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Steering a course between friends and foes. Why bureaucrats interact with interest groups.

Poppelaars, C.H.J.M.

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Steering a Course between Friends and Foes

Steering a Course between Friends and Foes

Why bureaucrats interact with interest groups

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Promotor: Prof. dr. D.L. Lowery

Overige leden: Prof. dr. F.R Baumgartner
(Pennsylvania State University and CEVIPOF Science Po)
Prof. dr. P. 't Hart
(Australian National University and Universiteit Utrecht)
Prof. dr. B. Steunenberg
Dr. A. Timmermans

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Uitgeverij Eburon
Postbus 2867
2601 CW Delft
tel.: 015-2131484 / fax: 015-2146888
info@eburon.nl / www.eburon.nl

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Preface

This dissertation partially resulted from my experiences while working for the parliamentary committee on Dutch immigrant integration policy. National and local civil servants appeared to have similar motives for cooperating with even the smallest immigrant organisations, although their practices were at odds with the political ideology of that time. In trying to square the circle between these bureaucratic motives and the reigning political ideology, I became more generally interested in bureaucratic motives for working with interest groups. This ongoing challenge to systematically explain variations in bureaucracy-interest group relations made me persist until this dissertation was finished.

Several years lie in between that initial moment of sheer fascination and the final proofs of this book. With the advantage of hindsight, I would compare these intermediate years to what evolutionary biology calls ‘punctuated equilibrium’. In the agenda-setting literature, this concept explains variation in political attention as a result of sudden turmoil. Every now and then in a dissertation project, there is indeed change and a leap forward. Contrary to what punctuated equilibrium theory predicts, however, real change does not occur in the short periods of turmoil. Real change in doing a PhD occurs in the periods of stability, because they confront you with your intellectual and personal abilities far more than the euphoria a leap forward produces.

The question is thus how to survive these, sometimes uncomfortable, stable periods? The answer is simple. I couldn’t have lived through them without the support of many people. First of all, I would like to thank the civil servants and the representatives of the interest groups who participated in this study. This research would not have been possible without them, and I hope I generated some valuable insights in return.

My promotor, David Lowery, has been an invaluable supervisor in many ways. I have benefited from his suggestions and ideas during this research project and his constructive feedback on earlier versions of the manuscript. More generally, his advice showed me how an academic could combine both analytical rigour and tolerance for the various traditions in doing scientific research.

Many other people were willing to help during the various stages of this dissertation project. Frits van der Meer and Trui Steen offered useful feedback on early drafts of the manuscript. Nanette Kistemaker’s assistance in collecting the data for the Dutch interest group survey was particularly helpful, and without Martin Gagner, the Swedish case would have been impossible. Marcel Hanegraaff’s good sense of humour and enthusiasm stimulated me to pursue a more elaborate data-collection strategy and made it much more enjoyable at the same time. Constructive feedback from the individual members of the PhD committee helped to improve the manuscript in significant ways. And, last but not least, I’m very grateful for Anne Messer’s meticulous and stimulating editing of the final manuscript.

Several colleagues ensured that I enjoyed a pleasant working environment and activities other than only those related to the dissertation. I appreciated the teamwork offered by the colleagues of the Agenda Setting Project. Co-teaching with Anne-Greet Keizer was a good experience, as well as the many talks we had about doing research. The coffee breaks and a fine Budapesti co-chairing experience with Joost Berkhout were both pleasant and welcome academic breaks. The meetings with my fellow PNN-board members offered a stimulating and enjoyable experience outside yet related to academics.

Roommates are truly important in creating a stimulating working environment, and I've been very lucky with my roommates at the fifth floor in Leiden, Marleen Romeijn and Caspar van den Berg. I enjoyed all those times we laughed together about what life sometimes has to offer, and I have benefited from this positive atmosphere in several ways. In addition, the joint venture with Caspar, both in teaching and conducting surveys, was a stimulating co-workers' experience amid the solo expedition of doing a PhD.

The final revisions of the manuscript were made after I joined the political science department of the University of Antwerp. I appreciate the warm welcome I received from my colleagues of the International and European Politics research group, in particular Jan Beyers, and I very much look forward to conducting some fascinating research together.

Above all, this dissertation would not have been possible without my family and friends. Although my friends often wondered whether it was really worth it, they nevertheless fully supported me in this endeavour. Ilse and Lennart were exactly the down-to-earth and enjoyable persons with whom you want to prepare an important day in your life. My family provided me with an encouraging and warm environment, even though the last few years were tied to life's unforeseen challenges. Ab showed me the benefits of constructive criticism during the short period of time I knew him, while Petra's and Stoffer's renewed happiness very much helped to put the dissertation in perspective. And so did the compassion of my parents for their family, while their own life was not always so easy. Most importantly, their unconditional support stimulated me to follow the direction of my dreams. Jort, my final thanks are for you. Your wonderful *joie de vivre*, even in times of sorrow, helped me to persist and finally finish the dissertation. And, what is more, how could I ever enjoy our lucky number 13 in the middle of the street so much without you?

Caelesta Poppelaars
Den Haag, Januari 2009

Building Bridges, Seeking Support, or in Need of Expertise?

*The importance of the bureaucracy in the decision-making process of modern societies has become almost axiomatic. It is true that 'the growth of executive power, de facto rule-making power in the bureaucracy, growing complexity of rule-making, the emergence of delegated legislation, the burgeoning of welfare state activity, the needs of regulatory and developmental bureaucratic agencies all help us to understand why a bureaucracy cannot be adequately understood unless we take careful account of the role of interest groups in the bureaucratic process.'*¹

1.1 Introduction

In January 2004, a Dutch parliamentary commission published its evaluation of Dutch integration policy, titled *Building Bridges*. This title, unintentionally but perfectly, summarised one of the most important reasons why civil servants continued to interact with immigrant organisations, even when current-day political and public opinion suggested a different approach. At that time, multiculturalism had become a politically sensitive issue. Politicians, scholars, and publicists alike were involved in public polemics about the negative outcomes of multiculturalism. One of the most often heard conclusions those days was that immigrant organisations had hindered the participation and integration of their members within Dutch society, rather than enhancing it. Meanwhile, however, most civil servants steadily continued to subsidise and maintain relationships with the very immigrant organisations that had been accused of creating substantial obstacles to integration.² In the public hearings conducted by the parliamentary commission, civil servants, ministers, aldermen, and representatives of immigrants' organisations described their relationships with each other. Illustrative of many of those conversations is the following quote from a former Alderman of Tilburg:³

We want to arrange a meeting point for Somali people. Some see this as a means of segregating activities. We, however, think of this as a kind of stepping stone for these people. Also, we want to provide them with a place to meet, because we ourselves feel the need to have deliberation partners from the community with whom we can do business with and arrange things.

