiate ‘chat’ sessions on the web. Furthermore, councillors might involve citizens (in cooperation with the council) in the decision-making process; for instance, by inviting them to speak in a council meeting or council committee meeting. Other activities that might be organised for the entire council to increase its level of responsiveness are field visits, or so-called ‘political markets’.

As far as the ‘explaining’ part is concerned, councillors can explain policy decisions proactively or reactively. For instance, when a certain decision is expected to cause some turmoil amongst citizens, councillors might want to explain the reasons for a certain decision beforehand (proactively) to prevent chaos. An example of reactive explaining is when citizens have several questions about a reconstruction project, and as a result of all those questions, the council decides to organise an information meeting. Explaining decisions can also happen on a more detailed level: a citizen might want to receive an explanation about a certain decision from his own representative.

The core of responsiveness activities for councillors is that they should approach citizens, as well as be approachable by them, in order to learn about their demands, preferences, needs and questions.

3.2.4 *Responsiveness definition*

This research concentrates on procedural responsiveness in which the council has two important tasks: one is to listen to citizens, and the other is to explain and justify policy decisions to citizens. Therefore, we define responsiveness as follows: *Responsiveness is the extent to which councillors undertake activities to listen to the requests and issues emerging from citizens and to express these*

concerns and demands in the public debate, and the extent to which they explain and justify their policy and service decisions to the citizens.

3.3 Accountability: the concept

In this section we will conceptualise accountability. Many authors define accountability as ‘stewardship’. The ideas of accountability as stewardship have their origin in the economic world and are very old (Coy et al. 2001). According to this view, accountability is a relation between persons, wherein person A performs a specific task and is obliged to inform person B about the performance (Fenstermacher 1979: 331). Thus, one party (the accountant) is accountable to the other party (the accountee) for an action, process, output or outcome (Patton 1992; Degeling et al. 1996). Fearon (1999) sets out two requirements. First, there is an understanding that party A is obliged to act in some way on behalf of party B.¹¹ Notice here that an accountability relationship ‘presupposes agreement both about what constitutes an acceptable performance and about the language of justification to be used by actors in defending their conduct’ (Day and Klein 1987: 5; see also Stewart 1984). Second, party B is able to punish or reward party A for her activities or performance by use of formal or informal rules (Fearon 1999: 55; see also Gray and Jenkins 1993: 55). For the council, this means that they have two important tasks in establishing accountability. First, the council has to define what is expected from the board, and second, the council needs to be able to judge (and sanction) the board on its performance and activities.

The concept of accountability will be further explained by answering three questions: accountable for what, to whom, and how? (Mansfield 1982: 61; Patton 1992; Scott 2000).

3.3.1 Accountable for what?

The ‘what’ question tries to clarify the object of accountability (Scott 2000). In this respect we need to decide between 1) procedural or material accountability, and 2) policy or service accountability. We first discuss procedural and material accountability, subsequently policy and service accountability.

Like responsiveness, accountability can be interpreted as procedural or material accountability. Procedural accountability focuses on activities: is the council formulating guidelines to steer the board, are they controlling the board, and do they undertake activities to hold board members accountable? Material accountability refers to the content and is therefore more specific. It relates to questions such as the following: is the board keeping its promises? Does it operate within the policy and financial limits set by the council?

For this research we decided to deal with accountability as procedural accountability. This decision was based on the same considerations as mentioned earlier for responsiveness. From a democratic point of view, using procedural accountability is better, since material accountability is not always desirable¹². Moreover it is typically also rather complicated to measure accountability.

As for responsiveness, we can distinguish between policy and service accountability. Policy accountability refers to the content: accountability in terms of effectiveness and efficiency (Day and Klein 1987). Service accountability refers to the quality: accountability with regard to specific complaints (Rubin 1996; Pollitt 1986). Political accountability might focus on two questions: is the board's policy fruitful in achieving the desired effects formulated by the council (effectiveness) and did the board stay within the budget (compliance; cf. financial¹³ accountability)? For the same reason as discussed for responsiveness, we are interested in the activities of councillors to secure both policy and service accountability.

3.3.2 *Accountable to and by whom?*

The role of the council in securing accountability is different from its role in responsiveness. With regard to responsiveness the council has to act responsively, while with regard to accountability it needs to act in such a way as to guarantee that the board takes the opinions of the council into account. The council needs to hold the board to account and force the board be accountable. This type of accountability is referred to in the literature as upward accountability¹⁴ (cf. Sinclair 1995: 223).

There are various forms of upward accountability; for instance, organisational¹⁵, legal¹⁶, administrative¹⁷, and political accountability (Gray and

Jenkins 1985; 1993; Sinclair 1995; Rubin 1996; Johnston and Romzek 1999; Bovens 2005). In this research we deal with political accountability. One type of political accountability concerns the relationship between the council and the board (local level). According to the political accountability chain: civil servants are accountable to the alderman, to the executive or board, to the council and hence to the electors (cf. Sinclair 1995: 225). In this research we concentrate on the accountability relation between the council and the board: the board should be accountable to the elected representatives (cf. Bovens 2005).

Accountability (between council and board) takes place both on the individual and the collective level. The council as a collective defines the main municipal activities to steer the board, subsequently controls the board and possibly punishes the board. The main activities cannot be determined by a single councillor, but only by a council's decision (support of the majority). Controlling often happens on an individual level: one councillor presents a question to one alderman¹⁸. Punishing an alderman, for instance, by a vote of no confidence can, however, only happen by a council's decision. Therefore, both councillors as individuals and the council as a collective can hold the board to account. Even so we can say that holding the board to account always starts with an individual initiative. Therefore, in this research we focus on the extent to which individual councillors hold the board to account. The principle of accountability refers both to the collective and the individual level: at a collective level because BMA decision-making is based on the principle of collegiality. According to this principle, not one alderman, but the BMA as a collective should be held accountable for most executive decisions. However, individual aldermen can be held to account (by asking him questions or asking him to give explanations).

3.3.3 *Accountable: How?*

In answering the final questions of 'how to hold to account' or 'through which means¹⁹' it is important to realise that we use a procedural definition of accountability. Consequently, we are particularly interested in accountability *activities* (cf. procedural responsiveness). In order for the council to hold the board to account, they should 1) make clear what they expect from the board, and subsequently, 2) control the board (gather information on their performance

and evaluate it accordingly). If necessary, the council can sanction members of the board or the board as a collective (cf. Lupia 2003: 35). We will now discuss the council's activities in these two elements of 'holding to account'.

First the council needs to formulate clear, general principles and guidelines²⁰ to steer (and later on to control) the board. This involves regulation, budgets, and plans that include some kind of regulation (Royal Commission Elzinga 2000: 454). The council provides the board with a framework stating how they should execute a specific policy. In order to formulate policy guidelines the Local Government Act 2002 provides several instruments: the right of initiative and amendment, and the authority to determine regulation and the program budget.

A second way in which the council can hold the board accountable is by keeping the board under scrutiny. In order to control, information is necessary. Information is 'the life-blood of accountability' (Day and Klein 1987: 243). Accountability involves both the collection of information and the evaluation of the information obtained in order to judge (Fenstermacher 1979: 331; Stewart 1984: 14-15).²¹ A key word in the collection of information is oversight. '[O]versight involves gathering information about agencies or programs and taking steps to correct any problems' (Levine et al. 1990: 117). Oversight varies in formality. Formal ways are comprised of hearings, requesting reports and sending letters of inquiry. Informal manners are conversations at lunch or over the phone, and information gleaned from the media or constituents (Levine et al. 1990: 118). A formal method of oversight guaranteed by the LGA 2002 is that councillors have the right to ask questions to board members. The board is also legally obliged to produce and present annual reports. The board has to provide the council with information proactively. Often the information is provided in policy or financial reports. The information can also be provided by information intermediaries, such as political parties, citizen budget groups, and the media (Patton 1992: 173-174).

Once councillors have the information on the actions, decisions and performance of the board, they need to evaluate it carefully. The council can then ask the board to give account. This can be done on an individual level: one councillor asks one board member to explain and justify a certain decision. It can also be more rigorous: the council asks the board to explain the executed policy. The council can even give a vote of no confidence to an alderman (or the

board). If this does not result in the resignation of the alderman the council can decide to fire him (article 49, LGA).

Thus, the essence of accountability activities for councillors is that, on the one hand, they communicate their policy guidelines to the board, and on the other hand, they make sure that the board is held accountable for its performance.

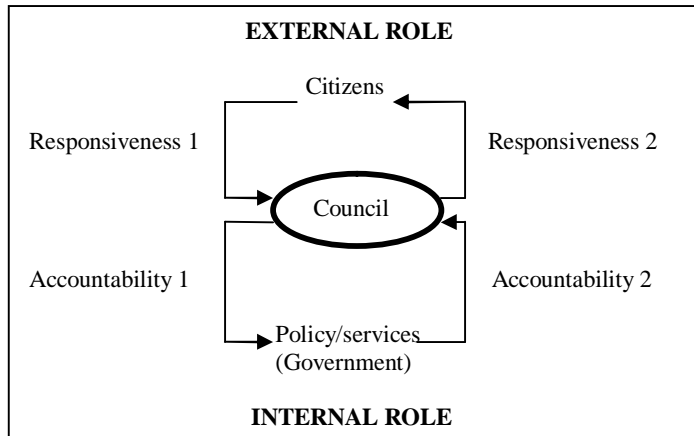
3.3.4 *Accountability definition*

The three questions – accountable for what, to who, and how – sharpened our conception of accountability. In this study, (procedural) accountability is defined as follows: *The extent to which councillors undertake activities to formulate general principles and guidelines and make them known to the board in order to steer the board, and the extent to which they control and scrutinise the quality, effectiveness, efficiency, and compliance of the board's policy and service provision.*

3.4 **Summary**

In a representative democracy, citizens elect representatives who should, as is included in the word, represent them. Another task of the representatives is to control the performance of the executives. As a result, representatives have an essential role in assuring responsiveness and accountability. The LGA 2002 tries to improve both the councillor's performance of his external and internal task. The external role refers to the relationship between the council and citizens, more specifically to the efforts of councillors to act responsive to citizens. The internal role refers to the relationship between the council and the BMA, or the efforts of councillors to secure accountability. Responsiveness can be divided into two parts: 'listening to citizens and expressing their concerns in the public debate' and 'explaining policy decisions and service to citizens'. Accountability can be separated into 'formulating policy guidelines and principles to steer the board' and 'controlling the board' (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Responsiveness and accountability in local government



Responsiveness 1 = listening to citizens
Responsiveness 2 = explaining to citizens
Accountability 1 = steering the BMA
Accountability 2 = controlling the BMA

4 Explaining attitudinal and behavioural change

Reformers expected that the 2002 institutional reform in Dutch local government would have several democratic effects. In the previous chapter we explicated these effects to improved levels of responsiveness and accountability. In accordance with our research question, we are also interested in explaining these possible changes. Therefore, this chapter concentrates on explaining attitudinal and behavioural change. The relationship between institutional change and attitudinal and behavioural change (in terms of responsiveness and accountability) is not as simple as it may sound. In fact, it is very complex. Behind the surface of the expectation that changing A will fix B, a whole world of theories, perspectives and assumptions is hiding. The linkage between institutional and behavioural change is very difficult to understand. ‘When rules are changed, behaviors do not necessarily adopt, or they do in ways that do not comply to the rules’ (Lanzara 1998: 21). Denters, Klok and Visser (2001) are equally critical; they argue that the sequence ‘formal changes leading to cultural changes, leading to behavioural changes (leading to an improvement of the local democracy)’ should not be taken for granted. Therefore, it is relevant to discuss the conditions under which institutional change will lead to behavioural change. This is the central concern of this chapter.

4.1 Two levels of analysis

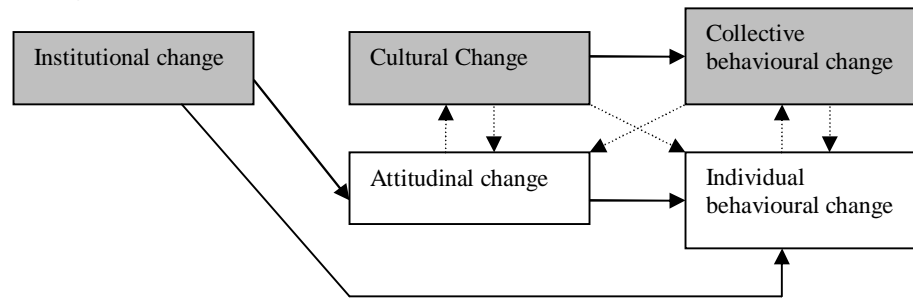
In the previous chapter we discussed the concepts of responsiveness and accountability. Following the procedural definition of both concepts, we are interested in the activities that councillors undertake to contribute to the levels of responsiveness and accountability in local government. Hence, both concepts refer to behaviour.

The success or failure of an institutional change depends on whether the desired behaviour is established, and to what extent. Often outcomes do not meet the expectations of the initiators of change (Attewell and Gerstein 1979). It might be the case that ‘organizations ignore clear instructions; sometimes

they pursue them more forcefully than was intended; sometimes they protect policymakers from folly; sometimes they do not' (March 1981: 563-564). Elements of resistance¹ to change make it more difficult for the desired behaviour to occur. Behaviour is often unpredictable (cf. Merton 1936).

As explained in chapter 2, reformers of the LGA 2002 expected that an institutional change would lead to an improvement in the levels of responsiveness and accountability in local government. To understand their expectation better, Figure 4.1 shows the relationship between institutional change and behavioural change. There are two layers in this relationship. One layer is the *collective level*: how does the council, or the municipality, adapt to the new law? The other layer is the *individual level*: how do individual councillors adapt to the new law? The aim of the reformers is to improve the level of responsiveness and accountability at the collective level. However, in order to change the collective level, change at the individual level is needed. Therefore, to say something about the collective level we have to start by looking at the individual level, since collectives are not able to 'feel', 'think', or 'act'. If we talk about collective attitudes, orientations (culture) or behaviour, we can only do so by referring to the attitude and the conduct of the individual members that make up the collective. This is the reason why Coleman (1990) argues for the need of an *internal analysis* of system behaviour: the explanation of the behaviour of collective bodies (like a council) necessarily requires the study of processes internal to the collective actor (here the council), involving individuals who are members of that particular social system: councillors. There are several reasons to look at the individual level; some are fundamental, others are more pragmatic (see Coleman 1990). The most fundamental reason is that we need to understand the individual level. After all, the individuals have to be influenced in order for their behaviour to be changed (i.e., influencing groups starts by influencing individuals; Coleman 1990).

Figure 4.1: Expected relationship between institutional and behavioural change



4.2 Factors determining behaviour

In order to answer the central question of this research – what are the democratic effects (in terms of responsiveness and accountability) of the 2002 institutional reform in Dutch local government and how can these effects be explained – it is necessary to make clear how individual behaviour is shaped. Therefore, this section focuses on individual behaviour in general and the factors determining that behaviour. Throughout this section we will apply our findings to the behaviour of councillors.

4.2.1 Behavioural assumptions

Several models exist to explain individual behaviour. The two main models are the *economic* and the *sociological behaviour* models. The first concentrates on the individual's self-interest. Wealth-maximisation is a key element in this model. The second model puts emphasis on the social context in which the individual is situated. In this view people's behaviour is 'determined by the taboos, customs, mores, and traditions of the society in which they were born and raised' (Jensen and Meckling 1994: 10). We can also clarify the difference between these two behavioural motives in a slightly different way. When we define behaviour as the outcome of (un)conscious decision making, the question arises of how the decisions are being made (Heyse 2005). The literature offers two answers. Firstly, the *logic of consequence* (March 1994), which is related to the economic behaviour model. According to this model, people act on the basis

of instrumental rationality (Downs 1957; Quade and Boucher 1968). People make decisions based on their preferences, the available alternatives, and the possible consequences of those alternatives. Secondly, there is the *logic of appropriateness* (March 1994), which relates to the sociological behaviour model, with rules and identities as central elements (Burns and Flam 1987). This model argues that when individuals make a decision, they do not act according to the logic of consequence but only take into account what they think they are expected to do in a given situation (Heyse 2005). Thus, people act according to their role conception and identity in a certain situation by following rules they understand as needing to be applied to the situation at hand.

The literature shows that human behaviour typically reflects elements of both the 'logic of consequences' and the 'logic of appropriateness'. According to North (1990), human behaviour has two important aspects: personal motivation and deciphering the environment. Wealth-maximisation appears not to be the only motivation for individuals. Ideologies, altruism² and self-imposed standards of conduct are also important motivations and can be seen as trade-offs with wealth motivations. The environment also influences human behaviour. These elements make it difficult to predict human behaviour: 'the more complex and unique the issues we confront, the more uncertain the outcome' (North 1990: 22).

Scharpf (1997) agrees, but he uses the sociological perspective as a point of departure. He believes that human activity cannot be explained exclusively by cultural beliefs and institutionalised rules. Human actors are 'intelligent, and they have views of their own interests and preferences of their own, which sometimes bring them to evade or to violate the norms and rules that they are supposed to follow' (Scharpf 1997: 21). Actors will always have a certain degree of autonomy, even within a given context, such as the institutional framework in local government. Nevertheless, human actors are not always rational, single-minded, self-interested maximisers.

Both the economic and the sociological model include a form of rationality that helps individuals to shape their behaviour. In the economic model, this rationality concentrates on the individual's self interest; in the sociological model on the social interest. However, a person's self interests and the social interests (which cannot be separated because they influence each other) involve some uncertainties. These uncertainties are usually caused by incomplete

information with respect to the behaviour of other individuals. In addition to this, individuals have a limited mental capacity to process, organise, and utilise information (North 1990: 25). This means that individuals make sense of their environment and consequently determine their behaviour based on their own perceptions. Therefore, the rationality of individuals in both behaviour models is *bounded*. Bounded rationality refers to the fact that there is a difference between ‘the real world and the actor’s perception of it and reasoning about it’ (Simon 1986: 210-211). With regard to the economic behaviour model, individuals have limited insight into the alternatives and consequences of their behaviour. For the sociological model, individuals have a limited view on the norms and expectations of others. These limitations determine the choice set of actors (North 1990).

Previous paragraphs showed the importance of the economic and sociological behaviour model and a combination of these models. Therefore, this research uses the ‘homo socio-economicus’ or the Resourceful Evaluative Maximising model (REM³) (Brunner and Meckling 1977; Wippler 1983 (1996); Lindenberg 1990; Jensen and Meckling 1994). In this model, four assumptions are made about actors. To start, each actor cares and is an evaluator. The actor cares about almost everything (not only his self interest, but also social interests) and is willing to make trade-offs and substitutions. His or her preferences are consistently ordered. Second, the desires of the actors are insatiable. Actors always want more, referring both to tangible and intangible things. Furthermore, actors try to maximise their utility. Under given constraints (such as energy, time, money, physical constraints and cognitive restrictions) they try to accomplish the most desirable situation. Therefore, actors estimate which alternative increases their utility most. Fourthly, actors are creative or resourceful. They are resourceful in tracing changes in their environment, seeing through the consequences of the change and creating new opportunities with this knowledge. Elements of learning, including the use of knowledge, experience and intelligence are all important (Jensen and Meckling 1994; de Boer 2003: 114-116).

The REM model uses the strong points of the economic and sociological behaviour model and leaves out the weak points⁴. Economic elements are the ordering of preferences and maximising of utility. There are also some sociological elements in the REM model, such as explicit acknowledgement of non-material values and needs. Social customs, norms and values play an

important role in the REM model. They influence the attitudes and actions of actors. However, the model is not social deterministic. In the REM model, the cultural and social factors are reflected in human behaviour without actually determining that behaviour. This is an important asset; because of their creativity, individuals are able to deliberately change social conditions, and they can decide not to conform to the rules and norms (cf. de Boer 2003). This last point is relevant for our research because we want to explain the effects of the LGA 2002 on the councillors' attitudes and behaviour.

Even though the REM model does not provide a complete description of human behaviour, this model helps us to understand human behaviour (Jensen and Meckling 1994: 7)⁵. The REM model helps us to understand which factors explain changes in people's attitudes and behaviour:

‘When underlying costs and benefits of various actions change, individuals are faced with a conflict between new, optimal forms of behavior and culturally accepted but inefficient forms...if the new behavior patterns are indeed optimal, the population will – through experience, education and death – gradually accommodate the new behavior in the culture.’

(Jensen and Meckling 1994: 11)

In section 4.3.3 we will discuss specific change mechanisms: socialisation and selection. For now, it is important to note that we decided to follow the behavioural assumptions of the REM model. Thus, behavioural choices are made on the basis of an actor's own interests, role and norm conceptions and resources (such as competencies and capacities) (cf. de Boer 2003: 117).

4.2.2 *Theory of Planned Behaviour*

There are several models including the assumptions made by the REM model that are able to explain attitudinal and behavioural change. One example of such a model (that gives attention to both economic and sociological elements of human behaviour) is the sociological role model. The role model studies the impact of an organisation upon an individual (Kahn et al 1964: 35) and gives attention to both thoughts (attitudes and perceptions) and deeds (behaviour) (Biddle 1979: 334). However, for this research we chose to use the behaviour model of Ajzen and Fishbein: the *Theory of Planned Behaviour* (TPB; Ajzen

1991). This model was chosen because it is more detailed than others, such as the role model. The TPB is an advanced version of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)⁶ of Ajzen and Fishbein (1980; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). De Boer (2003) showed that the model of Ajzen and Fishbein could be very useful in understanding the effect of an institutional change on an individual's attitude and behaviour. We will first discuss how the TPB incorporates the assumptions of the REM model, and subsequently discuss how the TPB explains behaviour.

The TPB takes the assumptions of the REM model into account by including both personal and social aspects, motivations and abilities. The model assumes subjective and bounded rationality. It combines the 'logic of consequentiality' and the 'logic of appropriateness' by using both attitudes (logic of consequences) and subjective norms (logic of appropriateness) as factors determining human behaviour.

An individual's behaviour is determined by his motivation. According to the theory of Ajzen and Fishbein an individual's motivation consists of two parts: his *attitude* and his *subjective norms*. In the self-determination theory (Sheeran et al 1999; Ryan and Deci 2000), authors refer to autonomous and controlled motivation. Autonomous motivation entails self-chosen or *internal motivation* (cf. attitude). Individuals want to show certain behaviour because they value this specific activity or have an interest in this. There is a sense of personal commitment to this behaviour. Internal motivation leads to self-determined behaviour, which is mainly based on the individual's own choice. Controlled motivation, on the other hand, refers to the intention to display certain behaviour as a result of *external pressure* (cf. subjective norm). Because of a bribe, the fear of being examined, or for other reasons external to the individual, individuals show the desired behaviour. This motivation causes controlled behaviour: behaviour that is based on compliance (the individual experiences a reduction in choice space) (Deci et al 1991: 326, 327; Ryan and Deci 2000: 69).

The processes behind internal motivation and behaviour, and external motivation and behaviour are different⁷. Furthermore, the relative importance of internal and external considerations differs in each situation. However, in general, researchers (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Miniard and Cohen 1981; Trafimow and Finlay 1996; cf. Sheeran et al 1999) have found that internal motivations or attitudes have a stronger influence on behaviour than external motivations or subjective norms (though there are some

exceptions). Nevertheless, subjective norms are an important predictor for behaviour: in other words, most behaviours are slightly (but significantly) under external control (Finley et al 1997). We will now discuss the concepts of attitudes and subjective norms.

A person's *attitude* refers to the person's beliefs that the behaviour leads to certain outcomes, and his evaluations of these outcomes (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). Attitudes are based on a combination of a belief and a value (Jones and Gerard 1967: 157). A person will have beliefs about the likelihood of certain behaviour outcomes. He will also have a certain appreciation of these behaviour outcomes (value). One behaviour outcome may be more desirable than another. The combination of these two components determines a person's attitude.

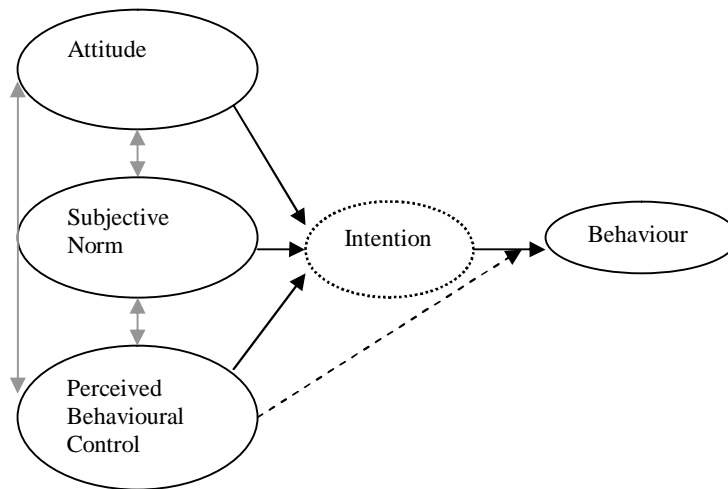
Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) refer to subjective norms as 'the person's beliefs that specific individuals or groups think he should or should not perform the behavior and his motivation to comply with the specific referents' (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980: 8). Normative beliefs can also be described as the perceived behavioural expectations of relevant others (How should I behave?). Together with the motivation to comply with this expectation (Do I care?), this determines the subjective norm. Therefore, such norms are about the social pressure to perform or not to perform certain behaviours (Ajzen 1991: 188): 'Changes in people's behavior include ... the willingness to engage in specific behaviors when they are considered appropriate by members of other cultures' (Brislin 1993: 57).

Besides a person's *motivation* to show certain behaviour, he also has to *be able* to show that behaviour. In the TPB this element is called the individual's *perceived behavioural control*, which refers to the actor's *ability*. The perceived behavioural control can be defined as: 'the people's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior of interest' (Ajzen 1991: 183). Controlled beliefs focus on the perceived presence of factors that enable or obstruct the performance of a particular behaviour. Together with the perceived power of these factors, the perceived behavioural control is determined. People's control over their behaviour is determined by non-motivational factors such as opportunities and the availability of resources (e.g., time, money, skills, the cooperation of others) (Ajzen 1991).

In the beginning of this chapter we made a distinction between the individual and the collective level. The TPB is a theory that tries to explain the individual's behaviour. Bagozzi and Lee (2002) describe the attitude and the

perceived behavioural control as ‘individual-level reasons for performing the personal act’ (226), and the subjective norms as ‘the perceived interpersonal pressure to perform the personal act’ (226). Figure 4.2 shows the model for the TPB and the influence of the three behavioural concepts (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control) on the behaviour.

Figure 4.2: Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)



Source: Ajzen (1991)

After what has already been explained, a few additional comments will suffice to explain Figure 4.2. The attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control are correlated. Furthermore, the model of Ajzen and Fishbein includes the concept intention⁸: a mix of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control determines the intention to perform certain behaviour. An intention to perform certain behaviour can only be formed ‘when the person believes he or she has the wherewithal to perform the behavior’ (Bagozzi 1992: 180).

However, in our theoretical model we will not include the behavioural intention as an additional factor, because we prefer not to complicate the model further by adding yet another factor. Instead, we would like to model the effects of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control.⁹ In order to do this we need to incorporate *interaction effects*. This means that a low level of perceived behavioural control (PBC) complicates or facilitates particular

behavioural choices. More precisely, the level of perceived behavioural control influences the relation between attitude and behaviour and between the subjective norm and behaviour. An actor is better able to convert his attitude or subjective norm to a specific behaviour if he has the skills to do so. The total effect of the three factors – attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control – is the intention of an individual to perform certain behaviour. The interaction effects can be represented in the behaviour model by arrows from the perceived behavioural control to the arrows between attitude and behaviour, and between subjective norm and behaviour.

We can now conclude that according to the model of Ajzen and Fishbein there needs to be a stimulus to show certain behaviour. Two main types of stimuli are the individual's attitude and subjective norm. The influence of the stimulus on the behaviour can be increased by a person's ability to perform certain behaviour or decreased by a lack of ability.

4.2.3 The TPB and local councillors

So far we have discussed the Theory of Planned Behaviour in general terms. In this section we will apply the theory to our case. How can the councillor's attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control influence his behaviour? Earlier we defined that the aim of the national legislator was to increase the levels of responsiveness and accountability in local government. We will describe how the councillor should change his attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control.

With regard to the councillor's attitude, in order to show the desired behaviour the councillor needs to be willing to act as a representative and scrutiniser (internal motivation). In allocating scarce resources (time, energy) the councillor needs to consider relevant activities like listening to citizens, explaining policy decisions to citizens, formulating guidelines to steer the board and controlling the executives as important. A positive attitude toward these activities might result in increased levels of responsiveness and accountability.

The subjective norm refers to the external motivation of councillors: what does the councillor think he is expected to do according to others? Several others can have an influence on the attitude and/or behaviour of the local councillor: citizens, fellow councillors, party members or members of the BMA. Because of the new LGA 2002, these actors might have new role expectations

of the councillor. Notice that relevant others can only influence the council if councillors are aware of these (different) role expectations. In this research we focus on the subjective norm from citizens and other councillors. Since the councillor is a representative of the citizens, the expectation is that councillors care about the role expectations of citizens. Another type of actor close to the councillor are his colleagues; possibly the councillor takes the role expectation of his colleagues into account. We do not take the subjective norms of other actors into account, because councillors are most often confronted with the expectations of citizens and their fellow councillors. A positive subjective norm towards responsiveness and accountability activities might result in increased levels of responsiveness and accountability.

The perceived behavioural control refers to the councillor's perception of the ease or difficulty to perform the desired behaviour. Do councillors have the instruments and resources to implement the new law and change their behaviour in line with the LGA 2002? Councillors who feel equipped and skilled to act responsive and secure accountability might be better able to convert their motivation into behaviour.

We can now formulate two hypotheses:

- Ø The more positive the councillors' attitudes towards responsiveness and accountability, the more efforts they will make to secure responsiveness and accountability. *This relation is stronger the higher the councillor's perceived behavioural control.*
- Ø The more positive the subjective norm from citizens and other councillors towards responsiveness and accountability, the more efforts councillors will make to secure responsiveness and accountability. *This relation is stronger the higher the councillor's perceived behavioural control.*

Based on the theory and research we also have a third hypothesis:

- Ø The councillor's attitude towards responsiveness and accountability will be a better predictor of his behaviour than the councillor's subjective norms (from citizens and other councillors) towards responsiveness and accountability.

4.3 Influence of the LGA 2002

So far, it has remained unclear how the Theory of Planned Behaviour contributes to answering our research question (explaining the effects of the LGA 2002). In this section we will focus on the role of the LGA 2002 in the TPB model.

The institutional reform can be included in the model as an *external variable*. The external variable affects the beliefs or influences the strength of the beliefs of the behavioural components (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980: 83): attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control. This means that there is ‘no necessary *direct* relation between any external variable and a given behavior’ (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980: 85; italic word added). Therefore, we need to explain the influence of external variables on behaviour by use of one of the three behavioural components: attitude, subjective norm or perceived behavioural control. With regard to Figure 4.2, the external variables can be placed on the left side of the model.

How does the institutional reform influence the behavioural components? We should separate the influence of the institutional reform into two elements: 1) the influence of the new formal rules, and 2) the influence of the Innovation Program. Before we discuss how these two components can influence the attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and the levels of responsiveness and accountability in the council, we will first show that the policy theory of the local government reform (Elzinga report and Explanatory Memorandum) links nicely with the TPB.

4.3.1 Policy theory and TPB

In chapter 2 we outlined the main arguments that were presented in defence of the Local Government Act 2002. The Royal Commission Elzinga explicated how this institutional change would lead to behavioural change and the achievement of the desired goals (increased responsiveness and accountability). Looking at the policy theory from the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, two conclusions can be drawn.

First, the TPB is indeed a very useful theory to examine this institutional change. The three concepts – attitude, subjective norm and perceived

behavioural control – are distinctly present in the general description of how this new law would lead to the desired goals:

- i. Councillors should become more willing to perform the desired behaviour (adopt new attitudes) because the LGA 2002 underlines the importance of councillors to act in a responsive manner and secure accountability.
- ii. A cultural change should be engendered (more positive subjective norm towards responsiveness and accountability activities) as a result of the formal changes.
- iii. Councillors should acquire more resources to perform their responsiveness and accountability activities as a result of delegation of tasks to the board (creates more time for councillors to spend on their main tasks), and more rights for councillors to execute their tasks.

Therefore, the TPB is a very useful theory in examining the effects of the LGA 2002.

However, a closer look at the policy theory from the perspective of the TPB shows that not every aspect of the policy theory (attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control) is well described: how do the reformers want to influence these aspects? Reformers want to change the attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control but are not clear on how exactly they want to accomplish this. In addition to this the LGA 2002 focuses mainly on elements of perceived behavioural control (more time, better equipment, etc.). Attitude and subjective norm are only implicitly mentioned. In the Innovation Program more attention is given to these behavioural concepts, though the emphasis here is also on how councillors can execute their tasks (perceived behavioural control).

Therefore, our second conclusion is that, from the perspective of the TPB, the policy theory has some flaws in terms of clarity and the lack of attention to certain behaviour components (attitude and subjective norms).

4.3.2 Effects of the new formal rules

The new rules of the game might change the councillor's attitude and subjective norm because people do have a tendency to reduce inconsistencies between their institutional context and their behavioural orientations, which, at least for

some, will result in adapting to the new rules and learning the behavioural responses that are in line with the new institutions (Festinger 1957). The *theory of cognitive dissonance* argues that ‘the presence of dissonance gives rise to pressures to reduce or eliminate dissonance’ (Festinger 1957: 18). Dissonance refers to incongruity or imbalance between what a person knows and what he does; in this case, there is dissonance between an environmental element (LGA 2002) and behavioural elements (responsiveness and accountability activities). One solution to reduce dissonance is to adopt new attitudes and change one’s behaviour (Festinger 1957: 19). The dissonance can also influence the role expectations of other actors: the councillor’s colleagues will take on expectations in line with the LGA 2002. As a result, after 2002 the councillor may have different subjective norms and therefore is likely to change his behaviour. This might also apply to the role expectations of citizens, though it is less likely to assume that citizens will notice a change in the institutional structure and will adapt their role expectations of councillors to this. However, the main point is that in general people try to bridge the gap between the institutional context and their behavioural orientations.¹⁰

As explained in section 4.3.1 the new formal rules mainly influence the perceived behavioural control of councillors. To start, the LGA 2002 creates new possibilities for councillors to execute their tasks. The new legislature introduced new instruments enabling councillors to accomplish their role as scrutiniser (and not so much their role as representative). Furthermore, aldermen are no longer part of several arenas (e.g. the council and council committees). The exclusion of aldermen from these arenas increases the independency of the council. As a result, councillors have more room for accomplishing their controlling task.

4.3.3 *Effects of the Innovation Program*

The Innovation Program might also (indirectly) affect the councillor’s behaviour. Two change mechanisms may be relevant here: the mechanism of *socialisation* and *selective recruitment and exit*. Both processes can realise organisational change (Knoke 1973; Oldham and Hackman 1981; Chatman 1989, 1991; Putnam et al. 1993). Either of these mechanisms might change the person-organisation fit (PO fit). This means that as a result of socialisation and selection, the number of people that have personal values in line with the norms

and values of the organisation increases (Chatman 1989, 1991; Cable and Judge 1996, 1997; Cable and Parsons 2001). The PO fit (or congruence between the individual and organisation) affects the individuals' attitudes and behaviours (Kristof 1996; Pervin 1989), but it also works the other way around: the attitude and behaviour of individuals determine the PO-fit. A low PO fit¹¹ could have at least three possible outcomes: the person adapts to the organisation, the organisation's values change (not very likely), or the person leaves the organisation. In creating a PO fit, socialisation and selection are not competitive processes, but they can operate jointly to get a particular outcome (Chatman 1989: 345). Because of the socialisation mechanism, councillors who work under the new institutional conditions will gradually adapt to their new environment and develop new attitudes and habits. The selection mechanism, on the other hand, affects the composition of the council as a result of new requirements that are used in the selection procedures of new candidates; this 'new' council might show a different culture and behaviour.

We will discuss how the Innovation Program might affect the councillors' attitude and behaviour through both these mechanisms. First, the socialisation mechanism is explained and subsequently applied to our case. After this discussion, we elaborate on the selection mechanism and apply this to our context of institutional reform and councillors.

4.3.3.1 The socialisation mechanism

Not only does the socialisation mechanism play a role in the Innovation Program; this mechanism is important for the effectiveness of institutional reform in general. However, the Innovation Program pays extra attention to this mechanism.

Socialisation refers to learning processes that lead to behaviours, attitudes and skills that are necessary to fulfil (new) roles and to function effectively in social systems. Socialisation takes place in numerous contexts, primarily in families, schools and informal groups (e.g. amongst friends), and in voluntary associations and formal organisations as well. All these social contexts, unintentionally or deliberately, shape their members' views and actions. Formal organisations have often designed programs to stimulate the development of attitudes, skills and activities amongst their members, in order to bring about organisational change or to make the organisation function more effectively (Feldman 1976: 317; van Maanen 1976; Biddle 1979; van Maanen and Schein

1979; Fischer 1986; Saks and Ashfort 1997). Feldman (1981) underlines the importance of socialisation programs: 'researchers and practitioners have expected socialization programs to increase the motivation of employees to certain types of behaviour' (Feldman 1981: 317).

Socialisation programs are especially important during reorganisations. In order to make structural reforms in the formal organisation work, it is often deemed necessary to supplement the structural reforms with programs to change the attitudes, skills and behaviour of the members. The socialisation process influences all elements of the TPB model: it concerns the role definition (attitudes), group norms and values (culture), and skills (perceived behavioral control) (Feldman 1981: 309).

Resocialisation is about establishing a match between the priorities and values of the individual and the organisation. A match leads to organisation members who are happier, have positive feelings, and are more likely to remain a member of the organisation (Meir and Hasson 1982; Chatman 1991). Those members who have a low fit but decide to change rather than to leave may end up being valuable supporters of the organisation's values, priorities and goals (Chatman 1991: 464). Re-socialisation focuses on reshaping prevalent attitudes and values (McCorkle and Korn 1954) and is therefore bound to be a toilsome process. Previous socialisation not only provides actors with attitudes, but also with a 'cultural bias' with which they 'view the world' (Thompson et al. 1990). Changing such an established biased view is likely to be a very time-consuming process with uncertain results. Therefore, it has been argued that the 'rhythms of institutional change are slow' (Putnam et al. 1993: 60).

Some individuals can be more susceptible to socialisation than others. 'Previous studies have shown that susceptibility is greatest at the time of entry into the organization and then declines with tenure (Louis 1980)' (Harrison and Carroll 1991). It seems that organisational tenure matters. This expectation is supported by the Upper Echelons Perspective (UEP). According to this perspective, managerial/executive background characteristics partially predict organisational outcomes in terms of strategic choices and performance levels (Hambrick and Mason 1984). Hence, certain profiles lead to certain strategies/behaviour. An important background characteristic is organisational tenure (Bergh 2001). Shorter-tenured members with fresh perspectives might enhance organisational change (Wiersema and Bantel 1993). They pursue more innovative strategies compared to longer-tenured members (Bantel and Jackson

1989; Thomas et al. 1991). Furthermore, executives with short organisational tenure are characterized by open-mindedness (Bergh 2001). Long-tenured employees are possibly more committed to prior strategies (Hambrick et al. 1993), which might result in resistance to change. In Bergh's (2001: 608) words:

'Executives committed to former methods of managing the organizations, who rely on routine and familiar information sources, are vulnerable to inertia, and have tendencies to become rigid and resistant to change ...'

However, there is also theoretical support for the opposite argument: the longer an actor serves in an organisation, the more flexible the actor is in adapting to changes in the environment. Bergh (2001: 603) describes the Resource Based View (RBV): organisation members with long organisational tenure have the advantage of organisation-specific knowledge that enables them to enhance the process of socialisation. Longer-tenured members have unique, valuable and non-transferable knowledge and skills not available to their less experienced colleagues (Cannella and Hambrick 1993; Lanzara 1998). Based on these resources, more experienced members are more open-minded and better able to adapt to new circumstances. Less experienced actors are forced to stick to a standard action repertoire because of their inadequate skills and knowledge (Bergh 2001).

According to the UEP and the RBV, the experience of an organisational member can also influence his perceived behavioural control. The UEP states that there is a risk that longer-tenured actors can become stuck in former routines and therefore are less able to perform the desired (new) behaviour. In reference to this, Lanzara (1998) refers to competency and resource endowments (see Textbox 4.1). Thus, according to the UEP, the perceived behaviour control of longer-tenured actors is expected to be low. The RBV on the other hand argues that the longer an actor is in function, the more knowledge and skills he will have that will help him to deal with organisational change. As a result, the actor is better able to show the desired (new) behaviour: he will have a high level of perceived behavioural control.

Textbox 4.1: Competency and resource endowments

Competency and resource endowments are about individual skills and collective routines: ‘actors know what to do with and within a specific rule structure or institutional framework’ (Lanzara 1998: 12). Experts are difficult to replace when institutional structure changes, but also taking ‘old’ people to new organisations can create problems: ‘if the existing competencies are called in, they tend to implant most of the old rules, practices and habits, which may sabotage any innovative effort and reinstate many features of the previous regime (...). After some time the outcome of the process of institution building starts to look strangely similar to what the innovators wanted to get rid of’ (Lanzara 1998: 13).

4.3.3.2 Socialisation and the council

What does this mean for our case? We can first establish that municipal councils are not any different from most organisations, in that they have a variety of formal and informal mechanisms for the socialisation of new members (Dearlove 1973). The Innovation Program is an example of a campaign that was designed to enhance the likeliness of councillors showing the desired attitude and behaviour. By implementing the institutional reform in 2002, the reformers aimed at a resocialisation of councillors: a shift from ‘old’ role orientations and behaviour, to orientations and behaviour in line with the LGA 2002. The Innovation Program tried to enforce this process by providing councillors with courses and guidebooks on how to deal with their role as representative and scrutiniser.

The socialisation process is also important in the adjustment to the formal rules. Based on the policy theory, the TPB, and the socialisation mechanism, we expect that councillors from municipalities that implemented the LGA 2002 in an early stage and to its full extent (in chapter 2 we explained that implementation rates can vary) have been more intensively socialised and are therefore more likely to show attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control in line with the LGA 2002. According to socialisation theory, the more time councillors have to get used to a new institutional structure (early and complete implementation), the more likely it becomes that they will adopt their role orientations in line with the ideas behind the LGA 2002. A long socialisation process also enables councillors to get used to their new rights and instruments, and consequently increases the ability of councillors to perform the desired behaviour. We can now formulate three hypotheses:

- Ø The earlier and more completely the formal rules of the LGA 2002 are implemented, the more positive the councillors' attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.
- Ø The earlier and more completely the formal rules of the LGA 2002 are implemented, the more positive the subjective norm from other councillors towards responsiveness and accountability.
- Ø The earlier and more completely the formal rules of the LGA 2002 are implemented, the higher the councillors' perceived behavioural control.

