



Who gets the say in the coalition agreement?

Local programs and municipal coalition agreements

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Nearly all research into coalition negotiations focuses on the national level. This study applies existing insights about national coalition negotiations to the local context in the Netherlands. The central question is: to what extent and under what conditions are parties negotiating to form a coalition government able to get policy and office pay-offs? We expect that larger parties will see more of their positions and priorities in the local council agreement than smaller parties and get more seats in the local executive. After all, larger parties have more bargaining power.

In the analyses for this paper, we look at more than one thousand parties negotiating in more than 300 municipalities and specifically, we look at more than 1,000 local election manifestos of local parties and branches of national parties that were in coalitions and more than 300 local coalition agreements. We apply an automated, quantitative "bag-of-words" approach to these texts. We estimate the policy positions of these texts using word scores and the attention they devote to issues using Latent Dirichlet Allocation. We find strong evidence that proportionality is the norm in Dutch local coalition agreements.

More information: www.uibk.ac.at/politikwissenschaft

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