¹ Suleiman (1974, 232) and Joseph La Palombara (1957, 257), *Interest groups in Italian Politics*, quoted in Suleiman (1974, 232).

² Temporary Committee Integration Policy, *Building Bridges*, TK, 2003-2004, 28689, nr. 7-9.

³ Temporary Committee Integration Policy, *Building Bridges*, TK, 2003-2004, 28689, nr. 10, 427.

It was exactly this concept of intermediation that explained why civil servants chose to keep in touch. The immigrant organisations fulfilled an important function, in Dutch neatly termed *aanspreekpunt*, which is best translated in English as *the capacity to intermediate*. This logic of intermediation proved to be more important than enhancing participation or integration of individual immigrants within Dutch society, a function these immigrant organisations were assumed to perform.

The challenges of administering a culturally diverse city call for an instrumental approach to such immigrant organisations, rather than the high politics involved in articulating policy ideas and policy advice (Poppelaars and Scholten 2008).⁴ The capacity to intermediate seems particularly important during political or societal events that may threaten the delicate balance of accommodating more than 150 nationalities within a single city's boundaries. For example, the Dutch Minister of Housing, Communities and Integration and the Minister of Justice immediately convened meetings with several Islamic organisations after the release of *Fitna*, Geert Wilders' anti-Islam cinematic essay in spring 2008.⁵ How else to probe the atmosphere in the different immigrant communities, in order to prepare an appropriate governmental response?

This link between contingencies and the logic of intermediation appears to travel the Atlantic well. In the early 1990s, Mayor Dinkins of New York City (NYC) came into office with the help of a broad civic coalition. His administration, however, did not maintain ties with this civic coalition while in office, which became problematic when attempting to solve major race riots between Caribbean and Jewish communities (Thompson 2005). Brooklyn, one of the City's neighbourhoods, had a tense atmosphere, especially within the Heights community in central Brooklyn. A rapidly growing Caribbean immigrant population and a small low-income Hasidic Jewish community vied for scarce housing. One day, a Caribbean boy was killed in a car accident involving a car driven by a Hasidic Jewish man. A Jewish student was stabbed in a crowd of young Caribbean men only a few hours later. Severe race riots broke out after these accidents, which could not be quickly stopped by the NYC administration. This inability resulted from a lack of interactions with community organisations that had contacts with both populations in Brooklyn Heights. Those two populations were, literally and figuratively, out of reach for Dinkin's administration. In the words of a former administration-member (Thompson 2005, 304):

There were only a few community leaders with connections and respect among the alienated youth who might have served as channels for positive discourse. In the absence of more such channels, and because there had been little prior effort to include unemployed men in civic affairs or to have their voice meaningfully considered within a neighbourhood civic structure, there was no way to rapidly construct meaningful exchanges between blacks and Jews during the Crown Height Crisis, or between blacks and the police department.

⁴ Formulating policies that do not seem to address existing social structures in society tend to even reinforce rather than reduce such an instrumental use of immigrant organisations (de Zwart and Poppelaars 2007).

⁵ Geert Wilders is the founder of the PPV, a populist, right-wing party with immigrant integration issues as political priority.

Apparently, a lack of communication channels, i.e. links to various communities, determined whether the New York City administration could solve the problem. Either termed *aanspreekpunt* or 'a need for communication channels,' organisations or individuals that serve as intermediaries were important to both Dutch national and local government and the New York City administration.

Could the logic of intermediation also apply to immigrant issues in other countries? Interacting with immigrant communities in France might be difficult, as the French system does not consider organisations solely based on an ethnic or religious background to be legitimate partners to work with (Koopmans and Statham 2000).⁶ Or, could intermediation be equally important in other policy areas? Voluntary organisations, for instance, proved to be highly useful in tracing people to properly address the HIV problem in Australia (Brown 1999). And, as illustrated by a Dutch respondent in this study, intermediation capacity is useful, for instance, in the health care sector as well:⁷

In my case it is very easy, this field is characterised by a diverse array of professional organisations. The existence of so many highly professionally organised interest groups simplifies the job as they are useful in reaching the proper people and offering new insights. My colleagues at the inspectorate for youth care face an unorganised field, which does not make life easier in monitoring and regulation.

Organisations capable of establishing access to the target population offer a useful resource to policy makers. Treasury civil servants involved with the budgetary process, however, are not very likely to need such intermediation capacity.⁸ Expertise on financial and fiscal issues would be more appropriate for them. Intermediation could, however, resume an importance in social security issues if governments seek to activate the long-termed unemployed. This group may be as unknown to governments as certain communities of immigrants.

These questions suggest that there are good reasons why civil servants choose to work with certain interest groups rather than with others. And although this implies limited responsiveness, it also seems that these particular patterns of bureaucracy-interest group interactions will vary along important political-administrative dimensions affecting the policy-making process, such as variation in policy sectors or public agencies. This study aims to explain such bureaucracy-interest group interactions systematically, and its central research question is as follows: *Why do civil servants interact with certain interest groups, whereas they do not or only do so to a lesser extent with other groups?* Bureaucracy-interest group interactions are thus the main dependent variable of this research.

⁶ The French citizenship regime is often termed 'assimilationist' or 'republican', meaning that France allows immigrants easy access to the political community, but denies their cultural or ethnic differences (Koopmans and Statham 2000). Solving severe policy problems may nevertheless require relations between such organisations and civil servants (see also Favell 2001).

⁷ Interview by author.

⁸ However, a recent affair in the Netherlands concerning the impossibility of levying taxes on people living in caravan parks would suggest otherwise (De Volkskrant, 2003, 'Wijn pakt illegale afspraken met woonwagenkampen aan', 3 June, online newspaper, www.volkskrant.nl).