We do not expect to find a relation between the speed and extent of implementation of the LGA 2002 and the subjective norm from citizens. Presumably, citizens will not even notice that something has changed. After all, the formal rules of the LGA 2002 are very internally focused: we cannot expect to find changes in the role expectations of citizens.

The strength of the socialisation process might differ for councillors depending on their organisational tenure. With regard to the relationship between organisation tenure and attitude there are two conflicting hypotheses: the UEP-hypothesis and the RBV-hypothesis. The UEP-hypothesis (expectation: negative relation between tenure and attitude) seems more applicable, because the RBV-hypothesis (expectation: positive relation between tenure and attitude) ignores that action orientations and practices are inextricably bound up with vested interests and power relations, and this is especially likely in a political context. From this point of view it could be argued that although long-tenured, more senior members may be capable of changing their ways, they would be unwilling to do so because of their vested interest in the status quo. Moreover, long-tenured members have a tendency to rely on routine and familiar information sources, which causes them to be inert and ill disposed toward change. Notice that this argumentation assumes that long-tenured councillors experience the LGA 2002 as a loss of influence or power (less governing authority)¹². With respect to the relation between organisation tenure and the councillor's perceived behavioural control, both the UEP and the RBV seem plausible.

This brings on three new hypotheses. The first hypothesis tries to explain attitudinal and behavioural change as a result of the socialisation process that is influenced by organisational tenure. The other two hypotheses focus on

explaining variances in two behavioural components (attitude and perceived behavioural control) between councillors.

- ∅ Councillors are more likely to change their attitude and behaviour in line with the LGA 2002 if they are socialised for some time in the new system; at the same time, councillors that have experience under the old system might have a more difficult time changing their attitude and behaviour to bring those in line with the LGA 2002.
- ∅ The experience of councillors in the old regime negatively influences their attitude towards responsiveness and accountability (according to UEP).

Concerning the relation between tenure and perceived behavioural control, we are indecisive on which hypothesis is more likely, the UEP-hypothesis or the RBV-hypothesis. Therefore, we formulate two alternative hypotheses:

- ∅ a) The councillors' experience negatively influences their perceived behavioural control (according to UEP).
- b) The councillors' experience positively influences their perceived behavioural control (according to RBV).

4.3.3.3 The selection mechanism

In this section we will discuss the selection mechanism. As with the socialisation mechanism, the selection mechanism not only plays a role in the Innovation Program, but this mechanism is important for the effectiveness of the complete institutional reform. However, the Innovation Program pays extra attention to this mechanism. Notice that the socialisation and selection mechanisms are linked: they can reinforce each other.

The mechanism of selection is very much a two-sided process: it is about the selective *exit* and the selective *recruitment* of members in an organisation. Changing the structure in an organisation might affect the process of selection. We will first discuss the effects for the exit and then the effects for the recruitment.

Exit

Harrison and Carroll (1991) state that ‘individuals leave organizations for a wide variety of reasons, including better jobs, dissatisfaction, and family concerns’ (Harrison and Carroll 1991: 560). As a result of institutional change, incumbent organisation members who do not feel at ease or who dysfunction in the (new) institutional environment may decide to quit their job or may be “thrown” out in favor of their more well-adapted colleagues. Indeed, organisation members might leave the organisation as a result of two different processes.

One possibility is that there is an incongruity between the organisation member’s personal normative role conception (ideas about what he ought to do) and his actual role performance. Actors who think the reforms (will) have a negative effect on the realisation of their personal objectives will have a stronger inclination to resign than actors who have a more positive attitude towards the reform (cf. Schneider 1987; Chatman 1991; Denton 1999; Cooper-Thomas et al. 2004: 55). An important element in this argument is the actor’s expectation that he/she will be able to do a satisfactory job. Organisation members who think that the institutional reforms have negatively affected their capacity to do their work properly will be less inclined to continue their job than colleagues who have a more positive evaluation of the reforms.¹³

In the second case, the relevant incongruity is between the normative role expectations (What should an organisation member do?) of relevant others and their perceptions of the actor’s role behaviour.¹⁴ Actors who are unable or unwilling to adjust their attitudes and behavioural strategies in line with the reforms are pressured by relevant others to leave the council (cf. Harrison and Carroll 1991: 560; cf. Schein 2000 (1999): 23).

Recruitment

We will now discuss the recruitment aspect of the selection process. Recruiters typically want to select candidates whose profile matches the organisation’s desired or current culture (Chatman 1989, 1991; Cable and Judge 1996; Cable and Judge 1997: 546; Cable and Parsons 2001). Again, the degree of congruity (P-O fit, see section 4.3.3) is crucially important. Through careful search and selection, role incongruities can be minimised (Harrison and Carroll 1991: 554). This matching process has two sides: attraction of job seekers and selection by the organisation (cf. Wanous 1980).

Attraction entails the self-selection of people based on person-organisation fit (Cable and Judge 1996). 'People actively search for and choose an organization to join' (Chatman 1989: 344). The first step in the process here is made by potential candidates. On the basis of personal motives (based on expectation about remuneration, prestige, job satisfaction and other 'rewards of office') people decide to apply or not. It is only after this that the selection commission can make its decision. Potential candidates will try to form expectations about the chances that they will be able to realise their personal objectives in the new position.

The other side of the matching process is selection by the organisation. Recruiters use the P-O fit to select new members (Cable and Judge 1997). New recruits who already have similar values and a close fit to the organisation are more likely to show the desired behaviour (Schneider 1987; Chatman 1989: 334, 344). Based on a set of pre-established criteria, the selector approaches candidates who are likely (or are already known) to meet these criteria. The invited candidates then have to decide whether or not they want to apply (and if selected, whether or not they actually want to accept the position). This perspective is organisation-centred, because it starts with the organisation's desire to minimise incongruities in order to improve job performance (Wanous 1980: 10).

Conclusion

New institutional conditions may be more attractive for some aspiring organisation members (with different backgrounds, "new" attitudes and habits) than for others (with a more "traditional" profile). At the same time, institutional reforms can motivate recruiters to select "nontraditional" new candidates rather than new candidates with a more traditional mindset. Therefore, the turnover process enhances the retention of highly socialised members and encourages the departure of those members who have not yet been successfully socialised (Harrison and Carroll 1991: 555; see also the attraction-selection-attrition framework¹⁵ of Schneider 1987).

4.3.3.4 Selection and the council

The selection mechanism is all about putting together a council with a specific profile. A particular composition of the council goes hand in hand with an organisational culture, and this culture may or may not be in accordance with

the reformers' wishes, nor is it guaranteed to induce behaviour that is more in line with the LGA 2002. According to Berg and Rao (2005: 5), changes in the institutional structure, such as new structures of power and tasks, can both 'restrain and encourage individual candidates to run for election and, consequently, affect the actual composition of the council'. We will now apply both sides of the mechanism of selection – exit and recruitment – to our case.

Councillors who think the reforms (will) have a negative effect on the realisation of their personal objectives will have a stronger inclination to resign than actors who have a more positive attitude towards the reform (cf. Schneider 1987; Chatman 1991; Denton 1999; Cooper-Thomas et al. 2004: 55). An important element in this argument is the actor's expectation that one will be able to do a satisfactory job. Councillors who think that the council reforms have negatively affected their capacity to do their work properly will be less inclined to stand for re-election than colleagues who think their capacity remained the same or even better: improved. Councillors who were unable or unwilling to adjust their attitudes and behavioural strategies in line with the reforms are pressured by relevant others (e.g. party members, the party chair) to leave the council (cf. Harrison and Carroll 1991: 560; cf. Schein 2000 (1999): 23). In both cases – by own choice or as a result of external pressure – the effect is that councillors who are dissatisfied with their job under the new regime and who – in the eyes of others – are considered to dysfunction are more likely to leave the council than councillors who are satisfied and who do a good job as a councillor.¹⁶

In the process of recruiting new councillors, both the selectors and the candidates will try to assess the chances that the aspiring new council members will be able to perform adequately under the new legislative regime. Notice, that the recruitment process not only entails the selection of new members, but also the reselection of previous members. Election day can be seen as a general selection that applies to all council candidates. We will refer to this as a 'selection sieve'. Compared to other organisations councils differ in that the sieve is applied to everybody, every four years.

In the context of the new institutional structure, municipalities, councils or political parties could look for new councillors by using a revised and up-to-date recruitment profile.¹⁷ Consider here the role of the recruitment committees of political parties who have the power to (re)place or not to (re)place current council members on the candidate list. Moreover, the aspiring councillor will

have an incentive to inform himself properly about what this new job entails. At the same time, the selectors and the municipality have an interest in supplying adequate information about the membership of the council, and the implication of the new legislation for the performance of this job (cf. Chatman 1991: 481). The Innovation Program sent out clear signals on the desired behaviour of councillors (e.g. guidelines on how councillors should act) and consequently may have influenced the selection process.

Hence, the recruitment process is likely to be selective in the sense that councillors who think (or are thought) to be able to do a satisfactory job under the new legislative regime (viz. the LGA 2002) are more likely to be selected than other candidates (cf. Oldham and Hackman 1981: 66-67, 78). With regard to the influence of the selection mechanism on the councillor's attitudinal and behavioural change we can formulate a hypothesis:

- Ø New councillors selected after the implementation of the LGA 2002 are more likely to show an attitude and behaviour in line with the LGA 2002 than new councillors selected before 2002.

4.3.3.5 Conclusion

We can now draw two conclusions. First, the changes in the councillors' attitude and behaviour as a result of the LGA 2002 can be explained by the socialisation and selection mechanism. Second, besides the speed and extent of implementation of the LGA 2002 as an external variable that might explain variations in the councillors' attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control, the councillors' experience also has an influence on these components. In the next section we discuss some other external variables that might strengthen the socialisation mechanism and as a result affect the councillors' attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control.

4.3.4 *Strengthening the socialisation mechanism*

We discussed the importance of the socialisation mechanism in organisational change. However, under certain conditions, the mechanism has an even bigger influence. The organisational tenure of councillors is an example of this. Several other external variables can also have an important influence on the

extent to which councillors try to change. These other external variables are discussed in this section.

One of these external variables is the *attitude towards the LGA 2002*. This refers to the idea of the 2002 reform in general. It is expected that actors who agree with and value the intentions and objectives of the institutional change will be inclined to adapt them (Oliver 1991: 162). Here, a high level of individual support for the LGA 2002 might create a strong process of institutional socialisation. Consider also the findings of Coyle-Shapiro (1999: 452):

‘This study finds empirical support for the assumption that employees who do not see a change intervention as beneficial in the early stages of implementation are unlikely to participate subsequently. Therefore, when employees exercise choice in participating in a change intervention, the degree to which they assess it as beneficial may be pivotal to their decision to participate.’

Therefore, the way in which local councillors perceive the LGA 2002 in the early stages will influence their attitude towards activities of responsiveness and accountability. This leads to the formulation of another hypothesis:

Ø The more positive the councillors’ attitude towards LGA 2002, the more positive their attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.

Another element that might influence the mechanism of institutional (re)socialisation is the problem perception of councillors. This refers to certain contextual variables. The argument is that the bigger the perceived problems are, the greater the need for a process of change will be (or the more fertile the soil is for socialisation). A sense of threat, crisis, or dissatisfaction makes it easier to learn new attitudes and behaviour and to ‘get out of the rut’ of old ones (Schein 1999). According to Schein (1999), each change should begin with certain invalidation of the old situation. Hence, specific contextual factors (related to the problem perception) might influence the perceived importance to perform activities of responsiveness and accountability. Contextual factors not only can influence an actor’s attitude, but also his subjective norm, because contextual factors also affect the feelings and opinions of relevant others.

Contextual factors are most likely to influence the subjective norm of other councillors. The perception of problems in local government might give other councillors the feeling that something has to change, and it might be a good choice to adapt to the LGA 2002. For the subjective norm of citizens, this expectation is not very likely. First, it can be questioned if citizens notice these problems at all. Second, citizens might not perceive these 'facts' as problems. Third, citizens probably will not connect these contextual factors to different role expectations of councillors.

One contextual factor is the eroded primacy of the council, which was the main reason why reformers decided to redefine the role of the council and introduce the LGA 2002 (see chapter 2). A development that contributes to the eroded primacy is the executive dominance (influence of the board) in council matters. In the old situation (before 2002), the board was perceived as dominant, which complicated the councillor's performance of his internal activities. The LGA 2002 tries to diminish the executive dominance by separating the council and the board (see chapter 2). The expectation is that when councillors perceive the board as dominant they will have a high sense of urgency to change and a high individual support for the reform. This might have an influence on the councillors' role perception and the role expectations of their colleagues (attitude and subjective norm in line with the LGA 2002).

Another contextual factor is the sense of a legitimacy crisis. The legitimacy crisis – experienced by legislators, politicians and other people – was one of the reasons to change the institutional structure of local government (see chapter 2). In this respect, Dutch literature also refers to the problematic 'gap' between citizens and local government: the relation between citizens and local government was thought to be troublesome. The LGA 2002 tries to improve the democratic legitimacy by strengthening the representative function of the council and creating a government that is identifiable for its citizens. The expectation is that in municipalities where the situation is likely to be experienced as a legitimacy crisis, there will be a higher sense of urgency for reform (which is likely to affect the role perception of councillors and possibly also the role expectations of their colleagues).

The following hypotheses can be formulated:

- Ø (a) The higher councillors perceive the executive dominance and (b) the more they perceive their municipality to be in a legitimacy crisis, the more positive their attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.
- Ø (a) The higher councillors perceive the executive dominance and (b) the more they perceive their municipality to be in a legitimacy crisis, the more positive the subjective norm from other councillors towards responsiveness and accountability.

4.4 Problem definition and research questions

In chapter 1 we formulated the general, preliminary question:

What are the democratic effects of the 2002 institutional reform in Dutch local government, and how can we explain any such effects?

In chapters 2 and 3 we explicated that we are interested in the democratic effects for individual councillors and the council in terms of responsiveness and accountability. We are also interested to see whether executive dominance decreases over time. In this chapter we explicated the explanatory question. The attitudinal and behavioural changes of councillors can take place as a result of two change mechanisms: socialisation and selection. Furthermore, we tried to explain the councillors' attitude and behaviour by use of the Theory of Planned Behaviour of Ajzen and Fisbein. The three behavioural components that might create a behavioural change (attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control) can be influenced by several external variables. For this research, besides the implementation of the new LGA 2002 we also distinguished the following: experience, attitude towards LGA 2002, the perception of executive dominance, and the sense of a legitimacy crisis.

In order to answer our research problem we need to address several sub questions. We are interested in the effects of a change in Dutch local government. Therefore, our first question has to refer to this change and the implementation of this change. Subsequently we need to include a question on

the effects (comparing elements before and after the introduction of the LGA 2002). A third step is to include a question on how we can explain these changes.

1. To what extent have institutional changes in the Dutch Local Government Act 2002 been implemented in Dutch municipalities?
2. To what extent do councillors display increased levels of individual responsiveness and accountability (in terms of their individual attitudes and behaviour)?
3. To what extent have the goals of the institutional reform been attained in terms of a more responsive and accountable work culture and behaviour in local government, and a decrease in the executive dominance?
4. To what extent are councillors' attitudinal and behavioural changes influenced by institutional (re)socialisation and selective recruitment and exit?

With regard to attitudinal and behavioural changes we formulated a question for both the individual and collective level. Change in the executive dominance is only included in the question on the collective level, because executive dominance is a collective characteristic. It is about the changed relation between the council and the board.

So far we focused in changes. However, we are also interested in the overall process: how are the attitudes and behaviours of councillors shaped and what role does the implementation of the LGA 2002 play in this? The 441 municipalities in the Netherlands will differ in their attitudes and behaviour. In addition, it is likely to find variations in the extent and especially speed in which the LGA 2002 has been implemented in the 441 Dutch municipalities. Can intermunicipal variations be explained by this factor? Furthermore, there are certain other local factors that might influence this process as well.

5. How can we explain variations in the councillors' behaviour in 2007 by their attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and several external variables (the implementation of the institutional changes in the LGA 2002; the councillors' experience; the councillors'

attitude towards the LGA 2002; and the councils' perceived executive dominance and sense of a legitimacy crisis)?

4.5 Summary

This research deals with three types of questions. First, what are the changes in the institutional make-up of local government, and in terms of councillors' attitudes and their behaviour? Second, how can these changes be explained? Third, how can we explain variations in the role behaviour of councillors in Dutch municipalities? These questions go together with certain hypotheses.

Based on Chapters 2 and 3 we can formulate three hypotheses that refer to the first type of question. A first hypothesis concerns the desired attitudinal change:

1. The attitude of councillors (councils) after 2002 will be more positive towards responsiveness and accountability activities than the attitude of councillors (councils) before 2002.

With regard to the desired behavioural change, according to the policy theory councillors should go outside the city hall more often. More time should be spent on the external task of councillors (responsiveness activities). The policy theory is less clear on the internal task of councillors (accountability activities). On the one hand we expect to see an increase in time because councillors should make use of new steering and controlling instruments (in order to be successful as a scrutiniser, meetings are necessary). On the other hand, the executive primacy no longer rests with the council and consequentially councillors should be less involved in executive activities (also the policy theory states that councillors should spend less time reading papers and going to meetings). From this last point of view we expect a decrease in time spent on internal activities. Hence, the policy theory is ambiguous: should we expect an increase or decrease in time spent on internal activities? However, to enable more time spent on external activities, less time should be spent on internal activities. Therefore a second hypothesis:

2. a) Councillors (councils) after 2002 will spend less time at accountability activities.

b) Councillors (councils) after 2002 will spend more time at responsiveness activities.

A final aim is a decrease of executive dominance:

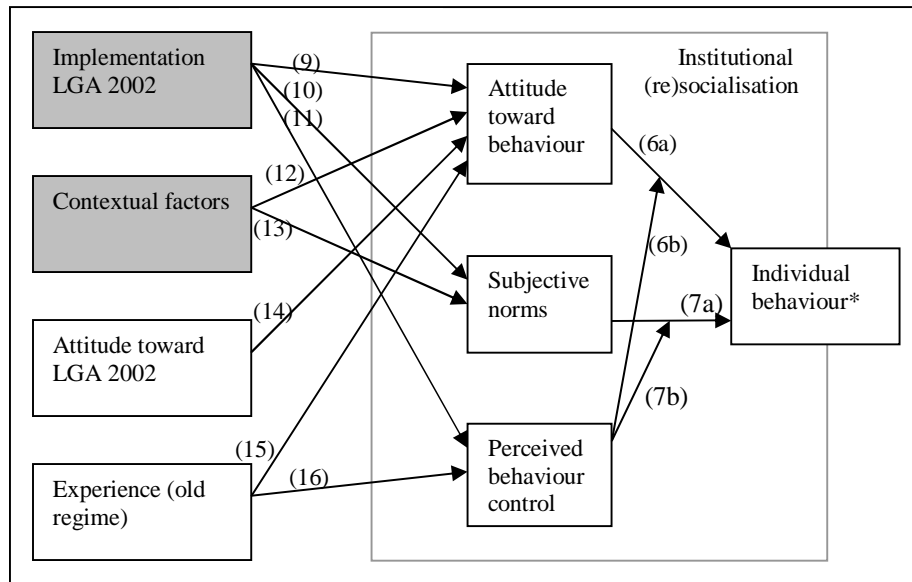
3. Councils after 2002 will perceive the board as less dominant than councils before 2002.

The second type of question focuses on explaining changes in the councillors' attitudes and behaviour by use of the socialisation and selection mechanism. The socialisation and the selection mechanism might enhance an organisational change in local government and bring about improvement in responsiveness and accountability. The influence of the socialisation and selection mechanisms can be tested by using hypotheses that include cohort analysis in time:

4. Councillors are more likely to change their attitude and behaviour in line with the LGA 2002 if they are socialised for some time in the new system; at the same time, councillors that have experience under the old system might have a more difficult time changing their attitude and behaviour to bring those in line with the LGA 2002.
5. New councillors selected after the implementation of the LGA 2002 are more likely to show an attitude and behaviour in line with the LGA 2002 than new councillors selected before 2002.

The third type of question focuses on explaining intermunicipal variations in the role behaviour of councillors in Dutch municipalities. According to the TPB, whether a councillor shows high levels of responsiveness and accountability depends on his attitude, subjective norm (motivation) and perceived behavioural control (ability). Several external variables might influence the three behavioural components: the level of implementation of the LGA 2002, the councillor's experience (of the old regime), the attitude towards LGA 2002, the perceived executive dominance, and the sense of a legitimacy crisis. The influence of these variables can be tested by our theoretical model presented in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: The theoretical model of institutional change in Dutch local government



* Behavioural factor refers to both responsiveness and accountability.
 Grey boxes are factors on the collective level.
 The attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control are correlated.

6. a) The more positive the councillors' attitudes towards responsiveness and accountability, the more efforts they will make to secure responsiveness and accountability.
 b) This relation is stronger the higher the councillor's perceived behavioural control.
7. a) The more positive the subjective norm from citizens and other councillors towards responsiveness and accountability, the more efforts councillors will make to secure responsiveness and accountability.
 b) This relation is stronger the higher the councillor's perceived behavioural control.
8. The councillor's attitude towards responsiveness and accountability will be a better predictor of his behaviour than the councillor's subjective norms (from citizens and other councillors) towards responsiveness and accountability (not in Figure 4.3).

9. The earlier and more completely the formal rules of the LGA 2002 are implemented, the more positive the councillors' attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.
10. The earlier and more completely the formal rules of the LGA 2002 are implemented, the more positive the subjective norm from other councillors towards responsiveness and accountability.
11. The earlier and more completely the formal rules of the LGA 2002 are implemented, the higher the councillors' perceived behavioural control.
12. a) The higher councillors perceive the executive dominance and b) the more they perceive their municipality to be in a legitimacy crisis, the more positive their attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.
13. a) The higher councillors perceive the executive dominance and b) the more they perceive their municipality to be in a legitimacy crisis, the more positive the subjective norm from other councillors towards responsiveness and accountability.
14. The more positive the councillors' attitude towards LGA 2002, the more positive their attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.
15. The experience of councillors in the old regime negatively influences their attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.
16. The experience of the councillor has either a positive or negative effect on his perceived behavioural control.

5 Methodology

In order to answer our research questions – Does the LGA 2002 lead to an improvement of responsiveness and accountability in local government? If so, how can we explain the councillor’s behaviour in light of this improvement? – we will use the following research strategy. First, we will decide which research design is best able to help us in answering the central question. Subsequently, we will determine which data we need and what our units of analysis are. As a final step, we will decide how to analyse our data and test our expectations and hypotheses.

5.1 Research design

The central research question includes two components: on the one hand, we are interested in what happens over the course of time (as a possible effect of the LGA 2002), on the other hand, we are interested in explaining variations in the councillors attitudes and behaviour in Dutch municipalities. Therefore, this research combines a longitudinal and cross-sectional design. In the longitudinal design there is a pretest (1999), an ‘experimental treatment’ (2002), and a posttest (2007). The pretest entails secondary data, the posttest primary data (see Schreuder Peters 2000: 47).

Answering the first aspect of our central question (sub-questions 1 to 4) requires a longitudinal design. A pretest already existed. In 1999 the Royal Commission Elzinga (see chapter 2) ordered SGB0 (the research and consulting agency of the Association of Dutch Municipalities) to conduct a council survey in 150 municipalities. We conducted a posttest in 2007. Important to mention is that our post-measurement is restricted in two ways: first, because the 2007 data set needs to be comparable to the 1999 data set, and second, because the 2007 data set is part of an international project, the Municipal Assemblies in European Local Governance (MAELG) project. The MAELG project (started in 2006) focuses on the attitudes, behaviours and backgrounds of local councillors and is a follow-up of the European mayoral study. Eighteen European countries

participated in the MAELG project: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. As a result of these data-set restrictions, important choices with regard to the data collection and research sample for the 2007 measurement were already made. These contingencies implied some important limitations for our operationalisation. Another limitation was created by the fact that we were unable to match the 1999 and 2007 data sets at the individual level due to privacy legislation. As a result, we can only compare aggregate level data from both years.

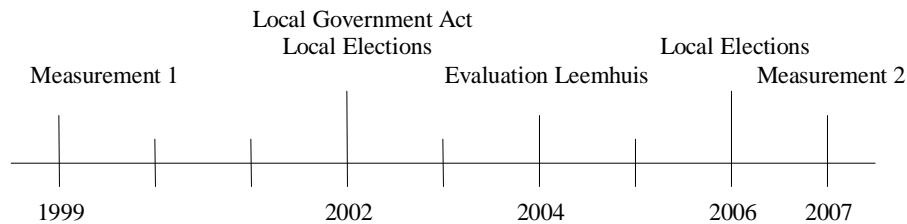
Besides our own post-test, we also used other post-tests: ‘the more post-test situations in which a changed opinion is manifested, the more confident we may be that a change in attitude has actually taken place’ (Rokeach 1967: 543). In 2004 the Leemhuis-Stout Commission evaluated the effects of the Local Government Act 2002. The commission commissioned an evaluation from the private research agency Berenschot. This survey was conducted in 2004. However, the data collection method and sample of the 2004 questionnaire were different from the 1999 measurement. Moreover, the 2004 response was quite low. Therefore, we used the 2007 research as the main post-measurement. Besides the Berenschot research there is other research that can be used as a post-test; for instance, the project ‘Duale Gemeenten’, the research of Daadkracht, and the research of the Commission Aarts (see Textbox 5.1). Using these other data sets will strengthen our evidence base.

Textbox 5.1: Other data sources

- **Berenschot 2004:** Research Agency that evaluated (by order of the Commission-Leemhuis) the LGA 2002;
- **‘Project Duale Gemeenten’ (PDG) 2002:** the University of Twente and Partners & Pröpper (a private research and consulting firm for the public sector) monitored experiments in 18 municipalities with the new governing model before its introduction in 2002 (see Denters and Pröpper 2002);
- **Daadkracht 2008:** Research Agency that conducted research on the activities of councillors and time spent at these activities (see Post and De Lange 2008);
- **Commission Aarts 2008:** the Association of Dutch Municipalities installed this commission to investigate the position of aldermen and councillors (and to give advice on how to deal with possible problems) (see Aarts 2008).

Our post-test in 2007 took place five years after the introduction of the LGA 2002 and one year after the municipal elections. Some might argue that this post-measurement was conducted rather early. After all, Scharpf argues that institutional reform ‘benefits are likely to be realized only in the longer term’ (1986: 187). Nevertheless, councillors had already had the opportunity to adapt to the new regime for one entire council term. The likelihood that any reform effects would manifest themselves was increased by the fact that our second survey was conducted in 2007 one year after the 2006 municipal elections. This implies that, in addition to possible socialisation effects, also the second change mechanism of exit and recruitment could have exerted its influence. Figure 5.1 shows the various events on a time continuum.

Figure 5.1: Time continuum



For answering the second aspect of our central question (sub question 5) we have employed a cross-sectional design. In chapter 4 we formulated several factors to explain variations in councillor behaviour and orientations: the speed and extent of implementation of the LGA 2002, the councillors’ experience and attitude towards the LGA 2002, the councils’ perceived executive dominance, and the councils’ sense of a legitimacy crisis. In order to measure the influence of these factors on the councillors’ attitude and behaviour, we (1) collected data ourselves by a survey distributed amongst councils (clerks) in 2007, (2) used data from the 1999 and 2007 council survey and (3) used data from Netherlands Statistics.

To measure the rate of implementation of the LGA 2002 the best approach would be to objectively determine the level of implementation by using written documents. However, such (complete) documents did not exist. An alternative source to secure this information was to conduct a survey amongst council clerks. We collected these data in 2007. Data on the councillors’ experience and

attitude towards the LGA 2002 were collected in our posttest amongst councillors in 2007. The councils' perceived executive dominance was determined in the council's pretest in 1999. The councils' sense of a legitimacy crisis (based on local election turnout) was measured by use of data from Netherlands Statistics. These four data sources enabled us to test for the influence of several external factors on the councillors' attitude, subjective norm and behaviour. The three behavioural components, as well as the councillors' behaviour, are measured in our posttest in 2007.

5.2 Data collection

After having discussed our research design, our next step was to decide on the kind of data we needed and how we wanted to collect them. In conducting this research we were interested in both perceptions and behaviour. Therefore, it made sense to use *survey methods* rather than direct observation. The main reason for using questionnaires is that our theoretical model contains several elements that are not directly observable, such as attitudes and perceived behavioural control. We are interested in what takes place in the minds of councillors. To measure behaviour, observation might seem the preferable method, as it enables the researcher to measure the actual state of affairs and the visible behaviour (e.g. determining whether councillors are more open to contacts with citizens). However, the choice to use questionnaires or self-reports to measure behaviour can be defended. One reason is that 'ethical considerations place severe limits on the extent to which natural behaviors can be observed and related to prior or subsequent attitude measures without telling subjects the purpose of the study' (Schuman and Johnson 1976: 200). There is also a more pragmatic reason to use questionnaires. Questionnaires are suitable for large samples, which makes it possible to say something about the entire population of the study. Questionnaires enable the researcher to collect a large amount of data in a relatively short amount of time, at relatively little expense. Observation, on the other hand, means that only a limited number of cases can be examined. It is time consuming and expensive (Jaspars 1981; Schreuder Peters 2000: 132-148; c.f. de Boer 2003: 154).

There are several kinds of surveys. Questionnaires can be verbal (phone or face-to-face) or written (mail and Internet). Since we used the 1999 data set as a

pretest, we decided to use the same data collection method in 2007: a *mail questionnaire*. This decision can be motivated in several ways. A written survey is less expensive (especially an Internet survey) and less time consuming than telephone or face-to-face surveys. Furthermore, the risk of giving socially desirable answers is lower in a written survey. Another advantage is the possible use of visual aids (this is also true for face-to-face surveys). The respondent can complete the questionnaire whenever he wants, and it is easy to guarantee anonymity (Denters 1988; Denters and Van der Kolk 1993; Dijkstra and Smit 1999: 12-18; c.f. de Boer 2003: 154-155). A written questionnaire is suitable for our research since councillors are typically well educated and adept at written communication, thus they should be able to fill in our questionnaire with no difficulty (see Schreuder Peters 2000: 147-148). There are also some disadvantages¹ to using written questionnaires, but these do not outweigh the advantages.

The decision to use a mail questionnaire rather than an Internet questionnaire was based on three reasons. First, we thought that the *risk of a high non-response was too high* for Internet questionnaires. This feeling was based on the low response rates of the evaluation research by Berenschot (Commission Leemhuis) in 2004². A low response is a threat to the external validity; it makes generalisations difficult (see section 5.5). Our research aim is to draw conclusions about the attitude and behaviour of Dutch local councillors. In order to draw conclusions for such a large population the number of respondents needs to be substantial. Another requirement for allowing us to generalise our findings is to *prevent a selective non-response*. This is our second reason to opt for a mail questionnaire. We feared that an Internet questionnaire would lead to a high degree of selective response: not everybody has access to the Internet or is comfortable with using it. Some councillors might have had a reserved attitude towards this medium. Thus, there was the risk of excluding a specific group of respondents from our research. For instance, older councillors might be less represented in an Internet survey than in a mail survey. Finally, there was also a practical objection to using Internet questionnaires: we did not have access to the email addresses of councillors. This meant we would have had to write to councillors by mail, ask them to participate in this research and then redirect them to an Internet Web page to answer the questionnaire. This approach would probably have resulted in high non-response.

5.3 Research population and sample

Our research questions implied the need to collect data about the attitudes and behaviour of councillors concerning their duties that require responsiveness and accountability. Therefore, our research population consisted of local councillors in the Netherlands. In the Netherlands there are 443³ municipalities, meaning 443 municipal councils. The number of councillors is legally fixed and related to the municipal size. The VNG – the Association for Dutch Municipalities – keeps track of the number of councillors⁴. All Dutch municipalities are registered at the VNG. VNG has data on all the councillors, aldermen, mayors, municipal and council clerks of the 443 municipalities.

In order to answer the research question we had to decide whether we would approach the whole research population or use a sample. For this research we decided to use a *sample*. This choice is justifiable since the population of councillors is of such magnitude that for practical reasons (capacity, resources), sending questionnaires to the whole population would not have been feasible. Furthermore, in this type of research, it is unnecessary to address the whole population: random sampling enables us to make valid statements for the whole research population (see also Swanborn 1987: 269).

Subsequently, we had to decide on the procedure and size of the sample⁵. Because we wanted to compare the 2007 data to the 1999 data, we needed to use a sample that was similar to that of the Royal Commission Elzinga. The Royal Commission Elzinga used a two-stage sample (cluster sample; see Swanborn 1987: 274). They first selected 150 municipalities in the Netherlands. Notice that this sample was not purely random. SGB0 (the research and consulting agency of the association of Dutch Municipalities) used the following sampling strategy. Municipalities were placed on a numbered list (with all municipalities in 1999 ordered based on population size), and through a systematic sampling procedure every fourth municipality was selected in the sample, beginning with a randomly selected starting number between 1 and 9. Based on the relatively large N (150) it was to be expected that the sample would present a fair geographical representation of municipalities.

Municipalities that held by-elections because of amalgamations in 1999 were excluded from the list, and therefore were not included in the 1999

sample. Also in 2007, several municipalities had been amalgamated between 1999 and 2007. From the perspective of comparability, this was a problem; the 'new' municipalities should have been left out in the 2007 sample. However, for our second research aim – to test the TPB in answering the fifth research question – amalgamations do not necessarily engender a problem. In fact, from this view it was even better to include the new municipalities because doing so increased the number of representatives. Consequently, the 2007 sample consisted of 144 municipalities: 112 'old' municipalities and 32 'new' ones. At first glance, it might seem that six municipalities are missing, but this is not the case: these municipalities are included in the 32 new ones (see Appendix A).

Although the research units were the municipalities or councils, our observation units were the individual councillors. We decided to address all councillors of the 150 municipalities. The data bank of the VNG was considered the best available sampling framework for our purposes. This file is used, among other things, for the mailing of the VNG magazine. It is a complete and up-to-date file. Another advantage of the data bank is that it contains some additional data on the personal backgrounds of councillors, making it unnecessary to ask questions about these topics in the survey. The VNG data bank therefore was used as the basis for determining and contacting the councillors of the 150 municipalities. To be certain of obtaining a reliable respondent list from the VNG, their list was checked twice (two months prior and again a few weeks before sending the questionnaire) and also corrected against municipal Web sites for updates on the composition of the councils.

Despite standard sampling guidelines, determining the sample size is at best an educated guess, the actual sample (number of respondents) should be large enough in respect to the reliability of the research results (Schreuder Peters 2000: 181; see also Swanborn 1987: 271-273). The nominal samples (numbers of councillors to whom questionnaires were sent in 1999 and 2007) in this research had been of substantial size (respectively 2429 and 3163). Hence, we considered the samples of this research to be sufficient for making statements about councillors and councils in the Netherlands.

5.4 Securing representativeness

In this section we will discuss our response strategy for our 2007 survey. What did we do to make sure that we received a high and representative response? We will also discuss the final response rate and the representativeness of our respondents.

5.4.1 *Response strategy*

Several efforts were made to get the highest possible response, starting with the construction of the questionnaire. The layout and structure of a questionnaire are very important (Dillman 1978). In order to create an attractive layout we used a yellow A4 cover, and the questionnaire itself was white. The front page included the title of the research and the research affiliation. The second page provided clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. It also reminded the respondent that anonymity was guaranteed, and it clearly specified the return date of the questionnaire. Throughout the questionnaire, we used a consistent format: we grouped the questions and used transitions to other types of questions. Also, if necessary, we provided introductions or instructions to the questions and we gave clear answer categories. The questionnaire entailed (almost) solely closed questions. We started with simple and interesting questions and ended with sensitive and demographical questions. Questions for which answers could be found otherwise were excluded. We tried to include only the most important research variables, but since the 2007 survey had been included as part of an international research project (and therefore other research variables existed), we had to expand the questionnaire. The last page included some space for final remarks and our expressions of appreciation to the respondents (Swanborn 1987: 279; Schreuder Peters 2000: 151-160).

A second important step to increase the response rate is to approach the respondents properly. Before sending the questionnaire, letters were sent in advance over the Internet and by mail to all councillors in the spring of 2007. A week later, a mail questionnaire was sent in which councillors were personally addressed. The municipal addresses had to be used since the home addresses of the councillors were not available for privacy reasons⁶. After two weeks' time a reminder was sent by mail (to their municipal addresses), and if available to the personal email addresses of councillors (collected from the municipal Web

sites). To increase the response rate, several strategies were followed. These strategies can be divided into three categories: maximising the rewards, minimising the costs and increasing confidence (Dillman 1978: 18). We used the following strategy to maximise the rewards (cf. Dillman 1978: 18; Denters 1988: 301-313):

- holding the respondent in great esteem
- thanking him for cooperation
- pointing out the importance of his cooperation
- promising to send the research results upon request

Moreover some strategies were used to minimise the costs (cf. Dillman 1978: 18; Denters 1988: 301-313):

- suggesting that the survey would take little effort (credible): questionnaire would take about 30 minutes to fill in responses
- minimising other costs: e.g. giving an answer envelope free of charge
- guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity

Finally we also some measures were taken to increase confidence (cf. Dillman 1978: 18; Denters 1988: 301-313):

- giving the name of a prestigious organisation that supports the research: the research was supported by the Association for Local Councillors. Their name was used in the advance as well as in the introductory letter. The research was also announced on their national Web site.
- using our good reputation and giving a professional impression: making clear our scientific and independent status.

Other small tactics that were applied were using official writing paper, providing contact information in case the respondents needed to ask us questions, and using a personal signature (Swanborn 1987).

Besides a high quantitative response (sufficient response), a high qualitative response (correct response) was needed as well. To ensure a high qualitative response the questionnaire and the concepts were developed and discussed by experts (international project group: MAELG). In addition, the questionnaire was tested on local councillors and revised before sending it to the respondents (Schreuder Peters 2000).

Most of the measures discussed in this section to assure a high quantitative and qualitative response in our 2007 research were also used in the 1999 research.

5.4.2 *Response rate*

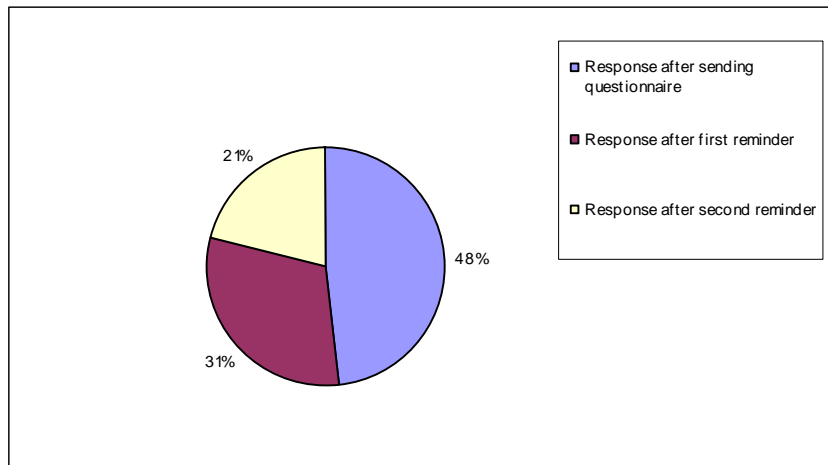
The 1999 survey had a response rate of 61% (see Table 5.1). This is a good response rate. Therefore, we judged the 2007 sample of 144 municipalities to be large enough to get a sufficient number of respondents, at least above 1000 as a critical minimum (according to the agreements of the international council project). The 2007 research had a considerably lower response rate of 41%. This is not surprising considering the 2007 research took place without some of the advantages of the 1999 research. This time there was no governmental support in terms of recommendation, money and assistance. We did not have access to personal addresses, and the topic was not as relevant and an issue as it was in 1999. Despite these constraints, the 2007 response was still considerably higher than the response of the 2004 research by the Commission Leemhuis (response of 17,4%; N=307).

Table 5.1: Measurements from 1999 and 2007

Actor	Sent⁷	Received	Response
Councillors 1999	2,429	1,489	61%
Councillors 2007	3,163	1,292	41%

The 2007 research used two reminders, which were quite effective (see Figure 5.2). We received more than half of the responses after sending reminders.

Figure 5.2: Response rate of local councillors 2007



In 2007 there were several reasons for non-participation; these can be categorised into four main reasons⁸. The first reason has to do with the *accuracy of the address file*: some persons were addressed as local councillors, but they were no longer serving in this role at the time the research took place. Most of these persons had quit their job, one or two had never even been a local councillor and two persons had recently passed away. Another reason not to participate was the *timing of the research*. Several local councillors indicated that they could not participate at that time due to sickness, parental leave, holidays and/or lack of time. Furthermore, some of the ‘new’ councillors indicated that they did not feel able to answer the questionnaire because they had only recently joined the council. A third reason not to participate related to *the 2007 research and questionnaire*. Some local councillors doubted the usefulness of this research, and others had the opinion that the quality of the questionnaire was insufficient. In addition, a few councillors indicated that the questionnaire was too long, and some would have preferred a digital questionnaire. Despite these last couple of reasons, several councillors filled in the questionnaire anyway (and wrote these remarks in the questionnaire; this means that the reasons mentioned here do not necessarily explain the non-response but they do give us insight into *possible* reasons for non-response). A final reason not to participate was related to the *attitude of the local councillor towards research in general*. Some councillors were in principle against any type of research or just showed no interest for it.

5.4.3 *Actual representativeness*

The 2007 data were checked for representativeness on age, gender and party representation (see Appendix B). No real peculiarities were found, except for one small one. The representation of local parties appeared to be a bit lower: 19% of the respondents of the council survey conducted in 2007 were from a local party/group, while after the local elections in 2006, local parties had 28% of the seats. However, part of this difference might be explained by the question in the 2007 questionnaire that we used to determine the political party of the respondent: ‘Are you presently a party member? If yes, please specify which party’. Maybe some of the respondents did not think of a local group as a political party and answered the question ‘no’. If we assume that answering ‘no’ means ‘a local party’, the representation of councillors from local party/groups increases to 22%. Thus, there still is a small underrepresentation. When the 2007 data was checked for representativeness of the sample without the amalgamated municipalities, roughly the same results were produced.

The 1999 respondents formed a good representation in terms of age, gender and political parties (Royal Commission Elzinga 2000).

5.5 Council clerk survey

In order to answer our research question (effects of the Local Government Act 2002) we needed to measure the level of implementation of the LGA 2002. Therefore, we conducted a survey amongst the 144 council clerks in our sample. In this section we will discuss the response strategy, the response rate, and the level of representation of the council clerk survey.

5.5.1 *Response strategy*

A questionnaire was sent to all council clerks of the 144 municipalities. The questionnaire was sent in spring 2007 (including a reminder) and again in the autumn of 2007. All non-respondents were contacted by telephone and again asked to participate. They were also given the option to complete only part of the questionnaire. Several efforts were made in order to achieve a high response. In our introductory letter to the council clerks we used official writing paper, mentioned the importance of participating in this research and guaranteed

confidentiality. We indicated that this research was supported by the Association for Council Clerks and the Association for Local Councillors. Our research was also mentioned on the national Web sites of both associations. With regard to the design of the questionnaire, we used the same strategy as discussed in section 5.4.1.

