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The economic effects of municipal amalgamation and intermunicipal cooperation

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Propositions with the dissertation

The economic effects of municipal amalgamation and intermunicipal cooperation

Bieuwe Geertsema

- 1. Policymakers have no idea what the optimal size of a local government is. (chapter 1)
- 2. Despite this, they almost always appear to assume that if any change is desirable, it should be always be scaling up of municipalities and never scaling down. (chapter 1)
- The bottom up approach applied to amalgamations in the Netherlands has rendered an ideal testing ground for economic studies. (chapter 2)
- 4. Given local budget setting practices it is incomprehensible that this thesis is one of the few works in the field applying a dynamic model. (chapter 2)
- Local government finances in the Netherlands are not in any robust, significant way affected by amalgamations. (chapter 2)
- More surprisingly, there is no evidence for any positive amalgamation effects on Dutch local government efficiency either. (chapter 3)
- Due to limited monitoring by local governments, intermunicipal organizations are insufficiently urged to operate efficiently. (chapter 4)
- 8. Expectations of efficiency gains from either municipal amalgamation or intermunicipal cooperation should be abandoned or at least moderated severely. (this thesis)
- 9. Policymakers do not want to hear all this.
- 10. The search for the optimal size of local governments is both an economist's dream and nightmare.
- 11. The most important discoveries made during the writing of a thesis, are the ones about oneself.