1.2 Explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions

Instances of bureaucratic interactions with interest groups have been termed as instances of 'bureaucratic politics' or 'bureaucratic autonomy' by some scholars; others call them 'iron triangles' or 'close-knit policy networks', and still others speak in terms of 'capture', or less dramatically, 'interest group influence'. Each approach examines the phenomenon through somewhat different lenses and arrives at different conclusions. The policy networks literature explains such behaviour by pointing to the mutual benefits for bureaucrats, interest groups, and parliamentarians interacting in policy making. Mutual benefits often result in long-term and close cooperation between a fairly limited number of policy actors (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Milward and Provan 2000; Rhodes 1990). Scholars in the field of bureaucratic politics argue that bureaucrats use their contacts with interest groups to enhance their autonomy or improve their bargaining power against their political superiors or other bureaucratic agencies (Carpenter 2001), or to otherwise serve their position or job performance (Peters 2001; Ripley and Franklin 1986; Suleiman 1974). The literature on interest group politics, finally, suggests that bureaucrats ultimately become dependent on powerful interest groups in society, often pointing to regulatory agencies that seem to be puppets in the hands of particular groups (Chubb 1983; Posner 1974; Yackee 2005).

The literatures on policy networks, interest group politics, and bureaucratic politics all agree on the existence of patterns of bureaucracy-interest group interactions that are not fully responsive to a comprehensive array of groups and interests. Yet, at the same time, they offer rather different explanations for these patterns. To date, it remains unclear which explanation will apply in which circumstances. A major reason for this ambiguity is that the literature lacks a single theoretical model capable of systematically comparing both bureaucrats' and interest groups' motives and how these motives vary across various political-administrative dimensions. This research is an attempt to formulate such a theoretical model. To do so, I adopt a resource dependence approach to explain these bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

1.3 Bureaucracy-interest group interactions unravelled

The three sets of literature discussed above share an implicit assumption that certain goods are exchanged for others. According to the bureaucratic politics literature, civil servants trade for political support by deliberately reaching out to those interest groups capable of providing them such support. The literature on interest group politics suggests that the information or expertise interest groups have to offer is so valuable that bureaucrats may to a large extent depend on these interest groups. And, finally, the policy network literature suggests that mutually beneficial exchanges result in long-term interactions. By employing this idea of 'exchange of goods', it is possible to integrate these different explanations into a single theoretical model of bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

Resource exchange is the key explanatory variable used in resource dependence theory to explain interorganisational behaviour. Its main hypothesis is that organisations are not fully self-supportive. They need to interact with other organisations to obtain the resources they need for their survival (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]). Such resource exchanges create interdependencies among organisations, which are a function of both the importance of a resource and its concentration in the environment. By measuring each of these two elements, the degree of dependence between organisations can be determined.

Based on classic resource dependence theory, bureaucracy-interest group interactions can be conceptualised as resource exchanges. By examining the importance of these resources and the availability of the resources in the environment, it should be possible to determine the degree of dependence that characterises bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Relevant contextual factors are included in the model to serve systematic comparisons of these resource exchanges. National interest representation regimes; political-administrative relations; agencies' tasks and culture; the influence of ideas; Europeanisation; and the salience, complexity, and political sensitivity of policy issues are all hypothesised to influence resource concentration, resource importance, or both. These contextual variables are derived from the literatures on interest group politics, bureaucratic politics, and network studies in which they have been shown to influence either bureaucrats' or interest groups' behaviour. Systematic variation of contextual variables thus makes it possible to determine the exact nature of bureaucracy-interest group interactions under different circumstances.

A model based on resource dependence theory incorporates the assumption that an organisation will try to minimise its dependence, and therefore the theory implicitly assumes that organisations can end their interactions when they think that this is beneficial for them. Indeed, why continue to interact when an organisation can no longer provide the resources you need? Factors such as trustworthiness, uncertainty reduction, routine behaviour or anticipating future consequences, however, will also determine resource exchange. In other words, bureaucracy-interest group interactions may not only be determined by strategic rationality that is implicit in a resource dependence approach but also by anticipatory and habitual rationality, which are revealed through a long-term perspective on these interactions over time.⁹

I constructed a dataset of bureaucracy-interest group interactions to assess the explanatory potential of the model. A survey of senior civil servants and interest groups in the Netherlands and the UK¹⁰ together with semi-structured elite interviewing were the methods used to collect data. To ensure equivalent data, I

⁹ While this all seems beneficial to the study of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, it is important to note that when applying resource exchange to these interactions, I implicitly assume that bureaucracies have certain administrative leeway to act within a set framework of rules and arrangements. Moreover, full autonomy is not attainable in the case of public bureaucracies, as they have to be loyal to their political superiors and responsive to the public. So, autonomy refers to the possibility to influence politicians and interest groups and thus does not have the same implications as autonomy in the original resource dependence approach (see chapter 3).

¹⁰ Data was also collected for senior civil servants and interest groups in Sweden and the US. However, because of a low response rate, these data will not be included in the analyses.

developed and implemented a strategy to construct a dataset of interest groups in the Netherlands. The survey data allowed for a cross-sectional analysis of bureaucracy-interest group interactions to test the model and explore additional contextual variables related to the interest group environment. The different types of rationality that may underlie the resource exchanges between bureaucrats and interest groups could be examined via additional interview data.

1.3.1 Why study bureaucracy-interest group interactions?

The explicit focus on bureaucracy-interest group interactions in this study is driven by a two-fold aim. First, this study aims to offer a theoretical contribution to the study of both bureaucratic and interest group behaviour. It does so by developing a theoretical model which should enable the systematic comparison of bureaucracy-interest group interactions over time and across cases. Although the literature is rich with findings of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, it is very difficult to determine which explanation holds under which circumstances. When will the bureaucrat be able to engage in entrepreneurial behaviour, or when is he/she likely to be vulnerable for capture? The resource dependence model developed in this study is an attempt to integrate the fundamental behavioural logics the various existing explanations point to. My main contribution is thus to push forward the conceptual discussion about bureaucracy-interest group interactions and to offer an analytical tool for systematic comparative research.

This research is not only driven by a strong theoretical and analytical interest. It is also driven by sheer curiosity and an irrepressible interest in what exactly is going on when either bureaucrats or interest groups decide to interact. It thus also aims to provide empirical insights into this phenomenon. Turning to the case of immigrant integration policy in the Netherlands clarifies this second goal. When public opinion forced politicians to argue strongly against subsidising immigrant organisations, politicians overlooked an important aspect of administering society. In reality, immigrant organisations offered a meeting point for people in a foreign society. Few acknowledged the usefulness of those organisations for civil servants to probe the atmosphere and to get in touch with different communities. Put differently, these organisations served as a valuable instrument for civil servants to steer and monitor a culturally diverse society. If this had been more explicit, regulation concerning immigrant organisations could have been better geared to the actual situation. In general, insights on bureaucracy-interest group interactions could indicate when the administrative part of the policy-making process inevitably diverges from politicians' plans, or to what extent bureaucracy-interest group interactions contribute to (un)intended consequences of policy making.