5.5.2 Response rate and representativeness

More than 75% (109) of the 144 council clerks filled in the questionnaire. The first time the questionnaire was sent, 79 council clerks responded positively (55%) and two council clerks withdrew. After sending the questionnaire again and phoning the (non)respondents we received another 30 questionnaires. There was no quantifiable difference in responses between amalgamated and non-amalgamated municipalities. The most frequent reason given for not responding was a lack of time. One council clerk felt he could not fill in the questionnaire since he had only recently started his job. The 2007 council clerk data were checked for representativeness on municipal size and municipalities per region. In both terms, the 2007 data formed a good representation (see Appendix B).

5.6 Data analysis

This section discusses the data analysis of our research. Different research questions require different types of data analyses. We will now discuss the analytical strategies used for answering three clusters of research questions. In Chapter 4 we distinguished these three clusters: 1) What are the changes in the institutional make-up of local government, and in terms of councillors' attitudes and their behaviour? (research questions 1-3); 2) How can these changes be explained? (research question 4); 3) How can we explain variations in the role behaviour of councillors (in 2007) in the 150 Dutch municipalities? (research question 5).

5.6.1 Research questions 1-3

Research questions 1-3 are all questions about describing changes (in independent and dependent) variables. The first research question is about the

level of implementation of the LGA 2002. The second and third research questions focus on the democratic effects of the LGA 2002:

2. To what extent do councillors display increased levels of individual responsiveness and accountability (in terms of their individual attitudes and behaviour)?
3. To what extent have the goals of the institutional reform been attained in terms of a more responsive and accountable work culture and behaviour in local government, and a decrease in the executive dominance?

These questions focus on change over time (in terms of responsiveness, accountability and perceived behavioural control); they can be tested by using diachronic data and descriptive analysis (chapter 7).

5.6.1.1 Testing hypotheses

We formulated three hypotheses about changes over time. First, we expected councillors (councils) to have a more positive attitude towards responsiveness and accountability activities in 2007 than councillors had in 1999. Second, we expected councillors (councils) to show higher levels of responsiveness and accountability activities in 2007 than councillors had shown in 1999. Third, we expected the level of perceived executive dominance of councils to decrease over time. A problem we face in testing these hypotheses is that the 1999 and 2007 data are not exactly comparable (see chapter 6). This lack of comparable data is the result of two research contingencies of the 2007 survey (see section 5.1).

The first two hypotheses (attitudinal and behavioural change) are tested at both the individual and collective level, and the third hypothesis (executive dominance change) is only tested at the collective level.

We will now first discuss the testing of our hypotheses at the individual level, and subsequently we will discuss the testing of our hypotheses at the collective level.

Individual level

To test the expectations at the individual level, ideally we would have liked to measure changes in attitudes and behaviour (before and after the LGA 2002) in

terms of responsiveness and accountability between the same individuals in 1999 and 2007. However, since we do not have any panel data⁹ at our disposal, we have to check for possible attitudinal and behavioural changes at a more general level. Therefore, to test our expectations we look at the individual averages (and deviations) of our entire sample and compare this through time. Since the 1999 data are not exactly comparable to the 2007 data, we use the *triangulation method* to draw conclusions (other data sets and research are discussed in section 5.1). If we obtain the same results using different data sets, we can be confident in drawing conclusions.

Collective level

To test the expectations at the municipal level (comparing municipalities in terms of cultural, and behavioural change) we *aggregate* the individual data. This means that individual attitudes are aggregated to collective attitudes of councils (culture), and the individual behaviour of councillors is aggregated to the collective behaviour of councils. The same applies to the perceived executive dominance. The individual data are aggregated by calculating the mean (standard method) of a certain variable for each municipality.

Sometimes these means rest on only a few respondents. In 1999 there was a range in responses of 4-30 local councillors per municipality; in 2007, the range was from 2-19. The average municipal response in 1999 was 10, and in 2007 it was 8. This means that on average, in 2007, there were two fewer respondents in each municipality. Nevertheless, we consider the 2007 data good enough to look at the aggregate level. Figure 5.3 shows that on average municipalities are at least represented by more than 30% of the local councillors. Middle sized municipalities are best represented, and municipalities with over 100.000 inhabitants have the lowest representation. Table 5.2 shows the absolute response figures for all municipalities. We can see that a few municipalities showed a low response: this might cause some problems. Two municipalities had only two respondents, and six municipalities had three. These numbers are low, but they should also be placed in the perspective of the number of council seats. For instance, the municipality of Maastricht had 8 respondents; this was 21% of the council. Blaricum had only 3 respondents, but this was 23% of the council. In our research, the lowest response rate was 12%; the highest response rate was 71%.

Small N's require caution in drawing conclusions. Therefore, we only draw conclusions in case of univocal patterns of change of attitudes and behaviour (see chapter 7).

Figure 5.3: Municipal size and average response of local councillors in municipalities in the 2007 survey (in %)

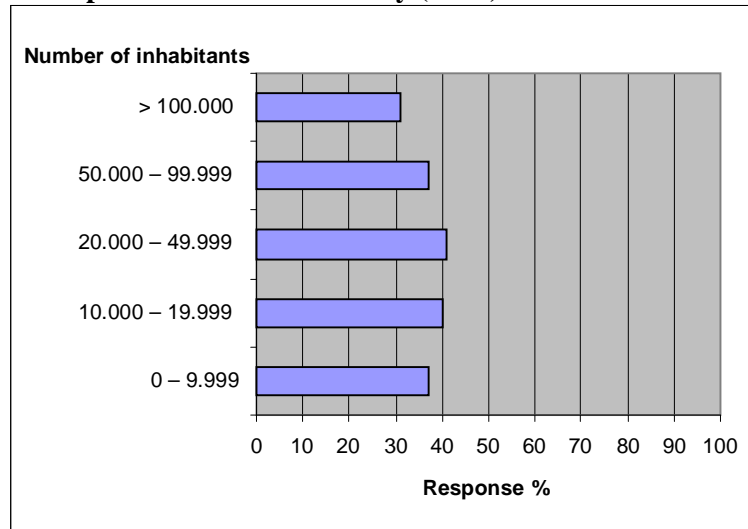


Table 5.2: Municipalities and respondents

Number of respondents	Number of municipalities (%)
2	2 (1)
3	6 (4)
4	16 (11)
5	7 (5)
> 5	112 (78)

5.6.2 Research question 4

The fourth research question is an explanatory question:

4. To what extent are councillors' attitudinal and behavioural changes influenced by institutional (re)socialisation and selective recruitment and exit?

With regard to this question, we formulated two hypotheses in chapter 4: according to the socialisation mechanism, councillors are more likely to show an attitude / behaviour in line with the LGA 2002 if they are socialised for some time in the new system. However, long-tenured councillors usually have to get

rid of an attitude / behaviour that is in line with the previous institutional structure. According to the mechanism of selection, the composition of the council in 2007 was expected to be different from the one in 1999: due to exit and recruitment, the 2007 council had an attitude/behaviour in line with the LGA 2002. In order to test these hypotheses we need diachronic data.

Unfortunately, our data do not allow us to rigorously test whether individual attitudes of councillors have changed over time, as we have no panel data. Therefore, it is impossible to establish whether socialisation of individuals under the new legislative regime has resulted in personal change (in terms of changing attitudes of an individual between t_0 and t_1). Nevertheless, to gain some insight into these change patterns, we compare three cohorts of the 2007 data: cohort I is composed of the newly elected councillors in the most recent municipal election (2006); cohort II is comprised of the councillors who in 2007 served for a maximum of one term (these councillors had no experience under the pre-LGA 2002 regime); and cohort III is comprised of the 2007 councillors who had more than five years' experience and therefore also had experience serving in local government under the old institutional regime. As we discussed in the theoretical section, it is expected that tenure will affect (re)socialisation efforts. Therefore, we expect to find different socialisation effects for the three cohorts. The same strategy can be applied to explain behavioural changes as a result of the socialisation process.

We are also interested in the influence of the selection mechanism. To isolate a recruitment effect (and minimise possible confounding effects by institutional socialisation of councillors while in office), we compare *new recruits* in 2007 (councillors with <1 year experience in the 2007 survey) with their equals in 1999 (councillors with <1 year experience in the 1999 survey). We expect that in comparing these two groups we will witness an increase in the saliency of the councillors' responsiveness and accountability activities. After all, both the 2007 candidates and their selectors were making their decisions in a new era, one in which the Local Government Act and the supporting Local Government Innovation Program emphasised the importance of these concerns. The same test strategy is applied to explain behavioural changes as a result of the selection process.

5.6.3 Research question 5

The fifth research question is an explanatory question as well. It seeks to explain the councillors' cross-sectional differences between councillors in different localities:

5. How can we explain variations in the councillors' behaviour in 2007 by their attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and several external variables (the implementation of the institutional changes in the LGA 2002; the councillors' experience; the councillors' attitude towards the LGA 2002; and the councils' perceived executive dominance and sense of a legitimacy crisis)?

In chapter 4 we formulated several hypotheses in relation to this question (see our theoretical model). By use of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control we try to explain the four activities of councillors: listening, explaining, steering and controlling (multivariate model). The hypotheses in the model are very complex: they include both linear and interaction effects (the relationship between attitude and behaviour is stronger for councillors with a high level of perceived behavioural control). An additional hypothesis is that attitude is a better predictor of the councillor's behaviour than the subjective norm. Several external variables might influence the attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control. These hypotheses can be tested by using synchronic data and explanatory analysis (chapter 8).

In order to test our theoretical behaviour model we use *regression analysis*¹⁰. Hypotheses can be accepted if the standardised beta coefficients are significant for $p < .05$. By running a regression analysis, it is easy to determine whether attitude or subjective norm is a better predictor of the councillor's responsiveness and accountability in fulfilling his duties: if the attitude beta weight is significantly higher than the subjective norm beta weight, then the hypothesis can be accepted.

We will first test the conditional hypotheses in SPSS (Ordinary Least Square method). Subsequently, we will test the complete theoretical model in Lisrel (Maximum Likelihood method). We use Lisrel because our theoretical model contains multiple dependent variables. In SPSS, path models can be tested, but only on a systematic basis (for each dependent variable). In Lisrel, the complete theoretical model can be tested at once.

Some of the external variables in the theoretical model are at the collective level (here the N is not 1292, but actually 150). This means that we deal with a *multi-level* model. However, we will not use multi-level analysis, but instead treat the higher-level variables as individual data. This means that the standard error is actually smaller, bringing on the risk of overestimating the effect of the (collective) variable (the chances of finding a significant relation are higher). However, because there are more than a hundred observations at the second level (i.e. 109 municipalities), the t-value has become more or less robust: this means there is no considerable difference between treating the variables as individual or collective data (therefore, it has no consequences for our conclusions).

Besides using simple regression analysis, we will also use *conditional regression* for those hypotheses that include an interaction effect. An example of such a hypothesis is as follows:

‘The more positive the attitude (X) towards activities of responsiveness the more responsive the behaviour of councillors (Y), this relation is stronger for local councillors with a high level of pbc (Z) than for local councillors with a lower level of perceived behavioural control.’

Conditional regression makes use of an interaction variable: this means that two independent variables are multiplied; in the example, this is attitude and perceived behavioural control. We can formalise this as follows:

$$Y = a + bX + cZ + d(X*Z).$$

Y: the dependent variable; in this example, the ‘responsive behaviour’

X: the independent variable; in this example, the ‘attitude towards responsiveness’

Z: the other independent variable; in this example, the ‘perceived behavioural control with regard to responsiveness activities’

X*Z: represents the interactive variable; in this example, the ‘attitude times perceived behavioural control’

This equation can be rewritten as follows (see Denters and Van Puijenbroek 1989: 85-86):

$$Y = (a + cZ) + (b + dZ)X$$

We will now explain the logic of this regression model by using our earlier example. In the example, we expected that the influence of attitude (X) on behaviour (Y) would be different *for each value* of the perceived behavioural control (Z). There are four values for PBC (four answer categories¹¹ in the questionnaire). In order to test the hypothesis we have to estimate four new conditional regression equations that include four new interaction terms (Attitude*PBCvalue1, Attitude*PBCvalue2, and so on¹²). The interaction component of the hypothesis can be accepted if the d coefficient is significant, and if the values of the conditional coefficient of attitude indicate a positive relation (increase between regression equations with a higher PBC value) (see van Puijenbroek 1992; Boedeltje 2009). Thus, the acceptance of the hypothesis depends on the sign and significance of the d-coefficient.

As stated previously, to create an interaction variable the two independent variables need to be multiplied. A possible problem is *multicollinearity*: a high correlation between the independent variables and the interaction variable. Multicollinearity has important consequences for interpreting and using regression models. Denters and Van Puijenbroek (1989) propose using the Smith and Sasaki (1979) method (from now on referred to as the S&S method), which corrects for multicollinearity. This method minimises the correlations of X and Z with the multiplicative term (X*Z) (see Denters and Van Puijenbroek 1989).¹³ To see if multicollinearity is a problem, the 'normal' regression model is compared to the corrected regression model. Differences in significance for the relationship between attitude and behaviour are an indication that multicollinearity significantly influences the relationship and therefore is a problem. In that case, to test the second part of the hypothesis (the interactive term), the four regression models (for the four values) are estimated by using the S&S correction method. If the S&S method is used, the coefficients need to be recalculated into the original ones in the end for interpretation (Denters and Van Puijenbroek 1989: 93-95).

5.7 Validity

This section shortly reflects on the validity of our research design. Validity refers to ‘the best available approximation to the truth ... of propositions, including propositions about cause’ (Cook and Campbell 1979: 37). Construct validity depends on the extent to which empirical measures represent the full load of our concepts (see next chapter), but validity also has to do with choosing the right methodology to answer the research question. In this respect, we can distinguish between internal and external validity (Cook and Campbell 1979).

Internal validity refers to ‘the validity with which statements can be made about whether there is a causal relationship from one variable to another in the form in which the variables were manipulated or measured’ (Cook and Campbell 1979: 38). Cook and Campbell (1979) list several threats of internal validity. The two biggest threats to validity in this research were history and instrumentation.

- History: ‘specific events, other than the experimental treatment, occurring between pretest and posttest, which might account for the change’ (Campbell and Ross 1970: 113)
- Instrumentation: ‘shifting of the measurement instrument independent of any change in the phenomenon observed’ (Campbell and Ross 1970: 114)

History as a threat to the internal validity cannot be ruled out. Other developments such as the rise of local parties and the LPF¹⁴ (cf. van der Burg and Van Praag 2006) might also have affected reception of the 2002 reforms at the local level. Theoretically, the use of a control group would be a solution to this problem. However, setting up such a group was not possible in this research study: there was not a single council in the Netherlands that could guarantee not having been influenced by these developments. Instrumentation was also a considerable threat to the internal validity in this research, since the research depended on two different surveys: in 1999 the data were collected by SGBO and in 2007 the data were collected in a different survey context by the University of Twente. In 2007 we tried to use a questionnaire as similar as possible to the one used in 1999, but there were still some differences. We tried to limit this threat by constructing the questions carefully and by using the method of triangulation. However, we know our limitations and are therefore cautious in drawing conclusions.

With regard to the cross-sectional design and explanatory research question, the requirements for causality are important (Swanborn 1987). There are three causality requirements when testing a relationship: 1) the two variables need to correlate, 2) the cause needs to precede the effect and 3) there should not be a third variable explaining the relation. Concerning the first requirement: our large data set (N=1292) enabled us to test for correlations between several variables. We will test the theoretical model in chapter 8.

It is also important for the cause to take place before the effect. Since the rules of the LGA 2002 had been implemented by municipalities before our posttest in 2007, this relation was secured. The cause-effect relation of other factors was also clear: the context variables (perceived executive dominance and sense of legitimacy crisis) were measured before the measurement of the dependent variables, and the councillor's experience logically preceded the councillor's attitude/behaviour. The attitude towards the LGA 2002 was measured at the same time as the attitude towards responsiveness and accountability activities. Here, our research design did not ensure that the cause took place before the effect. However, in chapter 4 we explained that there were theoretical reasons to assume that the councillors' attitude towards a specific behaviour (responsiveness and accountability) would depend on their general attitude towards the whole idea of institutional reform. As explained by Ajzen and Fishbein, the cause-effect relation between attitude (subjective norm) and behaviour is not that clear-cut: sometimes first the behaviour changes and then the attitude¹⁵. However, in our research we presumed (in correspondence with Ajzen and Fishbein) that the attitude preceded the behaviour. The best way to test the attitude-behaviour relation is when attitude and behaviour are closely linked in time (see Liska, 1984: 63). Both concepts should be measured in the same questionnaire, but taking into account that 'ideally, attitude and behavior need to be measured in ways that dissociate the two completely in the subject's mind, or else the need to present a temporarily consistent picture may result in spuriously high A-B relationships' (Schuman and Johnson 1976: 200). The 2007 questionnaire tried to prevent this problem by placing the two questions at a different place in the questionnaire and using clearly different formulations (see next chapter).

There is the possibility that the effect between the external factors and the councillors' attitude and behaviour could actually be explained by another factor. This risk is always present; however, we tried to deal with this risk by

including two control variables in our model: the status of the political party of the respondent (opposition or coalition), and the type of political party of the respondent (national or local party). There are some indications in the literature that these two variables might influence the attitude and behaviour of local councillors: councillors from opposition parties place other accents on their council job than councillors from coalition parties. The same is true for councillors from local or national parties (see for instance: Derksen 2001; Boogers 2007).

External validity refers to ‘the approximate validity with which conclusions are drawn about generalisability of a causal relationship to and across populations of persons, settings, and times’ (Cook and Campbell 1979: 39). A first requirement in order to make generalisations is that you start with a good sample: in terms of size and representativeness (representative for the whole population). During this chapter we explained that we considered our sample of more than 3,000 local councillors to be large enough to make generalisations for the entire council population. Though our sample was strictly taken, not random (municipal size was taken into account), our sample formed a good representation of the whole population. Besides having a ‘good’ sample, a second and third requirement is that there needs to be a high response rate (a large N), but maybe even more important is that there should not be a selective non-response. With regard to the response rate, in section 5.4.1 we discussed our tactics to increase the response, which contributed to the external validity. We consider the final response in 2007 of 1.292 respondents and in 1999 of 1.489 respondents, of sufficient size (large enough N). We also tried to limit the risk of selective non-response (establish a representative sample). In our data collection method and response strategy we tried to make participation in the survey as easy and attractive as possible to prevent selective non-response (consider here our earlier example on Internet surveys and older people). We have no indications for a selective non-response. Furthermore, in section 5.4.3 we discussed that the respondents formed a representative picture of the population.

5.8 Summary

In order to test our expectations about the impact of the LGA 2002 and behaviour of local councillors we used repeated surveys on mixed panels. In 1999 there was a pre-measurement (wave 1), and in 2007 a post-measurement (wave 2). In 1999, a two-stage sample was used, and questionnaires were sent to councillors (response of 61%). In 2007 we conducted a second survey in the same municipalities and again all the councillors received a self-administered questionnaire (response of 41%). To measure the level of implementation of the LGA 2002 we conducted a council clerk survey in the same municipalities in 2007 (response of 76%). In order to answer our research questions we also used other data sets (triangulation method). This research used several analysis methods. Our research questions on the attitudinal and behavioural changes resulting from the LGA 2002 were analysed using diachronic data. The research question about the influence of the socialisation and selection mechanism on the councillors' attitudinal and behavioural change was analysed by comparing means of several cohorts (diachronic data). Our theoretical behaviour model (fifth research question) was analysed in SPSS and Lisrel by using simple regression and conditional regression (synchronic data). The validity of our research design can be assessed as good.

6 Operationalisation

In the previous chapter, we divided our research questions into three types: 1) What are the changes in the institutional make-up of local government, and in terms of councillors' attitudes and their behaviour? 2) How can these changes be explained? 3) How can we explain variations in the role behaviour of councillors (in 2007) in the 150 Dutch municipalities? Consequently, our research entails both a diachronic comparison (changes over time) and a synchronic comparison (testing our theoretical model). The variables for our diachronic comparison are measured in the council survey conducted by the Royal Commission Elzinga in 1999, and our own council survey in 2007. For our description of changes over time, we will also use other research data (see the previous chapter). The variables for the synchronic comparison are measured in the 2007 survey. In this chapter, we clarify the measurement of the research variables. We will start out with the discussion of the variables used for answering our first research question, and then proceed with the discussion of the variables used for the other research questions.

6.1 Change over time

Following our research question, we are interested in the effects of the LGA 2002. A first step in answering this question is to make clear whether the LGA 2002 has been implemented or not, because if the LGA 2002 has not been implemented we cannot expect to find any effects of the LGA 2002. A second step is to describe the changes in the councillors' (councils') attitudes and behaviours regarding responsiveness and accountability. We also expect to find a decreased executive dominance. To measure these changes over time, we depend on diachronic data.

6.1.1 *Implementation of the LGA 2002*

In chapter 2 we discussed the point that municipalities can vary in the level of implementation of the LGA 2002. We made a distinction between (1) mandatory formal rules that had to be implemented right from the start in 2002, (2) formal (mandatory) rules that could be implemented at a later stage, (3) optional elements and (4) voluntary local initiatives that support the idea behind the LGA 2002. In order to describe the level of implementation of the LGA 2002 in municipalities, we are interested in the elements of implementation that can vary between municipalities. Therefore, we use measures of the second, third and fourth type to describe the level of implementation.

With respect to the implementation of the formal rules (with various implementation deadlines), we selected 12 formal rules from the LGA 2002. These formal rules all had to be implemented after the introduction of the LGA in 2002 and before different deadlines:¹

- Introduction of a Council Clerk (7-3-2002)
- Introduction of a Annual Citizen Report (7-3-2002)
- Establishment of rules for council meetings (7-3-2003, partly optional)
- Code of Conduct for councillors (7-3-2003)
- Code of Conduct for aldermen (7-3-2003)
- Code of Conduct for mayor (7-3-2003)
- Decree on assistance of civil servants (7-3-2003)
- Decree on regular effectiveness and efficiency research (7-3-2003)
- Decree on basis of financial policy (15-11-2003)
- Decree on external control on financial administration and organisation (15-11-2003)
- Introduction of a Program Budget² (2004)
- Introduction of a Court of Audit (1-1-2006)

In our 2007 council clerk survey, these officials were asked whether these formal rules were implemented in their municipality, and if so when (year and month). Using these results it was possible to construct for each of these twelve rules a score for every municipality according to: (1) the current stage, (2) the timeliness and (3) the speed of implementation. The first two indicators or variables are dichotomous: (1) implemented in 2007: yes/no or (2) implemented before deadline of this specific rule: yes/no. The third indicator of speed is a

continuous variable. For the description of the implementation of the LGA 2002 we will use all three definitions (see Chapter 7).

For descriptive purposes we are interested in the implementation of separate formal rules in municipalities. For explaining change we are also interested in the general level of implementation for each municipality. Therefore, we needed to construct a scale for the implementation of the formal rules of the LGA 2002. In terms of 'current stage' and 'timeliness' we used all 12 rules to construct a scale (current stage, $\alpha = 0.75$; timeliness, $\alpha = 0.79$). The average level of implementation was calculated for both 'current stage' and 'timeliness' by adding the values of all items and dividing this by the number of items. For example: if all items had been implemented in 2007 this would mean a score of '1' times 12; dividing this by the number items gives the overall score of '1'. If one item had not been implemented the overall score would be 0.92. This means that the implementation score of 'current stage' and 'timeliness' runs from 0 to 1. In terms of 'current stage': '0' means that nothing has been implemented in 2007 and '1' means that the LGA 2002 was implemented in 2007 to its full extent. With regard to 'timeliness':³ '0' means that none of the twelve LGA 2002 measures have been implemented before the statutory deadline, '1' means that the complete package of the LGA 2002 has been implemented before the deadline. To decrease information loss because of missing items we included data from a municipality if they had filled in more than half of the items for this index. This implies that all municipalities that gave an answer to seven (or more) of the 12 items were included. For the values of the missing items, the average of the other items is used.

We also constructed a scale for the implementation of the LGA 2002 in terms of speed. Before constructing a scale, we performed a factor analysis on the basis of 12 formal rules to see whether we would measure one general concept or maybe various dimensions of one concept (see Appendix C). A factor analysis (principal components) on the year⁴ of implementation of these formal rules shows that these 12 rules can be divided into three components (see Table 6.1). Component 1 contains six items and can be described as the implementation of formal rules that *empower the council*. This factor pertains to new instruments and functions to assist the council in performing its tasks ($\alpha = .69$). The Court of Audit and the program budget support the accountability activities of the council. An annual citizen report relates to the responsiveness activities of the municipality. The council clerk and assistance of civil servants

can be seen as support in general for the council. Rules for council meetings might help the council to perform its representative and scrutinising tasks in a better way by structuring and organising council meetings and thereby making them more efficient and effective. Component 2 contains three items and refers to the implementation of *codes of conduct* ($\alpha = .96$). This component contains the codes of conduct for councillors, aldermen and the mayor. Component 3 contains three items as well and pertains to the implementation of formal rules regarding *financial accountability* ($\alpha = .94$). It is about effectiveness and efficiency research, financial policy and external control on the financial administration and organisation.

Table 6.1: Speed of implementation of LGA 2002 measured by three different components

Component	Formal rules
Empowerment council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of a Council Clerk (7-3-2002) • Introduction of an Annual Citizens Report (7-3-2002) • Establishment of rules for council meetings (7-3-2003, part optional) • Decree on assistance of civil servants (7-3-2003) • Introduction of a Program Budget (2004) • Introduction of a Court of Audit (1-1-2006)
Codes of conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct for councillors (7-3-2003) • Code of Conduct for aldermen (7-3-2003) • Code of Conduct for mayor (7-3-2003)
Financial accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree on regular effectiveness and efficiency research (7-3-2003) • Decree on basis of financial policy (15-11-2003) • Decree on external control on financial administration and organisation (15-11-2003)

Thus, the speed of implementation index consists of three components.⁵ We constructed a scale for each component by calculating the average year of implementation (adding all years and dividing by the number of items). Again, to decrease information loss we used the same approach as discussed earlier (data from a municipality was included if they had filled in more than half of the items).

The level of implementation of the LGA 2002 in municipalities will also be described by discussing the use of optional elements and local initiatives that support the idea behind the LGA 2002. Municipalities can give their own touch to this institutional change by introducing additional changes proposed by the LGA 2002 or by taking their own initiatives in the spirit of the LGA 2002. The adoption of optional elements and local initiatives is likely to tell us something

about the reform ambitions of the municipality. Did the municipality try hard to make the new institutional structure work? This can be measured by looking at reform activities related to the LGA 2002. We asked council clerks to indicate whether their municipality introduced a number of optional changes, or initiated additional local reforms.⁶ In total, we used six reform options:

- provide courses for councillors (how to deal with their representing, steering and controlling tasks);
- before 2006: start to delegate authorities to the BMA (in consideration of the local implementation of national legislation);
- make a budget available for the council to investigate proposals of the board (meaning: a budget that the council can freely use);
- clearly involve citizens in council and committee meetings (using citizens' initiatives, interactive policy making, political debates, public accountability);
- initiate reforms of structure and practices of council meetings; and
- initiate reforms of structure and practices of council committee meetings.

Consequently, we will describe the level of implementation of the LGA 2002 in municipalities in four ways. First, we investigate the current stage of implementation: were the (mandatory) formal rules of the LGA 2002 implemented in the municipalities in 2007? Second, we investigate whether the implementation of these mandatory rules happened on time or not: were the (mandatory) formal rules of the LGA 2002 implemented in the municipalities before the official implementation deadline? Third, we measure the exact implementation data: in which year were the rules implemented? Is there a specific order of implementing the rules? A fourth approach to describe the level of implementation of the LGA 2002 is by examining the use of optional elements of the LGA 2002, and local initiatives in line with the LGA 2002.

6.1.2 *Attitude*

For our 'change-question' we want to study the changes in the councillors' and councils' attitudes before and after the introduction (and implementation) of the LGA 2002. In this research we use the Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) definition of attitude: an attitude consists of the person's beliefs that the behaviour leads to

certain outcomes and his or her evaluations of these outcomes. We are interested in the attitude towards *responsiveness* and *accountability*: more specifically the attitude towards listening, explaining, steering and controlling activities.⁷ By specifying the attitudes in this manner we hope to increase the attitude-behaviour (A-B) correlations: ‘attitudes measures will be more predictive of specific behaviors if they are kept close to whatever the behaviour is about’ (Schuman and Johnson 1976: 171).

There are two ways to reveal the councillors’ attitudes towards responsiveness and accountability: directly and indirectly (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). Firstly, we can ask the councillor about his or her orientation vis-à-vis responsiveness and accountability by posing a question on the importance of certain activities (direct manner); for instance: how important do you think it is to control the board? The direct measurement is based on one item. Secondly, we can use a number of questions in order to reveal the judgments, expectations and opinions on aspects of responsiveness and accountability, and take these findings as a basis to determine the attitude of a councillor (indirect manner). The indirect manner separates the measurement of the actor’s beliefs that the behaviour leads to certain outcomes, and his or her evaluations of these outcomes. Using our example of the attitude towards controlling activities, we can ask: do you consider it to be your task to control the board? How important do you think this is? The combination of these two questions shows the councillors’ attitudes towards controlling activities. Both methods—direct and indirect—give a good estimation of the attitude explaining the behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Ajzen and Fishbein 1980), where the second method provides us with more information. Nevertheless, a disadvantage of this indirect method is that it takes a lot of time; more questions need to be asked and processed. It also requires more from the respondent, which can have an effect on the response rates and the quality of responses (cf. de Boer, 2003). In this research only the direct manner is applied. This choice is based on the fact that in other research (de Boer 2003), results based on direct measurement are similar to the ones based on indirect measurement.

As stated before, we measured attitudinal change regarding responsiveness and accountability in terms of listening, explaining, steering and controlling. Before we can explain how we measured these attitudes, we should explain our understanding of each activity. *Listening* activities refer to the relation between councillors and citizens, and focus on those activities that enable councillors to

learn about the needs and demands of citizens. Examples are: organising public meetings and consulting hours, and allowing citizens to attend and speak in council meetings. *Explaining* activities also refer to the relation between councillors and citizens, but rather than ‘listening’ these refer to efforts made by councillors to inform citizens about council decisions and justify municipal policies and especially council decisions. Explaining activities can take place at gatherings in the neighbourhood: for instance, when the residents of a certain neighbourhood do not understand why their condo will be demolished to make room for new houses. Listening and explaining activities both happen in contacts with citizens and local organisations. The difference between these two activities is determined by the type and goal of these contacts, and the dominant direction of the flow of information.

The ‘steering’ and ‘controlling’ activities concentrate on the relationship between the council and the board (or between individual members of both organs). What do we mean by *steering* activities? This is a question that many municipalities and councillors have asked themselves over the last few years. In Chapter 3 we described it as ‘formulating general principles and guidelines to steer the executives’. A similar description would be ‘defining the main goals of the municipal activity’. In the 1999 measurement the Dutch word to summarise this activity (*kaderstellen*) was not yet in general use.⁸ However, the Royal Commission Elzinga referred to three types of key decisions that later would be used as indicators of ‘formulating general principles and guidelines.’ The three key decisions were the setting of (1) municipal decrees, (2) budgets, but also (3) ‘white papers’ and other strategic policy plans (Royal Commission Elzinga 2000: 454). All these key decisions required the approval of the council (majority). Typically, ‘steering activities’ therefore pertain to strategic decisions that allow the parties in the council to develop a distinct political profile towards the electorate. Reserving these key decisions to the council supports the political primacy of the council; the council makes the key political choices and the board is there to execute these choices. The council sets the standards for the board in various ways: by using the budget right (to formulate a program budget), the right of initiative, amendment, interpellation and motion, by formulating council decrees, and adding items to the council’s agenda (Vernieuwingsimpuls 2004).

Controlling activities refer to those activities in which the council (or councillors) scrutinises the activities and performance of the board (or board

members): the council checks whether the board acted upon the standards (policy guidelines and principles) set by the council. Does the board execute the decisions of the council and do they stay within the budget? An example of a controlling activity is when the council asks the board to give an account of its performance, or when an individual councillor has a question for an alderman. Council meetings in which the policy output or outcome and the annual account are discussed can also be considered as controlling activities.

In order to measure the attitudinal change towards the four types of activities, the questions (and answer categories) measuring attitude in 1999 need to be comparable to the questions (and answer categories) in 2007. Table 6.2 shows the four items that we used in 1999 and in 2007.

As can be seen in table 6.2, no item is exactly the same, though all items can be considered as functional equivalents (listening, explaining, steering and controlling activities). Functional equivalence refers 'to the requirement that concepts should be related to other concepts in other settings more or less the same way' (van Deth 1998: 6). The focus should be on the interpretation of items. Despite being different (not identical) items, items can still be equivalent if they have a similar interpretation. In terms of construct validity (see section 6.3): the items need to be valid and reliable measurements of the underlying construct (van Deth 1998: 6).

Table 6.2: Comparing attitude questions

Attitude towards:	Question (1999)	Question (2007)
listening	How important is it for you as a councillor to represent citizens in your municipality (e.g., ombudsman)?	How important is it for you as a councillor to express the requests and issues emerging from the local society?
explaining	How important is it for you as a councillor in your contacts with citizens, local organisations and followers of your party to explain or justify council decisions?	How important is it for you as a councillor to explain decisions of the council to citizens?
steering	How important is it for you as a councillor to define (1) municipal decrees, (2) white papers and other strategic plans and (3) budgets?	How important is it for you as a councillor to define the main goals of the municipal activity?
controlling	How important is it for you as a councillor to control for a proper execution of taken decisions?	How important is it for you as a councillor to control the municipal activity?

There are two main differences between the 1999 and 2007 questions:

- In 1999 there were four answer categories.⁹ In 2007 the original number of categories that was measured increased from four to five by adding a ‘not important’ category. This decision was made in a meeting of the international research team that conducted the various national surveys (including our Dutch survey) in the MAELG project (see Chapter 5). Although this extra category was almost never chosen, it stands in the way of a strict comparison. To make the data comparable we had to standardise them.
- Another difference is that in 1999 the attitude towards steering activities was measured by three separate items (see our earlier discussion on steering activities) and in 2007 by one general item. Two of the three items in 1999 had more or less the same average: the importance of defining ‘white papers’ and other strategic policy plans ($x = 3.31$), and defining budgets ($x = 3.44$). The item ‘defining municipal decrees’ was considered somewhat less important compared to the other two items ($x = 2.44$) and therefore decreased the average of the three items taken together ($x = 3.06$ instead of $x = 3.37$, based on two items). For this research, we decided to include all three items in measuring steering activities. This is done for the simple reason that also defining municipal statutes is part of formulating policy guidelines and principles to steer the executives (construct validity).

Since comparing attitudes on the basis of the 1999 and 2007 data questionnaires brings along several problems, we will use data from other research in order to compare the councillors’ attitudes over time (triangulation method; see Chapter 5). The PDG research in 2002 and the Berenschot research in 2004 asked the same ‘attitude-questions’ to councillors as in the 1999 survey (and used the same answer categories).

We are also interested in the attitudinal change at the collective level. In order to measure the collective attitudinal change we aggregated the individual data on attitudes.

6.1.3 Behaviour

We expect that the behaviour of councillors will be different after the implementation of the LGA 2002. Since we cannot compare specific items (different measurement in 1999 and 2007; see Chapter 5), we need to establish comparability at a higher level of abstraction. Therefore, we measure the councillors' behaviours in terms of external and internal behaviour. A second good reason to distinguish between external and internal behaviour is that it is really difficult to link the councillors' behaviours to listening, explaining, steering and controlling activities. For example: a conversation between a councillor and citizen can involve both 'listening to citizens' and 'explaining policy decisions to citizens'.

Basically, external activities (responsiveness) refer to all those council activities concerning citizens and local organisations, such as: consulting hours, information meetings, internet chats, et cetera. Internal activities (accountability) refer to 'city hall' activities: meetings and contacts with the board, civil servants, fellow councillors and party groups, as well as the preparation for those meetings.

We measure the external and internal behaviour by using *time allocations of council activities*.¹⁰ Table 6.3 shows which of the council activities in 1999 related to external activities¹¹, and which to internal activities ($\alpha = 0.78$), and which activities in 2007 related to external ones ($\alpha = 0.52$)¹² and internal ones ($\alpha = 0.54$). Table 6.3 shows yet another important problem in comparing the items of 1999 to the ones in 2007: in 1999, respondents were asked to provide their answers in percentages, whereas in 2007 they were asked to report how many hours they allocated to a particular activity on a monthly basis. As a consequence, the behaviour questions cannot be compared in a direct manner.

We will compare the time allocated to internal activities between 1999 and 2007 in percentages. This means that for the 2007 data the answers were transformed from hours per month to percentages (percentage of time allocated to internal activities). To get an idea about changes in the total amount of time that councillors spend at their job we also compared the time that councillors allocated to their job in 1999 to the time in 2007. For this comparison we transformed the 2007 answer scale into hours per week. The 1999 questionnaire included a question on the numbers of hours spent weekly on council activities.

Table 6.3: Comparing behaviour questions

Activities	Question (1999): Can you indicate in the scheme below in percentages (approximately) how you divide your time between the several activities mentioned below?	Question (2007): How much time do you spend on average each month at the following activities (hours per month)?
External	- activities related to contacts with individual citizens or local organisations	- public debates, meeting with citizens - field visits to municipal institutions
Internal	- activities related to the council (e.g., council meetings) - activities related to the party's council group (e.g., meetings) - desk work preparing your activity in the council (e.g., reading papers) - activities related to council committees (e.g., meetings)	- council and BMA meetings - meeting with the party's council group - desk work preparing your activity in the council - other meetings and activities - meetings with administrative staff

Since comparing behaviour on the basis of the 1999 and 2007 data questionnaires brings along several problems, we will use data from other research in order to find additional evidence for strengthening conclusions about councillors' behaviour over time (triangulation method; see Chapter 5). The Berenschot questionnaire in 2004 used the same items as the 1999 survey: we can make a distinction between time allocated to external activities and time allocated to internal activities the same way as we did for the 1999 data.

Besides behavioural changes at the individual level (councillors), we are also interested in the behavioural changes at the collective level (councils). In order to measure the collective behavioural change regarding external and internal activities, we aggregated the individual data.

6.1.4 *Executive dominance*

Based on our third research question we also expect to find a decreased executive dominance after the implementation of the LGA 2002. In order to test this expectation we need to measure the perceived executive dominance before and after the introduction of the LGA 2002.

To measure the executive dominance, councillors were asked to indicate in percentages the level of influence on the content of a council decision of the BMA and the council. Since this question is exactly the same in 2007 as in 1999 and both surveys have a considerable response, we can make a good

comparison of the level of executive dominance. We aggregated the individual data, and compared the perceived executive dominance of municipal councils in 2007 to their equals in 1999.

In order to strengthen our conclusions, another indicator and data-set (triangulation) to measure change in the perceived executive dominance is used as well. The council clerk survey in 2007 included the question: who has a decisive role in determining the agenda of the council? Answer possibilities are: presidium, agenda committee, chairs of council committees, BMA and the council clerk. More answers were allowed. The same question was asked to council clerks in 2004 by Berenschot (see Chapter 5). A decrease in naming the BMA as having a decisive role in determining the council agenda could be an alternative indication for a decline in executive dominance.

6.2 Explaining change

How can we explain the possible changes? In Chapter 4 we discussed the influence of two change mechanisms: socialisation and selection (fourth research question). Our expectation is that councillors that are socialised in the new system (LGA 2002) are more likely to show an attitude/behaviour in line with the LGA 2002 than longer-tenured councillors (who first have to free themselves from their previous attitudes) and new councillors. We also expect that new councillors (after the implementation of the LGA 2002) are more likely to show an attitude/behaviour in line with the LGA 2002 than new councillors before 2002 (see Chapter 4).

In Chapter 5 we explained that the change mechanisms will be tested by comparing the average attitude and behaviour of various cohorts. For the socialisation mechanism we compare three cohorts:

- 1) new councillors in 2007 (< 1 year experience);
- 2) councillors with some experience in the new system but not in the old system (1–5 years experience);
- 3) councillors with experience in the old system (> 5 years experience).

For the selection mechanism we compare two cohorts:

- 1) new councillors in 2007 (< 1 year experience); and
- 2) new councillors in 1999 (< 1 year experience).

These cohorts can be distinguished because the 2007 council survey includes the question: ‘for how many years have you been a local councillor (in total)?’ The 1999 questionnaire included a similar question about experience.

6.3 Explaining intermunicipal variations in councillor behaviour

Last but not least we are interested in how the intermunicipal variations in a councillor’s behaviour can be explained (fifth research question). In Chapter 4 we formulated a theoretical behaviour model (Figure 4.4). According to this model the councillor’s behaviour is explained by his or her attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural controls. External variables that might explain these three behavioural components are: the implementation of the LGA 2002, the council’s perceived executive dominance and sense of legitimacy crisis, the councillor’s attitude towards the LGA 2002, and his or her experience. These variables are measured by items from the council and council clerk survey in 2007 and the council survey in 1999, and some municipal characteristics are measured by means of official statistics.

6.3.1 Behaviour

To test our theoretical model we are interested in four types of behaviour: listening, explaining, steering and controlling activities. These types have already been discussed in section 6.1.2. In our explanatory analysis we measure behaviour using the indicator ‘actual contribution’. The indicator ‘time distribution’ could also have been used, however, as discussed in section 6.1.3 this indicator measures behaviour in terms of external and internal activities. We have chosen to use the contribution-indicator because it looks at four types of activities (listening, explaining, steering and controlling) and hence gives a more differentiated picture than by looking only at two types of activities.

We measure the actual contribution by asking councillors in 2007 the question: ‘How big is your actual contribution in...?’ (see Table 6.4). The interpretation of this question is somewhat ambiguous: because it could refer to behaviour in terms of input as well as in terms of output/outcome. Behaviour in terms of input refers to the activities councillors undertake to be responsive or to hold the board to account. This relates to our procedural definition of

responsiveness and accountability (see Chapter 3). Behaviour in terms of output refers to the result of the councillors' activities: maybe a councillor puts a lot of effort in formulating guidelines to steer the board, but because of 'forces working against him or her' the actual contribution (result) may be low. This conception relates to the material definition of responsiveness and accountability. Hence, the word 'contribution' can be taken in two ways. Since we are primarily interested in behaviour in terms of input or activities and not so much in the end result, this can be a problem.