In sum, this study is predominantly aimed at contributing to a better analytical and conceptual assessment of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. At the same time, it also aims to make a significant empirical contribution, both in testing the proposed analytical model and by providing insights into what exactly happens when civil servants and interest groups decide to interact.

1.3.2 What follows

To answer the research question of why civil servants interact with some interest groups, but not (or only to a lesser extent) with others, I proceed as follows. Chapter 2 will review and discuss the most important literatures addressing bureaucracy-interest group interactions. I argue that the problem in explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions is not so much a shortage of theories. It is much more a problem of offering different, even rival, theories that make it impossible to determine under which circumstances which set of explanations holds. Therefore, I develop a model to systematically compare bureaucracy-interest group interactions in chapter 3. I use the classic resource dependence theory of Pfeffer and Salancik (2003[1978]) to construct a model that not only enables a cross-sectional analysis, but also incorporates a longitudinal perspective on these interactions. Subsequently, I discuss the comparative design I employ in this study in chapter 4 as well as the characteristics of the datasets which have been developed to allow empirical analyses. Chapters 5-7 provide empirical insights on these interactions by testing the model empirically. The findings of chapter 5 imply that the resource dependence model has explanatory potential. It generates a satisfying explanation of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, and contextual factors are shown to have a small yet significant influence on the degree of dependence characterising bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Chapter 6 shows that interest group population dynamics influence the degree of dependence between interest groups and bureaucrats. Modest patterns of cooperation and competition in addition to highly valued access to the bureaucracy suggest that the degree of dependence for bureaucrats is mitigated. Chapter 7 explores the various types of choices that may potentially determine bureaucracy-interest group interactions, examining the (joint) contribution of strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality to explain their resource exchanges. Each of these chapters (chapters 5-7) incorporates a final paragraph summarising the main findings and reflecting on the implications of these findings. The final chapter, chapter 8, summarises the theoretical model, and the main empirical findings, and serves as a critical reflection of the explanatory value of the model and its implications for existing theories and future research.

The Captive, the Entrepreneur, and the Routine-Driven Man

2.1 Introduction

The question of why bureaucrats interact with certain interest groups but not with others, and to what extent their interaction vary, seems straightforward and even elegant, but proves to be misleadingly simple. The examples of the New York administrators and Dutch civil servants attempting to reach out to immigrant organisations reveal a similar – and well-founded – basis for interaction: namely, a need for intermediation. On either side of the Atlantic, the question of why civil servants interacted with these specific organisations seems easy to answer.

The theoretical and conceptual accounts of bureaucracy-interest group relations, however, offer diverse and contrasting explanations. The literature on interest group politics suggests that interest groups may be quite decisive in bureaucracy-interest group interactions. The literature on bureaucratic politics, on the other hand, suggests an image of the entrepreneurial bureaucrat capable of steering his interactions with interest groups. Finally, policy network studies suggest that mutually beneficial relationships between bureaucrats and interest groups are very durable. This chapter discusses each of these strands of literature in detail to show that, despite a considerable body of knowledge on bureaucracy-interest group interactions, the ability to distinguish under which conditions which explanation applies is missing. In short, we cannot properly determine when the bureaucrat will be an entrepreneur, a captive or a routine-driven man.

2.2 The captive bureaucrat

The notion that interest groups exert a significant influence on public decision making stems from the literature on interest group politics. More generally, this literature is concerned with questions of when do interest groups emerge, how do they maintain themselves, and why do they get access to governmental institutions to exert influence? Pluralism and corporatism are two broad research paradigms within which theories have been developed on interest group behaviour. To start with the former, pluralism has often been critiqued for constituting a normative view on interest groups within a democracy. Traditionally (and ideally), it refers to a democratic system characterised by the existence of many, often adversarial, interest groups involved in an equal competition to advance their interests. Every interest in society, or issue salient to it, eventually gets represented via a process of counter-mobilisation. When a particular interest mobilises, it follows naturally that

people who are harmed by this mobilisation process will automatically mobilise to counterbalance the initial mobilisation of an interest group (Truman 1951). Alternatively, pluralism holds that those in office or with other political power have such power only as long as they represent the latent political potential of a much larger group of citizen constituents (Dahl 2005[1961]). Traditional pluralism has been heavily critiqued for being almost naïve in its assumptions. Some pointed to a mobilisation bias in the interest population in favour of the upper-class and well-organised few (Schattschneider 1970[1960]), while others pointed out that such a bias was a consequence of the inherent nature of public goods, resulting in free-riding (Olson 1965). Traditional pluralism and its critics focused on the societal origins of interest groups, and thus adopted a group approach towards politics.

Things diverge when one sets foot on European shores, where corporatism has been the dominant paradigm for explaining interest group involvement in public decision making, rather than interest group behaviour as such. However, the conceptual fuzziness in the literature on corporatism (see Molina and Rhodes 2002) does not seem to help in drawing conclusions about the specific nature of interest representation in corporatist regimes. An important obstacle in defining corporatism is that most studies implicitly distinguish between a particular type of policy making and a particular type of interest representation. Schmitter (1989) proposed a reconceptualisation that explicitly disentangled both meanings: corporatism I and corporatism II. Corporatism I, he argued, refers to the organisation of societal interest representation and should accordingly be termed corporatism, as opposed to pluralism as another type of interest representation. Corporatism II entails decision making and implementation as a joint venture between the state and interest organisations, and should, therefore, be termed concertation, as opposed to pressure politics. In theory, corporatism and concertation do not necessarily co-exist (Schmitter 1989). Yet, in practice, they largely do, as policy making and implementation by concertation have implications for the way interest organisations are organised. Policy making and implementation by concertation necessarily limit the number of organisations to be invited to the negotiation table. When access is limited, and this is one of the core characteristics of concertation according to Schmitter (1985), the development and existence of hierarchically organised umbrella organisations is more likely (Lowery and Gray 2004; Lowery, Poppelaars, and Berkhout 2008). So, a concerted method of policy making and implementation (Schmitter's corporatism II) goes hand-in-hand with a hierarchically organised field of interest organisations (a pyramid structure). A simple rule seems to apply: when all interests do not have an equal chance of access, because access is regulated by the government, the best option is to organise in a hierarchical fashion.