Table 6.4: Behaviour in terms of contribution

Activity	In your experience as a councillor, how would you assess <u>your contribution</u> regarding the following tasks?
listening	Expressing the requests and issues emerging from the local society
explaining	Explaining decisions of the council to the citizens
steering	Defining the main goals of the municipal activity
controlling	Controlling the municipal activity

We are unsure which view the respondents have chosen in answering this question. We can check whether there is a connection between behaviour in terms of time distribution and behaviour in terms of actual contribution. The strength of this relation might differ for councillors of coalition or opposition parties. If the relationship between these two indicators is stronger for the coalition, this can be seen as support for the output interpretation of actual contribution. It is likely that when councillors from coalition parties put an effort in something (especially spending time at internal activities), the chances that it ends in good results (actual contribution to internal activities) is much higher for them than for members of opposition parties. However, Table 6.5¹³ shows that this is not the case (there is even some small evidence for the opposite). This means that the respondents probably interpreted the question in terms of input. As a result, the contribution-indicator is an appropriate measurement for the behaviour variable in our theoretical model.

Table 6.5: Relation between actual contribution and time distribution of councillors (in terms of internal and external activities), for coalition and opposition parties

Actual contribution Time distribution	Coalition		Opposition	
	Internal	External	Internal	External
Internal	-.048		.090	
External		.204**		.209**

6.3.2 Attitude

In our theoretical model, attitude is one of the variables that can explain the councillor's behaviour. The attitude of councillors in 2007 (regarding the four types of activities) is measured the same way as for our 'change-question': we used the same questions as discussed in section 6.1.2 (for the 2007 data-set).

6.3.3 Subjective Norm

A second variable that might explain the councillor's behaviour is the subjective norm. The subjective norm is defined as: 'the person's beliefs that specific individuals or groups think he should or should not perform the behavior and his motivation to comply with the specific referents' (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980: 8). The *perceived* social norm and the importance attached to it may differ for each individual councillor. Again, the subjective norm can be measured directly or indirectly (see section 6.1.2). For the same reasons as mentioned earlier for attitudes, we use the direct measurement.

The social norm can be shaped or determined by several relevant actors. In Chapter 4 we already indicated that our focus is on the norms of citizens and councillors because we expect councillors to be sensitive to the opinions of the citizens, and also because they are confronted with these norms on a regular basis. The subjective norm is measured for four activities (Table 6.6).

Table 6.6: Subjective norm from citizens and (fellow) local councillors

Activity	According to you, how important do <u>citizens</u> hold the council activities below?	According to you, how important do <u>fellow councillors</u> hold the council activities below?
listening	Expressing the requests and issues emerging from the local society	Expressing the requests and issues emerging from the local society
explaining	Explaining decisions of the council to the citizens	Explaining decisions of the council to the citizens
steering	Defining the main goals of the municipal activity	Defining the main goals of the municipal activity
controlling	Controlling the municipal activity	Controlling the municipal activity

6.3.4 Perceived Behavioural Control

A third (conditional) variable that might explain the councillor's behaviour is the perceived behavioural control. Perceived behavioural control refers to: 'the people's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior of interest' (Ajzen 1991). Hence, do councillors feel that they are able to perform the four types of activities? The perceived behaviour control can be measured in two ways: a direct or indirect measure (cf. section 6.1.2). For the reasons mentioned earlier, this research uses direct measures (see also Notani 1998). The perceived behavioural control is measured for four activities (see Table 6.7).

Table 6.7: Perceived Behavioural Control of local councillors

Activity	Do you have as a councillor, considering the available time, information, money and facilities, sufficient opportunities to perform the activities below well?
listening	Expressing the requests and issues emerging from the local society
explaining	Explaining decisions of the council to the citizens
steering	Defining the main goals of the municipal activity
controlling	Controlling the municipal activity

6.3.5 Implementation of the LGA 2002

The level of implementation of the LGA 2002 is one of the external variables that might explain the three behavioural components (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control). In section 6.1.1 we already discussed how the level of implementation can be described in various ways.

One possible dimension is the use of optional elements and local initiatives. Municipalities that have taken a lot of effort with regard to these elements might be more likely to show positive attitudes towards responsiveness and

accountability. However, looking at the six elements that we defined in section 6.1.1, we can say that these elements are rather vague (what do they exactly entail, and how can these elements contribute to the responsiveness and accountability?). Still, it might be a valuable dimension if we are able to construct a decent scale. Factor analysis shows that these six items can be divided into three components; so, we are unable to speak of one dimension. As a result, we decided not to include the ‘optional elements and local initiatives’ as an explanatory variable for the councillors’ attitudes and behaviour.

The other dimension is the implementation of formal rules of the LGA 2002. We expect to find a difference between on the one hand municipalities that implemented the LGA 2002 right away and to its full extent, and on the other hand municipalities that implemented (parts of) the LGA 2002 at a later stage. For our explanatory question we define the level of implementation (variable at the collective level) as ‘the speed in which the formal rules (with various deadlines) of the LGA 2002 are implemented’. This definition has been chosen because implementation in terms of speed has the most variation between municipalities. In order to test our theoretical model the variables need to vary: we try to explain differences in councillors’ attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control by differences in the municipal implementation of the LGA 2002. Therefore, we do not take the extent of implementation into account because almost all municipalities have implemented the LGA 2002 by now (as they should have!). See section 7.1.1.

In order to test our hypothesis that ‘the longer the socialisation process, the more likely it is to find attitudes and behaviour in line with the LGA 2002’, we converted our data on the year of implementation. As a result, we can test the positive relation formulated in the hypothesis: a high score for ‘speed of implementation’ increases the chance for finding positive attitudes towards responsiveness and accountability.

We should mention that our measurement of ‘speed of implementation’ also tells us something about the comprehensiveness of the local implementation of the LGA. A high score for ‘speed of implementation’ (long socialisation process) means that this municipality was not only an early adopter, but also adopted the full range of the LGA reforms at an early stage (a high score can only be obtained if all the rules are relatively quickly implemented).

In section 6.1.1 we described that the concept ‘speed of implementation LGA 2002’ actually measures three different aspects. Since it is the core of the

LGA 2002, and for reasons of simplicity, we decided to take only one component into account to test our expectations in the theoretical model: the empowerment of the council (for the construction of this scale, see section 6.1.1). A few municipalities did not implement all the formal rules with regard to the empowerment of the council in 2007 and consequently could not indicate the implementation date of certain formal rules. However, these municipalities did indicate the expected implementation date. These dates were used in the measurement of ‘speed of implementation of the LGA 2002’.

6.3.6 *Perceived executive dominance*

A second external (collective) variable is the perceived executive dominance. According to our expectation the perceived executive dominance before 2002 might affect the councilors’ willingness to implement the LGA 2002. Therefore, we are only interested in the (perceived) executive dominance in 1999. We already explained the measurement of executive dominance in section 6.1.3.

6.3.7 *Sense of legitimacy crisis*

Another (collective) external variable is the sense of legitimacy crisis. This variable is measured by looking at the *decline in electoral turnout*. In Chapter 2 we have already explained that using electoral turnout as an indicator for the level of legitimacy is questionable,¹⁴ but the main point is that councillors consider a low electoral turnout as an indicator of a legitimacy problem: it can be the cause for a *sense* of legitimacy crisis. As a result of low municipal election turnout, the legitimacy crisis became a frequently discussed topic (Gilsing 1994: 3). Because of declining rates of turnout in municipal elections and declining support for established local parties (and increasing electoral support for non-traditional and protest parties), many local administrators and politicians came to the conclusion that the relation with citizens had to be improved (Gilsing 1994). Politicians and reformers used the low electoral turnout as a motivation for revising the democratic process and thinking about solutions and opportunities to strengthen democracy on the national, local and regional level (Denters and De Jong 1992: 149). The low turnout triggered a whole battery of reforms, research and experiments on, for instance, interactive decision-making processes (cf. Depla and Tops 1993: 169).

In this research we measured the ‘decline in electoral turnout’ (DET) by using several local election turnout figures: 1994, 1998 and 2002. Elections from 1994 till 2002 were used because these elections reflect the context of the pre-LGA 2002 situation. We measured the ‘decline of electoral turnout’ on the basis of the *total* differences in the electoral turnout (ET) between 1994 and 1998, and between 1998 and 2002. We constructed one variable out of this by calculating the mean of these two figures. In formula:

$$\text{DET} = ((\text{ET}_{1994} - \text{ET}_{1998}) + (\text{ET}_{1998} - \text{ET}_{2002}))/2$$

The assumption is that a high score of the variable DET might result in a higher sense of a legitimacy crisis.

Only the electoral turnout of municipalities that were not amalgamated could be used. There are two reasons for this. One reason is that the electoral turnout of the municipalities needs to be comparable over time (electoral turnout figures of the same municipalities). The other reason is that we compare relations, for instance between ‘decline in electoral turnout’ and change in attitude, within municipalities. Therefore, we need to have data of exactly the same municipality (the turnout and attitudes need to be matched).

6.3.8 *Attitude towards LGA 2002*

A fourth external variable is the attitude towards the LGA 2002 (the idea in general). To measure this variable, eight items are taken into account. These items are seen as central elements of the new LGA 2002 (of course there could be other aspects included as well, however, we restricted ourselves to these eight items). Seven items focus on ‘new’ instruments resulting from the LGA 2002 (see also Chapter 2): ‘to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following measures?’:

- aldermen do not participate in party group meetings
- aldermen no longer chair council committee meetings
- aldermen cannot be a member of council committees
- delegation of governing authorities of the council to the BMA
- administrative support of the council by a council clerk
- introduction of an independent Court of Audit
- introduction of a program budget

We added another item as well: ‘Which of the statements below resembles your point of view best?’:

- A. The council should govern: the BMA should focus on daily management.
- B. The BMA should govern: the council has to formulate policy guidelines and principles in order to steer the board and should control the BMA.

Though the format of this question differs from the other seven, we felt that it is a substantial part of a person’s attitude towards the LGA 2002.

Before we constructed a scale on the basis of these eight items, we did a factor analysis to see if these items measure the same thing, or in fact different components of this variable. Factor analysis shows that the eight items can be divided into three components (Appendix C). The components represent different aspects of the LGA 2002 (see Table 6.8).

Table 6.8: Attitude towards LGA 2002 as measured by three different components

Component	Items
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administrative support of the council by a council clerk - Introduction of an independent Court of Audit - Introduction of program budget
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aldermen do not participate in party group meetings - Aldermen no longer chair council committee meetings - Aldermen cannot be a member of council committees
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The BMA should govern: the council has to formulate policy guidelines and principles in order to steer the board and should control the BMA. - Delegation of governing authorities of the council to the BMA

However, since we do not believe that these three components will have a separate and different effect on the councillors’ attitudes towards responsiveness and accountability activities, we take these eight items as one component. In order to compare item number eight (about the statements) to the other items we gave respondents the extreme score ‘0’ for stating that the council should govern, and the extreme score ‘4’ for stating that the board should govern. The other items were measured on a scale from 0 to 4 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). To construct a scale we calculated the mean by adding up all the answer scores and dividing this by the number of items (including the data of respondents if they had filled in more than half of the items). Therefore, the scale of the variable ‘attitude towards LGA 2002’ runs

from 0–4 (negative – positive). The alpha of this scale is quite low ($\alpha = 0.66$), but this is no surprise for we measure several dimensions of the concept.¹⁵

6.3.9 *Experience (under the old regime)*

A final external variable is the experience (under the old regime). For our theoretical model we are interested in the influence of ‘experience under the old regime’ on the councillor’s attitude, and the influence of ‘experience’ on the councillor’s perceived behavioural control (see Chapter 4).

In our 2007 council survey we measured the experience of the councillor by the number of years that a local councillor performs his or her job. We asked councillors: ‘For how many years have you been a local councillor (in total)?’ Using this question we measure ‘experience’ as a continuous variable. However, we are also interested in comparing councillors that only have experience in the new institutional structure with those that have experience in the old regime (‘experience under the old regime’); in other words, experience as a dichotomous variable (councillors with fewer or more than five years experience). This variable was added to our data-set by converting the experience variable.

6.4 **Validity and reliability**

In the previous chapter we discussed the internal and external validity of the research design. In this section we focus on another type of validity: construct validity (Cook and Campbell 1979; see also Babbie 2001). Construct validity is about the degree to which several operational items/indicators together truly and fully reflect the theoretical concept. In other words: do the indicators introduced in this chapter cover the concepts on which we want to make statements? Do our indicators cover the full range of the concept? Is it measuring the concept or something else as well? We also pay attention to the reliability of our research. Reliability is ‘a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, yields the same result each time’ (Babbie 2001: 140). Or stated otherwise: doing this research, would another person get the same results?

Before discussing the construct validity we should start with the general remark that this research has to deal with some restrictions based on two

research contingencies (see Chapter 5). On the one hand, the 2007 questionnaire had to be comparable to the 1999 questionnaire, because we want to compare the attitude, behaviour and executive dominance over time. On the other hand, the 2007 questionnaire was part of an international research project, and because of this we depended for our question formulation on others. This brought along a few problems for our diachronic comparisons. To improve the construct validity and reliability of these comparisons, we made use of other resources (triangulation method; see attitude and behaviour). In order to support our conclusions for executive dominance, we used more indicators.

This chapter showed several problems for the construct validity. One specific problem is the measurement of attitudes towards steering activities. In 1999 this activity is explicated by three items, in 2007 by one. But do they both measure steering activities (to the same extent)? We think they do: the 2007 item is simply an overlapping item of these separate items in 1999.

The other problem relates to the concept of behaviour measured by the indicators 'time distribution' and 'actual contribution'. In section 6.1.3 we discussed how for behaviour in terms of time distribution the items between 1999 and 2007 are not exactly comparable. We tried to deal with this problem by using the external/internal dimension and the triangulation method. For behaviour in terms of actual contribution, we discussed how this item can measure two different things: the councillors' input or output. In section 6.2.2 we discovered that the input interpretation is most likely to be measured.

Besides construct validity we can also say something about the reliability. The effort that we made in this chapter—by providing well-defined, strict concepts and clear descriptions of the indicators—contributes to the reliability of our research. To increase the reliability of our research, we tested the questionnaire on councillors not included in the sample before sending it to the respondents. This way we checked whether the questions were clear and unambiguous. We also decided to use (almost) solely closed questions. To ensure reliability of the data-set, the completed questionnaires were scanned automatically. For some of the variables (based on more items) we checked the reliability (internal consistency) by indicating Cronbachs alpha.

6.5 Summary

In this chapter we specified the research variables. We attributed one or more indicators to the various concepts (see Table 6.9). In the second part of this book we will test our hypotheses and behaviour models.

Table 6.9: Summary of variables and indicators

Variable	Indicator
Implementation LGA 2002	<p>A. Formal rules: To what extent are the following rules (regarding empowerment council, codes of conduct, financial accountability) implemented? In terms of: (1) current stage, (2) on time or not, (3) speed (range of package)?</p> <p>B. Optional changes and local initiatives: To what extent did the municipality use optional changes and own initiatives to improve the implementation of the LGA 2002?</p>
Attitude towards behaviour	∅ How important is it for you to ...?
Behaviour	<p>∅ Time distribution: How much time do you spend at ...?</p> <p>∅ Actual contribution: How big would you define your actual contribution regarding ...?</p>
Executive domination	<p>∅ Can you indicate in percentages the level of influence on the content of a council decision of the BMA and the council?</p> <p>∅ Who has a decisive role in determining the agenda of the council?</p>
Subjective norm citizens	∅ How important do citizens feel it is for you to ...?
Subjective norm councillors	∅ How important do other councillors feel it is for you to ...?
Perceived behavioural control	∅ How easy or difficult is it for you to ...?
Sense of legitimacy crisis	∅ Decline in electoral turnout: the mean for the total electoral turnout difference between 1994 and 1998 and between 1998 and 2002.
Attitude towards LGA 2002	∅ To which extent do you agree with the several measures introduced by the LGA 2002?
Experience (under the old regime)	∅ For how long have you been a local councillor?

7 Change over time?

The speed and range of implementation of the LGA 2002 is expected to go hand in hand with the changing role orientations and role behaviour of councillors. Early implementation of the LGA 2002 means more time for councillors to adapt to the new structure and to develop attitudes (and behaviours) in line with the LGA 2002. At the same time, an early adoption of the new structure might also reflect an initial benevolence, for example, of the council and its members towards the new legislation, providing a fertile soil for the reform. In this chapter we take a look at the possible effects of the LGA 2002: are attitudes and behaviours regarding responsiveness and accountability activities becoming more positive, and is the perceived executive dominance decreasing (second and third research question)? However, before we can discuss possible effects of the LGA 2002, we have to take a look at the implementation of the LGA 2002 in municipalities, because the effects are only likely to appear if the LGA 2002 has been implemented (first research question). After discussing the level of implementation, we elaborate on the goal achievement of the LGA 2002 (research questions two and three), and the influence of the socialisation and selection mechanisms (fourth research question). In addition to these conclusions about the goal attainment, we will also look into a number of potential side-effects of the legislation. This chapter is mainly descriptive; in the next chapter we will focus on testing causal relations.

7.1 *Level of implementation of LGA 2002*

The institutional reform entails both the implementation of mandatory formal rules, and the implementation of optional elements and local initiatives. We will first discuss the speed and range of implementation of the formal rules, and then go into the implementation of the optional elements and local initiatives. This section deals with the first research question:

(1) *To what extent have institutional changes in the Dutch Local Government Act 2002 been implemented in Dutch municipalities?*

7.1.1 Implementation of (mandatory) formal rules

The implementation of the LGA 2002 in terms of (mandatory) formal rules can be described in three different ways (see Chapter 6): 1) implementation of the formal rules in 2007 ('current stage'), 2) timeliness of the implementation of the formal rules (before the deadline or not), 3) implementation of the formal rules in terms of speed. The implementation of the formal rules is to a large extent up to the council and the municipality itself: there is no national or regional organisation(s) responsible for the implementation of the LGA 2002 in municipalities. Besides the implementation of specific formal rules, it is also interesting to look into the overall level of implementation.

Table 7.1 shows that in 2007 almost all formal changes were implemented in the municipalities. Only the codes of conducts for the councillors, aldermen and mayor were not yet completely implemented. About 10% of the municipalities failed to enact such codes by 2007.

Table 7.1: Rules of the LGA 2002 implemented in 2007 by municipalities

Formal rule	Implemented	In procedure	Procedure has to start	N
Introduction of a Council Clerk	100%	0%	0%	107
Introduction of an Annual Citizen Report	99%	0%	1%	101
Establishment of regulation for the council*	100%	0%	0%	106
Code of Conduct for councillors	88%	8%	5%	105
Code of Conduct for aldermen	90%	6%	2%	101
Code of Conduct for mayor	88%	8%	4%	99
Decree on assistance of civil servants	96%	2%	2%	104
Decree on basis of financial policy	98%	2%	0%	105
Decree on external control on financial administration and organisation	99%	1%	0%	106
Decree on regular effectiveness and efficiency research	98%	1%	1%	106
Introduction of a Program Budget	96%	3%	1%	102
Introduction of a Court of Audit	100%	0%	0%	106

* partly optional

To get a better idea about the implementation of the formal rules of the LGA 2002 we checked whether the municipalities implemented the rules on time (see Table 7.2). Looking at this table we see that many municipalities implemented the formal rules before the statutory deadline, yet some of them did not. The vast majority of the municipalities were able to meet the statutory deadlines for the introduction of regulation for the council, the decree on assistance of civil servants, the program budget and a Court of Audit (82%, 71%, 77%, 92%). A somewhat smaller majority met the deadline for introducing the council clerk, the decree on financial policy and the decree on external control (66%, 59%, 61%). A narrow majority implemented the codes of conduct and the decree on effectiveness and efficiency research on time (53% and 55%). The annual citizen report was implemented with delay in most of the municipalities (89%).

Table 7.2: Implementation of formal rules of LGA 2002

Formal rule	Deadline	On time	Average year	N
Introduction of a Council Clerk	2002	66%	Middle 2002	103
Introduction of an Annual Citizen Report	2002	11%	Middle 2003	95
Establishment of regulation for the council*	2003	82%	End 2002	99
Code of Conduct for councillors**	2003	53% (74%)	Beginning 2004	99
Code of Conduct for aldermen**	2003	53% (73%)	Beginning 2004	96
Code of Conduct for mayor**	2003	53% (71%)	Beginning 2004	94
Decree on assistance of civil servants	2003	71%	Middle 2003	100
Decree on basis of financial policy	2003	59%	Middle 2003	100
Decree on external control on financial administration and organisation	2003	61%	Middle 2003	100
Decree on regular effectiveness and efficiency research**	2003	55% (85%)	Middle 2003	100
Introduction of a Program Budget	2004	77%	End 2003	93
Introduction of a Court of Audit	2006	92%	End 2004	103

* partly optional

** Between brackets means that municipalities had the possibility to postpone the introduction of the codes of conducts and the decree on effectiveness with one year. This means that for example 74% of the municipalities implemented the code of conduct for councillors on time before the extended data.

If we take a look at the order of implementation of the various rules, we see that on average municipalities first introduced a council clerk and the regulation for the council. In a second stage, municipalities implemented the annual citizen report, the decree on financial policy, on external control and on effectiveness/efficiency research and the program budget. The codes of conduct and the decree on assistance of civil servants were implemented in some

municipalities in the first stage, in other municipalities in the second stage. On average, municipalities implemented the Court of Audit as the last formal rule. Some of the formal rules had already been implemented in certain municipalities before the introduction of the LGA 2002. Our data show that four municipalities already had a Court of Audit, in two municipalities they already used a program budget and in three municipalities the codes of conduct were already implemented. One municipality had already implemented before 2002 the regulation for the council, the annual citizen report and the decree on civil servant assistance.

We are also interested in the overall implementation of the LGA 2002. Table 7.3 shows two aspects of the overall implementation: the ‘state of affairs’ for the year 2007 and the implementation before the obligatory date. With respect to the former, the average score of municipalities is 0.96 on a scale of 0–1 (0: not implemented, 1: implemented). This means that x amount of 12 rules have been implemented. In other words, ‘0.96’ means that the average municipality in 2007 implemented the LGA 2002 almost to its full extent. In 2007, 79% of the municipalities had implemented the complete LGA 2002 (score of 1). With regard to the second aspect (see Table 7.3), the timeliness of the reforms, municipalities have an average score of 0.62 on a scale of 0–1 (0: not implemented before the statutory deadline; 1: implemented before deadline). This tells us that the larger part, but by no means the whole LGA reform package was implemented on time. One municipality in our sample has a score of zero: this means that none of the formal rules of the LGA 2002 were implemented on time. At the other extreme, 4% of the municipalities implemented all rules of the LGA 2002 before the deadline (score of 1). More than a quarter of the municipalities (28%) implemented the majority of the new measures after the obligatory date.

Table 7.3: Implementation of the LGA 2002, in terms of ‘current stage’ and ‘before deadline’

	Implemented in 2007	Rules implemented before deadline
LGA 2002 in municipalities	X = .96	X = .62
	N = 106	N = 102
	Sd = .092	Sd = .249
	Min = .54	Min = 0
	Max = 1	Max = 1

Finally, we can also look at the overall speed of implementation of the LGA 2002. In Chapter 6 we explained that in terms of overall speed we are dealing with three components: rules related to (1) the empowerment of the council, (2) the financial accountability, and (3) the codes of conduct. With respect to the speed of implementation we can say that municipalities implemented the rules to empower the council on average in the middle of the year 2003. Rules related to the financial accountability were implemented on average in the second half of 2003, and rules related to the codes of conduct at the beginning of 2004 (see Table 7.4). This pace was in part dictated by statutory deadlines.

Table 7.4: Implementation of the LGA 2002, in terms of speed

Component LGA 2002	Speed of implementation
Empowerment council	X = 2003.5
	N = 101
	Sd = 0.953
	Min = 2000.6
	Max = 2007.5
Financial accountability	X = 2003.6
	N = 100
	Sd = 1.047
	Min = 2002
	Max = 2008
Codes of conduct	X = 2004.1
	N = 96
	Sd = 2.540
	Min = 1998
	Max = 2010

We can conclude that there are intermunicipal variations in the pace and comprehensiveness of local reforms. Is this random, or is there a pattern? Although this is not our primary research question, we nevertheless do pay some brief attention to this subject. We expect that two characteristics of municipalities may have an influence on the level of implementation of formal rules: *municipal size*¹ and *amalgamation*.

First, municipal size might be of influence on the implementation of the LGA. After all, large municipalities have a more professional administrative and political apparatus (Boogers 2007: 112), and should therefore better be able to implement all the new formal rules. Furthermore, large municipalities are more likely to implement certain aspects of the LGA 2002 at an early stage because in most big cities the political process was already in line with several principles of the institutional reform (Boogers 2007). It might also be the case

that the need for the LGA 2002 is greater in bigger municipalities. This need might express itself in two different ways. Following one view, bigger municipalities are confronted with extensive and complex decision making: compared to smaller municipalities, bigger municipalities have larger budgets, more policy programs, more neighbourhoods, more problems, et cetera (Bos 2008). As a result, the need for a clear job description and the facilitation (support) of external and internal activities might be higher for councils in larger municipalities. Another view, that expresses the sense of urgency for the LGA 2002 in bigger municipalities, is that the ‘gap’ between citizens and local government—which is often seen as an indicator for the level of legitimacy—is probably perceived to be higher in larger than in smaller municipalities; the distance between citizens and local government is thought to be smaller in smaller municipalities (Gilsing 1994: 9). One of the aims of the LGA reform is to decrease the distance between citizens and local government, and, therefore, bigger municipalities might implement the LGA at an early stage.

A second characteristic that might have had some influence on the level of implementation is whether a municipality has been recently (after 2002) amalgamated or not. The relevance of this element can be easily explained: municipalities that are in the process of amalgamation may be heavily involved in this major reorganisation and therefore cannot spend much energy on other concerns. They may also be inclined to postpone the reforms until the full implementation of the amalgamation. An example: why decide on regulation for the council when soon there will be a ‘new’ council? This ‘new’ council might have different ideas about regulation for the council. As a result, amalgamated municipalities may have decided to implement some of the formal rules of the LGA 2002 on a later date.

Our empirical analysis showed some significant correlations between municipal size and the implementation of specific formal rules, looking at the exact implementation date (in years). As expected, we found a positive relation between municipal size and the implementation of three formal rules: 1) the introduction of a Court of Audit ($r = 0.560$, for $p < 0.01$), 2) the program budget ($r = 0.228$, for $p < 0.05$), and 3) the decree on assistance of civil servants ($r = 0.199$, for $p < 0.05$). In other words: the larger the municipality the higher the chance that the Court of Audit, the program budget and the decree on assistance were implemented at an early stage. In terms of the overall measure we found a significant relation between municipal size and the speed of implementation of

rules to empower the council ($r = 0.299$, for $p < 0.01$): the larger the municipality the sooner the rules to empower the council are implemented. No significant relations were found between municipal size and the general implementation measures in terms of ‘current stage’ and ‘timeliness’.

As we expected, municipalities that were amalgamated between 1999 and 2007 needed more time to implement several of the formal rules. Amalgamated municipalities implemented the following rules systematically later than other municipalities: introduction of a council clerk, the annual citizen report, regulation of the council, codes of conduct, and the decrees on financial policy, external control and effectiveness research. In terms of overall measures: the implementation of the formal rules in 2007 was significantly lower in amalgamated municipalities, also the speed of implementation of the LGA 2002 (all three components) was significantly lower.

7.1.2 Implementation of optional elements and local initiatives

Besides the formal rules, the introduction of optional changes and local initiatives also tells us something about the implementation of the local government reforms in municipalities. Table 7.5 shows that most municipalities provided courses to councillors on ‘how to handle their representing and scrutiny tasks’ (87%). At the other end of the spectrum only 19% of the municipalities provided a budget for the council to investigate proposals of the board. In 2004 the same question² was asked to council clerks by Berenschot. In 2004 28% of the municipalities provided the council with a research budget ($N = 249$). This means between 2004 and 2007 a decline of almost 10%. A possible explanation for this decline is that the LGA 2002 obliged municipalities to introduce a Court of Audit before 2006. Possibly the budget for the Court of Audit is there at the expense of a research budget for the council.³

Furthermore, almost three out of four municipalities took action to involve citizens more directly in council and council committee meetings (74%). Examples are: consulting hours, citizen initiatives and referenda, right to speak for citizens, ‘round table conversations’, political market, hearings on location, ‘guest of the council’, working visits, living room conversations, speed dates and chats, information and theme meetings, and so on. Renewals in council committee meetings involve mostly abolishing the council committees (and for instance replacing them by a political market) or decreasing the number of

council committees. Overall, out of the six items on optional change and local initiatives, three municipalities applied none of them, one municipality applied all of them, but most municipalities applied three or four of the items.

Table 7.5: The use of optional changes and local initiatives in 2007

Optional changes	Yes (%)
a. Providing courses for councillors (how to deal with their representing, steering and controlling tasks)	87
b. Before 2006: start to delegate authorities to the BMA	40
c. Availability of a budget for the council to investigate proposals of the board	19
Initiatives / Renewals	
d. Involving citizens to council and council committee meetings	74
e. Reform of proceedings in council meetings	46
f. Reform of structure and procedures in council committee meetings	69

Looking at the relation between, on the one hand, municipal size and amalgamation, and, on the other hand, the optional changes and local initiatives, there were no significant correlations except for one weak one: the larger the municipality, the higher the chance that the municipality started with (early) delegation of authorities from the council to the board ($r = 0.116$, for $p < 0.05$).

It might be the case that municipalities that implemented the formal rules at an early stage were also more ambitious and eager to use optional elements and local initiatives. Therefore, we checked for correlations between ‘speed of implementation of the formal rules’ and the six optional items. It turns out that the speed of implementation of rules that empower the council correlate with the provision of courses for councillors ($r = 0.279$, for $p < 0.01$), and with early delegation of authorities to the board ($r = 0.253$, $p < 0.05$). The earlier the rules with regard to the empowerment of the council are implemented, the more likely it is that this municipality provides courses for councillors (how to deal with their tasks) and started to delegate authorities to the BMA before 2006.

7.1.3 Conclusions

At the end of this section we can draw two conclusions. One positive conclusion is that the LGA 2002 has been implemented completely in most of the municipalities; in other municipalities, the LGA 2002 has been implemented almost completely (range of implementation). Therefore, we can expect to see some changes in terms of the councillors’ attitudes and behaviour. Second, the speed of implementation varies between municipalities (though this variation is

not very big). This variation is needed for our next chapter where we will test the influence of the speed of implementation on the councillors' attitude.

7.2 *Attitudinal change*

This section deals with attitudinal changes at the individual level, and briefly discusses changes at the collective level. As discussed in the previous chapter, there are some validity threats concerning the items we use for our diachronic comparisons (council survey, 1999 and 2007): the wording of some questions is not exactly the same. Therefore, when useful, we will compare our outcomes to other research, especially the data of Berenschot (2004). By combining research we are able to make some inferences about changes after the LGA 2002 with regard to the councillors' and councils' attitudes. Hence, this section deals with the second and third research questions:

(2) *To what extent do councillors display **increased** levels of individual responsiveness and accountability (in terms of their **individual attitudes** and behaviour)?*

(3) *To what extent have the goals of the institutional reform been attained in terms of a **more responsive and accountable work culture** and behaviour in local government, and a decrease in the executive dominance?*

According to the policy theory of the LGA 2002, by emphasising (and supporting) the roles of the councillor as a representative and scrutiniser, councillors should acquire a more positive attitude towards these activities. Therefore, comparing the attitudes towards responsiveness and accountability in 1999 and 2007 we expect to find an increase in the importance councillors attach to these activities (hypothesis 1). In order to test this hypothesis we compare the attitudes towards listening, explaining, steering and controlling activities of councillors in 1999 to the ones in 2007. Before we compare the two data-sets we will describe our findings in 2007.

In 2007 84% of the councillors considered their task to express the requests and issues emerging from local society as (very) important. With respect to explaining activities: in 2007, 75% of the councillors deemed this task to be (very) important. Steering activities were thought to be (very) important by 96%

of the councillors. As far as the controlling task is concerned, 91% of the councillors indicated this task as (very) important (see Table 7.6, third and fourth column). Based on these figures we can conclude that all four tasks are considered to be important by councillors.

Table 7.6: Attitude towards four types of behaviour in 2007 (in %)

Activity	Not important (0)	1	2	3	Very important (4)
Listening	-	1.0	15.1	43.6	40.2
Explaining	0.1	2.7	22.0	45.0	30.2
Steering	-	0.4	3.6	32.1	64.0
Controlling	-	0.9	8.1	45.0	45.9

Scale 0–4 (not important – very important), N = 1292

We will now compare the attitudes of the 1999 average councillor to the 2007 average councillor (see Table 7.7). The table shows the (standardised) average attitude of the four activities (listening, explaining, steering, controlling), as well as significant differences: both in terms of comparing attitudes in 1999 to the ones in 2007, and in terms of differences between activities within the 1999 and 2007 data set (ranking). Councillors considered both responsiveness and securing accountability as important tasks in 1999 as well as in 2007 (average score is closer to 1 than to 0). These similarities notwithstanding, we can make two important observations.

First, considering activities of responsiveness and accountability, there has been a shift towards accountability activities. This becomes especially clear by looking at the ranking figures: in 1999, responsiveness activities were perceived as more important than accountability activities (the same attitudinal pattern was found in 2002 in the PDG research); in 2007, this pattern has been reversed.

Second, this change has not so much been the result of a decrease in importance of responsiveness activities (2007 scores are not deviating much from the previous scores, there is even a small increase), but more the effect of an increasing importance of accountability activities (significant for $p < 0.01$).

This selective increase in saliency is remarkable: in comparison to 1999 the accountability activities have grown in importance, whereas there was no similar change in the importance of responsiveness activities. This asymmetry does not reflect the dual normative case for the reforms that emphasised the importance of both concerns. Apparently, local actors have prioritised the accountability goals of the reforms. Looking at the goals of the reformers of the

LGA 2002, this finding is surprising, for their aims were to improve both responsiveness and accountability in local government. However, this duality is less surprising from the perspective of the instruments: most measures in the reform package were targeted at an improvement of the position of the council vis-à-vis the BMA and not to the external orientation of the council in its relation to the citizenry.

Table 7.7: Comparing attitudes 1999 and 2007

Attitude towards activity	1999		2007		Significant difference (1999–2007)
	x (sd)	ranking	x (sd)	ranking	
Listening	.75 (0.26)	1	.81 (0.18)	3	P < 0.01
Explaining	.71 (0.24)	2	.76 (0.20)	4	P < 0.01
Steering	.69 (0.17)	2	.90 (0.14)	1	P < 0.01
Controlling	.70 (0.25)	2	.84 (0.17)	2	P < 0.01

Scale: 0 – 1 (not important to very important)

It is also interesting to put these results in the perspective of the council survey conducted in 2004 by Berenschot.⁴ This survey included exactly the same attitudinal questions as in 1999. Compared to the 1999 data, the 2004 data show a small increase in the attitude towards listening activities, and a big increase in the attitude towards controlling activities. There are no changes in the attitudes with regard to explaining and steering activities (see Table 7.8). If we standardise the 2004 data in order to guarantee comparability with the 2007 measurements, and compare them to the 1999 and 2007 data, we can see a small increase in importance of listening and explaining activities over time, a moderate increase in importance of controlling activities (especially right after the introduction of the LGA 2002) and a considerable increase in importance of steering activities⁵ (though, only after some time) (see Table 7.9).

Table 7.8: Comparing attitudes 1999 and 2004

Attitude towards activity	1999		2004		Significant difference (1999-2004)
	x (sd)	Ranking	x (sd)	Ranking	
Listening	3.26 (0.78)	1	3.36 (0.74)	1	P < 0.05
Explaining	3.12 (0.72)	2	3.08 (0.72)	2	no
Steering	3.06 (0.74)	2	3.06 (0.48)	2	no
Controlling	3.09 (0.76)	2	3.44 (0.63)	1	P < 0.01

Scale: 1-4 (not very important to very important)

Table 7.9: Comparing attitudes 1999, 2004, 2007

Attitude towards activity	1999: x (sd)	2004: x (sd)	2007: x (sd)
Listening	.75 (0.26)	.79 (0.24)	.81 (0.18)
Explaining	.71 (0.24)	.69 (0.24)	.76 (0.20)
Steering	.69 (0.17)	.69 (0.16)	.90 (0.14)
Controlling	.70 (0.25)	.81 (0.21)	.84 (0.17)

Scale: 0 – 1 (not important to very important)

This brings us to the conclusion that although it is claimed in the literature that it takes some time for institutional reforms to show effects (see our discussion in Chapter 1), we (notwithstanding the relatively short period covered in our research) found a change in the councillors' attitude towards responsiveness and accountability activities. Part of this change took place right after the introduction of the LGA 2002 (especially the attitude towards controlling activities); other attitudes needed a bit more time to change (especially the attitude towards steering activities).

Attitudinal changes at the collective level

We are also interested in changes at the collective level. Therefore, Table 7.10 shows the cultural changes by using the attitudinal aggregates (mean for each municipality). We compared the average opinion climate (i.e., culture) of the councils in 2007 to their equals in 1999 (since the councils need to be the same, we only included those municipalities that have not been amalgamated: N = 112).

Table 7.10: Cultural change in Dutch municipalities

Culture towards:	Number of municipalities:										Average change (N = 112)
	Negative change				No change	Positive change					
	> 0.3	0.2–0.3	0.1–0.2	0–0.1		0–0.1	0.1–0.2	0.2–0.3	> 0.3		
Listening	-	-	9	19	5	42	29	7	1	+0.06**	
Explaining	1	1	9	26	3	36	23	12	1	+0.01	
Steering	-	1	-	2	-	17	36	45	11	+0.19**	
Controlling	-	-	3	1	2	27	49	26	4	+0.15**	

** means significant for $p < 0.01$

Table 7.10 shows the average (standardised) attitudinal change at the collective level. These averages differ from the averages we reported earlier for changes at the individual level (see Table 7.7). According to Table 7.10, the attitude towards 'listening' activities becomes slightly more positive in

municipal councils: an increase of importance of 0.06 in the average municipality (on a scale from 0–1; significant for $p < 0.01$). This increase is mainly the result of many municipalities with a small increase, and not so much the result of few municipalities with a large increase. An increase in importance for listening activities was also found at the individual level.

The attitude towards ‘explaining’ activities remains the same over time: there is no significant difference between the attitude of the average municipality in 1999 and the average municipality in 2007. At the individual level we did find a small, but significant increase.

The importance attached to accountability activities in municipalities has increased considerably over time. The attitude towards steering activities became more positive in the average municipality with 0.19 (significant for $p < 0.01$). This is mainly the result of few municipalities with a decrease in importance, many municipalities with a moderate increase (0.1–0.3) and several municipalities with a large increase (> 0.3). This rather large increase corresponds to our findings at the individual level. Also the fact that many municipalities show a big increase can be traced back in our individual analyses: many councillors in 2007 indicated the ‘steering’ task to be very important (which was not the case in 1999).

The attitude towards ‘controlling’ activities became more positive in the average municipality with 0.15 (significant for $p < 0.01$). This is mainly the result of few municipalities showing a decrease in the importance attached to controlling activities, and many municipalities with a small to moderate increase in importance (0–0.3). We also found an increase at the individual level, one that was smaller than for steering activities.

On the basis of these collective findings we can conclude the following. In some municipalities, the cultural changes were small, but overall we can observe an equivocal pattern⁶: almost all municipalities show a selective cultural change, a more positive culture towards accountability activities (the increase of importance towards responsiveness activities stays somewhat behind). What is also important is that these findings are the result of a general pattern of change observed in many different municipalities and are therefore not likely to be an artefact of the small N’s in a few of these municipalities.

7.3 Explaining attitudinal change

In this section we will discuss attitudinal change more in depth: we will try to explain the attitudinal change. We will test for the influence of two change mechanisms: socialisation and selection. Therefore, this section deals with the fourth research question:

(4) To what extent are councillors' attitudinal and behavioural changes influenced by institutional (re)socialisation, and selective recruitment and exit?

As discussed in Chapter 5, we will answer this question by comparing cohorts. First we go in to the socialisation mechanism, subsequently the selection mechanism.

If *only* the socialisation mechanism would be responsible for the attitudinal change that we observed in the previous section, we would expect that for the 2007 respondents the importance attached to responsiveness and accountability would co-vary with organisational tenure. In Chapter 4 we formulated a hypothesis:

4. Councillors are more likely to change their attitudes and behaviours in line with the LGA 2002 if they are socialised for some time in the new system; however, councillors that have experience under the old system might have a more difficult time changing their attitudes and behaviours to bring those in line with the LGA 2002.

In Chapter 5 we explained that we will test this hypothesis by comparing three cohorts: 1) new councillors (< 1 year experience), 2) councillors with some experience in the new regime (1–5 years experience), and 3) councillors with experience in the old regime (> 5 years experience). Based on socialisation theory we would expect that the reform values (responsiveness and accountability) would be most effectively inculcated in cohort II—councillors with one term of experience, under the new legal regime. The freshmen (cohort I) have yet to be fully socialised, whereas in cohort III—councillors with experience under the previous institutional structure—the socialisation process is likely to be less effective because it has to undo the results of previous socialisation under the old legislative regime. Therefore, we expect to see a

curvilinear relationship between tenure and attitudes. In order to see if our expectation is right we compare the three previously distinguished tenure cohorts (Table 7.11).

Table 7.11: 2007 socialisation mechanism

Attitude towards activity	Cohort I: 1 year: x (sd)	Cohort II 1–5 years: x (sd)	Cohort III > 5 years: x (sd)
listening	.81 (0.17)	.80 (0.19)	.81 (0.18)
explaining	.76 (0.19)	.77 (0.20)	.76 (0.20)
steering	.89 (0.16)	.90 (0.14)	.91 (0.14)
controlling	.84 (0.16)	.84 (0.17)	.84 (0.17)

Cohort 1 N = 400; Cohort 2 N = 319; Cohort 3 N = 453

Scale 0–1: not important–very important

Table 7.11 shows that there are no (real) and consistent differences between the three cohorts in terms of the importance scores for the responsiveness and accountability activities. Therefore we conclude that the tenure hypothesis based on the socialisation argument is not corroborated.

A possible explanation is that results of organisational socialisation have been attenuated by the selection mechanism. As a result of the selection process (a combination of self-selection and selection by recruiters), all three cohorts of councillors elected in the 2006 elections—*irrespective of their different socialisation histories*—have a similar attitudinal profile (attitudes in line with the LGA 2002). In order to probe this option, we have subsequently tried to isolate a recruitment effect. On the basis of our data it is possible to isolate a possible recruitment effect (and minimise possible confounding effects by institutional socialisation of councillors while in office) when we compare *new recruits* in 2007 with their equals in 1999. Therefore, we tested our hypothesis formulated in Chapter 4:

5. New councillors selected after the implementation of the LGA 2002 are more likely to show an attitude and behaviour in line with the LGA 2002 than new councillors selected before 2002.

Table 7.12 shows that if we compare 1999's freshmen with their equals of 2007 (standardised data), we find the expected increase in importance for the two accountability activities (all four activities show a significant increase for $p < 0.01$). This confirms the hypothesis of a substantial recruitment effect in the case of these activities. The freshmen of 2007 on the eve of the 2006 elections

went through a screen that was different from traditional selection criteria employed for the freshman of 1999, putting a heavier emphasis on the accountability values than before.

Table 7.12: New councillors (Cohort I: 1 year experience) 1999 compared to 2007

Attitude towards activity	1999: x (sd)	2007: x (sd)
listening	.76 (0.28)	.82 (0.17)
explaining	.69 (0.25)	.76 (0.19)
steering	.68 (0.18)	.89 (0.17)
controlling	.70 (0.26)	.84 (0.16)

1999: N = 520, 2007: N = 400

Scale 0–1: not important–very important

Our conclusion⁷ is that the attitudinal changes observed in the previous section may at least partially be understood as the result of a selection effect. On the basis of our data it is hard to tell whether there is also a socialisation effect. We were unable to corroborate the organisational tenure hypothesis. As already mentioned, an explanation for our findings might be that the possible results of organisational socialisation have been attenuated by the selection mechanism. An alternative explanation which cannot be ruled out is that everybody or at least political actors change as ‘a sign of the times’: these days there is simply more attention paid to the responsiveness and accountability task of the council and new councillors may be socialised into their roles before entering the council.

7.4 Behavioural change

Besides attitudinal change we also expect to find behavioural change regarding responsiveness and accountability activities. This again refers to the second (individual behavioural change) and third research questions (collective behavioural change). In this section we will check whether the behaviour of councillors and the council towards responsiveness and accountability activities changes. In Chapter 6 we have explained that, based on the 1999 and 2007 data, we cannot look into behavioural changes in terms of listening, explaining, steering and controlling activities but we can compare time spent on external and internal activities. External activities refer to contacts with citizens and local organisations (relates to responsiveness), and internal activities refer to

internal meetings and desk preparation (relates to accountability). In order to strengthen our conclusions, we have also compared our findings with other related research. In this section we will look at the research (data) of Berenschot 2004, Daadkracht 2008, and Commission Aarts (2008).

According to the policy theory, implementation of the LGA 2002 should result in a behavioural change: to enable more time spent on external activities, councillors should spend less time at internal activities (hypothesis 2). We will now first discuss the total amounts of time that councillors spend on their job.

In 1999, the total time spent by councillors on their job was measured by the question, 'How many hours per week do you spend on average on your council job?' For the 2007 data we calculated the total amount of time spent on the job by adding the items of the question, 'How many hours per month do you spend at the following council activities?'⁸ In 1999, councillors spent on average 13.8 hours per week at their job, in 2007 on average 13.4 hours; a small decline (significant for $p < 0.05$). Since the questions are a bit different we can only make a rough comparison and, therefore, should be careful in drawing conclusions. Nevertheless, there is at least no indication for a substantial increase in the time allocated to their job. This finding is supported by other research. In the research of Berenschot (2004) the average time spent per week was a bit higher (14.7), while in the research of Daadkracht (2008) the average time was estimated at 14.0 hours per week (Post and De Lange 2008: 15). Based on these data-sets we can say that there is no substantial difference in time that councillors allocate to their job as a councillor before and after the LGA 2002. This is also the conclusion of the Commission Aarts (Aarts 2008).

We will now turn to the main question: have time allocations to internal and external activities changed over time? The share of internal activities in the total amount of time spent at the council's job was in 1999 75.3% (sd = 13.1, N = 1459) and in 2007 78.6% (sd = 11.5, N = 1275). Comparing these two figures we can conclude that there is at most a marginal increase in time allocated to internal activities and not a decrease. The result of Berenschot (2004) hardly differs from this pattern (74.5%, sd = 11.7, N = 306).

On the basis of our two findings that 1) the total amount of time that councillors spend at their councillor's job hardly changes, and 2) the share of total amount of time allocated to internal activities remains more or less the same, we can conclude that the argumentation of the policy theory—more time

can be spent at external activities, because less time is spent at internal activities—is not supported by our data.⁹

Behavioural change at the collective level

This does not preclude, however, that there might be a collective behavioural change. Table 7.13 shows the collective behavioural changes by using the aggregated individual data (mean for each municipality). We compared the average time that was allocated to internal activities by councils in 2007 to their equals in 1999 (since the councils need to be the same we only included those municipalities that have not been amalgamated: N = 112).

Table 7.13: Behavioural change in Dutch municipalities

Time allocated to:	Number of municipalities							Average change (N = 112)
	Negative change			No change	Positive change			
	> 20	10–20	1–10		1–10	10–20	> 20	
Internal activities	1	5	30	14	48	12	2	+1.99**

** means significant for $p < 0.01$

Table 7.13 shows the average behavioural change at the collective level. According to Table 7.13, the average municipal council shows a small increase in time allocated to internal activities (1.99, significant for $p < 0.01$). This is mainly the result of many municipalities showing a small increase, and not so much the result of a few municipalities with a high increase. This finding corresponds to our finding at the individual level: there is at most a marginal increase in time allocated to internal activities (not a decrease). This brings us to the conclusion that also at the collective level the LGA 2002 failed to strengthen the external orientation of the council. Since there are no behavioural changes (for both levels), there is also no need to look into the influence of the socialisation and selection mechanism.

7.5 Executive dominance

Initiators of the LGA 2002 expected that this reform would strengthen the position of the council and decrease the influence of the board in council

matters. The level of executive dominance between 1999 and 2007 should decrease. This section concentrates on the third research question:

*(3) To what extent have the goals of the institutional reform been attained in terms of a more responsive and accountable work culture and behaviour in local government, and a **decrease in the executive dominance**?*

We will now compare the perceived executive dominance of municipal councils in 2007 to their equals in 1999, according to the policy theory we can expect to find a decrease (hypothesis 3).

The perceived executive dominance is measured by asking councillors the question how much influence the board (compared to the council) has in determining the content of a council decision (on a scale of 0 to 100; see Chapter 6). This means that a number of 50 or higher for the board indicates executive dominance. In order to measure changes in the executive dominance at the collective level, we aggregated the individual data, and subsequently compared the data of municipal councils in 2007 to their equals in 1999 (this means that we did not include the amalgamated municipalities).

In 1999 the board dominated the council in determining the content of a council decision. For the average municipal council the perceived influence of the board was 67.9. In 1999 the same question on the influence of the board was also asked of mayors. According to the average mayor, the influence of the board was 74.9; so the mayors perceived an even stronger dominance than the municipal councils. In 2007 the board was still perceived as dominant in the average council, but the level of dominance shows an interesting change. The influence of the board in determining the content of a council decision was now 57.7. This means that the average municipal council perceived the board as less dominant over time: there is a decrease of more than 10 points (significant for $p < 0.01$). This is a considerable difference and might be seen as a positive effect resulting from the LGA 2002. Table 7.14 shows the changes in the perceived executive dominance for municipalities and the change in dominance for the average municipal council. The decline in executive dominance in the average municipality seems to be mainly the result of several municipal councils showing a decrease of up to 20 points (a few municipalities show an even larger decrease).

Table 7.14: Change in the perceived executive dominance in Dutch municipalities

Executive dominance:	Number of municipalities									Average change (N = 112)
	Negative change				No change	Positive change				
	> 30	20–30	10–20	1–10		1–10	10–20	20–30	> 30	
Influence BMA	4	13	43	35	1	9	6	1	-	-10.2**

** means significant for $p < 0.01$

The decrease in executive dominance over time is supported by other research (triangulation method). In the research of PDG in 2002, the same question was asked to councillors (different and smaller sample; see Chapter 5). Unfortunately, we cannot aggregate the individual data to the collective level. However, the data do show us that the average councillor perceives a domination of the BMA as well: 68.1. This is almost the same score as in 1999, which makes sense since effects of the LGA 2002 are only likely to show up some considerable time after 2002. Berenschot asked the same question of local councillors in 2004 (see Chapter 5). Again, we do not have data on the average municipal council, but only on the average councillor. According to the Berenschot data, the average councillor has a perceived executive dominance of 61.1. This figure indicates a decline in executive dominance of more than seven points (according to our own data, this decrease is even stronger in 2007). In addition to this we can compare the perceived executive dominance by the mayors in 1999 to 2004. In 2004 the average mayor has a perceived executive dominance of 65.4: compared to the 1999 data a decline of almost ten points. Therefore, we can say that other research support a trend of decline in the perceived executive dominance.

In Chapter 6 we discussed another indicator to measure the perceived executive dominance. Berenschot asked council clerks in 2004 to indicate the importance of several actors in the determination of the council's agenda. The same question was asked of the council clerk in 2007. Comparing these two data-sets gives us insight in the role of the BMA in the determination of the council's agenda over time. This also reflects the influence of the BMA, and hence the perceived executive dominance. Table 7.15 shows the importance of several actors in the determination of the council's agenda in 2004 and 2007.

In 2004 the presidium—which often coordinates the agenda of the council—were most often named as having a decisive role (by 70.3% of the council clerks), though the BMA and council clerk were also quite often named (respectively by 41.4% and 40.6% of the council clerks). In 2007 the presidium was almost the ‘absolute ruler’ in determining the council’s agenda: 70.6% of the council clerks noted the presidium as the most important actor; a second important actor (though with great distance from the presidium) is the council clerk, with 26.6%.

Table 7.15: Who has a decisive role in determining the agenda of the council? (more answers possible)

	2004 (N = 175): Yes %	2007 (N = 109): Yes %
Presidium	70.3	70.6
Agenda committee	14.5	18.3
Chairs council committees	13.7	11.9
BMA	41.4	11.9
Council Clerk	40.6	26.6

Comparing the two data-sets shows that the actor that we are primarily interested in—the BMA—is less often mentioned as being a decisive actor in the determination of the council’s agenda. In 2004 the BMA played a decisive role according to 41.4% of the council clerks; in 2007 this number had decreased to 11.9%. As a result, we can conclude that the table supports the picture that we got earlier: a decrease in the domination by the BMA.

An additional observation of comparing the two data-sets, is that the presidium seems to have more or less the same influence over time, however the presidium becomes more of a monopolist. In 2004 the BMA and council clerk were also important in setting the council’s agenda. In 2007 however the Presidium’s relative importance has increased substantially. The table shows that the role of the council clerk seems to diminish over time: from being a decisive actor, according to 40.6% of the council clerks in 2004, to 26.6% in 2007. This decrease in influence might be explained by the fact that right after the introduction of the LGA 2002, the council clerk felt the need to assist the council or the presidium (as first contact point of the council) in the agenda setting, but after some time felt more confident to leave it to the presidium (time to get used to the new situation). If necessary, the council clerk can advise the

council. The agenda committee gained a bit in influence, and the chairs of council committees became less influential.

7.6 Other possible (negative) effects

With regard to the changes over time, there might be several democratic side-effects as a result of the LGA 2002. These side-effects concern the external role of councillors and the accompanying question of representation. In the discussion about possible side-effects, some observers pointed out the increased workload of councillors (for part the result of the LGA 2002) and as a result the (increased) leaving of councillors (see for instance van der Zwan 2008; van der Ven 2008). People fear that the LGA 2002 is too time-consuming, causing especially the younger and middle-aged councillors to withdraw from office: this might have some effects for the age of the council members. An aging council would (negatively) affect the council in terms of representation. This can be a problem; in Pitkin's words: 'true representation [...] requires that the legislature be so selected that its composition corresponds accurately to that of the whole nation; only then is it really a representative body' (Pitkin 1967: 60).

The departure of councillors on a large scale *could* lead to a decrease in experience (councillors quitting after one term). The experience of councillors might also impact upon the accountability function. It could have negative consequences for the capacity to formulate policy guidelines and principles to steer the board, and to control the executives, because experienced councillors have had time to develop the required skills. Therefore, a loss of experience might decrease the functioning of the council's internal performance. In this section we therefore discuss the age and experience factor of the council over time. The central question that we ask ourselves is: is the composition of the council changing in terms of age and experience, and can this be related to the LGA 2002?

First, we discuss the composition of the council. The average age of councillors between 1998¹⁰ and 2007 increased from 49.2 to 51.1 years (VNG data) (see Figure 7.1). So, there is a small increase. With regard to the councillors' experience, we can compare the 1999 respondents to the 2007 respondents. In 1999 local councillors spent on average 6.1 years on the council (N = 1475). This remained more or less the same in 2007 with an average of 6.2

years (N = 1172). Additionally, the composition of the council in terms of new councillors, councillors who experienced one whole council term and ‘old’ councillors does not really differ between 1999 and 2007 (see Table 7.16). Based on these findings, we can conclude that there is no considerable difference in terms of age and experience after the introduction of the LGA 2002.

Subsequently, we can say that according to these findings there are at least *no indications* of more councillors leaving the council after introduction of the LGA 2002. This conclusion is supported by the Commission Aarts in their report on the job of councillors and aldermen (Aarts 2008).

Figure 7.1: Average age of local councillors from 1998 to 2007

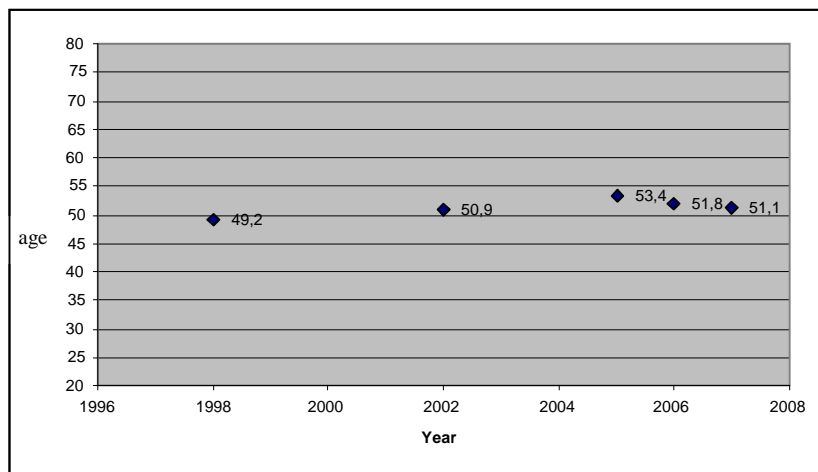


Table 7.16: Number of years experience as a local councillor

Council experience	1999 (%)	2007 (%)
1 year	35.3	34.1
1–5 years	28.4	27.3
> 5 years	36.3	38.6

Still, it might be a good idea to further investigate the profile of councillors who are planning to leave the council and their reasons to quit politics. There could be some pattern and this might be related to the LGA 2002. According to the 2007 survey, 43% of the councillors are planning to continue their council job after the next municipal elections in 2010. This does not mean that the other 57% will vanish from the (local) political stage. In fact, 19% of all respondents

are planning to continue as council party group leader, alderman or mayor, and 5% want to continue their job in politics at a regional or national level. These (former) councillors want to retain a political function. Of all councillors, 33% are planning to withdraw completely from political functions: these are the 'real' quitters.

Looking closer at this group of 'real' quitters, the average age is 57.6. This is more than five years older than the average age of a councillor. The average time spent in the council by this group is two terms (eight years). This is two years more than the number of years in council of an average member. This gives the impression that 'older' councillors are the main 'quitters'. Table 7.17 shows the main reasons¹¹ for councillors to quit politics classified by age.¹² This table confirms our finding that 'the older the councillor is, the higher the chance he will quit', but also shows that for younger councillors there are different reasons to quit their job than for older councillors. For many of 'the younger' councillors (till age 55), their council job is too time-consuming in relation to their family or occupation. This 'high' time consumption is often linked to the LGA 2002: the new institutional structure would ask too much from councillors. Since we do not have the data on reasons to quit the council job before 2002, it is impossible to check whether the reason to quit—'it's too time-consuming'—is more named after the introduction of the LGA 2002.

Table 7.17: Number of ‘real’ quitters and reasons to quit

	Age: < 25 (N = 20)	Age: 26–35 (N = 71)	Age: 36–45 (N = 211)	Age: 46–55 (N = 406)	Age: 56–65 (N = 450)	Age: > 66 (N = 94)
‘Real’ quitter	2 (10%)	7 (10%)	34 (16%)	92 (23%)	208 (46%)	66 (70%)
Reason 1	‘I want to concentrate on my profession’	‘I think political work is too time-consuming in relation to my family or occupation’	‘I think political work is too time-consuming in relation to my family or occupation’	‘I think political work is too time-consuming in relation to my family or occupation’	‘I am too old’	‘I am too old’
Reason 2	A. ‘I think political work is too time-consuming in relation to my family or occupation’ B. ‘I lack influence’	‘I lack influence’ <i>(shared first place with reason mentioned above)</i>	‘I want to concentrate on my profession’	‘I want to concentrate on my profession’	‘I have done my citizen duty’	‘I have done my citizen duty’

However, we can check if the councillor’s job has become more time-consuming after the new LGA 2002. As already discussed in section 7.4, we have no indication that councillors in 2007 spent more time on their job than councillors in 1999.¹³ Nevertheless, there are some suspicions that councillors in small municipalities may have a harder job in the new institutional structure. SGBO (research agency of the VNG) state in their 2006 research that especially councillors in small municipalities experience an increase in time spent on their work after the introduction of the LGA 2002. We can check this by comparing the average time that councillors spent on their job in 1999, in which we take municipal size into account, to the same figures in 2007.¹⁴ Table 7.18 shows that in 1999 small municipalities (< 10.000 inhabitants) spent on average 9.82 hours per week at their council job; in 2007 this was 11.19 hours per week: so, a small increase in time. Councillors in larger municipalities seem to allocate less time to their council job, especially municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Though we should be careful in drawing conclusion—since the collection of data on ‘hours spent per week on their council job’ is somewhat different in 2007 from 1999—the data do indicate that size matters. This also

confirms the research findings of CDA (Dutch political party) at the end of 2007 (de Bat 2007). According to this research, CDA councillors—who are strongly represented in small municipalities—experience an increase in the time they spend at their council job after the introduction of the LGA 2002 (see also Aarts 2008: 20).

Table 7.18: Hours spent per week on council job

Municipal size	1999		2007	
	x	N	x	N*
0-9.999 inhabitants	9.82	34	11.19	15
10.000–19.999 inhabitants	11.17	52	11.74	44
20.000–49.999 inhabitants	13.70	46	12.84	62
50.000–99.999 inhabitants	16.76	9	15.31	14
100.000–199.999 inhabitants	20.14	7	17.75	6
> 200.000 inhabitants	33.17	2	21.54	3
total	13.82	150	13.35	144

* The shift in N (few small- and more middle-size municipalities) can be explained by the amalgamation of small municipalities.

At any rate, apart from small municipalities, the increase in time allocated to their job cannot be a reason for councillors to leave the council and to quit their political career because there is no increase.

Another motive to quit politics is ‘workload’ (see also Table 7.17). A councillor’s workload is determined by the time division between his or her councillor’s job, profession and spare time. Notice that time is restricted: a councillor has to divide time between his or her councillor’s job, profession and spare time. Table 7.19 shows the average amount of time that councillors allocated in 1999, 2004 and 2007 to their council activities and other paid work. Overall, there are no clear indications that the councillors’ workload—in terms of time allocated to council activities and other paid work—substantially increased after the introduction of the LGA 2002. The data of SGBO in 2006 support this finding: average time spent at council activities is 15 hours per week, and average time spent at other paid work 37 hours per week (Ministry of Interior 2009), meaning no considerable change in workload over time (see also Initiatiefgroep ‘Burgers en gekozen burgers’ 2009).

Table 7.19: Characteristics of councillors in 1999, 2004 and 2007

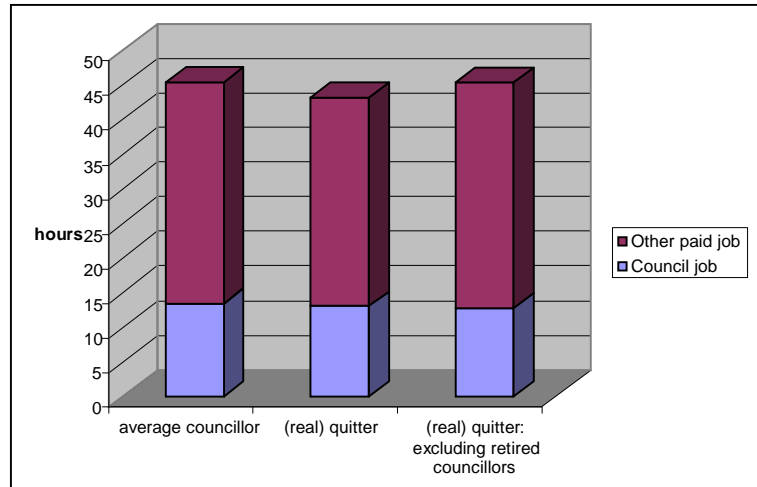
	1999 (Elzinga) N = 1489	2004 (Berenschot) N = 307	2007 (UT) N = 1291
Council activities: (hours per week)	14	15	13
Other paid work: (hours per week)	38	36	34*

*this figure is probably a bit lower because of a small difference in the question.¹⁵

Since, most of the time, ‘workload’ is the number one reason to quit for councillors under the age of 55, it would be interesting to check whether the workload of the group ‘quitters’ is significantly higher than for the average councillor. Logically, workload is less of an issue for retired councillors. Therefore, we will look into the workload of the group of quitters excluding the retired councillors. This sub-group is especially interesting because local government wants to get a hold on this group (which represents the future of local politics). We can define this group out of the 2007 data since councillors were asked to state their profession, including the option ‘retired’. On average, the group of quitters (excluding retired councillors) spent 33 hours per week at paid activities other than council activities. This is one hour more per week than the average councillor. The group of quitters spent a slight 13 hours per week on council activities, which is a bit less than the average councillor (see also Figure 7.2). Based on these results, we can conclude that councillors who want to leave politics in 2010 (and were not retired in 2007) do not have a higher workload than the average councillor. The fact that councillors leave politics to spend more time at their profession and with their family seems to be most of all a priority issue and less a workload issue.

Notice that our findings on ‘workload’ do not tell us anything about the *experienced* workload. It may very well be that there is a change in the experienced workload of councillors (the 2007 survey did not include a question on this topic; see also Initiatiefgroep ‘Burgers en gekozen burgers’ 2009).

Figure 7.2: Hours allocated to paid activities (per week) by councillors in 2007



This section showed that the council has not considerably aged or changed in terms of experience after the introduction of the LGA 2002. Moreover, there are no indications for an increase in the number of councillors leaving the council after the introduction of the LGA 2002, and also the ‘objective’ workload of councillors is not higher after the LGA 2002 (at least not in larger municipalities). However, the findings in this section do support the conclusion of the Commission Aarts: councillors quit because their job becomes too time-consuming in relation to other aspects of their lives (experienced or subjective workload). For councillors between the age of 25 and 55 this is the number one reason to quit their job. For councillors under 25 this is the second most important reason to quit. Furthermore, this section showed that there is a high percentage of retired councillors that want to quit. The challenge is to find new suitable (young) council candidates to replace them. As discussed in other research, this might be difficult (cf. Boogers 2007; Aarts 2008).

7.7 Summary

In this research we are interested in the effects of the Dutch LGA 2002. In order for these effects to occur the LGA 2002 has to be implemented in Dutch municipalities (research question 1). In 2007, most of the formal rules of the LGA 2002 were implemented in the municipalities. This does not mean that all

formal rules were implemented on time. The exact implementation date of formal rules differed for each municipality. Small municipalities and amalgamated municipalities needed on average more time for implementation.

With regard to the effects of the LGA 2002 we expect to find a more positive attitude towards responsiveness and accountability activities over time. As a result of the LGA 2002, we found an attitudinal change: local councillors in 2007 consider their responsiveness and accountability activities more important than local councillors in 1999 (question 2). This change is selective; especially the attitude towards accountability has become more positive. The same (selective) change is found at the collective level (question 3). In the theoretical part of this research we distinguished two mechanisms that could explain possible changes: socialisation and selection. Analyses show that the attitudinal change that we found seems to be the result of selection (question 4). There is either no socialisation effect or the possible results of organisational socialisation have been attenuated by the selection mechanism.

We also looked into the behavioural changes. The expectation is to find a decrease in time spend on internal activities, and an increase in time spent on external activities. However, there seems to be no behavioural change at either the individual or collective level (question 2 and 3): councillors spend about the same amount of time on their job, and time allocated to their internal activities (in percentages) remains the same. In other words: councillors (or the councils) did not spend more time at the performance of their external activities.

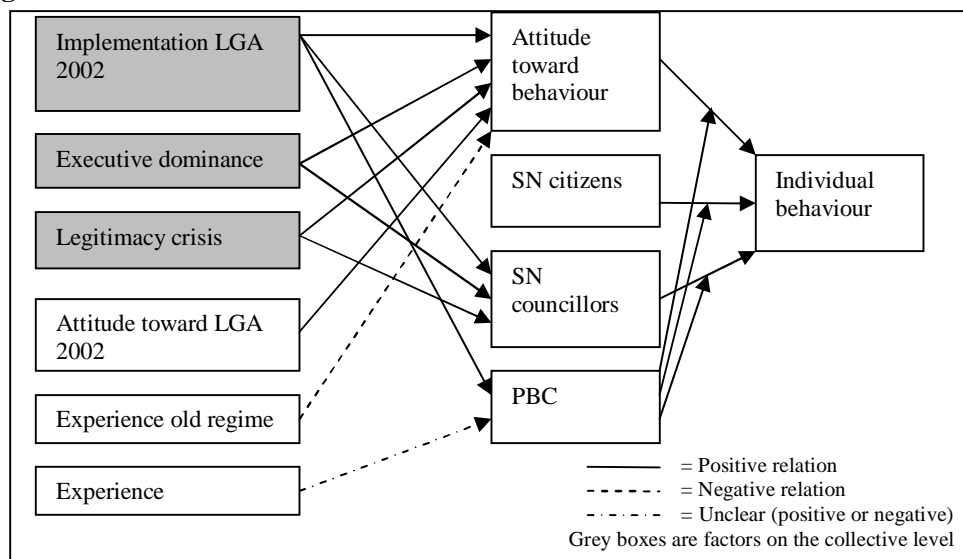
Besides changes in attitudes and behaviour, we also checked for a change in the level of executive dominance, for the aim of the LGA 2002 is to decrease the influence of the board in council matters. It turns out that in 2007 the board was still dominant in determining the content of a council decision, but less dominant compared to 1999. In addition to this the board seemed to be a less influential actor in determining the agenda of the council. Therefore, we can conclude there is a decrease in the (perceived) executive dominance in municipalities (question 3).

With regard to possible side-effects of the LGA 2002; there is no indication for more councillors leaving the council after the implementation of the LGA 2002. Furthermore, the reasons for councillors to quit did not seem to be related to the LGA 2002. This finding is supported by other research (Aarts 2008).

8 Explaining variations in the behaviour of councillors

The focus in this chapter is on explaining variations in the behaviour of councillors (fifth research question): *How can we explain variations in the councillors' behaviour in 2007 by their attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and several external variables (the implementation of the institutional changes in the LGA 2002; the councillors' experience; the councillors' attitude towards the LGA 2002; and the councils' perceived executive dominance and sense of a legitimacy crisis)?* In Chapter 4 we formulated several hypotheses related to this question. These hypotheses are summarised in a theoretical model (see Figure 8.1). The model comprises two parts. In the rightmost part of the model, variations in behaviour are explained by three factors (attitudes, social norms and perceived behavioural controls). In the leftmost part of the model, these factors are linked with several external variables that might explain these three explanatory factors. In this chapter we will test the hypotheses implied in this theoretical model. In doing so we first concentrate on the right part of the model.

Figure 8.1: Theoretical model of institutional change in Dutch local government



8.1 Explaining behaviour

According to our theory, the actual responsiveness and accountability are determined by the attitudes and relevant subjective norms of councillors. We expect that the more positive the attitude and subjective norms with regard to responsiveness and accountability are, the more efforts the councillors make to secure responsiveness and accountability. In addition to this, perceived behavioural control is also important. This factor does not have a direct effect on the dependent variables. Instead, our model implies that the perceived behavioural control affects the relation between attitude and behaviour, and between subjective norms and behaviour (see Appendix D for descriptive measures). Therefore, the hypotheses about the effects of attitudes and both types of social norms (those of citizens and of other councillors) contain a general and a specific part (printed in italics):

6. (a) The more positive the councillors' attitude towards responsiveness and accountability, the more efforts they will make to secure responsiveness and accountability. (b) *This relation is stronger the higher the councillor's perceived behavioural control.*

- 7.1 (a) The more positive the subjective norm from citizens towards responsiveness and accountability, the more efforts councillors will make to secure responsiveness and accountability. (b) *This relation is stronger the higher the councillor's perceived behavioural control.*

- 7.2 (a) The more positive the subjective norm from other local councillors towards responsiveness and accountability, the more efforts councillors will make to secure responsiveness and accountability. (b) *This relation is stronger the higher the councillor's perceived behavioural control.*

Do the three hypotheses mentioned above hold or not? Table 8.1 shows the regression coefficients for all four dependent variables (activities): listening, explaining, steering and controlling. In all but one instance the attitude, the citizen norms and the other councillor norms show the theoretically expected positive effect. The exception is that the subjective norm from other councillors is not significant in explaining 'listening activities'. Moreover, we also may conclude that the attitude is the best predictor for behaviour. The beta

coefficients of the four types of attitudes are significantly higher than the beta coefficients of the accompanying subjective norms (hypothesis 8). Furthermore, the citizen norms have a stronger effect on responsiveness and accountability than the perceived norms of other councillors. Finally, the model for ‘explaining activities’ has the highest predictive value (24% explained variance). The predictive value of the other models is quite low.

Table 8.1: Regression coefficients for explaining four types of behaviour (in terms of actual contribution)

Activity		Attitude	SN citizens	SN councillor
Listening	β	0.33**	0.21**	-0.01
	t-value	12.42	7.61	-0.42
	N = 1256; R ² = .182; F = 93.09			
Explaining	β	0.29**	0.25**	0.09**
	t-value	10.87	9.04	3.58
	N = 1249; R ² = .242; F = 132.91			
Steering	β	0.18**	0.15**	0.07**
	t-value	6.63	5.32	2.62
	N=1249; R ² =.078; F=34.98			
Controlling	β	0.21**	0.15**	0.06*
	t-value	7.49	5.32	1.99
	N = 1253; R ² = .093; F = 42.63			

* significant at p < 0.05; ** significant at p < 0.01

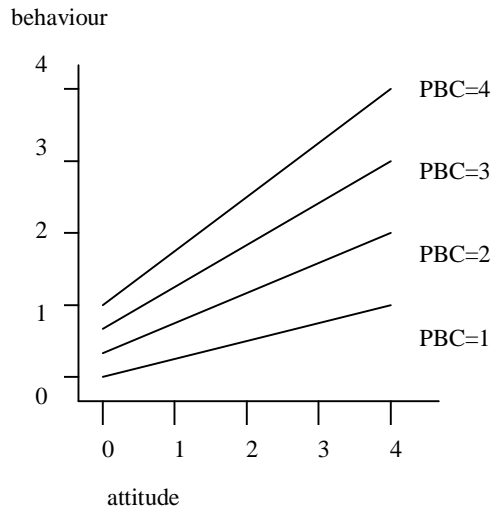
All in all we can therefore conclude that the general part of hypotheses 6 and 7 is essentially confirmed. But what about the conditional part (italicised) of these propositions? According to the hypotheses we expect that the general relationships found in Table 8.1 will vary for councillors with varying degrees of perceived behavioural control. In cases where the strength and the sign (positive or negative) of a causal effect is affected by a third variable, this effect is called a conditional effect. In the equation below we have specified such a conditional effect between an attitude and a behaviour (activity), where this effect is contingent upon the degree of perceived behavioural control (see also Chapter 5):

$$B = (a + cPBC) + (b + d^*PBC)A$$

The perceived behavioural control strengthens the relation between attitude and behaviour if the d-coefficient is significant and positive. Figure 8.2 illustrates

our theoretical expectation that the perceived behavioural control will affect the effect of the attitude on the dependent variable (behaviour). The figure clearly demonstrates how the slope ($b + d \cdot \text{PBC}$) differs for different levels of perceived behavioural control.

Figure 8.2: Hypothetical conditional effect for four values of perceived behavioural control



Relation between attitude and behaviour

We will now test the specification part of the following hypothesis. We will use a one-sided test for this purpose, since the hypothesis implied that the effect of perceived behavioral control on the effect of attitudes and norms would be positive:

6. (a) The more positive the councillors' attitude towards responsiveness and accountability, the more efforts they will make to secure responsiveness and accountability. (b) *This relation is stronger the higher the councillor's perceived behavioural control.*

This hypothesis needs to be tested for four types of behaviour. A first step to test the hypothesis is to check whether multicollinearity is a problem (see Chapter 5). In cases where multicollinearity occurred, we took remedial action. After this first step we then tested the conditional effect hypotheses.

Comparing the ‘normal’ and corrected regression models for the relation between attitude and behaviour (for four types of behaviour) showed that multicollinearity was no problem for listening and explaining. For steering and controlling, however, we encountered multicollinearity problems. Therefore, we used the Smith and Sasaki (S&S) correction method in testing the hypotheses for these two activities (See Chapter 5).

As we have explained before, the size (and statistical significance of the d coefficient) determines whether it is justified to talk about a conditional (rather than a general) effect. For *listening activities* the d-coefficient was not significant ($t = .400$; $p = .345$), this implies that there is no interaction effect. Therefore, we did not include a table with the conditional regression coefficients reporting the relation between attitude and these activities for different levels of perceived behavioural control.

With regard to *explaining activities*, however, this coefficient was significant ($t = 1.777$; $p = .038$). Therefore, in this particular case it makes sense to look into the specific impact of perceived behavioural control on the relation between attitude and explaining activities. Table 8.2 shows that the conditional regression coefficients for different values of perceived behavioral control (PBC)—that are defined by the term $(b + d \cdot PBC)$ in the above equation—were significant and positive, as was theoretically expected. Hence, for explaining activities, the general as well as the conditional hypothesis can be accepted: ‘the more positive the attitude towards explaining activities, the more efforts councillors will make to secure responsiveness and accountability. This relation is stronger the higher the councillor’s perceived behavioural control.’¹

Table 8.2: Relation between attitude and behaviour (with regard to ‘explaining activities’) for different levels of perceived behavioural control

Value	1	2	3	4
Conditional b-coefficient	0.29	0.36	0.43	0.50
Sd	0.07	0.04	0.03	0.06
T	4.26	10.16	14.10	8.24
P	.00	.00	.00	.00

R Square = .230; N = 1257

Testing the hypothesis for *steering activities*, the regression models were corrected by the S&S method. The d coefficient in this model was not significant ($t = -.094$; $p = .463$). Likewise, we failed to establish a conditional effect for *controlling activities*: again the d coefficient was not statistically

significant ($t = .608$; $p = .272$). Since the hypotheses are rejected we did not include additional tables.

We can conclude that the level of perceived behavioural control only influences the relation between attitude and behaviour for explaining activities. For the other activities (listening, steering and controlling), there is only a general effect.

Relation between subjective norm (citizens) and behaviour

In much the same way we will now also test the specification part of the fourth hypothesis:

- 7.1 (a) The more positive the subjective norm from citizens towards responsiveness and accountability, the more efforts councillors will make to secure responsiveness and accountability. (b) *This relation is stronger the higher the councillor's perceived behavioural control.*

Again, a first step is to check for multicollinearity. Comparing the 'normal' and corrected regression models for the relation between subjective norm (citizens) and behaviour (for the four types of behaviour) shows that multicollinearity is a problem for all four activities and therefore we use the S&S correction for all four models.

For *listening activities* the d coefficient in the conditional regression term ($b + d \cdot \text{PBC}$) was not significant ($t = .944$; $p = .173$). With regard to *explaining activities*, however, this d coefficient was significant ($t = 4.506$; $p = .000$). Table 8.3 shows that the conditional regression coefficients were significant and they indicate a positive relationship. Hence, the general as well as the conditional hypothesis for explaining activities can be accepted: 'the more positive the subjective norm of citizens towards explaining activities, the more efforts they will make to secure responsiveness and accountability. This relation is stronger the higher the councillor's perceived behavioural control.'² Concerning *steering* and *controlling activities*, the coefficients of the interaction terms were not significant (respectively, $t = .334$; $p = .369$ and $t = 1.567$; $p = .059$).

Table 8.3: Relation between subjective norm citizens and behaviour (with regard to ‘explaining activities’) for different levels of perceived behavioural control (corrected by the S&S method)

Value	1	2	3	4
Conditional b-coefficient	.52	.68	.83	.99
Sd	.04	.07	.11	.14
T	12.28	9.22	7.81	7.03
P	.00	.00	.00	.00

R Square = .230; N = 1256

We can conclude that only in one of the four models—in the case of explaining—is there an effect of perceived behavioural control on the relation between citizen norms and behaviour for explaining activities. For the other activities (listening, steering and controlling), there is only a general effect.

Relation between subjective norm (councillors) and behaviour

Finally, we will also test the hypothesis with regard to the subjective norm of other councillors in its conditional form:

- 7.2 (a) The more positive the subjective norm from other local councillors towards responsiveness and accountability, the more efforts councillors will make to secure responsiveness and accountability. (b) *This relation is stronger the higher the councillor’s perceived behavioural control.*

Again, at the outset we will check for multicollinearity. Our analyses provided evidence of such problems for explaining, steering and controlling activities. In these cases we used the S&S correction method for testing the hypotheses.

The d coefficient in the interaction term in the model for *listening activities* was not significant ($t = .152$, $p = .440$). Likewise, for *explaining* and *steering activities* the d coefficients were not statistically significant (respectively, $t = 1.529$, $p = .063$ and $t = .565$, $p = .286$). In the model for *controlling activities* we found a significant d coefficient ($t = 3.797$; $p = .000$). Moreover, Table 8.4 shows that the conditional regression coefficients at different levels of perceived behavioural control were positive and statistically significant. Therefore, the conditional hypothesis is accepted: ‘the relation between subjective norms councillors and the contribution at controlling activities is stronger for councillors with a high level of perceived behavioural control than for councillors with a low level of perceived behavioural control’.³

Table 8.4: Relation between subjective norm councillors and behaviour (with regard to ‘controlling activities’) for different levels of perceived behavioural control (corrected by the S&S method)

Value	1	2	3	4
Conditional b-coefficient	.20	.32	.45	.57
Sd	.04	.07	.10	.13
T	4.81	4.60	4.41	4.28
P	.00	.00	.00	.00

R Square = .058; N = .1251

We can conclude that only in the case of controlling activities there is evidence of a conditional effect of perceived behavioural control. For two other activities (explaining and steering), there is only a general effect. Finally, in the case of listening activities we found neither a conditional nor a general effect (see Table 8.1).

8.2 Testing the complete models

So far we have only looked at the right-hand side of the model. It is now time to broaden the scope of our analysis, by including a range of external variables (see Appendix D for descriptive measures). This model not only encompasses the theoretically specified relations but we have also included correlations between the three main explanatory factors in the theory of planned behaviour (see Chapter 4): attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Not including these correlations would attenuate the effect parameters in our models.⁴ Moreover, the model also includes two control variables (see section 5.7): the status of the political party (opposition or coalition) and the type of political party (national or local party).

Analyses show that we should test the theoretical model for the four types of behaviour separately and not together as one model (the four types of behaviour are relatively independent of each other).⁵ Furthermore, in testing our theoretical model, we will only include those interaction effects that proved to be significant in the previous section. Since multicollinearity proved to be a potential threat in many instances, we used S&S corrections in our analyses. For two behaviour models (listening and steering), our previous analyses established no significant interaction effects. Therefore, we decided not to

include 'perceived behavioural control' in these two behaviour models. We tested the four (complete) behaviour models by using regression analyses (maximum likelihood). The full equations of the four regression models are included in Appendix E.

The research findings will be discussed by focussing on each of our dependent variables. These dependent variables, first of all, pertain to various components of councillor behaviour: listening, explaining, steering and controlling. Moreover, when we look at the left-hand side of the model we can also consider the attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural controls as dependent variables that are explained by a series of external factors. We will present the results from the right-hand side to the left: we first ask 'How can we explain the behaviour of councillors?', then we ask ourselves the question 'How can we explain the three main explanatory factors identified in the theory of planned behaviour?'

8.2.1 Explaining behaviour

Behaviour (in terms of contribution to listening, explaining, steering and controlling activities) can be explained by the councillors' attitude, and his or her social norms. Analyses in the previous subsection showed that the perceived behavioural control might have a conditioning effect for explaining and 'controlling' activities (hypotheses 6 and 7). Differently from our initial tests, we now evaluate these two hypotheses in the context of the complete model. In addition to this we will also evaluate another hypothesis that was formulated in Chapter 4:

8. A councillor's attitude towards activities of responsiveness and accountability will be a better predictor for his behaviour than his subjective norms towards responsiveness and accountability.

In agreement with our previous results our more comprehensive tests (see Table 8.5) again clearly demonstrate that the attitude and citizen norms have a significant positive effect on all four types of behaviour. For the councillor norms we find mixed evidence: it does have its predicted significant positive effect for explaining and steering, whereas we found no evidence for an effect

on listening and controlling activities. The magnitude of the standardised regression coefficients (β) also shows that the attitude is a more powerful predictor than citizen norms. When we compare the explanatory power of the attitudinal component with other councillor norms, the importance of attitudes is even more obvious. In addition to these effects we also find occasional conditional effects of perceived behavioural control. The model for explaining activities has one significant interaction effect:⁶ perceived behavioural control strengthens the relation between subjective norm citizens and behaviour. The model for controlling activities also includes one interaction effect: perceived behavioural control strengthens the relation between the subjective norm of councillors and behaviour. This interaction effect was already found in our initial analyses and survives after adequate controls.

Table 8.5: Determinants of four types of behaviour, in 2007

Variable	Listening	Explaining	Steering	Controlling
Explanatory variables				
Attitude towards behaviour	.32**	.26**	.18**	.20**
Interaction with PBC	X		X	X
SN citizens	.19**	(.24**) ¹	.14**	.13**
Interaction with PBC	X	(.10**)	X	X
SN councillors		.10**	.07**	(.03) ¹
Interaction with PBC	X	X	X	(.07**)
Control variables				
Status of party (opposition/ coalition)			.21**	
Type party (national/ local)	.10**	.11**		.06**
R²	.19	.30	.12	.13

* significant for $p < 0.05$; ** significant for $p < 0.01$

¹ coefficients in parentheses are part of statistically significant conditional effect and these coefficients are therefore not strictly comparable with the general effect coefficients in the same row of the table.

X: variable not included in the regression model

In all four models we also found that one of the control variables (status and type of party) is influential. The self-reported contribution to steering activities is higher for council members of coalition parties, than for members of opposition parties. The self-reported contribution to listening, explaining and controlling activities is higher for council members of local parties, than for members of national parties.⁷

This has a number of implications for our hypotheses. We can first conclude that the general hypothesis (6a) about the relation between attitude and behaviour can be confirmed for all four activities. Moreover, the general hypothesis about the relation between subjective norm citizens and behaviour (7.1a) was confirmed for four cases. In one instance there was also confirmation for the second part of this hypothesis (7.1b): for explaining activities. Furthermore, the general part of the hypothesis about the effects of other councillor norms (7.2a) is confirmed for both explaining and steering, but not for listening and controlling. Finally, the hypothesis (8) that attitudes are better predictors of a councillors' behaviour than the subjective norms from others is confirmed. We also learned that the subjective norms from citizens are a better predictor for the councillors' behaviour than the subjective norms from mother councillors.