Without explicit reference to it, studies of concertation have prevailed within the field of corporatism. They have predominantly focused on the systemic effects of institutional deliberation on economic and social-economic policies (Molina and Rhodes 2002). In addition, both concertation and corporatism have been heavily dominated by studies of business interests (Schmitter 1989), a trend still apparent in recent attempts to operationalise and measure corporatism (Siaroff 1999), or in studies examining derivatives of corporatism (Becker 2005). Such a political-economy perspective has dominated studies of corporatism (Visser 2005; Visser

and Hemerijck 1997; Wilts 2001). And this emphasis has resulted almost in a neglect of the representation of other interests in corporatist regimes (but see Blom-Hansen 2001; Huitema, 2005; Trappenburg 2005).

Although the two paradigms differ markedly, they nowadays seem closer to each other than they have ever been. Most importantly, the emphasis on context has become apparent on both sides of the Atlantic, and, in addition, scholars in Europe now seem to pay more attention to interest population studies than previously. Dependencies on their immediate environment have been used to explain, for instance, whether or not interest groups are able to get access in Brussels (Beyers and Kerremans 2007). More generally, context seems to have become an important explanatory variable in explaining interest groups' behaviour (Lowery and Gray 2004). Baumgartner (1996), for instance, has shown that different conceptions of government and constitutional structures in France versus the US result in different resources, maintenance strategies, and relations between government agencies and interest groups. State structures and constitutional design are additional variables to consider along with historical tradition, social cleavages and other mass-based factors to explain interest groups' access.

Variables such as formal political institutions, informal arrangements between elites, social cleavages and more informal institutional characteristics determine how and why social movements come to life and maintain themselves (Koopmans and Statham 2000; McAdam 1996). Originally designed to explain social movement behaviour, these political opportunity structure arguments have more recently been applied to explain the origins and maintenance of immigrant organisations in Western Europe as well (Koopmans and Statham 2000; Soysal 1994). Another approach that heavily emphasises context is Gray and Lowery's population ecology approach explaining the density of interest group communities at the US state level. They applied a population ecology model used by island biogeographers hypothesising that the size of the island (area), the energy available for species (energy) and the stability of the system (stability) are crucial in explaining how certain species of interest groups thrive (Gray and Lowery 1996a). They found that the size of potential constituents (area) and the likelihood of government actions (energy) of concern to interest groups have a profound influence on a state's interest community density.

An important question for this study is thus whether and how government action, and context in general, affects interest group behaviour. As Lowery and Gray (2004, 170) note: "Neo-pluralist research is strongly grounded in the notion that policy outcomes influence mobilisation rates, the structure of interest populations, and levels and types of influence activities employed." Illustrative is a study on the relationships between the US Presidency and federal membership organisations, which shows that the US presidency deliberately tried and succeeded to influence interest group behaviour. More generally, Leech et al. (2005) identify a recurrent pattern of interaction between government actions and interest group activity. US interest groups become active when there is a certain level of government activity in the issue areas of concern to interest groups. A similar process takes place in Brussels concerning EU interest groups (Mahoney 2004). And Dutch interest groups also seem to benefit from the distinct opportunities the Dutch political system offered: the maintenance of Dutch interest groups is often

ascribed to the willingness of the government to provide subsidies, even to perceived adversaries (Duyvendak et al. 1992; Koopmans 2002). And as a respondent in the current study observes: “Now that the government emphasises the importance of exercising for personal health, the fitness and sports industry has become really active in this field.”¹ In other words, government activity is like the legendary flute of the Pied Piper of Hamelin (*De rattenvanger van Hamelen*).² Just like the tune of the Pied Piper’s flute, governments’ activities seem to cast a spell on interest groups’ behaviour, drawing them to their realm. Whenever a government proposes solutions to societal problems or initiates projects, interest groups become active, almost in a mechanical fashion. Vice versa, when government withdraws from initiating policy actions, interest groups lose interest.

Some question, however, whether the Pied Piper’s flute is really in the government’s hand. Those who have studied the behaviour of interest groups with respect to regulatory agencies are likely to argue that it is interest groups that play the flute. The following example illustrates this point:

Interest groups playing high

We [one of the regulatory agencies in the NLD, CP] formulate every year a formal list of priorities we will address in the year to come. It includes, for instance, which industries we are going to monitor closely, or what kind of sector-specific research we are planning to conduct. We consult the major stakeholders to approve this list. One of the priorities included in this year’s list was to establish a research project in a particular sector where we knew that individual corporations were violating the law. Their representative organisation was one of the stakeholders invited to discuss our priorities for this year. They obviously did not agree with this particular priority and threatened not to endorse the list. They even threatened to no longer cooperate, and they refused to attend the stakeholders meeting. A few days later they invited themselves to our office and, tried to ‘convince’ us to refrain from investigating their sector. ... This was indeed difficult, but we need to find a way to deal with this situation. Obviously, we caught a big fish....³

Interest group influence on agency behaviour is often referred as ‘capture,’ and this concept most commonly features in studies about economic regulation. In short, capture means that regulatory agencies become largely dependent on the industries they were designed to regulate. Regulations such agencies produce often favour certain industries (Chubb 1983; Posner 1974). More generally, authors have studied interactions between bureaucracies and interest groups in terms of bureaucratic responsiveness, or how external actors determine a bureaucracy’s or agency’s behaviour (Moe 1985; Scholz and Wei 1986). Recent studies indeed show that business interests have a significantly larger influence on government rulemaking than other interest groups (Yackee and Yackee 2006), and that, in general, interest groups have significant influence on the content of government regulation (Yackee

¹ Interview by author.

² This is the legendary tale of a man who lured all rats of Hamelen out of the city with the bewitching tunes of his flute in 13th century Germany. When he did not get properly paid for his helpful deed to dispose Hamelen of the rats, he repeated the same trick with the city’s children, and led them out of the city and they never returned.

³ Interview by author.

2005). By studying databases of proposed rules by government agencies, the comments various types of interest groups submitted on the proposals, and, finally, the extent to which the rules were changed according to the interest groups' comments, the authors assessed the influence of various categories of interest groups. Business interests indeed seemed to have a dominant influence.

Measuring business influence by content analysis certainly points to the direction of influence, but not necessarily to the causal mechanisms underlying these interactions. The advantage accorded to certain businesses may be related to capture, but may also be related to familiarity with a particular firm or early entrant benefits. Some capture-related mechanisms thus may overlap with non-capture-related mechanisms (Carpenter 2004). Indeed, it is a difficult methodological challenge to establish whether behaviour that benefits a certain industry results from capture or is simply a routine (Yackee and Yackee 2006; see also Wilson 2000[1989]). Perhaps civil servants, in coping with their workload, simply adapt the rules accordingly to make life a bit easier, a routine which unintentionally results in benefiting a certain industry. Questions of whether and how bureaucratic agencies respond to their environment, in particular to interest groups - so, who eventually plays the Pied Piper's flute - brings me to the second strand of literature related to bureaucracy-interest group interactions, namely, bureaucratic politics.