8.2.2 *Explaining attitude*

We are now moving to the left side of the theoretical model. This subsection discusses the variables that might explain the councillors' attitudes. The following hypotheses will be tested:

9. The earlier (and more completely) the formal rules of the LGA 2002 are implemented, the more positive the councillors' attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.
12. a) The higher councillors perceive the executive dominance and b) the more they perceive their municipality to be in a legitimacy crisis, the more positive their attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.
14. The more positive the councillors' attitude towards the LGA 2002, the more positive the attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.
15. The experience of councillors in the old regime negatively influences their attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.

The regression models (see Table 8.6) show more or less unequivocal results for two hypotheses. The speed of implementation of the LGA 2002 has no significant direct influence on any of the four attitudes. On the other hand, the perceived executive dominance has a significant positive effect on three of the four attitudes: we find such effects for explaining, steering and controlling

activities. For the other hypothesised relations the picture is less clear. The sense of legitimacy crisis has an (unexpected) negative effect on the attitude towards listening activities. This is remarkable because we expected a positive relation: the more serious the problem (legitimacy crisis), the more positive the attitudes towards responsiveness and accountability. The attitude towards the LGA 2002 has a positive effect on the attitude towards the accountability activities (steering and controlling activities), but not towards responsiveness activities (listening and explaining activities). This makes sense, because most of the items included in the measurement of the attitude towards the LGA 2002 concern items related to the internal task of councillors. The experience of the old regime has a significant positive influence on the attitude towards steering activities. The direction of this relation is in contradiction to our expectation (see Chapter 4). Based on the Upper Echelons Perspective (UEP), we expected to find a negative relation. A positive relation supports the Resource Based View (RBV): councillors who have experience in the old regime (have been a councillor for more than five years), have a more positive attitude towards steering activities. However, the support for this alternative interpretation is by no means consistent, because we did not find similar effects for the three other types of attitudes (listening, explaining and controlling).

Table 8.6: Determinants of four types of attitudes, in 2007

Variable	Listening	Explaining	Steering	Controlling
Explanatory variables				
Implementation LGA 2002				
Executive dominance		.09**	.07**	.07**
Legitimacy crisis	-.06**			
Attitude LGA 2002			.09**	.08**
Experience old regime			.06**	
Control variables				
Status of party (opposition/ coalition)		.11**		-.10**
Type party (national/ local)	.18**	.11**		
R²	.08	.15	.04	.08

* significant for $p < 0.05$; ** significant for $p < 0.01$

The control variables also have an effect on the attitudes.⁸ The attitude towards explaining activities is more positive for council members of coalition parties, than for members of opposition parties. Furthermore, the attitude towards controlling activities is more negative for councillors of coalition

parties, than for councillors of opposition parties. Members of local parties find it more important to secure responsiveness than members of national parties.

These findings have clear implications for the empirical validity of our hypotheses. First, it is obvious that in none of the four cases did the speed of implementation of the LGA 2002 have its expected positive impact on councillor attitudes (hypothesis 9). On the other hand, the hypothesis about the effect of executive dominance on attitudes (12a) was confirmed for explaining, steering and controlling. Hypothesis 12b about the effects of a possible local legitimacy crisis is disconfirmed in all four models, whereas the expected positive effect of support for the LGA 2002 (hypothesis 14) is only confirmed for the two accountability-related items: steering and controlling. Finally, the hypothesis (15) about the influence of the experience of councillors under the old regime and attitude was rejected for all four activities.

8.2.3 *Explaining subjective norms*

According to our theoretical model, the subjective norm from other councillors might be explained by the speed of implementation, the executive dominance and the sense of legitimacy crisis. Since we focus on the explanation of attitudes and activities of councillors, our theoretical model does not include variables that might explain the subjective norm from citizens. In this subsection we will test the following hypotheses:

10. The earlier (and more completely) the formal rules of the LGA 2002 are implemented, the more positive the subjective norm from other councillors towards responsiveness and accountability.
13. a) The higher councillors perceive the executive dominance and b) the more they perceive their municipality to be in a legitimacy crisis, the more positive the subjective norm from other councillors towards responsiveness and accountability.

The regression models (see Table 8.7) show that there is only one weak significant relation ($p < 0.05$): the speed of implementing the LGA 2002 negatively influences the subjective norm from councillors towards explaining activities. This is in contradiction to our expectation: we expected to find a

positive effect (early implementation of the LGA 2002 results in a positive subjective norm from other councillors). The two contextual variables (executive dominance and legitimacy crisis) have no significant effect on the subjective norms from other councillors towards responsiveness and accountability.

Table 8.7: Determinants of four types of subjective norm from other councillors, in 2007

Variable	Listening	Explaining	Steering	Controlling
Explanatory variables				
Implementation LGA 2002		-.05*		
Executive dominance				
Legitimacy crisis				

* significant for $p < 0.05$; ** significant for $p < 0.01$

We can conclude that the hypothesis about the influence of the speed of implementation of the LGA 2002 on the subjective norm councillors (10) is rejected for all four activities. Likewise, the hypotheses about the effects of ‘perceived executive dominance’ (13a) and the ‘sense of legitimacy crisis’ (13b) on the subjective norm councillors were rejected.

8.2.4 Explaining perceived behavioural control

Since we found significant interaction effects for two behaviour models (explaining and controlling activities), we tried to explain the level of perceived behavioural control only for these two models. Possible predictors for the perceived behavioural control are the speed of implementing the LGA 2002 and the experience of the councillor. Hence, we test the following hypotheses:

11. The earlier (and more completely) the formal rules of the LGA 2002 are implemented, the higher the councillors’ perceived behavioural control.
16. The experience of the councillor has either a positive or negative effect on his perceived behavioural control.

The regression models (see Table 8.8) do not show significant effects of the speed of implementing the LGA 2002. However, in both models there is a significant positive effect of the experience of the councillor on the level of perceived behavioural control. In other words: the longer a councillor is in his

or her function, the higher his or her perceived behavioural control is with regard to explaining and controlling activities. This supports the Resource Based View discussed in Chapter 4.

Table 8.8: Determinants of four types of perceived behavioural control, in 2007

Variable	Explaining	Controlling
Explanatory variables		
Implementation LGA 2002		
Experience	.09**	.06**

* significant for $p < 0.05$; ** significant for $p < 0.01$

We can conclude that the hypothesis about the influence of the speed of implementation of the LGA 2002 on the perceived behavioural control (11) is rejected for all four activities. The hypothesis about the influence of the councillor's experience on his or her behavioural control (16) is accepted for explaining and controlling activities (RBV).

8.2.5 Four path models

Figures 8.3 to 8.6 show the four path models representing the overall structure of our explanatory model. These models can be seen as a summary of the previous sections: they show the significant relations (arrows between variables) both in the right and left part of the model. The relations that were not significant, as well as (significant) correlations between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control, are for reasons of simplicity not presented in the path models.

The four path models basically show two things:

- 1) The councillors' attitude and their subjective norms are major factors for understanding councillor activities aimed at responsiveness and accountability; and
- 2) the external variables do not have a major impact on the attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural controls to the extent that we expected.

With regard to the external factors two findings stand out. First, the speed of implementation of the LGA 2002 does not seem to have an influence on the

councillors' attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. As we will discuss in the final chapter this does not mean that without the implementation of the LGA 2002 everything would have remained the same. Second, executive dominance does play a role: in three models (explaining, steering and controlling), a high perceived executive dominance in 1999 results in a more positive attitude towards the behaviour of councillors in 2007.

Figure 8.3: Path model for 'listening' activities

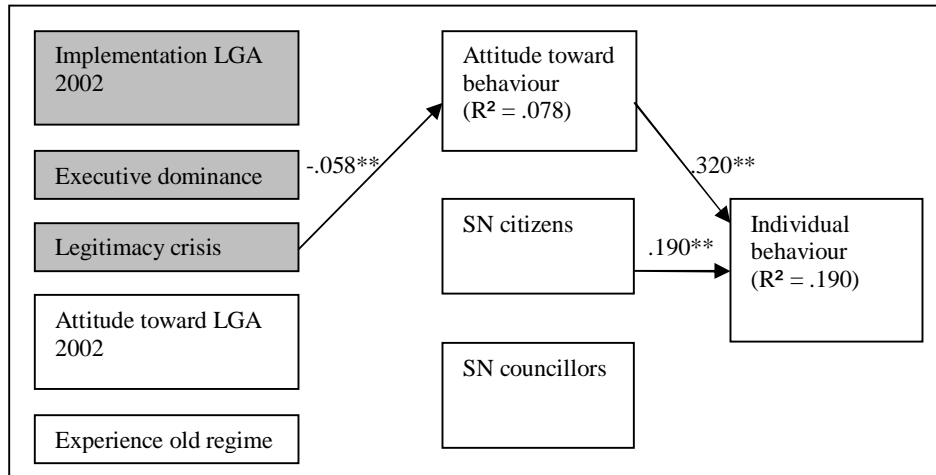


Figure 8.4: Path model for 'explaining' activities

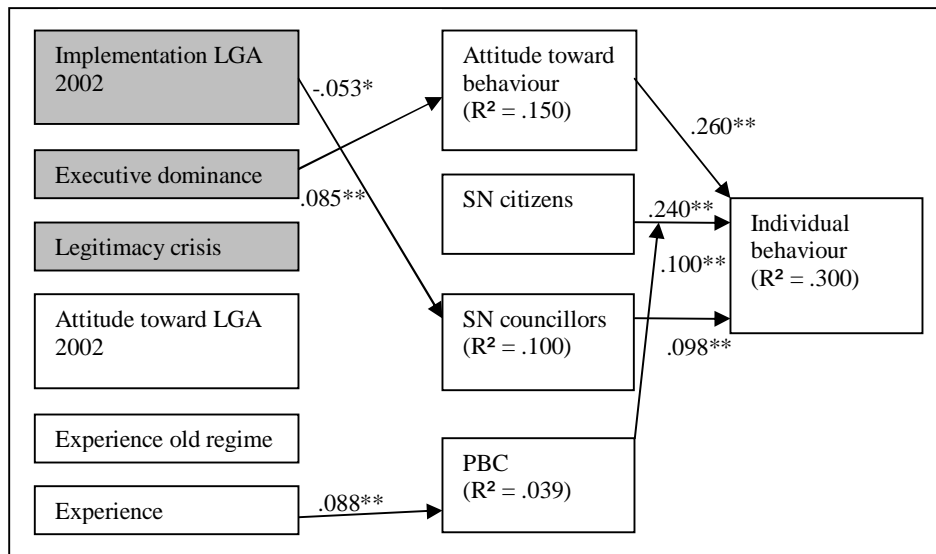


Figure 8.5: Path model for ‘steering’ activities

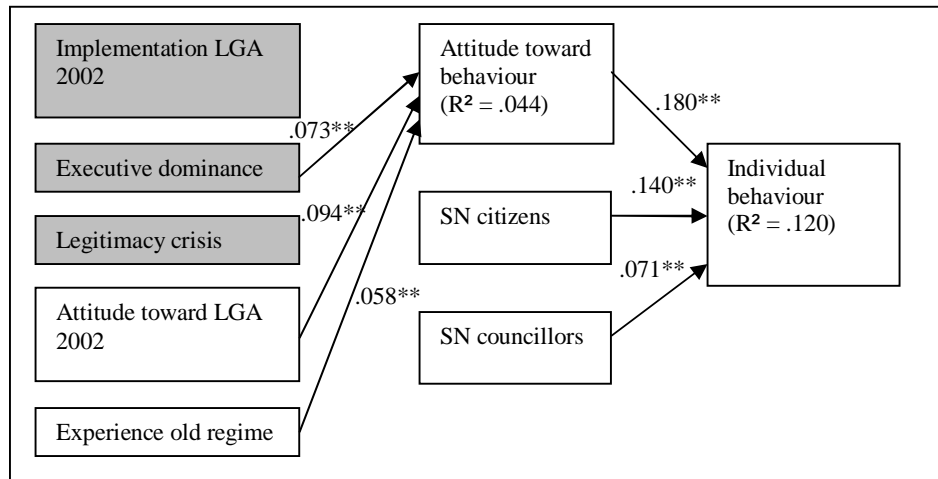
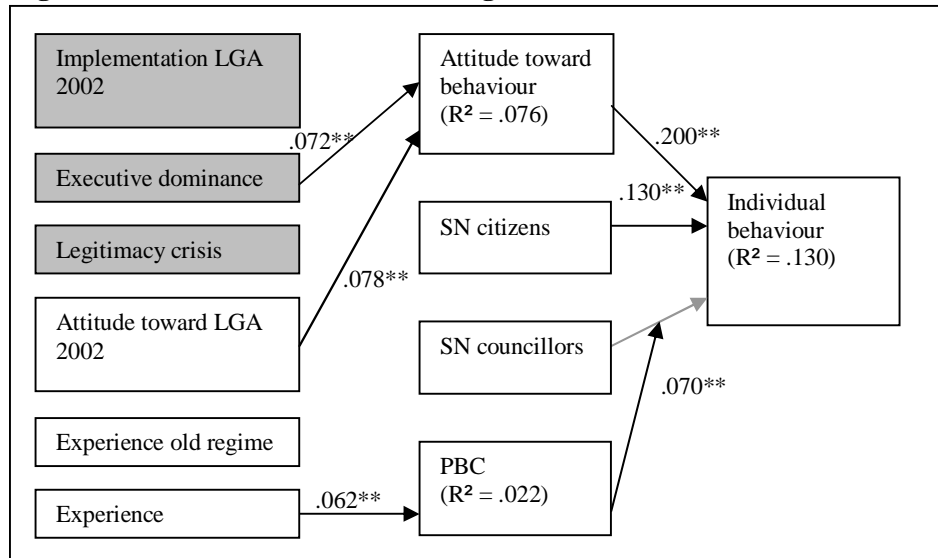


Figure 8.6: Path model for ‘controlling’ activities



8.2.6 Model Fit

This section discusses the model fit⁹ of the four behaviour models. The model fit indicates the suitability of our complete theory. There are several global fit measures: we used RMR (Root Mean Square Residual), RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) and AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of the Fit

Index) (Hooper et al. 2008). There are no consistent standards for what are considered to be acceptable values for fit measures, but we used as guidelines for RMR and RMSEA values below 0.1, and for AGFI values above 0.9 (above 0.8 is still acceptable). If we look at the model fit of the four behavioural models (Table 8.9), we see that the model for listening activities has an acceptable/moderate fit. The other three models (explaining, steering and controlling activities) have a weak to acceptable fit. As can be seen in the path models, adequate fit does not mean that the predictive power of the model is also high (and vice versa). The poor model fit is the result of the left side of our theoretical model (external variables explaining the councillors' attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control). It turns out that the external variables are not as important as we thought they would be. As a result of the poor model fit, the behavioural models cannot be used to make predictions, but only as an instrument to show which of the hypotheses formulated in Chapter 4 can be accepted and which have to be rejected.

Table 8.9: Model fit for the four behavioural models

Model fit	Listening	Explaining	Steering	Controlling
Behavioural model				
RMR	.052	.072	.059	.074
RMSEA	.077	.110	.093	.100
AGFI	.860	.740	.780	.720

8.3 Summary

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which originally comes from the psychology field but over the years has been implemented and tested in many other fields, also proved its value in this research. Indeed, the councillor's attitude and subjective norm explain his or her behaviour with regard to responsiveness and accountability. A councillor's attitude is a better predictor of behaviour than his or her subjective norm. Furthermore, we discovered that councillors seem to take the role expectations of citizens into consideration, but less so the expectations of fellow councillors. For some behaviour types there is an indirect influence of perceived behavioural control on behaviour. However, the conditional effect of perceived behavioural control plays only a minor role in explaining behaviour. Another interesting finding is that the results testify to the usefulness of the TPB (right side of the theoretical model) for explaining all

four types of behaviour (listening, explaining, steering and controlling activities).

With respect to the external variables, this chapter showed that the speed of implementation of the LGA 2002 had no effect on the attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, and, therefore, also did not have its expected indirect effect on the behaviour of councillors. As far as the contextual variables are concerned, the executive dominance (partly) explained the attitude towards responsiveness and accountability. The sense of legitimacy crisis did not positively affect the councillors' attitude or their subjective norms (other councillors). The attitude towards the LGA 2002 turned out to be a good explanatory variable for the attitude towards accountability activities. There was a significant positive effect of experience on the attitude towards steering activities. This supports the RBV. The RBV is also supported by the significant positive relation between experience and perceived behavioural control.

9 Conclusions and discussion

In this research we examined the effects of the Dutch Local Government Act 2002 for the council. We also tested the expectation – formulated in the policy theory of the LGA 2002 (see chapter 2) – that a new institutional structure would lead to a change in the role orientations and behaviour of councillors. The main aims of the reforms were the improvement of the responsiveness of the council vis-à-vis the citizens, and an enhancement of the democratic accountability of the local executive to the council. In the course of this book we discovered that bringing about such changes requires more than simply changing the institutional structure. In this final chapter we will summarise our research findings by answering our research questions (formulated in chapter 4). The second part of this chapter elaborates on the implications of these answers for both theory and practice of local government and institutional reforms.

9.1 The research question

In chapter 1 we formulated our research question, which is comprised of two parts. First of all, we are interested in the changes that occurred after the LGA 2002 was introduced to local government. The aim of the reformers was to improve the levels of responsiveness and accountability, and decrease the perceived executive dominance. A second interest of our research is to get an impression of the attitudes and behaviour of councillors in 2007 and to explain differences in their behaviour. An important explanation for these differences could be the extent to which municipalities have implemented the institutional reform.

This means that on the one hand we are interested in the general change process of the institutional reform, and, on the other hand, we want to get a better understanding of variations in councillors' behaviour, as a result of various individual and municipal factors. The central question of this research therefore can be stated as follows:

What are the democratic effects of the 2002 institutional reform in Dutch local government, and how can we explain any such effects?

To answer this question we formulated five more detailed questions, which we will go on to discuss:

1. To what extent have institutional changes in the Dutch Local Government Act 2002 been implemented in Dutch municipalities?
2. To what extent do councillors display increased levels of individual responsiveness and accountability (in terms of their individual attitudes and behaviour)?
3. To what extent have the goals of the institutional reform been attained in terms of a more responsive and accountable work culture and behaviour in local government, and a decrease in the executive dominance?
4. To what extent are councillors' attitudinal and behavioural changes influenced by institutional (re)socialisation and selective recruitment and exit?
5. How can we explain variations in the councillors' behaviour in 2007 by their attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and several external variables (the implementation of the institutional changes in the LGA 2002; the councillors' experience; the councillors' attitude towards the LGA 2002; and the councils' perceived executive dominance and sense of a legitimacy crisis)?

9.1.1 Implementation of Local Government Act 2002

Following the policy theory of the LGA 2002 (the formal rules, the Explanatory Memorandum, the Innovation Program and the Elzinga report) we can expect to find different levels of implementation of the LGA 2002, for the act gives some freedom to municipalities with respect to the implementation date of several formal rules. Municipalities can also decide on the use of optional elements and local initiatives in line with the LGA 2002.

In order to answer the first research question we conducted a council clerk survey in our sample of 142 municipalities. The council clerks provided us with information on the dates of implementation of various mandatory formal rules, and the use of optional changes and local initiatives. In chapter 7 we have

described the level of implementation of the LGA 2002 in municipalities in four different ways:

- the implementation of twelve formal rules in terms of *current stage* (implemented in 2007 or not?);
- the *timeliness* of implementation of twelve formal rules: were these rules implemented *in time or not* (implemented before deadline?);
- the *speed* of implementation of twelve formal rules (year of implementation?);
- the use of *optional elements and local initiatives* that support the LGA 2002 and the ideas behind it.

Results show that almost all rules were implemented in 2007. Only the codes of conduct for the councillors, aldermen and mayor were not universally implemented, and even that only affected approximately 10% of the municipalities. In general (all formal rules together) the LGA 2002 is in 2007 almost fully implemented in every municipality. In 2007 79% of the municipalities implemented the LGA 2002 to its full extent.

Nevertheless, many of the formal rules were introduced with some delay: after the statutory deadline. The Annual Citizen Report, for example, was introduced with a delay in 89% of the municipalities. The average municipality implemented a substantial part of the LGA 2002 before the deadline, but certainly not the whole package. More than a quarter of the municipalities (28%) implemented the majority of the new measures after the deadline.

In terms of the overall speed of implementation, we divided the twelve formal rules into three types: (1) rules related to the empowerment of the council; (2) rules about the codes of conduct; and (3) rules on financial accountability. Rules related to the empowerment of the council and to financial accountability were implemented on average in mid-2003; rules concerning the codes of conduct at the beginning of 2004.

Municipalities vary in the use of optional elements and local initiatives. From the six optional elements/local initiatives that we asked about, most municipalities had applied three to four items.

With respect to the first research question we can conclude two things. In terms of 'current stage' we can say that the LGA 2002 has been fully implemented in Dutch municipalities. This is important for the first part our research: changes over time. After all, in order to find changes as a result of the

LGA 2002 the institutional reform needs to have been implemented. A second conclusion is that there are variations in the speed of implementation. This finding is important for the second part of our research: intermunicipal variations (question 5). We expect that variations in the implementation of the LGA 2002 will explain variations in the councillors' behaviour.

9.1.2 Effects of the LGA 2002

In the first empirical chapter we have focused on the impact of the LGA on changes in the councils' (councillors') attitude, behaviour and perceived influence of the board. Here both the second and third research question focus on the effects of LGA 2002 in terms of changes in individual and collective orientations and patterns of activity. We tested three hypotheses:

1. The attitude of councillors (councils) after 2002 will be more positive towards responsiveness and accountability activities than the attitude of councillors (councils) before 2002.
2. a) Councillors (councils) after 2002 will spend less time at accountability activities.
b) Councillors (councils) after 2002 will spend more time at responsiveness activities.
3. Councils after 2002 will perceive the board as less dominant than councils before 2002.

The first two hypotheses are tested for both the individual and collective level. In chapter 4 and 5 we discussed the differences between the two levels. We will now discuss the effects of the LGA 2002, first at the individual level (second research question), and then at the collective level (third research question).

The second question focuses on changes in the councillors' attitude and behaviour regarding responsiveness and accountability activities, as a result of the new institutional structure. According to the policy theory of the LGA 2002, a more positive attitude towards responsiveness and accountability was expected. In terms of behaviour it was expected to find a shift in priorities: councillors were expected to reallocate time from internal activities in the direction of external activities.

It was possible to answer the second research question with the help of surveys conducted amongst councillors in 1999 and 2007 in the same 150 municipalities. Unfortunately, it was impossible to conduct a genuine panel analysis that would allow for a full-fledged analysis of change at the level of individual councillors. Because of privacy considerations we were unable to link the two survey data sets on an individual basis. Nevertheless, we can get an insight in the attitudinal and behavioural changes by comparing the averages of councillors in these surveys.

In chapter 7 we discussed the results in terms of attitudinal and behavioural change. With respect to the *councillors' attitudes* we found, on average, a more positive attitude towards both responsiveness and accountability over time. However, this attitudinal change does seem to be selective: in 1999 responsiveness activities were perceived as the most important tasks by councillors, but in 2007 accountability activities were perceived as most important. Comparing data from 1999, 2004, and 2007 shows that attitudes toward listening activities become slightly more positive over time. The importance attached to explaining activities seems to be more stable, but shows a small increase in 2007. The attitude towards steering activities became considerably more positive in 2007. The importance attached to controlling activities increased, especially right after the LGA 2002.

As far as *behavioural change* is concerned, there seems to be no indication that councillors spend more time on their job. This research finding is confirmed by other research: Berenschot 2004, Daadkracht 2008, and Commission Aarts 2008. Furthermore, the time division (in percentages) between external and internal activities does not seem to shift (between 1999, 2004 and 2007).

Therefore, our conclusion with regard to the second research question – to what extent do councillors display increased levels of individual responsiveness and accountability (in terms of their individual attitudes and behaviour) – is that there seems to be only a (selective) attitudinal change (hypothesis 1). There is as yet no indication for a behavioural change (hypothesis 2). In line with the aims of the institutional reform, the councillors' orientation towards both responsiveness and accountability became more positive over time; councillors do find it more important to secure responsiveness and accountability. In addition to this, we discovered that the attitudinal change is stronger for accountability than for responsiveness activities. This selective change is not

really surprising, for the LGA 2002, in terms of its concrete legislative measures, has a strong focus on the internal activities of the council.

The third research question deals with attitudinal and behavioural changes at the collective level, as well as with perceived executive dominance. According to the policy theory of the LGA 2002, a new institutional structure should lead to a cultural and collective behavioural change: an improvement in the responsiveness and accountability of the council. Furthermore, the perceived executive dominance in council matters is expected to decrease as a result of the LGA 2002. In order to measure changes at the collective level we aggregated the individual data.

In chapter 7 we found a cultural change at the municipal level that was similar to the previously discussed (selective) attitudinal change at the level of individual councillors. Likewise, we did not find a behavioural change at the collective level, neither in terms of responsiveness nor with regard to accountability activities.

With regard to the change in executive dominance things were different. The average municipality showed a drop in executive dominance of 10 points. This means that the influence of the board, as perceived by the council, decreased considerably between 1999 and 2007. This trend of decline is supported by both the PDG data and the data of Berenschot (2004). This decrease was also found by using another indicator – council clerks in 2007 mentioned ‘the board’ as a decisive actor in determining the council’s agenda less often than council clerks in 2004.

Therefore our conclusion with regard to the third research question (what are the democratic effects of the LGA 2002 at the collective level?) is threefold: First, there is a (selective) cultural change – councils find it more important to secure responsiveness and accountability (hypothesis 1). This is in line with the aims of the institutional reform. There is no collective behavioural change (hypothesis 2). Second, the change in the councils’ role orientation is selective – the change is stronger for accountability than for responsiveness activities. As we explained earlier, this is no surprise. A final but important conclusion is that, in line with the aims of the LGA 2002, there is a decrease in the perceived executive dominance by councils – the board has less influence in council matters over time (hypothesis 3).

9.1.3 *Explaining attitudinal change*

The fourth research question focuses on the explanation of attitudinal and behavioural changes that took place as a result of the LGA 2002. Since, as was explained in the previous section, we only discovered attitudinal changes we will not deal with behavioural changes in this section. In chapter 4 we discussed two change mechanisms (socialisation and selection) and formulated two hypotheses about their relevance for understanding the effects of the LGA 2002:

4. Councillors are more likely to change their attitude and behaviour in line with the LGA 2002 if they are socialised for some time in the new system; at the same time, councillors that have experience under the old system might have a more difficult time changing their attitude and behaviour to bring those in line with the LGA 2002.
5. New councillors after the implementation of the LGA 2002 are more likely to show an attitude and behaviour in line with the LGA 2002 than new councillors before 2002.

In chapter 7 we tested these two hypotheses by using the council data of both the 1999 and 2007 survey. Can the selective attitudinal change be attributed to the mechanism of socialisation or selection? In order to answer this question we compared the attitudes of councillors with different organisational tenure. To check for the mechanism of socialisation we compared the attitudes of councillors in 2007 in terms of three cohorts: new councillors (1 year experience), councillors that had experienced one council term (1-5 years experience), and 'old' councillors (>5 years experience). We expected to find a curvilinear relationship: the most positive attitude for councillors with 1-5 year experience, the least positive attitude for 'old' councillors, with the freshmen expected to fall somewhere in between. Findings in chapter 7 did not confirm this expectation – the importance attached by these three cohorts to their responsiveness and accountability activities was more or less the same. This leaves open two possibilities: socialisation has no influence, or its effect has been attenuated by the selection mechanism.

We tested for the influence of selection by comparing the attitudes of new recruits in 1999 to their equals in 2007 (hypothesis 5). We expected to find more positive attitudes towards responsiveness and accountability for new councillors in 2007 – after all, these new recruits joined the council in a time

and institutional structure that emphasised the importance of these concerns. In chapter 7 we discovered that new recruits in 2007 are indeed more positive towards accountability activities than their equals in 1999. Apparently, councillors that joined the council in 2006 have different role orientations than councillors that joined the council in 1998 (before the introduction of the LGA 2002). This is an indication that selection matters: a different type of councillor joined the council after the introduction of the institutional reform. This might not only be true for ‘freshman’ – councillors with no council experience – but also for councillors that were again elected in 2006 (councillors with council experience). They all went through the same ‘selection’ sieve. The influence of the selection mechanism would explain the selective attitudinal change that we found.

We can now answer the fourth research question about the influence of the socialisation and selection mechanism on attitudinal change. The councillors’ (selective) attitudinal change in terms of responsiveness and accountability activities may at least partly be understood as the result of a selection effect. On the basis of our data it is hard to tell whether there is also a socialisation effect. It might be the case that the possible results of organisational socialisation have been attenuated by the selection mechanism. An alternative explanation which cannot be ruled out is that everybody or at least political actors change as ‘a sign of the times’: these days there is simply more attention paid to the responsiveness and accountability task of the council and new councillors may be socialised into their roles before entering the council.

9.1.4 Explaining the councillors’ behaviour

The fifth and final research question is the most complex one:

How can we explain variations in the councillors’ behaviour in 2007 by their attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and several external variables (the implementation of the institutional changes in the LGA 2002; the councillors’ experience; the councillors’ attitude towards the LGA 2002; and the councils’ perceived executive dominance and sense of a legitimacy crisis)?

In order to answer this question we first had to formulate specific hypotheses, which we did in the theoretical part of this book. In chapter 4 we formulated a theoretical model, comprised of two parts. The right side of the model entails the theory of planned behaviour: a councillor's attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control explains his behaviour. The left side of the model focuses on the municipal implementation of the LGA 2002 as explanatory factor for the councillor's attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. We also defined other possible important explanatory factors.

In our empirical analyses in chapter 8 we discussed our hypotheses in these two steps as well. First we tested the right side of the model by using (conditional) regression. Then, we tested the complete behavioural model (four models, one model for each specific activity: listening, explaining, steering, and controlling activities), which we subsequently discussed from right to left. In order to test the hypotheses we used some of the councillors' data from 1999 (to measure executive dominance), but mainly used data from 2007. Also data from the council clerks in 2007 were used (to measure the speed of the implementation of LGA 2002), as well as some additional data from Netherlands Statistics (to measure the extent of the 'legitimacy crisis').

With regard to the right side of the model, we were able to confirm three hypotheses. The hypotheses that the attitude and subjective norm of citizens influence the councillors' behaviour could be confirmed (hypotheses 6a and 7a), as well as the expectation that the councillors' attitude forms a better predictor for the councillors' behaviour than his subjective norm (hypothesis 8). In the behaviour models for 'explaining' and 'controlling' activities we also found a conditional effect of the perceived behavioural control on the relation between subjective norm and behaviour (hypothesis 7b). We did not find a conditional effect for the other activities (hypotheses 6b and 7b); also the hypothesis that the social norm of fellow councillors influences the councillor' behaviour had to be rejected (only accepted for two types of behaviour; hypothesis 7a). See Textbox 9.1.

Textbox 9.1: Hypotheses on the right side of the model

6. a) The more positive the councillors' attitudes towards responsiveness and accountability, the more efforts they will make to secure responsiveness and accountability.
 Ø CONFIRMED
 b) This relation is stronger the higher the councillor's perceived behavioural control.
 Ø REJECTED
7. a) The more positive the subjective norm from citizens and other councillors towards responsiveness and accountability, the more efforts councillors will make to secure responsiveness and accountability.
 Ø CONFIRMED for norm citizens; PARTLY REJECTED for norm other councillors
 b) This relation is stronger the higher the councillor's perceived behavioural control.
 Ø PARTLY REJECTED
8. The councillor's attitude towards responsiveness and accountability will be a better predictor of his behaviour than the councillor's subjective norms (from citizens and other councillors) towards responsiveness and accountability
 Ø CONFIRMED

With regard to the left side of the model, most of the hypotheses have to be rejected. The speed of implementation of the LGA 2002 (in terms of the rules related to the empowerment of the council) did not have a significant positive effect on the councillors' attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (hypotheses 9-11). Furthermore, other contextual variables also had less influence than expected. The sense of legitimacy crisis did not positively influence the councillors' attitude and subjective norms (hypothesis 12b and 13b). The perceived executive dominance did have an effect on the attitude towards 'explaining', 'steering' and 'controlling' activities (hypothesis 12a), but not on the subjective norm (hypothesis 12a). The attitude towards the LGA 2002 influenced the attitude towards accountability activities (hypothesis 14). Their experience under the old regime did not negatively influence the councillors' attitude (hypothesis 15). For two behaviour models we also tested the relation between a councillors' experience and his perceived behavioural control. We found a positive relation which supports the Resource Based View (the longer in function, the more skills/resources are obtained, and consequently the better able the councillor feels himself to perform responsiveness and accountability activities; hypothesis 16).

Textbox 9.2: Hypotheses on the left side of the model

9. The earlier and more completely the formal rules of the LGA 2002 are implemented, the more positive the councillors' attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.
 REJECTED
10. The earlier and more completely the formal rules of the LGA 2002 are implemented, the more positive the subjective norm from other councillors towards responsiveness and accountability.
 REJECTED
11. The earlier and more completely the formal rules of the LGA 2002 are implemented, the higher the councillors' perceived behavioural control.
 REJECTED
12. a) The higher councillors perceive the executive dominance, and
 PARTLY REJECTED
 b) the more they perceive their municipality to be in a legitimacy crisis, the more positive their attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.
 REJECTED
13. a) The higher councillors perceive the executive dominance, and
 REJECTED
 b) the more they perceive their municipality to be in a legitimacy crisis, the more positive the subjective norm from other councillors towards responsiveness and accountability.
 REJECTED
14. The more positive the councillors' attitude towards LGA 2002, the more positive their attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.
 PARTLY REJECTED
15. The experience of councillors in the old regime negatively influences their attitude towards responsiveness and accountability.
 REJECTED
16. The experience of the councillor has either a positive or negative effect on his perceived behavioural control.
 CONFIRMED (positive effect)

Assessing our theoretical model, the behaviour model for explaining activities has the highest explained variance (30%). The models for listening, steering, and controlling have respectively an explained variance of 19%, 12%, and 13%. Notice that this is the explained variance of the 'behaviour': meaning that these figures only apply to the right side of the theoretical model. If we make an assessment of the complete theoretical model by looking at the model fit we can say that the behavioural model for 'listening' activities shows a moderate fit; the other three behaviour models (explaining, steering, and controlling) show a weak fit. This means that our model is not appropriate for predictions, but does allow us to confirm or reject hypotheses. The poor fit can be attributed to the left side of the theoretical model (influence of external variables on the behaviour components).

After summarising all the research findings we can answer the fifth research question: How can we explain variations in the councillors' behaviour in 2007 by their attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and several external variables (the implementation of the institutional changes in the LGA 2002; the councillors' experience; the councillors' attitude towards the LGA 2002; and the councils' perceived executive dominance and sense of a legitimacy crisis)? Based on our research we can say that the councillors' attitude and subjective norms are explanatory variables for the councillors' behaviour. For two types of behaviour (explaining and controlling activities) the councillors' perceived behavioural control has a conditional effect on the relation between subjective norm and behaviour. Therefore, the right side of the theoretical model seems to be quite strong; however, the explanatory factors on this side of the model do not link very well with the external variables on the left side of the model. Two external variables that are mostly related to the impact of the institutional reform are the speed of implementation of the LGA 2002 and the perceived executive dominance. The speed of implementation of the LGA 2002 did not influence the councillors' attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (and, consequently, did not affect their behaviour in terms of responsiveness and accountability). The perceived executive dominance did have a significant positive influence for three behaviour models (explaining, steering, and controlling activities). With regard to the other external variables: the attitude towards the LGA 2002 in general does explain the attitude towards accountability activities; also the experience of councillors had a positive influence on their perceived behavioural control. The sense of legitimacy crisis and the experience of councillors under the old regime did not influence the councillors' attitudes and subjective norms as we expected. As a result, the left side of our theoretical behaviour model for councillors was revealed to be less strong.

9.1.5 Conclusion

We can now draw two conclusions. Our first main conclusion is that, notwithstanding the views of sceptics (with regard to the effects of institutional change in general, see Scharpf 1986 and Putnam et al 1993; and with regard to the effects of the LGA 2002 in particular, see publications in *Binnenlands Bestuur* (e.g. Bouwmans 2005; Breure 2007), and Koning and Mennens 2004),

the institutional reforms of the LGA did bring about at least a number of its anticipated effects. On the one hand by 2007 the vast majority of the municipalities had actually adapted their local institutional arrangements to the stipulations of the LGA 2002. Moreover these institutional changes also were found to have consequences in terms of attitudinal change amongst local councillors and a shift in executive dominance. With regard to the attitudinal change, there was a more positive attitude towards responsiveness and accountability activities. Concerning the executive dominance, there are a number of indications that point to changes in the balance of power between the council and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. To begin with, as we have demonstrated in chapter 7, councils perceived the board as less dominant than before. There are also other indications that there may have been a decline in the dominance of the executive. Mayors have perceived a rather similar shift in the balance of power between the council and the executive board (based on the 1999 and 2004 data) and council clerks for example report that the council is increasingly in control of its own agenda (based on the 2004 and 2007 data; see chapter 7). The discussion about the problem of forced resignations of aldermen as a result of the LGA 2002 (see for instance, Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations 2008) may be seen as another indication that councillors did change their behaviour (became more assertive). All these findings show that institutional reform can make a difference.

In the light of this conclusion our second conclusion may seem awkward. If the implementation of the LGA has produced important changes, how is it then possible that we also find that variations in the councillors' attitudes and behaviour in 2007 cannot be explained by variations in the comprehensiveness and speed of the municipal implementation of the new legislation? After all, on the basis of socialisation theory it was plausible to expect that councillors who were exposed to the new regime for a longer period and more fully, would show a more positive attitude towards responsiveness and accountability activities and act accordingly in 2007. This expectation was not supported by our research findings. There may be several, partly complementary, explanations for this. A first reason for not finding any effects of intermunicipal variations in the speed and comprehensiveness of LGA implementation may have been that by 2007 the seeds of change had germinated in most if not all municipalities, irrespective of whether the seed was sown sooner rather than later. A second reason may be

that (re)socialisation effects may not have been particularly strong in the first place.

This latter interpretation brings us to a third conclusion. In the literature (see chapter 4) two main change mechanisms have been identified: socialisation and selection. In the policy theory underlying the Dutch reforms the relevance of (re)socialisation as a mechanism for change was emphasised. In our research we have been unable to find conclusive evidence for (re)socialisation effects. On the other hand we did find some (limited) evidence pointing to the potential relevance of recruitment and selection effects. As was expected on the basis of a selection/ recruitment hypothesis, the cohort of new councillors selected/ recruited after the 2002 reform was substantially more positive about responsiveness and accountability activities than the freshmen selected/ recruited in 1999 before the reforms were initiated.

9.2 Discussion

In this final section we will first discuss our findings on the effects of institutional reform, more specifically on the effects of the Dutch LGA 2002. Subsequently we will discuss our theoretical model.

9.2.1 *Institutional Reform*

In the beginning of this book we put the LGA 2002 in a broader perspective by linking it to the theory of institutional change. Substantively theories of institutional change address two types of questions. On the one hand we find discussions of factors that explain institutional change (here institutional change is the dependent variable). On the other hand we also find contributions that look into possible effects of institutional change (where institutional change is the independent variable; cf. de Boer 2003: 244). In the latter case the assumption is that changes in the institutional structure affect the behaviour of actors (by changing their choice space) and therefore the outcome of institutional reforms. In this research we focused on the validity of this crucial assumption.

Although the expectation that institutional reform may bring about (desired) behavioural changes may seem plausible, it has been argued that this might not be as self-evident as it might sound initially (see Scharpf 1986; Putnam et al 1993; Genschel 1997). This implies that reformers should not think lightly about institutional reform; it is an enormous job with no guarantees for success (cf. de Boer 2003: 247). It is impossible to be sure about the outcomes of an institutional change in advance, and the outcomes rarely satisfy the prior intentions of the initiators (Scharpf 1986; March and Olsen 1989: 65; Lowndes and Wilson 2001: 634). Putnam et al. (1993: 17) warned us that ‘designers of new institutions are often writing on water’ and they rightly add that the proposition that institutional reforms will alter people’s attitudes and behaviour ‘is an hypothesis, not an axiom’ (1993: 18). Moreover, it has also been argued by several of these authors that it may take some considerable time before effects of institutional change will manifest themselves (Scharpf 1986; Putnam et al. 1993; Genschel 1997).

In the light of such sceptical arguments it is remarkable that in our study of institutional reform in the context of Dutch local government we have concluded that institutional reforms did have a number of substantial effects, even relatively shortly after the adoption of the reform. After the introduction of the LGA 2002 councillors developed more positive attitudes towards both responsiveness and accountability activities. These effects, however, were particularly strong for attitudes about the accountability activities. The selectiveness of these changes is not very surprising, for the LGA 2002 primarily aimed at improving democratic accountability of the BMA in its relation to the council. This focus on accountability issues is also reflected in the instrumentation (selection of actual measures) of the LGA 2002 that are predominantly aimed at empowering the council in its relation to the BMA.

In addition to an attitudinal change amongst councillors this research also showed a decrease in the (perceived) executive dominance. As we concluded before, there are also other indications that there may have been a decline in the dominance of the executive. After many decades in which vain attempts were made to strengthen the position of the council under the traditional model, the LGA reform looks like having achieved at least one of its main aims: the empowerment of the municipal council. This shows that the Dutch Local Government Act 2002 is not (or, at least, not only) ‘problematic’, or ‘a burden’

as has been suggested in the mostly negatively toned public debate (see *VNG Magazine* and *Binnenlands Bestuur*). Some of the main complaints have simply been proven wrong. Complaints were made, for example, that the LGA 2002 – despite all the extra work – did not achieve its aims. Others complained that as a result of the LGA 2002 the workload increased, and more councillors left the council. In chapter 7 we proved these claims to be wrong.

But our results that indicate that the LGA reforms have had an impact on local democracy are not unequivocal. As described earlier, there are no indications that councillors in their actual behaviour (in terms of time allocation) give a higher priority to responsiveness and accountability activities, as the reformers had hoped. From a theoretical perspective this is puzzling. Theoretically (and empirically) in all sorts of research settings attitudes have proven to be good predictors for behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; see also for example Godin et al 1992; Kolvereid 1996). And therefore it is surprising that in this research we do not find that the observed attitudinal changes go hand in hand with behavioural changes. One factor that might have produced this unexpected result is the operationalisation and measurement of behavioural change. Because of the available data we could only compare changes in time allocations for different aspects of the councillor's role. It is perfectly conceivable that a councillor who before and after the reforms allocates the same amount of time to a particular activity (e.g. attending council meetings) may spend this time in a completely different way. In other words identical time allocation may conceal rather different role-activities. This interpretation is supported by our conclusion about changes in the executive dominance. It is hard to imagine how such a change could have occurred without behavioural changes amongst councillors.¹

In terms of the theoretical arguments about the effects of institutional reform we have not only been able to draw conclusions about the absence or presence of such effects on the attitudes and behaviour of social actors (here councillors) but we have also shed light on the mechanisms bringing about such changes. In this report we have investigated the effect of both the socialisation and the selection mechanism. Whereas we did not find evidence for (re)socialisation effects, we were able to find indications for the influence of the selection mechanism. We should be cautious in interpreting the former result as conclusive evidence for

the presumption that the socialisation mechanism is not working. First there may have been successful attempts at re-socialisation that have been attenuated by the selection mechanism. Furthermore, to the extent that attempts at re-socialisation have been unsuccessful, this failure may be interpreted as the success of the initial socialisation of incumbent councillors who have become resistant to external pressures for changing their attitudes and conduct.

Our conclusion about the relative importance of the change mechanisms also sheds a new light on the claim (for example Scharpf 1986 and Putnam et al. 1993) that institutional reforms need a long time before they will show any effects. As it stands the rationale behind this hypothesis largely rests on a socialisation argument. In our case we found evidence that at least some change occurred already relatively shortly after the reform was implemented. This result might very well have to do with the fact that in the context where the LGA reforms were implemented, selection and recruitment are a prominent feature of organisational tenure: after all every four years all members of the council have to be nominated for election and be re-elected. This is a setting where *potentially* the selection and recruitment mechanisms may be a very powerful mechanism in producing change. Therefore it should not come as a surprise that we did indeed find evidence for rather strong selection effects.

9.2.2 *Theoretical model*

In this research we formulated a theoretical model in order to explain intermunicipal variations in the behaviour of councillors. This model was comprised of two parts.

The core of the right-hand part of the model was based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour: a general theory to explain human behaviour on the basis of attitudes, social norms and perceived behavioural control of actors (here Dutch councillors). This part of the explanation was relatively successful: most of the hypotheses in this part of the model were confirmed. Nevertheless we think a few results deserve some special attention.

To start, we learned that the councillor's attitude forms a better predictor for his behaviour than his/her perceptions of social norms of relevant others in the social context. Furthermore, some social norms are more important than others:

the norms of citizens are more important than the norms of fellow councillors (significant higher beta coefficient for citizen norms than for the norms of other councillors). This leads us to the conclusion that councillors do not take everyone's subjective norm into account; in our case, the opinion of citizens is more important to them than the opinion of their colleagues. From the perspective of role theory, this finding makes sense – a councillor will make an assessment of which role expectations he considers to be important. Furthermore, his behaviour will be influenced by the role pressure of role-senders; this pressure varies between role-senders. Apparently the role pressure from citizens is larger than the pressure from other councillors. This makes sense too: not only because councillors want to represent citizens and therefore value their opinion, but also if they want to get re-elected, they should better pay attention to the citizen opinion.

A second important conclusion pertains to the effect of perceived behavioural controls. Theoretically we expected that the higher the perceived behaviour control, the stronger the relation between attitude / subjective norm and the councillors' behaviour would be. But we were only able to establish such an interaction effect in two out of the twelve cases where we expected these. One explanation for this may be that as members of a political elite most councillors will typically have high levels of behavioural control and therefore there is only little variation in their perceived behavioural control. A look at the data presented in appendix D we can see that this might indeed be part of the explanation. Moreover we also see that the interaction effects occurred in those instances where there was the largest variation in perceived behavioural control scores, i.e. perceived behavioural control with regard to explaining and controlling activities. Presumably more interaction effects would have been found if the levels of perceived behavioural control showed more variation.

The left-hand side of the model focussed on the context of our case: the effects of the introduction of the new Dutch LGA in 2002 and other related factors. In our model we tried to link both aspects (TPB and context). This effort was only partly successful. Not successful, particularly because our (expected) main explanatory factor 'speed of implementation of the LGA 2002' did not explain the key behavioural factors: councillors' attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. As we said before the effect of the speed factor depends on a socialisation effect (length of exposure to the new institutional

conditions). Once we realise this, it becomes evident that the absence of the speed effect may have had to do with the effect of selection in combination with the timing of the various surveys. Since there are indications of a substantial selection effect, it may be that any possible speed effects were washed away by the electoral selection and recruitment effects in preparation of the 2006 municipal elections.

This also points to the fact that in the left-hand side of the model we did not include factors that would tap variations in local mechanisms of selection and recruitment, e.g. whether or not party selection commissions in a municipality used the template for a recruitment profile that was prepared as part of the Innovation Program. For much the same reasons, with the wisdom of hindsight we should perhaps also have included a measure of the local saliency of the LGA reforms. Such a measure might have used items as: How often was the implementation of elements of the LGA 2002 discussed in the council? How actively were individual councillors and municipalities involved in activities organised as part of the Local Government Innovation Program (visiting the website, participating in conferences, and so on)?

A second block of variables in the left-hand side of the model was based on the presumption that the more serious actors perceive the problems that the reforms seek to remedy, the more they will be prone to change their behavior in line with the expectations of the reformers. The more serious the problems are perceived to be, the more actors are convinced of the need for reform, the more fertile soil for a successful reform (see chapter 4): an invalidation of the old situation calls for attitudinal and behavioral change. The evidence for this line of argument is mixed. On the one hand, perceived executive dominance did affect three of the four relevant councillors' attitude. On the other hand, the indicator for the seriousness of local legitimacy problems did not affect any of the relevant attitudes.

These mixed results are in part likely to reflect variations in the saliency of these two concerns. First of all, from the personal perspective of councillors, the executive dominance touches the direct personal interest of councillors, and therefore is likely to make them more sensitive to this concern. Moreover, the saliency of executive dominance is further increased by the LGA reform's focus on the empowerment of the council (internal orientation of the LGA). In addition to this, councillors perceive the LGA 2002 mostly as an internal

instrument: the general attitude towards the LGA 2002 is positively related to internal attitudes, not to external attitudes. In this light it also comes as no surprise that the intensity of the problem that is referring to the external function (legitimacy) is not related to attitudinal change: councillors did not really perceive the legal change as an instrument regarding this problem. In addition to this there may also be methodological reasons for the mixed results. The theoretical argument underlying these expectations was framed in terms of *perceived* problems. Our measure for the problem of executive dominance is – as it should ideally be – based on councillor perceptions.² The measure we had to employ for the legitimacy problem, however, was not based on councillor perceptions but on an ‘objective’ condition (level of electoral turnout). Since perceptions are psychologically relatively close to attitudes, part of the difference in findings for the two types of problems may be a methodological artefact.

9.2.3 *Epilogue*

At the end of this book we want to address two final questions.

First: How should we assess the results of the LGA reforms? Of course this depends on one’s criteria. But if we evaluate the reforms by the standards of the reformers we can be moderately positive. One of the main aims of the reforms was to improve democratic accountability in local government and empower the council. On both counts the reforms may be considered as a modest success. The fact that the effects in the responsiveness domain are not nearly as strong, should not blind us for this outcome. This is especially true if we consider the widespread scepticism about the impact of institutional reforms as a vehicle for bringing social and political change and the relatively short period during which we were able to assess this impact.

A second question is: what are the lessons that future reformers could learn from the Dutch case? Of course in very general terms reformers should be well aware that simply changing an institutional structure will not result in a behavioural change. *Effective* institutional changes require more than merely changing the rules of the game. During this research project we learned that the process of changing an actor’s behaviour is much more complex than often thought or pictured. Behavioural change will only occur when reformers

understand the conditions under which actors are prepared to change their behaviour and take these insights into consideration in designing the reform process. This implies a number of important issues.

First, reformers must carefully specify the aspects of behaviour that they want to influence and address all these concerns in their policy design. In the design of the LGA reforms in 2002 we noticed the strong focus on the improvement of the councillors' performance of their internal activities. Therefore, it did not come as a surprise that in this research we found only minor effects for the councillors' performance of their external activities.

Next, reformers must determine the elements that might influence that behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour provides a catalogue of the major elements to be taken into account. A good piece of advice would be 'not to put all eggs in one basket' but pay attention to all three relevant elements: attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control. Reformers should preferably influence the broad spectrum of these behavioural factors; not only the skills and resources of actors, but also their attitude and subjective norms. Studying the LGA 2002 we found that most attention was given to enabling councillors to perform their internal activities. Less attention was paid to changing the councillors' role perception and the role expectations of relevant others.

Subsequently reformers should think about how they can influence these behavioural components. Again reliance on one or two instruments is probably not sufficient to achieve a multiplicity of objectives. The Dutch institutional reform – the LGA 2002 – did to some extent respect this principle, for instance by combining the legislative reform with a multifaceted Innovation Program for local government. Nevertheless the reform policy (and its underlying policy theory) was one-sided in its focus on the socialisation mechanism. Our results suggest that a more balanced instrumentation would in all likelihood have produced more satisfactory results. Moreover, our research has also pointed out that it is important to be able to persuade the actors who should change their ways that the reform is an answer to problems that are salient for their personal objectives (e.g. the empowerment of councillors), since a lack of political will on their part is likely to be fatal for achieving reform ambitions.

Based on the considerations in this section we hold the opinion that 'merely' changing the institutional structure might not be enough to achieve a (desired)

behavioural change. Policy makers and legislators in the field of institutional change should clearly think about how to influence all relevant behavioural aspects, and if necessary come up with additional measures to make an institutional change a success. Institutional reforms require convincing argumentation, which means a thorough problem analysis, clarification of the desired behaviour, clear instruments or rules (attention to both socialisation and selection) that can influence several behavioural components (such as attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control) and last but not least sensitivity for concerns of those whose political will is crucial for the achievement of the reform aims.

Endnotes

Chapter 1:

- ¹ Governance started with a focus on new management, but later on networks became increasingly important. The rise of multi-level governance has caused increased complexity as well (see Stoker 2004).
- ² They note that management reforms in established local government systems of Western European countries cannot directly be compared to management reforms in Eastern European countries (Kersting and Vetter 2003: 339-340). Indeed, reforms in Eastern and Central Europe are multiple and more radical. Reforms in Western Europe are often the result of a slow process (see Pilet et al 2005: 637).
- ³ On their own initiative or at the instigation of central government.
- ⁴ The danger in this is that by strengthening the direct democratic relation, the representative democracy, or the primacy of politics might be weakened (Gilsing 1994: 27). Gilsing (1994: 27) argues in his article that local democracy is too much a reflection of the national democracy ideal – a strong representative democracy – while in local government the short distance with citizens is seen as an advantage of local government. Therefore, local politics should use this ‘short distance’ and strengthen the direct relation with citizens.
- ⁵ A broader definition of institutional structure might also include informal elements (like customs and routines) (cf. Lowndes 1996: 192).

Chapter 2:

- ¹ Concerning the direct elections, initially they were by no means general. In 1917, all men were allowed to vote. In 1919, female voting rights were introduced and the voting age was lowered from 23 to 18 years. The introduction of voting rights for immigrants in municipal elections took place in 1985.
- ² The number of council members increases with the population size of the municipality. The allocation of the seats is based on a system of proportional representation.
- ³ This system is also referred to as a ‘monistic’ system.
- ⁴ The appointment of the mayor has changed over time.
- ⁵ Originally, most local parties were located in the Catholic south of the Netherlands, and in small municipalities.
- ⁶ Initially, aldermen were also part-time officials. Since 1994, however, all municipalities with more than 18,000 inhabitants can employ full-time aldermen.
- ⁷ With respect to this shift, Brugué and Vallès state, ‘Since councillors are at the heart of the decision making process, it seems clear that they will have to modify their roles to adapt to this new situation’ (Brugué and Vallès 2005: 222).

- ⁸ In large cities, the centre of power rested with the aldermen, whereas in small cities it rested with the mayor (cf. Denters et al. 1999; Denters 2000).
- ⁹ There may be many reasons for the decline in election turnout in the Netherlands. One reason could be the depillarisation in the Netherlands. Since the 1960s, the traditionally close relation between councillors and the political parties they represented with segments of local society loosened (Denters et al 2005; Leijenaar and Niemöller 1997: 114). Possibly, the secularisation and declining salience of class differences contributed to the declining turnout and the low level of involvement of citizens in political affairs. Tops et al (1991) looked for reasons to explain the low turnout. Possible explanations were dissatisfaction of the constituency, local politics being considered unimportant, municipality considered as primarily a service institution, lack of confidence in local politics and little interest in and knowledge of local politics. Tops et al (1991) concluded that the last three explanations were correlated with the probability to vote.
- ¹⁰ Alternatives are not provided for several reasons. Two of them are high costs and inefficiency.
- ¹¹ Party group discipline refers to the discipline to keep to the agreements made by the party group in votes and political statements (Boon and Geeraerts 2005). Thomassen and Andeweg (2005: 160) describe it as the enforcement by a party group (leader) to have united action by members of that party group.
- ¹² That was based on the legislative and executive primacy of the council.
- ¹³ This 'new' system is also referred to as the 'dualistic' system. The LGA before 2002 contained a few elements that showed resemblance to this system. Authorities related to co-government are directly attributed by the legislator to the BMA (these authorities are not derived from the council). The mayor is appointed (and dismissed) by the Crown (and not by the council, though in practice they have some influence) (Derksen 1996: 36).
- ¹⁴ However, aldermen can be invited to attend council committee meetings.
- ¹⁵ The LGA 2002 aims to shift governing authorities from the council to the board. In 2006 this shift was made formal by a new Act on the co-governing authorities of municipalities.
- ¹⁶ To support the council and its committees on a secretarial, procedural, and substantive base.
- ¹⁷ As an independent position, or as an audit function: a commission (partly) consisting of councillors. The Court's findings should help the council to perform its scrutiny and control function vis-à-vis municipal administration.
- ¹⁸ A new boundary rule might be that aldermen are no longer allowed to join party group meetings. If they are allowed to visit a meeting, the authority rules should be examined: Can they influence a decision or not?
- ¹⁹ This is a project of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and VNG, and aims to strengthen local government and increase cooperation. The program is funded through 2010.
- ²⁰ Checked in January 2006. Now the Web site has been replaced by www.actieprogramma.nl (with slightly different aims and focus).

Chapter 3:

- ¹ However, democracy for ‘city-states’ (Greek communities) and not for ‘states’ as in modern democracy (Sartori 1987: 278; Held 2006: 11).
- ² Note, that ‘people’ refers to free adult males (excluding adult females, slaves, men coming from other communities who resettled, and children) (Held 2006: 12-13).
- ³ Modern democracy theory emphasises the representation of different social groups that make up the citizen body (representation in terms of presence: race, ethnicity, gender) and not the representation of ideas and interests (though these elements coincide) (Phillips 1995).
- ⁴ For example, Pitkin (1967: 209) incorporates ‘explaining’ in the responsiveness definition: representatives can make decisions not directly in accordance with citizens’ preferences as long as they can explain and justify them. Other authors (e.g. Day and Klein 1987: 5; Stewart 1984: 15) include the element of ‘explaining’ in the accountability definition: accountability as being obliged to explain and justify what one does (cf. accountability as answerability: Pennock 1979: 267; Paul 1991: 2; Sinclair 1995: 221).
- ⁵ Van der Kaap (2006) calls this quantitative representation: concentrating on *who* represents; cf. integrative theories of representative democracy.
- ⁶ Van der Kaap (2006) calls this qualitative representation: concentrating on the *content*; cf. aggregative theories of representative democracy.
- ⁷ Burke’s theory of representation (1763) states that the representative is someone ‘who ought to respect his constituents’ opinions, who ought to prefer their interests above his own, but who ought not to sacrifice his unbiased opinions in deciding for the good of the whole nation’ (Rao 1998: 30).
- ⁸ Our conception of procedural responsiveness relates to what Van der Kolk calls ‘conditional responsiveness’: ‘the degree to which representatives explain and justify their acts referring to the interests of voters and the extent to which they offer the opportunity to raise questions, offer opinions and ask for justifications’ (Van der Kolk 1997: 171).
- ⁹ Although it is difficult to make a connection between some of these elements, take for instance outcome. It is not always possible to get an outcome in accordance with citizens’ preferences, because preferences might be in conflict; furthermore, councillors will have their own idea about what is best for the citizens.
- ¹⁰ ‘Helping people who have personal problems with the government’ (Krasno 1994: 20).
- ¹¹ However, accountability is more than obeying instructions faithfully; it is also about competence, integrity, judgment, prudence, vision, courage and other qualities (Mansfield 1982).
- ¹² For instance, the council lacks the resources to control all moves and decisions made by the board: they simply cannot control or question every topic. Furthermore, every now and then there might be a good reason for the executive to partially deviate from the council’s policy guidelines and principles.
- ¹³ Other types of accountability are outward (horizontal) and inward (personal) accountability (Sinclair 1995: 223).
- ¹⁴ Organisational accountability: (public) managers and advisors are accountable to their supervisors for their performance (Bovens 2005).

- ¹⁵ Legal accountability is accountability by constitutive force of a body of law or by an independent judiciary (Gilmour and Jensen 1998). Managers can be summoned by courts to give account of their own acts or of the agency's as a whole (Bovens 2005).
- ¹⁶ Administrative accountability: the administrative agency is accountable to auditors, inspectors and controllers for the tasks assigned to it. This is not always in a hierarchical relation but is more often in a 'diagonal' relation. Controlling agencies (or independent accountees) are not part of the principal-agent relation, but they support the principal in his controlling task (Bovens 2005).
- ¹⁷ However, the councillor's individual right to ask questions can be considered part of a council's activity.
- ¹⁸ Financial accountability concerns the parliament's or council's capacity to authorise and review expenditure (Degeling et al 1996).
- ¹⁹ Institutional means are the ways 'by which agents are bonded to a principal and the processes by which information will be verified, judged and debated, and rewards or penalties assigned' (Degeling et al 1996: 32). Accountability mechanisms are codes of conduct, the civil service system, and hearing and notification requirements. However, rules enabling control are also considered to be accountability mechanisms: for instance freedom of information acts, ombudsmen, and oversight boards (Gruber 1987: 22).
- ²⁰ Based on citizen demands and needs, party programs, own visions, et cetera.
- ²¹ An agreed and common vocabulary is necessary: the meaning (if any) that should be attached to the information that is published needs to be clear (Day and Klein 1987: 243).

Chapter 4:

- ¹ High sunk costs, uncertainty, political conflict, link between stability and effectiveness (Genschel 1997); intentional design and path dependence (Pierson 2000); legal dimension of formal institutions (Levi 1990); complexity of joint action in implementation stage (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973); ambiguity and problematic allocation of attention (March and Olsen 1976); 'competency traps' (March and Olsen 1998).
- ² Altruism refers to the willingness of a person to sacrifice his own goods, time, or welfare (resources) for the benefits of others (Jensen and Meckling 1994).
- ³ Or RREEMM-model: Resourceful Restricted Evaluating Expecting Maximising Man
- ⁴ The weak point of the economic model is that people do not behave in this way: only maximising wealth. There is a complexity of actual preferences of individuals. Weak point of the sociologic model is that the model 'leaves social scientists with no explanation of changes in social customs, mores, taboos, and traditions' (Jensen and Meckling 1994). According to this model, culture determines human behaviour; behaviour is dictated. Individuals are seen as 'social victims' unable to change. (Jensen and Meckling 1994).
- ⁵ 'REMM is not meant to describe the behavior of any particular individual. To do so requires a more complete specification of the preferences, values, emotions, and talents of each person. Moreover, individuals respond very differently to factors

- such as stress, tension, and fear, and, in so doing often violate the predictions of the REMM model. For purposes of organizational and public policy, many of these violations of REMM “cancel out” in the aggregate across large groups of people over time –but no means all’ (Jensen and Meckling 1994: 9).
- ⁶ Related to the ‘expectancy-value’ theory: attitude perceived as a composition of expectancies and values (evaluation of goals/attributes) (Rosenberg 1956; Jones and Gerard 1967).
- ⁷ Furthermore, the qualities of self-determined or controlled behaviour are different (Deci et al 1991).
- ⁸ According to Ajzen and Fishbein, the person’s intention (readiness to perform a given behaviour) determines the behaviour. Intention on its turn is determined by attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control. Perceived behavioural control moderates the effect of intention on behaviour: wanting to perform the behaviour (positive intention) can only result in the specific behaviour performance if the perceived behavioural control is strong. Therefore, you need to be able to perform the behaviour as well.
- ⁹ The decision to leave the concept of intention out in this research can be supported in several ways. First, Liska (1984: 64) points out that several field studies show that attitudes have a substantial direct effect on behaviour. ‘Some field studies (Schwartz and Tessler, 1972; Albrecht and Carpenter, 1976; Bentler and Speckart, 1979) even suggest that attitudes are better predictors of behavior than are behavioral intentions’ (Liska 1984: 65). Furthermore, intention as an explanatory variable has some defects: ‘behavioral intentions are frequently unstable and ill formed; frequently, they are only formed just immediately before behaving, making them a somewhat uninteresting cause and ineffectual predictor of behavior’ (Liska 1984: 67).
- ¹⁰ This is difficult when the change involves loss or the present behaviour is otherwise satisfying. The change might also be impossible because it is not in the behaviour capacity of the person (Festinger 1957: 25, 26).
- ¹¹ High fit is not always preferable: Organisations and its members may become unable to react upon environmental changes. Low fit enhances members to grow and learn. Organisations might bring in persons with different perspectives and new ideas helping organisations to adapt to changing environments. Therefore, Chatman (1989) speaks of an ‘optimal fit’.
- ¹² It might also be the case that long-tenured councillors consider the LGA 2002 as an improvement of their position. This assumption would make the UEP-hypothesis incorrect.
- ¹³ The idea of being able to do a proper job (or to act in conformity with one’s personal normative role conception – in the jargon of role theory) may be seen as the nucleus of one’s professional identity. Loss of identity or the apprehension of such a loss may be an important factor for people’s decision to retire (Schein 2000(1999)).
- ¹⁴ In the literature such normative role expectations in the environment of the organisation member have also been referred to as the ‘management ideal’ (Harrison and Carroll 1991; Wanous 1980).
- ¹⁵ Similarities (in terms of values and goals) are cause for attraction between individuals and organisations (Cable and Judge 1997: 546; Cable and Parsons 2001). Values guide an individual’s attitude and behaviours (Chatman 1989; 1991).

According to the ASA framework, individuals are not randomly assigned to organisations but they work there based on selection (Cooper-Thomas et al. 2004: 55). The ASA framework explains the person-organisation fit (see §4.3).

- ¹⁶ In both situations, the final decision of whether or not to retire rests with the councillor. The two situations, however, differ because the locus of the initiative for the decision (not to run) differs. In the first case, the candidate decides to retire based on his own personal criteria. In the other case, it is not the individual who initiates the decision but others who feel that the incumbent fails and should retire. Based on such signals, the councillor might opt for an honourable way out, but he might also be thrown out.
- ¹⁷ This is what actually happened. The Dutch Association of Municipalities and The Ministry of Home Affairs have developed a Recruitment *Profile of Councillors* that local parties could use as a basis to revise their criteria for selecting their party's candidates for the council elections after the introduction of the new legal regime.

Chapter 5:

- ¹ Compared to face-to-face interviews a disadvantage of written questionnaires is the duration of the interview. Face-to-face surveys can be far longer in duration than other types of survey: more questions can be asked. Another disadvantage of the internet and mail questionnaire is the risk that it is not the respondent but another person who filled in the questionnaire. Furthermore, we do not know how the respondent came to his answer, and there is no opportunity to explain the question to the respondent. Last but not least written questionnaires have a higher risk of low response than face-to-face surveys (Denters 1988; Denters and Van der Kolk 1993; Dijkstra and Smit 1999: 12-18; c.f. De Boer 2003: 154-155).
- ² In total 307 councillors participated in the internet survey. This is a response of 17,4%.
- ³ In 2007 and 2008.
- ⁴ This number is in some cases smaller than the legally permitted council seats. The gap can be explained in several ways. However, the most logical reason seems to be that councillors who recently resigned did not (yet) have a successor. In other cases the number of councillors known to VNG is bigger than the legally permitted council seats. Formally, this is not possible, but it can be explained by looking at the recent amalgamation of municipalities. The total number of council seats in the new municipality can be smaller than the joint council seats of the former municipalities. There can be some delay in the update of these new numbers. Over the years the number of council seats is decreasing, due to municipal mergers.
- ⁵ The size of the sample depends on various factors such as the purpose of the study (research problem), the population size, type of respondent (education level, available time), the risk of selecting a 'bad' sample, practical reasons (such as available time and costs) and the allowable sampling error (Israel 1992 (2003); Schreuder Peters 2000: 146-147). The sample size should also be appropriate for the analysis that is planned (Israel 1992 (2003)). These factors have to be taken into consideration. Once this is clear, there are several strategies for determining the sample size: using a census for small populations, using a sample size of a similar study, using published tables and using formulas to calculate a sample size.

- ⁶ For the 1999 survey the researchers used a written questionnaire that had been sent to all the mayors, aldermen, and chiefs executive officer of the 150 municipalities using the home-addresses provided by the VNG. Notice, council clerks were not included since this job did not exist before 2002.
- ⁷ The difference in ‘questionnaires sent’ between 1999 and 2007 might be explained because the number of inhabitants in municipalities increased in eight years and therefore also the number of council seats. Though, this does not explain the large difference. Another explanation might be that due to amalgamation small municipalities of the 1999 sample had been merged with or ‘into’ large municipalities, thereby increasing the number of council seats.
- ⁸ This is a general reflection of what was going on, we do not have the exact numbers of how often a specific reason for non-response is given by councillors.
- ⁹ In order to speak of panel data we need to be able to connect the respondents of 2007 to the exact same respondents in 1999. This is not possible for several reasons: turnover, non-response, but the most important reason is privacy (anonymity was guaranteed).
- ¹⁰ We dealt with small populations (maximum number of councillors in any single municipality was 45), so the N would be small regardless.
- ¹¹ Regression should only be used if both dependent and independent variables are measured on at least an *interval* scale. In this research attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and behaviour are measured on an ordinal scale. However, we can consider the concepts as interval since we regard the differences between the categories (not important, little important, moderate important, important, very important) as equal. This choice is supported by the work of for instance Labovitz (1967, 1970) and Kim (1975, 1978) who claim that the power and flexibility gained from using multivariate methods for interval-level variables outweigh the small biases that they may entail (see Winship and Mare 1984). Labovitz (1967) shows empirically that it matters little if an ordinal scale is treated as an interval scale. Nevertheless, this choice is disputable. The ‘conservatives’ argue that using a wrong analysing method (means, standard deviations and Pearson’s correlation with ordinal data) can bring very strange results (Stevens 1955; O’Brien 1982). These authors promote the use of (alternative) techniques appropriate to ordinal measurements (see for instance: Morris 1970, Hawkes 1971, Reynolds 1973, Somers 1974). Treating ordinal variables as interval variables is an ongoing debate (cf. Winship and Mare 1984; Knapp 1990: 122). De Boer (2003: 215) in his research uses both approaches and comes to the conclusion that it makes no difference for his conclusions: the data analyses results are the same in terms of interpretation.
- ¹² Scale 1-4: very insufficient – very sufficient
- ¹³ Meaning: what is the influence of perceived behavioural control on the attitude – behaviour relationship for councillors indicating perceived behavioural control as very insufficient, insufficient, sufficient or very sufficient? To determine the interaction term for each value we subtracted the several values of the PBC (Z-variable) and multiplied it with the attitude (X-variable): (PBC – value pbc)*Attitude. (Van Puijenbroek 1992).
- ¹⁴ By subtracting a constant from both independent variables in the product term: $Y = a + b*X + c*Z + d((X-v)*(Z-w))$ (Denters and Van Puijenbroek 1989: 90-95; Boedeltje 2009).

- ¹⁵ ‘Lijst Pim Fortuyn’: a new national party quickly increasing in size. However, in 2003 this party lost most of his influence in national politics (in 2006 the LPF lost even all his seats in the Lower House). At the local level the party still has some influence in a few municipalities.
- ¹⁶ Kelman (1958) has shown that a subject exposed to an authority, that is in the position to punish or reward (c.f. French and Raven 1959), will display a behavioural change in the direction of the authority’s opinion. Indeed, in the case of the new Local Government Act it is credible that councillors would behave in a certain way because they are ordered to by legislators, even if they do not believe in it. Or they show the desired behaviour because they trust the initiators of the law: ‘maybe it will work’. Eventually, this altered behaviour might affect the attitude: ‘one becomes what one does’.

Chapter 6:

- ¹ The annual citizen report and the council clerk also had to be implemented right from the start of the LGA 2002; nevertheless, we decided to include these two items in our measurement. In contrast to formal rules such as ‘an alderman is no longer allowed to be member of the council’ it can be expected that these two elements would not be implemented right from the start. The municipality actually has to do something.
- ² This formal rule is not stated in the LGA 2002, but in the Resolution on Budgeting and Accountability Provinces and Municipalities (BBV) of January 2003. The LGA 2002 made it desirable to change the old budgeting and accountability structure (CV95) in order to support the councillor in his or her task to steer the executives and control the board.
- ³ Factor analysis shows that there are four components:
1. Court of Audit, council clerk, regulation for the council, decree on assistance civil servants;
 2. program budget, annual citizens report;
 3. codes of conduct (council, aldermen, and mayor); and
 4. financial accountability (decree on financial policy, external control and efficiency research).
- ⁴ Though data indicating both year and month are perhaps more precise on determining the level of implementation, we decided only to use the year of implementation. There are two main reasons for this choice. One, there are more data available looking only at years. Second, the word ‘implementation’ is rather vague and can be interpreted differently by the respondents. Take for instance the implementation of a Court of Audit. Does implementation mean: the decision of the council on how the Court of Audit should be structured; or maybe the nomination of its members, or the official date of its first research project? Looking only at years seems to be a safer choice, though having the disadvantage of some information loss.
- ⁵ In their evaluation report in 2004, Berenschot also discussed the codes of conduct and the decrees on financial accountability cogently.
- ⁶ We will not use a scale to measure the implementation of the LGA 2002 in terms of ‘optional changes and local initiatives’ because this variable is not uni-dimensional

- (three components) and the alpha is very low (0.39). Only the use of the separate items is discussed.
- ⁷ These words or activities are abbreviations for the full content of the activities. Chapter 3 contains a more thorough definition of the four activities.
- ⁸ Also, this concept is not mentioned in the LGA 2002; only in other official documents and the daily practice of local government. Nevertheless, the concept is a prominent part of the discourse on the LGA 2002 (Vernieuwingsimpuls 2004).
- ⁹ 1999: scale 1–4 (little important–very important)
- ¹⁰ Measuring time allocations of councillors is not that easy. Take for instance time allocated at external activities: should walking the dog and chatting with neighbors also be included?
- ¹¹ No alpha, because the measurement of external activities in 1999 is based on one item.
- ¹² Based on only two items
- ¹³ For the internal and external behaviour in terms of actual contribution we added activities: internal activities refer to steering and controlling activities, external activities entail ‘listening’ and ‘explaining’ activities.
- ¹⁴ There is a lot of disagreement about using electoral turnout as an indicator for a legitimacy crisis. For instance, people that do not vote can have several motives. One motive might be that they disagree with the system. Another motive is that they have the feeling things are going well (expression of satisfaction with the political system). Two totally different motives from which no unambiguous conclusion can be drawn: is there or is there not a legitimacy crisis? Also, the decline of electoral turnout should be viewed in relation to other forms of political participation. Is there a general decline or is there a change in modes? It turns out that other modes of political participation are increasing: people turn away from traditional modes of political participation to alternative ones (Gilsing 1994: 5; Denters 2000).
- ¹⁵ Therefore, in this case the alpha is not that important: it is about the validity of the measurement and not so much about the reliability.

Chapter 7:

- ¹ Gilsing (1994) shows in his research that municipal size is the most important explanatory variable for local reforms.
- ² Exact question: ‘Does the council have the right to a research budget (contra-expertise) for investigating proposals of the BMA?’ (Meaning: does the council have a budget that can be used freely?)
- ³ If we compare the same municipalities in 2004 and in 2007, we see that the majority of the municipalities did not change in the meantime (80% still have or do not have a budget), 17% of the municipalities now indicate that they do not have a budget while they did have one in 2004, and 3% have a budget in 2007 and did not have one in 2004. A reason why the council abandoned the budget might be that in the meantime they installed a Court of Audit with a research budget of its own.
- ⁴ The 2004 research is in terms of questions better comparable to the 1999 research, yet not in terms of research sample, data collection and response.

- ⁵ The attitude towards steering activities in 1999 and 2004 is measured by use of three items (in 2007 by only one, see our discussion in Chapter 6). However, if we measure the attitude in 1999 and 2004 by use of the two most positive items we still find a significant increase in importance that councillors attach to their steering activities (1999, $x = .79$; 2004, $x = .79$; 2007, $x = .90$).
- ⁶ Despite the fact that the results of some municipalities are based on a low N, we can make a statement about the pattern. See our notions in Chapter 5 on ‘borrowing strength’.
- ⁷ It is also still possible that the changes are an artefact of our method (comparability of the questions). The questions in 1999 and 2007 are functionally equivalent, yet not similar. The question on the importance of controlling activities is most similar. Nevertheless, all four activities show a fairly consistent pattern (including controlling). Therefore, we can conclude that there is an (selective) attitudinal change that seems to be mostly the result of the selection process.
- ⁸ This question includes the item ‘other’, making this question more reliable as an indicator of total time spent at council activities and therefore more comparable to the question in 1999.
- ⁹ However, there is also research indicating otherwise: the data of Boogers show that the share of time that is spent at internal activities decreases, and hence the share of external activities increases. This difference in findings might be explained by the sample, data collection method and response rate (also the external/internal percentages are very different from the 1999, 2004 and 2007 data). Nevertheless, this again shows that we should be careful in drawing conclusions.
- ¹⁰ No data are available for the average age of councillors in 1999. However, the council term started in 1998 so it can be expected that the average age of councillors in 1998 resembles the average age in 1999.
- ¹¹ Another reason to quit that often popped up in the media is the allowance of councillors. The 2007 survey did not incorporate this item as a reason to quit in the questionnaire, but it did ask councillors whether they felt the allowance they receive is adequate or not. ‘Considering the corresponding responsibilities, do you think your allowance as a councillor is adequate or not?’ (scale 1–6: not adequate – adequate). The average councillor gave the allowance a score of 3.1, and the group quitters a score of 3.3. This shows that councillors overall are not very satisfied with the allowance, but also not unsatisfied. But most of all, it shows that councillors who are planning to leave politics are at least not more negative than the average councillor. In fact they are slightly more positive.
- ¹² Instead of categorising by age, another interesting characteristic is council experience: especially the reasons for ‘new’ councillors to quit politics for they are ‘the future’ for municipalities (as well as young councillors). It turns out that experience and age are much alike: the more experienced, the older and also the reasons to quit show a big resemblance.
- ¹³ This finding is also observed by Daadkracht (Post and De Lange 2008), and the Commission Aarts (Aarts 2008).
- ¹⁴ Comparing the 1999 data to the 2004 was not possible because we use data at the municipal level. The sample used in 2004 and the low response make it impossible to say something about the collective level.
- ¹⁵ The 1999 and 2004 questionnaire asks first about the type of profession of the respondent and then about the time allocated to this. In 2007 the question is more

general: How many hours do you spend on paid activities, besides council work? Here, councillors also fill in small extra paid jobs which might lower the average (we excluded retired councillors from this figure).

Chapter 8:

- ¹ The interaction effect in formula: $Y = (0.688 + 0.220X) (0.096 + 0.069X)Z$.
- ² The interaction effect in formula (re-calculated into the original parameters):
 $Y = (1.479 + -.037X) (-.141 + .156X)Z$.
- ³ The interaction effect in formula (recalculated into the original parameters):
 $Y = (2.615 + -.239X) (-.156 + .124X)Z$.
- ⁴ If we would not model such correlations, the regression coefficient of the attitude on behaviour, for example, would not only reflect the direct effect of the attitude but also comprise an indirect effect of the subjective norms on the dependent variable (an indirect effect through attitude).
- ⁵ Should we test the theoretical model for the four types of behaviours at once, or can we test the models separately? This depends on the extent to which the four types of behaviour correlate. The correlation matrix (see Table 1) shows two correlations that are quite high (between listening and explaining, and between steering and controlling). This means that it might be better to test the theoretical model for all four types of behaviour together. However, if we run a regression analysis with attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and the four types of behaviour we see that the correlation between the four types of behaviour is quite low (below 0.2). This means that the four types of behaviour are relatively independent of each other (we deal, indeed, with four different types of behaviour). Therefore, we will test the four behaviour models separately.

Table 1: Correlation matrix for four types of behaviour

Behaviour	Listening	Explaining	Steering	Controlling
Listening	1			
Explaining	.428	1		
Steering	.185	.273	1	
Controlling	.266	.304	.445	1

- ⁶ Earlier we found two significant interaction effects: in the regression analyses only one effect remains significant.
- ⁷ It is no big surprise that the status and type of the councillor's political party has an influence on his or her behaviour ('where you sit is where you stand'). In the literature we can find suggestions that councillors from opposition parties place other accents on their council job than councillors from coalition parties. Members of opposition parties are more likely to be distanced from and critical towards the board than members of coalition parties. For councillors of coalition parties the distance from the board is much smaller: as a result it might be easier for them to steer the board. In the literature we can also find suggestions that councillors from local parties place other accents on their council job than national parties. Councillors of local parties are more likely to emphasise their external task, councillors from national parties their internal task. This external focus of local

parties is one of the reasons why local parties exist. Boogers (2007: 85–86) describes ‘attention for local problems’ as a reason for local parties to start their party. According to this view, local parties are more susceptible to the concerns of the citizens than political party groups. Especially, local parties are the ones fighting for the everyday surroundings (Derksen 2001: 140). This view supports the external focus and the possibility of a higher level of responsiveness of local party members.

- ⁸ The status and type of the councillor’s political party is expected to have an influence on his or her attitude towards responsiveness and accountability activities (‘where you sit is where you stand’; see also previous endnote). In the literature we can find suggestions that councillors from opposition parties place other accents on their council job than councillors from coalition parties. Opposition parties are often ‘protest’ parties, mostly anti-establishment. Members of opposition parties are often not happy with the performance of the municipality. As a result, opposition parties have a larger critical distance from the board than coalition parties. Therefore, it makes sense that the controlling task becomes more important to opposition parties. Councillors of coalition parties might feel stronger about the importance of explaining and justifying the municipal policy to citizens because they feel that it is actually ‘their’ policy. With regard to the type of political party, in the previous endnote we already described the strong external focus of councillors from local parties. Members of local political parties see themselves first of all as representatives of citizens, while members of national parties are more focused on realising their party’s political agenda (Derksen 2001: 129–130). Indeed, one of the reasons for citizens to vote for a local party is that they believe local parties pay more attention to local problems (Boogers 2007: 87). Notice that the positive attitude of local councillors towards responsiveness can explain the higher contribution to these activities as well (by emphasising the importance of responsiveness in the electoral campaign, local councillors might also adapt their behaviour to this).
- ⁹ The model fit represents how well the model as a whole corresponds to the data. It is thus possible that some parts of the model poorly fit the data.

Chapter 9:

- ¹ Of course our main evidence pertains to perceptions of councillors but this result has been corroborated by supporting evidence from different sources. Moreover, one might argue that the less dominant position of the BMA could be the result of changes in the behaviour of aldermen and mayors. But even if these other officials have changed their behaviour, it still requires that councillors would have to step up and hence change their behaviour as well.
- ² Of course, strictly spoken councillors may not consider a situation of executive dominance as problematic.