2.3 The entrepreneurial bureaucrat

From the literature on bureaucratic politics we can infer that bureaucrats rather than interest groups dominate these interactions. Bureaucratic politics commonly refers to conflict among several bureaucratic agencies within government, or to the strategic behaviour of civil servants in regard to their political superiors. Engaging in contacts with interest groups could enhance the bargaining power of agencies as opposed to their political superiors or other competing agencies. Those interactions, however, could also serve the execution of policies designed by civil servants. To establish and maintain relations with interest groups could, thus, be administratively instrumental or political in nature. But there is only a fine line between these two incentives, if there is any at all. To address this delicate line, bureaucratic politics is here defined to include several individual yet interrelated components: political-administrative relations, interagency competition, and interactions with interest groups.

2.3.1 Political-administrative relations

Bureaucratic politics raises the idea that government bureaucracies constitute a 'fourth power' in addition to Montesquieu's *Trias Politica* (Crinice le Roy 1979). This in turn invokes a discussion of the grand dichotomy between politics and administration. In its most rigorous, but nowadays unattainable, form it declares administration to be both totally separate from and yet loyal to its political masters. This neutral yet loyal conception of bureaucracy parallels the Weberian ideal type of a rational bureaucracy. Weber acknowledged the potential capacity of a bureaucracy to gain power and engage in policy making based on its specialised knowledge. Weber, however, was very much concerned with restricting such bureaucratic

power because he considered it most undesirable (Albrow 1970; Weber 2006[1922]). What seems common sense today is that bureaucrats enjoy administrative leeway and that their activities are becoming increasingly political in nature (Peters and Pierre 2004; Svava 2001).

Aberbach, Putnam and Rockman (1981) were among the first to offer a comprehensive empirical picture of the overlap between bureaucratic and political functions. They distinguished four images of the relation between politicians and bureaucrats. Image I, 'Policy-Administration', refers to a true politics-administration dichotomy. Image II, 'Facts-Interests', assumes that both politicians and civil servants engage in policy making. Their functions are intertwined, but they bring distinct contributions to the policy process. Politicians bring interests and values; civil servants bring facts and knowledge. Image III, 'Energy-Equilibrium', states that civil servants and politicians engage both in policy making and politics. Yet a distinction remains, with politicians articulating the broad interest of unorganised individuals and civil servants introducing the narrowly focused interests of organised clientele. Their fourth and final image, the 'Pure Hybrid', indicates a full blurring of the roles of bureaucrats and politicians. Following a comprehensive empirical analysis, part of their conclusion is as follows (Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman 1981, 239-241):

It could be a committee room in the modernistic Bundestag, or the prime minister's functional central Stockholm office, or a Renaissance chamber in a Roman ministry. Around the table are gathered a few members of parliament and several senior civil servants, discussing what to do about petroleum supplies, or housing subsidies, or university reform. In the shorthand of political science: they are 'making policy.' (...) All these men (and they are almost surely all men) are here as policy makers, and all accept that civil servants are legitimate participants in the policy process.

Such an overlap between roles and tasks, or put differently, the politicisation of the bureaucracy (Peters and Pierre 2004; Page and Wright 2001), triggers intense debate about the perceived power of the bureaucracy. Such debates involve concerns about the primacy of politics, the span of control of the political executives, and the perceived power of senior civil servants. The case below, 'Stuck in a revolving door' (*Klem in de draaideur*), illustrates this nicely. It is the case of a notorious clash of influential top civil servants and the Dutch minister of Justice, which harmed her reputation and finally resulted in the dismissal of the chair of the Board of Procurators General (Van Thijn 1998):

Stuck in a revolving door⁴

'Stuck in a revolving door' is situated in the late 1990s and tells the story of Arthur Docters van Leeuwen, the then chair of the Board of Procurators General, in defending a colleague who eventually got fired by the then Ministry of Justice, Mrs. Sorgdrager. His colleague, Procurator General Steenhuisen, had been accused of favouring a particular consultancy bureau, which employed him, to conduct the investigation of a judicial case. The case was formally investigated. Just before the findings of the investigation were to be sent to the parliament,

⁴ The title 'Stuck in a revolving door' refers to the story that Docters van Leeuwen had once been literally stuck in the main entrance of the Ministry of Justice, which is a revolving door.

Docters van Leeuwen, during a short conversation with Mrs. Sorgdrager on that day, defended the position of his colleague. The fact that Steenhuisen wanted to go to court to contest the evaluation even before it had been sent to the parliament, was leaked to the media. The eight o'clock news announced that the entire Board of Procurators General was about to go court. Soon, the political establishment of The Hague portrayed the entire Board of Procurators General as senior civil servants in rebellion against Mrs. Sorgdrager. 'Mutiny' among Sorgdrager's senior civil servants, whether a true reflection of reality or not, was undoubtedly severely harmful for her authority and her political position. The image of an entire a Board of Procurators General on a collision course with the Minister could not be remedied, and Docters van Leeuwen lost his job. Such a display of power was unacceptable. As chair of the Board of Procurators General, he was held responsible for allowing the senior civil servants to adopt too powerful a position and for being too supportive of his colleague.

2.3.2 Agency strife

Not only do such power relations between top civil servants and political executives add to the idea of bureaucratic politics, but inter-agency competition does so as well. Inter-agency competition stems from the underlying idea that civil servants pursue their agency's interests rather than the public interest in general. Early public choice scholars developed a rather bleak picture of civil servants submerged in their own or their agency's interests. Whereas Tullock (1965), for instance, argued that bureaucrats seek to maximise their agency's size, Niskanen (1971) argued that, as there is no profit to maximise, bureaucrats will try to maximise the budgets they receive to do their work. Their individual interests, such as salary, public reputation, power, or output of the bureau are all positively related to the bureau's overall budget. Maximising budgets are in two ways important for an agency's survival. First, agencies receive their budget from 'sponsors', i.e. political superiors who expect to receive requests for an increase in the agency's budget. It is their natural tendency to expect demands for higher budgets from civil servants (see Dunleavy 1991; Wildavsky 1964). If there is no demand for an increase, political superiors will get confused and stop their cooperative behaviour. Secondly, senior civil servants seek to maximise budgets, because a larger budget makes it easier to manage the bureau. Removing people to other positions, for instance, becomes easier with a larger budget. These accounts of bureaucratic behaviour portray civil servants' motives as purely based upon maximising their own interests, either by maximising the budget or maximising agency size.

The public choice literature developed a picture of what bureaucracies do and why they do it based on the idea of 'economic man', projecting 'market failure' in terms of the inefficient monopolies granted to government agencies. Downs' (1967) account of bureaucratic behaviour is bit more nuanced. Instead of the existence of *the* bureaucracy's interest, Downs argues that bureaucrats' preferences depend on the role and function they have.⁵ He developed two laws of bureaucratic behaviour, namely the 'law of conservatism' and the 'law of increasing

⁵ He distinguishes several bureaucratic personalities, of which two act upon pure self-interests, the 'climbers' and 'conservers'. The other personalities, 'zealots', 'advocates' and 'statesmen', mix self-interest with broader altruistic motivations (Downs 1967, 88).

conservatism.’ The first law points to a life cycle of bureaucracies, arguing that every agency ends up becoming dominated by conservers who are resistant to change. Second, the ‘law of increasing conservatism’ indicates that every individual bureaucrat will become a conserver who wants to retain the status quo. Upward-moving bureaucrats quickly exhaust the promotion options available to themselves and lower-ranking officials and become conservers of their function. Lower-ranking officials, in turn, also become conservers as they realise that their behaviour has no significant influence on the agency’s policy. Another account, also inspired by public choice principles, is that the bureaucrat, rather than maximising agency size and budgets per se, engages in bureau-shaping behaviour (Dunleavy 1991). Public employment systems make it likely that the welfare of higher-ranking bureaucrats will be closely linked to intrinsic characteristics of their work. This means that rational officials want to work in small, elite, collegial bureaus close to the centre of political power. Bureaucrats will maximise their bureaus’ conformity to these goals.

Although the latter is somewhat more nuanced, what these accounts of bureaucratic behaviour have in common is that they only pay attention to one particular set of incentives bearing upon a bureaucrat’s behaviour, namely self-interest. As Wilson (2000[1989], 88) argues: “When bureaucrats are free to choose a course of action, their choices will reflect the full array of incentives operating on them: some will reflect the need to manage workload; others will reflect the expectations of workplace peers and professional colleagues elsewhere; still others may reflect their own convictions.” Not all of these early public choice scholars are entirely oblivious to the public interests civil servants might want to serve. Yet, they argue that civil servants will be unable to do so, because they lack full information to properly attend to that interest (Niskanen 1971). Critics of these approaches have shown that economic models of bureaucratic behaviour do not always effectively explain bureaucratic behaviour (Frederickson and Smith 2003, 190-193), or that public-choice-inspired solutions for inefficiency should not be taken as axiomatic in designing reforms, despite their attractive analytical rigour (cf. Lowery 1998).

Interagency competition between the armed services that together make up a country’s Ministry of Defence is a well-known phenomenon (Huntington 1961). Equally notorious in the Netherlands was competition over *het banenplan van den Uyl*, an attempt of the 1981 Minister of Employment and Social Affairs (Joop den Uyl) to design a comprehensive approach to unemployment. The Ministry of Social Affairs brought its political reasoning to the negotiation table, while the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Treasury brought a divergent view, which resulted in serious antagonism during the bargaining process (Hupe 2000). More recently, the competitive or, rather, non-cooperative behaviour between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Economics to address what is commonly called the ‘knowledge economy’ may be also termed a case of bureaucratic politics. Bureaucratic politics, some argue, may result in neutralising the power of the entire bureaucracy because of the competition that results from individual agencies pursuing their own interests (Rosenthal 1988), a possibility that the early public choice scholars ignored (but see Niskanen’s (1971) last chapter). Or, it might result in a virtual bureaucratic gridlock (in Dutch: *bureaupolitisme*). Such a gridlock, or *bureaupolitisme* occurs when competition and rivalry among bureaucratic agencies ends up in a strong defence of self-interests, resulting in non-decisions,

inefficiency, and avoidance (Rosenthal 1988; Rosenthal, Geveke, and 't Hart 1994). More generally, bureaucratic politics seems to be characterised by the interplay of many actors with divergent interests, where no single actor has dominant influence, and by compromises and a gap between decision making and implementation (Rosenthal 1988). The divergent interests that characterise interagency competition not only seem to result from civil servants pursuing their own interests, as public choice scholars have argued. They may also stem from divergent societal interests that civil servants want to represent or defend.

2.3.3 A search for interest groups

The politicisation of the bureaucracy and interagency competition all contribute to inherently political behaviour by and within the bureaucracy. An important aspect of this political behaviour concerns the external relations of civil servants. As Aberbach, Putnam and Rockman (1981, 241) observed:

The civil servants, it is true, are especially concerned with technical matters (...). But they are also concerned about mediating among those organised interests that have expressed concern about the problem at hand. The politicians, by contrast, emphasise their own roles as partisans and advocates for broader causes and for less organised or more individual interests. (...) brokerage among interests is less central to the role conception of politicians than of bureaucrats.

Thus, the tasks of politicians and bureaucrats seem intertwined, and advocating interests has become a significant task of civil servants nowadays. 'Brokerage among interests' is exactly what bureaucratic politics often seems to be all about. Civil servants may use such external relations to enhance their agency's position or their own position in relation to the political executive. As a respondent notes:

Within the ministry, we have divergent opinions on how to properly design a public health care system. We have recently written a letter for the minister to send to parliament discussing our idea for such a design. Well, they [civil servants from another division, CP] made sure that this letter did not reach the minister. So, we tried another way, by involving certain interest groups, in order to convince him of the advantages of our approach.⁶

Although the external component of bureaucratic politics is not demarcated as a theoretical topic as such in the literature, several authors have discussed such dynamics. A very early example of bureaucracy-interest group interactions is provided by the Ottoman bureaucracy. As early as the seventeenth century, such interactions between the state administration and interest groups are reported to have existed within the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman state officials engaged in purposive bargaining with organised groups of bandits roaming the empire to incorporate them into the state bureaucracy. The Ottoman state absorbed these bandits temporarily into the state organisation either by hiring their services or attracting their leaders to powerful positions within the state bureaucracy. The main goal was to keep them under control and establish state rule in the remote regions of the vast Ottoman Empire (Barkey 1994). In fact, the Ottoman bureaucracy shows a very early attempt of what Selznick (1953) termed cooptation.

⁶ Interview by author.