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Appendix A List of Municipalities

Municipality in 1999	Municipality in 2007	Amalgamation
Achtkarspelen	Achtkarspelen	
Ameland	Ameland	
Anna Paulowna	Anna Paulowna	
Appingedam	Appingedam	
Arnhem	Arnhem	
Axel	Terneuzen	In January 2003: Terneuzen, Sas van Gent and Axel
Beek	Beek	
Beemster	Beemster	
Berkel en Rodenrijs	Lansingerland	In January 2007: Bergschenhoek, Berkel en Rodenrijs and Bleiswijk
Bernisse	Bernisse	
Best	Best	
Beuningen	Beuningen	
Binnenmaas	Binnenmaas	In January 2007: Binnenmaas and 's-Gravendeel
Blaricum	Blaricum	
Boarnsterhim	Boarnsterhim	
Boxtel	Boxtel	
Capelle aan den IJssel	Capelle aan den IJssel	
Coevorden	Coevorden	
Cuijk	Cuijk	
De Marne	De Marne	
Didam	Montferland	In January 2005: Bergh and Didam
Dinxperlo	Aalten	In January 2005: Aalten and Dinxperlo
Dongeradeel	Dongeradeel	
Edam-Volendam	Edam-Volendam	
Eijsden	Eijsden	
Eindhoven	Eindhoven	
Emmen	Emmen	
Gaasterlân-Sleat	Gaasterlân-Sleat	
Geldermalsen	Geldermalsen	
Geldrop	Geldrop-Mierlo	In January 2004: Geldrop and Mierlo
Gendringen	Oude IJsselstreek	In January 2005: Gendringen and Wisch
Gorinchem	Gorinchem	
Graft-De Rijp	Graft-De Rijp	
Grave	Grave	
's-Gravendeel	Binnenmaas	In January 2007: Binnenmaas and 's-Gravendeel
Grubbenvorst	Horst aan de Maas	In January 2001: Horst Grubbenvorst and Broekhuizen
Gulpen-Wittem	Gulpen-Wittem	
Hasselt	Zwartewaterland	In January 2001: Hasselt, Genemuiden and Zwartsluis

Municipality in 1999	Municipality in 2007	Amalgamation
Hattem	Hattem	
Heemskerk	Heemskerk	
Heerenveen	Heerenveen	
Hellendoorn	Hellendoorn	
Helmond	Helmond	
Heumen	Heumen	
Hillegom	Hillegom	
Hilversum	Hilversum	
Hoogezand-Sappemeer	Hoogezand-Sappemeer	
Hoorn	Hoorn	
Huizen	Huizen	
Hummelo en Keppel	Bronckhorst	In January 2005: Hengelo, Hummelo en Keppel, Steenderen, Vorden and Zelhem
IJsselham	Steenwijkerland	In January 2001: Brederwiede, Steenwijk and IJsselham (name: Steenwijk) New name in 2003: Steenwijkerland
IJsselmuiden	Kampen	In January 2001: Kampen and IJsselmuiden
Katwijk	Katwijk	In January 2006: Katwijk, Rijnsburg and Valkenburg
Kerkrade	Kerkrade	
Kessel	Kessel	
Kollumerland c.a.	Kollumerland c.a.	
Landgraaf	Landgraaf	
Landsmeer	Landsmeer	
Langedijk	Langedijk	
Leek	Leek	
Leersum	Utrechtse Heuvelrug	In January 2006: Amerongen, Doorn, Driebergen-Rijsenburg, Leersum and Maarn
Lelystad	Lelystad	
Leusden	Leusden	
Liesveld	Liesveld	
Limmen	Castricum	In January 2002: Castricum, Akersloot and Limmen
Lingewaal	Lingewaal	
Littenseradiel	Littenseradiel	
Lochem	Lochem	In January 2005: Gorssel and Lochem
Loenen	Loenen	
Maastricht	Maastricht	
Margraten	Margraten	
Medemblik	Medemblik	In January 2007: Medemblik, Noorder-Koggenland and Wognum
Meppel	Meppel	
Middelburg	Middelburg	
Mill en Sint Hubert	Mill en Sint Hubert	
Millingen aan de Rijn	Millingen aan de Rijn	
Montfoort	Montfoort	
Mook en Middelaar	Mook en Middelaar	
Naaldwijk	Westland	In January 2004: Naaldwijk, Monster, 's-Gravenzande, De Lier and Wateringen

Municipality in 1999	Municipality in 2007	Amalgamation
Neede	Berkelland	In January 2005: Borculo, Eibergen, Neede and Ruurlo
Niedorp	Niedorp	
Nieuwkoop	Nieuwkoop	In January 2007: Ter Aar, Liemeer and Nieuwkoop
Nieuwleusen	Dalfsen	In January 2001: Dalfsen and Nieuwleusen
Noord-Beveland	Noord-Beveland	
Nootdorp	Pijnacker-Nootdorp	In January 2002: Nootdorp and Pijnacker
Oldebroek	Oldebroek	
Olst	Olst-Wijhe	In January 2001: Olst and Wijhe (name: Olst) New name in 2002: Olst-Wijhe
Oosterhout	Oosterhout	
Ouder-Amstel	Ouder-Amstel	
Ouderkerk	Ouderkerk	
Oudewater	Oudewater	
Pijnacker	Pijnacker-Nootdorp	In January 2002: Nootdorp and Pijnacker
Raalte	Raalte	In January 2001: Heino and Raalte
Ravenstein	Oss	In January 2003: Oss and Ravenstein
Reimerswaal	Reimerswaal	
Renkum	Renkum	
Rheden	Rheden	
Rhenen	Rhenen	
Rijnsburg	Katwijk	In January 2006: Katwijk, Rijnsburg and Valkenburg
Rijnwoude	Rijnwoude	
Rotterdam	Rotterdam	
Rucphen	Rucphen	
Ruurlo	Berkelland	In January 2005: Borculo, Eibergen, Neede and Ruurlo
Schagen	Schagen	
Scheemda	Scheemda	
Schermer	Schermer	
Schijndel	Schijndel	
Schoonhoven	Schoonhoven	
Schouwen-Duiveland	Schouwen-Duiveland	
Sint-Oedenrode	Sint-Oedenrode	
Someren	Someren	
Son en Breugel	Son en Breugel	
Spijkenisse	Spijkenisse	
Staphorst	Staphorst	
Stede Broec	Stede Broec	
Stein	Stein	
Strijen	Strijen	
Swalmen	Roermond	In January 2007: Roermond and Swalmen
Tegelen	Venlo	In January 2001: Venlo, Tegelen and Belfeld
Ten Boer	Ten Boer	
Tiel	Tiel	
Tubbergen	Tubbergen	

Municipality in 1999	Municipality in 2007	Amalgamation
Uden	Uden	
Utrecht	Utrecht	In January 2001: Utrecht and Vleuten-De Meern
Vaals	Vaals	
Veghel	Veghel	
Voerendaal	Voerendaal	
Voorschoten	Voorschoten	
Vught	Vught	
Warmond	Teylingen	In January 2006: Sassenheim, Voorhout and Warmond
Warnsveld	Zutphen	In January 2005: Warnsveld and Zutphen
Wassenaar	Wassenaar	
Wateringen	Westland	In January 2004: Naaldwijk, Monster, 's-Gravenzande, De Lier and Wateringen
West Maas en Waal	West Maas en Waal	
Westerveld	Westerveld	
Westvoorne	Westvoorne	
Wierden	Wierden	
Wijk bij Duurstede	Wijk bij Duurstede	
Woerden	Woerden	In January 2001: Woerden and Harmelen
Woudrichem	Woudrichem	
Zaanstad	Zaanstad	
Zandvoort	Zandvoort	
Zeewolde	Zeewolde	
Zeist	Zeist	
Zevenaar	Zevenaar	In January 2005: Angerlo and Zevenaar
Zevenhuizen-Moerkapelle	Zevenhuizen-Moerkapelle	
Zoetermeer	Zoetermeer	
Zuidhorn	Zuidhorn	
Zwartsluis	Zwartewaterland	In January 2001: Hasselt, Genemuiden and Zwartsluis
Zwolle	Zwolle	

Appendix B Representation figures

Table 1: Representation of the respondents (councillors in 2007 survey) in terms of age

	2007	2007 (UT survey)
Average age	51.1	52.4

Figure 1: Representation of the respondents (councillors in 2007 survey) in terms of gender

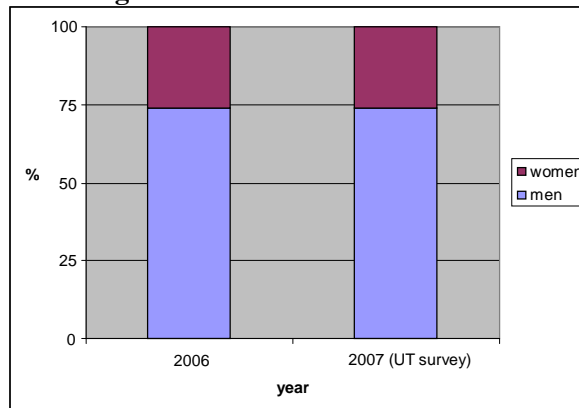


Figure 2: Representation of the respondents (councillors in 2007 survey) in terms of political party

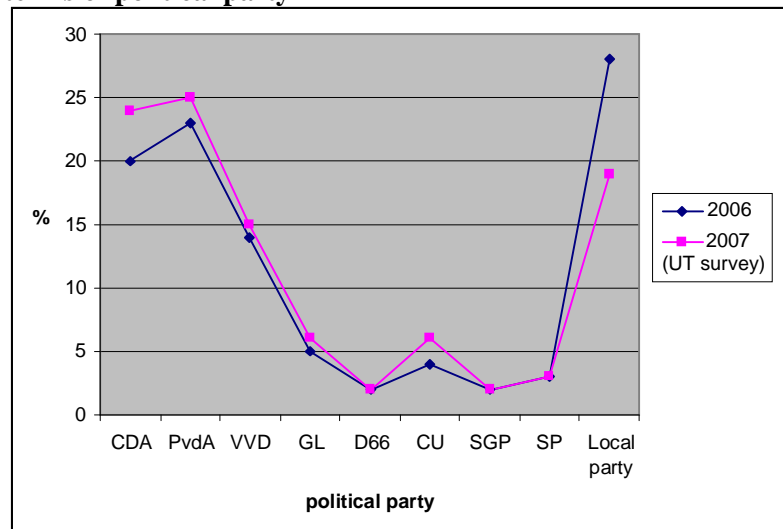


Figure 3: Representation of the respondents (council clerks in 2007 survey) in terms of municipal size

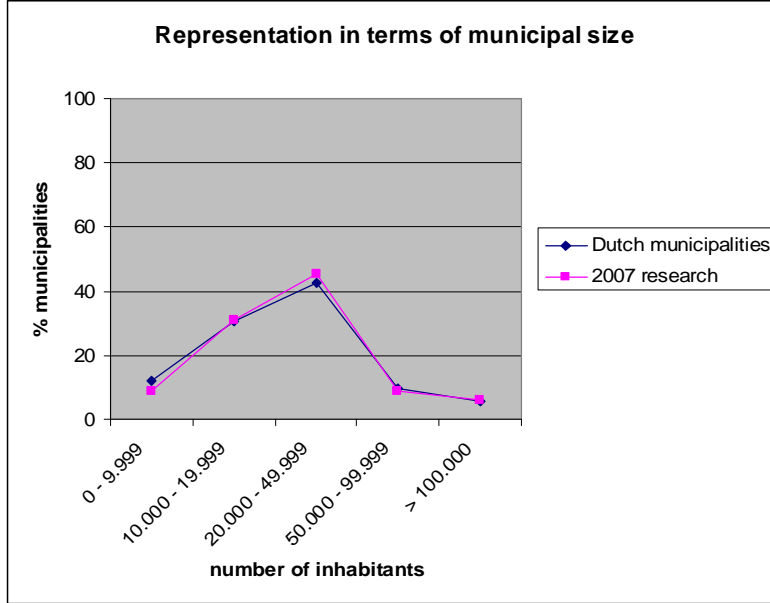
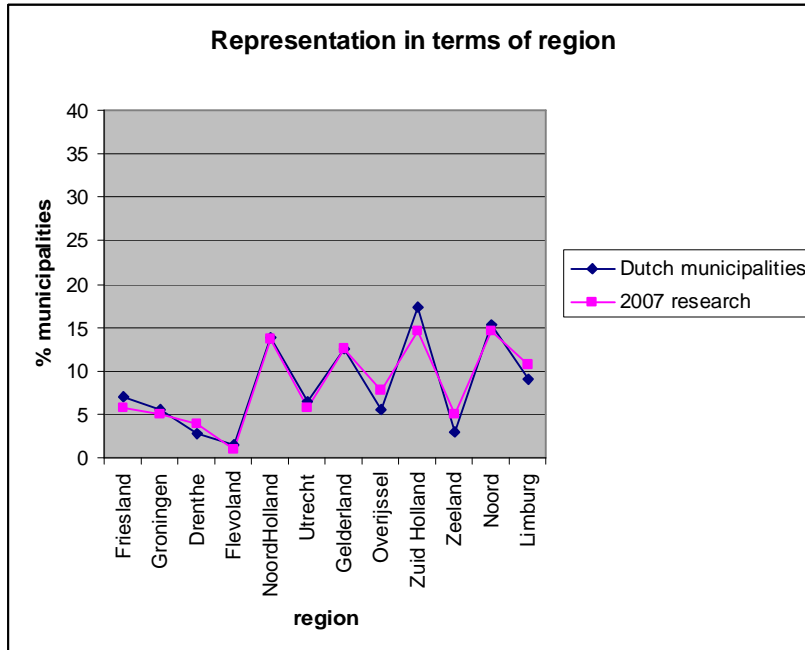


Figure 4: Representation of the respondents (council clerks in 2007 survey) in terms of region



Appendix C Factor Analyses

1. Implementation of LGA 2002

Figure 1: Implementation of LGA 2002 measured by three different components

Component	Variables
1. Financial accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jaartal58: Decree on basis of financial policy • Jaartal60: Decree on external control ... • Jaartal62: Decree on regular effectiveness ...
2. Codes of conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jaartal50: Code of Conduct for councillors • Jaartal52: Code of Conduct for aldermen • Jaartal54: Code of Conduct for mayor
3. Empowerment council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jaartal38: Introduction of a Court of Audit • Jaartal40: Introduction of a Program Budget • Jaartal42: Introduction of a Council Clerk • Jaartal44: Introduction of a Citizens Report • Jaartal46: Regulation for council meetings • Jaartal56: Decree on assistance of civil servants

Rotated Component Matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
jaartal38	,024	-,104	,755
jaartal40	,073	-,004	,659
jaartal42	,418	,233	,578
jaartal44	,431	,356	,511
jaartal46	,370	,374	,445
jaartal50	,129	,968	,001
jaartal52	,131	,962	,106
jaartal54	,129	,919	,085
jaartal56	,254	,310	,454
jaartal58	,925	,166	,186
jaartal60	,940	,133	,172
jaartal62	,929	,083	,133

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

2. *Attitude towards LGA 2002***Figure 2: Attitude towards LGA 2002 measured by three different components**

Component	Variables
1. Strengthening position council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item5: Administrative support of the council by a council clerk • Item6: Introduction of an independent Court of Audit • Item7: Introduction of a program budget
2. Demarcation of personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item1: Aldermen do not participate in party group meetings • Item2: Aldermen no longer chair council committee meetings • Item3: Aldermen are no longer part of council committees
3. Division of Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item4: Who should govern the board or the municipality? • Item8: Delegation of governing authorities of the council to the BMA

Rotated Component Matrix

	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
item1	,117	,656	-,121
item2	,196	,753	,112
item3	,076	,816	,160
item4	,117	,103	,764
item5	,759	,192	,043
item6	,805	,180	,009
item7	,794	,039	,143
item8	,029	-,012	,811

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Appendix D Descriptive Analyses

Table 1: Subjective norm from citizens and fellow local councillors (in %)

Activity	Not important (0)	1	2	3	Very important (4)	N	x	sd
Citizens:								
Listening	0,1	1,2	6,3	38,6	53,8	1287	3.45	0.676
Explaining	0,2	7,5	23,9	48,8	19,5	1286	2.80	0.847
Steering	0,6	9,2	28,2	44,4	17,6	1286	2.69	0.887
Controlling	1,2	8,9	20,8	41,8	27,3	1285	2.85	0.961
Councillors:								
Listening	0,3	4,1	12,9	50,6	32,1	1279	3.10	0.795
Explaining	0,9	11,6	28,8	46,0	12,8	1278	2.58	0.884
Steering	0,5	5,4	20,4	50,1	23,5	1277	2.91	0.835
Controlling	0,9	4,7	15,4	48,9	30,0	1277	3.02	0.852

Scale 0-4 (not important – very important)

Table 2: Perceived behavioural control (in %)

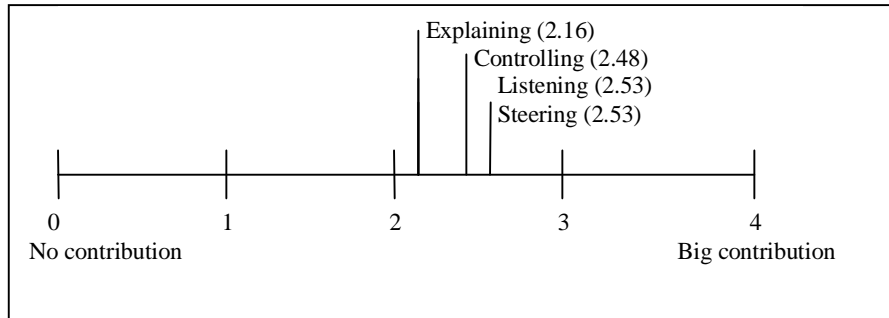
Activity	Very insufficient (0)	1	2	Very sufficient (3)	N	x	sd
Listening	1,2	24,9	63,3	10,6	1287	1.83	0.612
Explaining	2,6	40,5	50,1	6,8	1285	1.61	0.653
Steering	1,4	23,9	63,5	11,2	1284	1.85	0.619
Controlling	3,1	36,6	52,5	7,7	1283	1.65	0.667

Scale 0-3 (very insufficient – very sufficient)

Table 3: External factors

	Speed of implementation LGA	Perceived executive dominance	Sense of legitimacy crisis	Attitude towards LGA 2002	Experience under the old regime	Experience
X	2003,4	69	2,9	3	0,4	6,1
Sd.	1	8	1,8	0,5	0,5	6,1
Min.	2000,7	30	-2,5	0,6	0	1
Max.	2007,5	83,3	8,6	4	1	45
N	899	920	896	1287	1172	1172

Figure 1: Behaviour in terms of contribution regarding four types of activities



Appendix E Regression models

LEGENDA

V182: contribution to listening activities
V184: contribution to explaining activities
V180: contribution to steering activities
V181: contribution to controlling activities

V70: attitude towards listening activities
V72: attitude towards explaining activities
V68: attitude towards steering activities
V69: attitude towards controlling activities

V1017: subjective norms of citizens towards listening activities
V1018: subjective norms of citizens towards explaining activities
V1019: subjective norms of citizens towards steering activities
V1020: subjective norms of citizens towards controlling activities

V1021: subjective norms of councillors towards listening activities
V1022: subjective norms of councillors towards explaining activities
V1023: subjective norms of councillors towards steering activities
V1024: subjective norms of councillors towards controlling activities

V1001: perceived behavioural control regarding listening activities
V1002: perceived behavioural control regarding explaining activities
V1003: perceived behavioural control regarding steering activities
V1004: perceived behavioural control regarding controlling activities

Impl: speed of implementing the LGA 2002

Exp: experience of the councillor

Expold: experience of the councillor in the old regime

Exdom: executive dominance of the board

Legcr: sense of legitimacy crisis

AtLGA: attitude towards the LGA 2002

Ppco: position of the councillor's political party (opposition or coalition)

Pppln: type of the councillor's political party (local or national party)

Iauss: corrected interaction effect of pbc on the a-b relation for explaining activities

Isncies: corrected interaction effect of pbc on the sn citizens–b relation for explaining activities

Isncocs: corrected interaction effect of pbc on the sn councillors–b relation for controlling activities

MODEL 1: 'listening activities'

LISREL Estimates (Maximum Likelihood)

$$v182 = 0.32*v70 + 0.19*v1017 + 0.00089*v1021 - 0.0100*ppco + 0.098*ppln, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.81, R^2 = 0.19$$

(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.033)
11.53	6.96	0.033	-0.36	3.46	24.32

$$v70 = 0.12*v1017 + 0.0042*v1021 - 0.0084*impl + 0.011*exdom - 0.058*legcr + 0.016*expold + 0.028*AtLGA + 0.049*ppco + 0.18*ppln, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.92, R^2 = 0.078$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.038)
8.63	0.29	-0.29	0.39	-2.06	0.55	0.98	1.62	6.10	24.23

$$v1017 = 0.12*v70 + 0.12*v1021, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.91, R^2 = 0.085$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.038)
8.63	8.23	24.14

$$v1021 = 0.0042*v70 + 0.12*v1017 + 0.0038*impl - 0.0044*exdom + 0.035*legcr, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.96, R^2 = 0.043$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.039)
0.29	8.23	0.13	-0.15	1.22	24.24

MODEL 2: 'explaining activities'

LISREL Estimates (Maximum Likelihood)

$$v184 = 0.26*v72 + 0.21*v1002 + 0.24*v1018 + 0.068*v1022 - 0.013*iauss + 0.098*isncies + 0.027*ppco + 0.11*ppln, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.69, R^2 = 0.30$$

(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.028)
9.59	8.45	8.85	2.63	-0.49	3.67	1.05	4.40	24.31

$$v72 = 0.038*v1002 + 0.19*v1018 + 0.039*v1022 + 0.046*impl + 0.085*exdom + 0.0061*legcr - 0.0068*expold + 0.043*AtLGA + 0.11*ppco + 0.11*ppln, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.84, R^2 = 0.15$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.035)
2.68	13.75	2.74	1.65	3.07	0.22	-0.25	1.58	3.84	3.97	24.05

$$v1018 = 0.19*v72 + 0.038*v1002 + 0.15*v1022, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.81, R^2 = 0.18$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.034)
13.75	2.68	10.47	23.92

$$v1022 = 0.039*v72 + 0.069*v1002 + 0.15*v1018 + 0.053*impl - 0.0083*exdom + 0.028*legcr, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.90, R^2 = 0.10$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.037)
2.74	4.82	10.47	1.88	-0.29	1.01	24.11

$$v1002 = 0.038*v72 + 0.038*v1018 + 0.069*v1022 - 0.0018*impl + 0.088*exp, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.96, R^2 = 0.039$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.040)
2.68	2.68	4.82	-0.062	3.08	24.25

MODEL 3: 'steering activities'

LISREL Estimates (Maximum Likelihood)

$$v180 = 0.18*v68 + 0.14*v1019 + 0.071*v1023 + 0.21*ppco + 0.0078*ppln, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.88, R^2 = 0.12$$

(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.036)
6.57	5.03	2.52	7.16	0.27	24.28

$$v68 = 0.064*v1019 + 0.059*v1023 + 0.018*impl + 0.073*exdom - 0.028*legcr + 0.058*expold + 0.094*AtLGA + 0.017*ppco - 0.0031*ppln, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.95, R^2 = 0.044$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.039)
4.41	4.11	0.62	2.46	-0.97	2.01	3.24	0.57	-0.10	24.23

$$v1019 = 0.064*v68 + 0.11*v1023, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.95, R^2 = 0.051$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.039)
4.41	7.65	24.18

$$v1023 = 0.059*v68 + 0.11*v1019 + 0.036*impl + 0.038*exdom - 0.0040*legcr, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.95, R^2 = 0.052$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.039)
4.11	7.65	1.25	1.28	-0.14	24.18

MODEL 4: 'controlling activities'

LISREL Estimates (Maximum Likelihood)

$$v181 = 0.20*v69 + 0.20*v1004 + 0.13*v1020 + 0.034*v1024 + 0.070*isncocs + 0.043*ppco + 0.059*ppln, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.87, R^2 = 0.13$$

(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.036)
7.20	7.29	4.50	1.20	2.58	1.47	2.03	24.28

$$v69 = 0.0021*v1004 + 0.13*v1020 + 0.025*v1024 + 0.035*impl + 0.072*exdom + 0.0016*legcr - 0.017*expold + 0.078*AtLGA - 0.098*ppco + 0.0073*ppln, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.92, R^2 = 0.076$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.038)
0.15	8.92	1.74	1.21	2.47	0.056	-0.61	2.74	-3.26	0.24	24.17

$$v1020 = 0.13*v69 + 0.029*v1004 + 0.11*v1024, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.91, R^2 = 0.090$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.038)
8.92	1.98	7.75	24.09

$$v1024 = 0.025*v69 + 0.064*v1004 + 0.11*v1020 + 0.036*impl + 0.032*exdom + 0.031*legcr, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.94, R^2 = 0.058$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.039)
1.74	4.43	7.75	1.24	1.10	1.07	24.17

$$v1004 = 0.0021*v69 + 0.029*v1020 + 0.064*v1024 + 0.029*impl + 0.062*exp, \text{Errorvar.} = 0.98, R^2 = 0.022$$

(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.040)
0.15	1.98	4.43	0.99	2.14	24.25

Samenvatting

Dit onderzoek richt zich op de effecten van institutionele veranderingen voor de democratische kwaliteit van het lokaal bestuur. Meer specifiek gaat dit onderzoek over de effecten van de *Wet Dualisering Gemeentebestuur* voor gemeente in Nederland. In 2002 is deze wet in Nederland van kracht geworden. De vraag die centraal staat is of wijzigingen in de institutionele structuur van de lokale overheid bijdragen aan cultuur- en gedragsverandering binnen de lokale overheid. De literatuur plaats bij deze veronderstelling kritische kanttekeningen, één van de opmerkingen is dat het enige tijd kan duren voordat effecten van institutionele veranderingen zichtbaar worden (Scharpf 1986; Putnam et al 1993; Genschel 1997). Meer specifiek richt dit onderzoek zich op de vraag of de Wet Dualisering heeft bijgedragen aan een verbetering van het democratisch functioneren van de Nederlandse gemeenten? In dit proefschrift ligt de focus daarbij op de rol van de gemeenteraad.

De onderzoeksvraag luidt:

Wat zijn de democratische effecten van de Wet Dualisering Gemeentebestuur 2002 en hoe kunnen deze effecten worden verklaard?

Om deze onderzoeksvraag te kunnen beantwoorden wordt in hoofdstuk 2 allereerst de context van de wetswijziging uiteen gezet. Verschillende ontwikkelingen (zoals de emancipatie van burgers, een verandering in participatie kanalen en de rol van politieke partijen, een groei in verantwoordelijkheden voor de lokale overheid, professionalisering, de verschuiving van 'government naar governance', en de machtsverschuiving van raad naar college), veroorzaken problemen met het functioneren van de lokale democratie. Een belangrijke oorzaak ligt daarbij in het oude monistische systeem, waarin zowel wetgevend als bestuurlijk het primaat ligt bij de gemeenteraad. Door dit primaat zijn raadsleden overbelast en hebben ze onvoldoende tijd en aandacht voor de burgers. Bovendien zijn ze onvoldoende in staat om het college van Burgemeester en Wethouders (B&W) te controleren, dat in de praktijk de besluitvorming blijkt te domineren (collegedominantie).

De oplossing wordt gezocht in een dualistisch systeem gebaseerd op nevenschikking, waarbij de raad en het college naast elkaar dienen te functioneren met elk hun eigen taken en bevoegdheden. Hierbij bestuurt het college, terwijl de raad de algemene kaders stelt en daarnaast het college controleert. Het belangrijkste verschil met het oude systeem is wellicht dat wethouders niet langer tevens lid zijn van de raad, waardoor de raad onafhankelijker kan functioneren. De Wet Dualisering Gemeentebestuur bevat verschillende typen van formele regels: regels betreffende positie, formele bevoegdheden en taakondersteuning. Sommige van deze regels werden direct in 2002 van kracht, andere regels konden door de gemeente op een later moment worden geïmplementeerd. Naast verandering van de formele regels is er ook een programma dat de hervorming ondersteunt: de Vernieuwingsimpuls. Dit programma bevat hulpmiddelen waarmee gemeenten de overgang naar de nieuwe verhoudingen kunnen vormgeven. Met de Wet Dualisering wordt getracht verschillende doelen te bereiken. Een algemeen doel is het verbeteren van de lokale democratie. Meer specifieke doelen zijn de verbetering van de responsiviteit en verantwoording. Door de institutionele structuur van de lokale overheid te veranderen, dient er een culturele verandering plaats te vinden, die weer moet leiden tot een gedragsverandering in de gemeenten. Opvallend is dat de meeste nieuwe maatregelen in de Wet Dualisering 2002 zijn gericht op de interne relatie tussen de raad en het college (verantwoording). Hiermee dient met name de collegedominantie te worden doorbroken. De externe relatie tussen burgers en raad (responsiviteit) wordt door de te nemen maatregelen slechts indirect beïnvloed: doordat raadsleden niet meer hoeven te besturen worden zij geacht meer tijd beschikbaar te krijgen die zij kunnen besteden aan het intensiveren van hun contacten met burgers.

In hoofdstuk 3 worden de centrale concepten responsiviteit en verantwoording nader uitgelegd in de context van de Nederlandse lokale representatieve democratie. In de lokale representatieve democratie vormen burgers het belangrijkste element, hierna volgt de gemeenteraad als volksvertegenwoordigend orgaan en hoofd van de gemeente. Onder de regie van de raad functioneert het College van B&W als uitvoerende macht, geassisteerd door het ambtelijk apparaat. De raad heeft hiermee zowel een externe als een interne rol. De externe of volksvertegenwoordigende rol verwijst naar de relatie tussen de raad en burgers. De democratische kwaliteit van deze

relatie wordt bepaald door de inspanningen die raadsleden zich getroosten om zich responsief naar burgers op te stellen. De interne rol verwijst naar de relatie tussen de raad en het college van B&W. De democratische kwaliteit van deze relatie wordt bepaald door de activiteiten die raadsleden ondernemen om het college tot verantwoording te roepen over het door hen gevoerde bestuur. Responsiviteit impliceert twee typen activiteiten: ‘het luisteren naar burgers en het vertalen van de wensen en belangen van burgers in het publieke debat’ en ‘het uitleggen van beleidsbeslissingen aan burgers’. Verantwoording impliceert eveneens twee typen van activiteiten: ‘het formuleren van beleidsrichtlijnen en principes om het college aan te sturen’ en ‘het controleren van het college’. In de ‘dualiseringsliteratuur’ wordt verwezen naar deze activiteiten met de termen kaderstelling en controle.

In hoofdstuk 4 wordt het theoretisch kader van het onderzoek geëxpliciteerd. Om de verwachting van de hervormers te kunnen testen (verandering institutionele structuur \rightarrow verandering cultuur \rightarrow collectieve gedragsverandering: verbetering van responsiviteit en verantwoording), dient er gekeken te worden naar de attitudes en gedragingen van individuele raadsleden. Wij gaan er daarbij van uit dat het gedrag van raadsleden zowel wordt beïnvloed door de ‘logic of consequences’ (economisch model) als door de ‘logic of appropriateness’ (sociologisch model). Het gaat niet alleen om de eigen belangen en rolperceptie van het raadslid, maar de omgeving en de rolverwachtingen van anderen zijn ook van belang. Om deze reden zijn het ‘Resourceful Evaluatieve Maximising’ model en de theorie van gepland gedrag (Theory of Planned Behavior: TPB) bruikbare gedragsmodellen om het gedrag van raadsleden te kunnen verklaren. In dit model hangt de vraag of een raadslid zich actief inzet met het oog op responsiviteit en verantwoording af van zijn attitude, subjectieve norm van relevante anderen en zijn beeld van het eigen vermogen tot gedragscontrole.

Veranderingen in de attitudes en gedrag van raadsleden kunnen plaatsvinden door twee veranderingsmechanismen: socialisering en selectie. Diverse factoren beïnvloeden via deze mechanismen mogelijke gedragsveranderingen bij raadsleden. Zo heeft de snelheid waarmee en de mate waarin de Wet Dualisering is geïmplementeerd in gemeenten mogelijk effect op de attitudes, subjectieve normen en waargenomen gedragscontrole omdat er sprake is van een socialiseringsmechanisme. De wet en de Vernieuwingsimpuls

gaan uit van bepaalde normatieve rolverwachtingen die raadsleden, zo hoopt men, zich na verloop van tijd eigen zullen maken. Naast de snelheid van implementatie zijn er ook andere externe variabelen die mogelijk het socialiseringsproces (en de gedragscomponenten) beïnvloeden: de ervaring van het raadslid, de attitude naar de Wet Dualisering in het algemeen. Verder speelt de door raadsleden gevoelde noodzaak (sense of urgency) betreffende de hervormingen een rol. Naarmate raadsleden de problemen die de wet wil aanpakken (de collegedominantie en een legitimiteitscrisis) urgenter achten, zal hun bereidheid tot gedragsverandering groter zijn.

Tenslotte is er mogelijk sprake van een selectiemechanisme. Enerzijds worden nieuwe raadsleden gerekruteerd die qua rolopvatting en competenties goed passen bij de nieuwe rol die van raadsleden wordt verwacht in de duale verhoudingen. Anderzijds maken zittende raadsleden die zich goed hebben aangepast aan de nieuwe structuur meer kans om door selectiecommissies op een verkiesbare plaats te worden gezet. Daarbij kan ook sprake zijn van zelfselectie door kandidaten en raadsleden (exit).

Na deze theoretische verkenning waren we in staat om de algemene onderzoeksvraag in vijf sub-vragen uiteen te leggen:

1. Zijn de institutionele veranderingen van de Wet Dualisering Gemeentebestuur geïmplementeerd in Nederlandse gemeenten?
2. Leveren raadsleden na de dualisering een grotere bijdrage aan responsiviteit en verantwoording (in termen van hun individuele attitudes en gedrag)?
3. Zijn de doelen van de institutionele hervorming behaald: een verbeterde responsiviteit en verantwoording (in termen van attitude en gedrag), en een afgenomen dominantie van het college?
4. Zijn de veranderingen in attitudes en het gedrag van raadsleden beïnvloed door institutionele (her)socialisatie en selectieve rekrutering en exit?
5. Hoe kunnen we variaties in het gedrag van raadsleden in 2007 verklaren aan de hand van hun attitudes, subjectieve normen, waargenomen gedragscontrole en verschillende externe variabelen (de implementatie van de Wet Dualisering Gemeentebestuur, de ervaring van raadsleden, de houding van raadsleden ten opzichte van de dualisering, en de door

de raad gepercipieerde collegedominantie en gevoel van legitimiteitscrisis)?

In hoofdstuk 5 staat de methode van onderzoek centraal. Om de verwachtingen betreffende de invloed van de Wet Dualisering op het gedrag van raadsleden te kunnen testen wordt gebruik gemaakt van herhaalde surveys bij gemengde panels. In 1999 is een voormeting uitgevoerd, in 2007 een nameting. In 1999 is gebruik gemaakt van een steekproef van 150 gemeenten, waarin alle raadsleden voor het onderzoek zijn benaderd (respons van 61%). In 2007 voerde de Universiteit Twente een tweede survey uit in dezelfde gemeenten (respons van 41%). Om de mate van implementatie van de Wet Dualisering te kunnen meten is er een aanvullend onderzoek uitgevoerd onder de griffiers van deze gemeenten (respons van 76%). Er is verder gebruik gemaakt van andere relevante onderzoeken en data-sets (triangulatie methode). Om de onderzoeksvragen te kunnen beantwoorden worden verschillende analysemethoden gebruikt. De onderzoeksvragen betreffende de veranderingen in attitudes, gedrag en gepercipieerd collegedominantie (als gevolg van de Wet Dualisering) zijn beantwoord aan de hand van diachronische data. De onderzoeksvraag over de invloed van het socialisering- en selectie mechanisme op attitude en gedragsveranderingen van raadsleden is getoetst door de gemiddelde waarden van verschillende cohorten van raadsleden te vergelijken. Het theoretische gedragsmodel (vijfde onderzoeksvraag) is getoetst door middel van regressieanalyses (zowel Ordinary Least Squares als Maximum Likelihood Estimation via LISREL). Omdat een deel van de afgeleide hypothesen interactie-effecten bevatten is gewerkt met zogenaamde conditionele regressiemodellen. In hoofdstuk 6 zijn de onderzoeksvariabelen geoperationaliseerd.

Het empirische deel van het onderzoek valt uiteen in twee delen. Enerzijds dient er gekeken te worden naar de implementatie van de dualisering en veranderingen in de tijd (beschrijving van mogelijke effecten). Dit deel betreft de beantwoording van de eerste vier onderzoeksvragen. Anderzijds is er aandacht voor causale relaties en het testen van het in hoofdstuk 4 geformuleerde theoretisch model: hoe zijn variaties in het gedrag van raadsleden in 2007 te verklaren aan de hand van de dualisering en andere

factoren? (Onderzoeksvraag 5). In hoofdstuk 7 wordt ingegaan op de eerste vier onderzoeksvragen, terwijl in hoofdstuk 8 vraag 5 aan de orde komt.

Met betrekking tot de eerste onderzoeksvraag kunnen we concluderen dat in 2007 de meeste formele regels van de Wet Dualisering bij gemeenten blijken te zijn geïmplementeerd. Dit betekent niet dat alle regels op één en hetzelfde moment zijn ingevoerd. De exacte invoeringsdata van de formele regels verschillen per gemeente. Kleine gemeenten en heringedeelde gemeenten hebben over het algemeen meer tijd nodig voor de implementatie.

Met betrekking tot de onderzoeksvragen 2 tot en met 4 blijkt dat raadsleden na de dualisering een responsieve opstelling en het bewerkstelligen van verantwoording belangrijker zijn gaan vinden. Er is hierbij sprake van een selectieve attitudeverandering: raadsleden vinden met name hun rol in het bewerkstelligen van verantwoording door het college belangrijker. Eenzelfde verandering vinden we op het gemeentelijke (collectieve) niveau. De verandering in attitude lijkt voor een deel het gevolg te zijn van het selectiemechanisme. Het is onduidelijk of er daarnaast sprake is van een socialisatie-effect. Er lijkt geen gedragsverandering te zijn op zowel het individuele als collectieve niveau: raadsleden besteden ongeveer dezelfde hoeveelheid tijd aan hun werk, en de tijd (in percentages) die ze besteden aan interne activiteiten blijft min of meer gelijk. Met andere woorden: raadsleden (of raden) zijn niet meer tijd gaan besteden aan hun externe activiteiten.

Naast naar attitude en gedragsveranderingen is er ook gekeken naar veranderingen in de dominantie van het college. Doel van de dualisering is immers om de invloed van het college in raadszaken te verminderen. Het blijkt dat in 2007 het college nog steeds dominant is bij de bepaling van de inhoud van een raadsbesluit. Echter, die dominantie is aanzienlijk kleiner dan in 1999. Tevens lijkt het college minder invloed te hebben bij de bepaling van de raadsagenda.

Met betrekking tot de beantwoording van vraag 5 heeft de 'Theory of Planned Behaviour' gefungeerd als analytisch kader. Deze theorie, die haar oorsprong vindt in de psychologie, maar inmiddels is toegepast en getoetst op vele andere gebieden, heeft ook in dit onderzoek zijn waarde bewezen. Het blijkt dat de attitude en subjectieve norm van raadsleden inderdaad een goede voorspeller

zijn van hun gedrag (in termen van responsiviteit en verantwoordingsactiviteiten). De attitude van een raadslid is hierbij een betere voorspeller dan de rolverwachtingen (normen) van burgers en andere collega raadsleden. Verder toont het onderzoek aan dat raadsleden meer rekening houden met de rolverwachtingen van burgers dan met de rolverwachtingen van hun collega's in de raad. De verwachting dat het beeld van het eigen vermogen tot gedragscontrole het effect van attitudes en normen op het gedrag zouden versterken (een conditioneel effect) werd slechts incidenteel bevestigd. Het deel van het theoretisch model dat betrekking heeft op deze kernvariabelen biedt een redelijk inzicht in de achtergronden van het gedrag van raadsleden.

In het verklaringsmodel is echter niet alleen gekeken naar de kernvariabelen (attituden, sociale normen en beeld eigen gedragscontrole) uit de 'Theory of Planned Behaviour'. Er is ook bezien hoe deze kernvariabelen worden beïnvloed door een aantal externe variabelen. Dit deel van het verklaringsmodel blijkt veel minder verklaringskrachtig. We vatten hier de belangrijkste resultaten van de toetsing samen. Bij de toetsing van het model blijkt in de eerste plaats dat de snelheid waarmee de Wet Dualisering is ingevoerd geen invloed heeft op de drie kernvariabelen. Dit betekent ook dat er geen indirecte invloed van deze factor is op het gedrag van raadsleden. Ook is gekeken naar de vraag of verschillen in de (gepercipieerde) urgentie van problemen als collegedominantie en een lage verkiezingsopkomst van invloed zijn op de houdingen van raadsleden. Het blijkt dat dit deels het geval is. De waargenomen dominantie van het college in raadszaken verklaart (gedeeltelijk) de attitude ten opzichte van responsiviteit en verantwoordingsactiviteiten. Daling van opkomst bij gemeenteraadsverkiezingen (als indicatie voor een legitimiteitsprobleem) heeft evenwel niet het verwachte effect op de kernvariabelen.

Dit onderzoek brengt ons tot twee hoofdconclusies. Ten eerste zijn er na de invoering van de Wet Dualisering Gemeentebestuur wel degelijk veranderingen te zien: raadsleden vinden hun responsiviteit- en verantwoordingsactiviteiten belangrijker en het college wordt als minder dominant gezien. Dit toont aan dat de opmerking 'institutionele hervormingen hebben veel tijd nodig alvorens effecten zichtbaar zijn' (zie Scharpf 1986; Genschel 1997), niet altijd blijkt op te gaan. Daarmee laat het onderzoek tegelijkertijd ook zien dat de Dualisering niet alleen 'kommer en kwel' is, zoals veelvuldig in discussies in bladen als Binnenlands Bestuur naar voren komt. Mogelijke verklaringen waarom er geen

gedragsveranderingen in termen van tijdsbesteding zichtbaar zijn worden besproken in hoofdstuk 9.

Een tweede conclusie is dat het theoretisch model, waarin de snelheid van invoering van de Wet dualisering de attitude en het gedrag van raadsleden verklaart, niet in zijn geheel stand houdt. Weliswaar blijken attitude en subjectieve norm goede voorspellers te zijn van het gedrag van raadsleden, maar de attitude en subjectieve norm laten zich slecht verklaren door de externe factoren. De mate van dualisering, door ons geoperationaliseerd als 'snelheid' of te wel 'duur socialisatie', heeft geen invloed op de sterkte van de attitudes van raadsleden. In hoofdstuk 9 bediscussiëren we mogelijke oorzaken van deze bevinding. Eén mogelijke verklaring is dat socialisering er niet veel toe lijkt te doen, maar selectie wel (zie hoofdstuk 7). Hierdoor is het niet verwonderlijk dat we geen relatie met roloriëntaties vinden wanneer we de implementatie van de dualisering in termen van snelheid meten.

Nawoord

Na het atheneum in Hengelo aan de Bataafse Kamp te hebben afgerond ben ik in 2001 aan mijn studie Bestuurskunde bij de Universiteit Twente in Enschede begonnen. Ik koos toen bewust voor 'breed'. Toch heb ik in 2005 de keuze gemaakt om juist de diepte in te gaan door te gaan promoveren bij de vakgroep Politicologie en Onderzoeksmethoden aan de Universiteit Twente. Dit is een rijke ervaring gebleken, waarbij ik geleerd heb dat met hard werken en logisch nadenken alles mogelijk is. Zoals dat in het Engels zo mooi klinkt 'the sky is the limit!'

In september 2005 ben ik aan mijn onderzoek over de Wet Dualisering Gemeentebestuur begonnen. Vanaf dag één stonden mijn promotor Bas Denters en (assistent-) promotor Pieter-Jan Klok voor mij klaar. Eerst om me op weg te helpen, later om bij te sturen en waar nodig af te remmen (want ik had nogal eens de neiging om er als een sneltrein vandoor te gaan...). Ik ben jullie enorm dankbaar voor de waardevolle adviezen: van verstrekkend commentaar over de hoofdlijnen in mijn onderzoek, tot de puntjes op de i over bijvoorbeeld 'past and present tense'. Ook wil ik jullie graag bedanken voor de kansen die jullie mij hebben gegeven om me verder te ontwikkelen: van deelname in een internationaal project, tot het samen schrijven van artikelen. Ik had me geen betere begeleiders kunnen wensen!

Een andere belangrijke motor achter mijn promotie-onderzoek zijn mijn ouders geweest. Als mijn hoofd weer eens overliep van mijn onderzoek dan kon ik bij hen een rustpunt vinden. Mijn vader wil ik graag bedanken voor zijn continue interesse en luisterend oor. Van hem heb ik geleerd dat als je iets wilt bereiken je het gewoon moet doen. Mijn moeder wil ik bedanken voor de praktische hulp (bijvoorbeeld het vullen van enveloppen en het checken van referenties), maar bovenal voor het feit dat zij mij de ware betekenis van doorzettingsvermogen heeft laten zien.

Speciale dank gaat ook uit naar Peter Geurts voor zijn hulp bij het toetsen van mijn model in Lisrel, Els Gellevij voor het invoeren van de enquêtes in SPSS, en Janine van der Woude voor alle administratieve ondersteuning.

Tot slot bedank ik graag al mijn collega's bij POLMT. Fijn dat jullie altijd bereid waren om vragen te beantwoorden, stukken te lezen en zo nodig tips te geven. Ik kijk met genoegen terug op de afgelopen vier jaar en dat heeft ook zeker te maken met de prettige werksfeer! Ik prijs mezelf gelukkig dat ik deze bijzondere ervaring heb mogen delen met mijn mede-aio's: Bengü, Jarno, Mijke, Gideon en Juul. Bedankt voor jullie gezelligheid!

Hengelo, september 2009