More recent, but still early, accounts of bureaucrats interacting with interest groups can be found in the works of La Palombara (1964) and Suleiman (1974). Suleiman, for instance, shows that French bureaucrats in the 1970s interacted with a few selected interest groups, despite the general belief that intermediary organisations would threaten the general public interest. Although the ministries were open to virtually any organised interest, in practice, the Directors of the ministries made a careful distinction between what they perceived as legitimate and illegitimate groups. For those civil servants, the term *groupe d'intérêt* or *groupe de pression* entailed a negative connotation. Interest groups were thought to only represent private interests and not to represent a larger part of the population. They rather favoured working with *professional* organisations that represented an 'entire profession' (Suleiman 1974). Perhaps more important than this perceived representation was the fact that these professional organisations were well-equipped, well-organised, and had information to offer that was useful and often indispensable to the *Directions* or agencies of a ministry. Moreover, close relations between such professional organisations and the *corpes des mines* of respective industries meant that agencies could mobilise an industry's power to exert pressure on their own minister (Suleiman 1974, 343-344).

At a more general level, Peters (2001) describes several types of relations between bureaucrats and interest groups: 'legitimate', 'clientele', 'parentela' and 'illegitimate' interactions. These relations differ in the scope of the interests that are included and how close the relationships are between bureaucrats and interest groups. Such classifications or general theoretical statements about bureaucracy-interest group interactions can be summarised by the fact that interactions often involve a resource exchange: support and information for access to and influence over the political process (Peters 2001, 186; Van Schendelen 1992). Carpenter (2001, 94-144) provides a detailed account of how political support is exchanged when it is beneficial to, what he terms, the 'forging of bureaucratic autonomy.'

Forging bureaucratic autonomy with the help of various interests

In the late 19th and early 20th century, the establishment of a Rural Free Delivery system (RFD) in the US became feasible due to the American Post Office's sound reputation together with its multiple ties to a diverse network of political actors, including many interest groups. The then postmaster-general, Wanamaker, turned out to be a skilful entrepreneur in establishing a diverse network of support and a sound reputation for his agency. RFD would entail a revision of the national delivery system and included delivering mail at the doorstep of each rural citizen instead of delivering mail for a small town to a small post office located in a general or common store. Whereas Wanamaker thought his proposal for RFD would strengthen support from rural constituencies, it divided farm communities. The fourth-class postmasters, the ones who ran the small post offices in common stores, were heavily opposed to RFD and lobbied extensively against it. As they were central figures in the Republican Party, many representatives were left between choosing between the new system or sticking to the old one. Wanamaker knew he had to establish sound support from the farmers. To get support for his agency and RFD, he not only communicated with agrarian leaders, he also tightened relations with business and civic associations, which were supportive of free rural delivery. In sum, coalition building in the case of the post office included assembling diverse organised interests in a broad network, including

moralist progressives, media organisations, agrarians and corporate business, all with a stake in mail delivery reforms. Without securing vast support from such a diverse coalition, the development of a strong autonomous bureaucratic agency would not have been possible, or would at least have been more difficult.

According to Carpenter (2001), bureaucratic agencies tend to rely on a network of diverse organised interests for support to prevent capture and enhance their position toward their political executives. In the RFD case mentioned above, Wanamaker proved to be a skilful bureaucratic entrepreneur capable of arranging such a network. When policy innovations are supported by a wide variety of organised interests, it becomes more difficult for politicians to resist or stall proposals for reform. In Carpenter's words (2001, 363): "Multiple networks did not refract power. They rather reduced the dependence of agencies on any one group, putting the agency in the role of broker among numerous interests seeking access to the state." Late 19th and early 20th century civil servants thus proactively reached out to interest groups in society and diversified the portfolio of interest groups they interacted with to build agency autonomy.

Scattered throughout the literature, one can find other studies of bureaucrats deliberately choosing to interact with particular interest groups. A well-known example of a government agency deliberately working together with interest groups is what Selznick (1953) called 'the cooptative mechanism'. Cooptation refers to the "the process of absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy-determining structure of an organisation as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence" (Selznick 1953, 262-263). The strong constituent relationship that evolved between the agricultural relations department of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the land-grant college system in the valley can be said to particularly reflect such a cooptation mechanism. Strong influence centres in the valley were covertly absorbed into the policy-determining structure of the TVA. More generally concerning bureaucracy-interest group interactions, Lindblom and Woodhouse (1993,77), for instance, state that: "Interest group interactions with the bureaucracy make an important contribution to social problem solving by helping to cope with the great complexity of the governmental agenda."

Ripley and Franklin (1986, 28) offer an even more intriguing argument on interactions between bureaucracies and organised interests: "What is less-evident [in the study of interest groups' role in policy, CP] is that bureaucracies charged with implementing programs will, in fact, sometimes take the initiative in creating and funding the existence and activities of interest groups that will then subsequently lobby for decisions favourable to their interests." This is basically what the EU is aiming at by encouraging a flourishing civil society to address the democratic gap in European decision-making. A respondent observes: "National implementation of policy programs as part of the European Social Funds, requires us to involve interest groups. Interest groups and an active civil society are really important in Brussels. Actually, Brussels is organising its own system of interest representation, just as we in the Netherlands have done before, to proactively arrange organisational structures with which to deliberate and which could serve as intermediates."⁷ A clear example of deliberately including interest groups during

⁷ Interview by author.

local level implementation is the practice of community policing in which police officers choose community groups to interact with to enhance public safety.

Community policing and the search for intermediates

In trying to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Houston Police Department, its then new leader Lee P. Brown chose to bring the police closer to the community. In this way, the police would respond more to problems of citizens' concerns rather than to those the police department considered important. To bring the police closer to the people, Brown set up the Directed Area Response Teams (DART). Each team was assigned a specific district in Houston and was responsible for public order and safety in that area. The police officers had to establish contacts in the community and had to consult with local citizen groups representing the citizens living in that area. Subsequently, they had to solve the problems the citizens brought up (Moore 1990). This idea of 'community policing' and proactively reaching out to citizen groups has also been applied in the Netherlands. In Rotterdam, for instance, police officers responsible for particular neighbourhoods (*wijkagenten*) try to build and maintain relationships with various organisations, such as community organisations, governmental agencies, and mosques, so that they can be informed by and provide information to those organisations. According to a police officer in Rotterdam: "The police are by now utterly convinced of the necessity and usefulness of cooperating and communicating with other actors. When the relationships are good, you can get a lot of information, even from mosques, which naturally have a rather suspicious attitude towards us."⁸

Both cases show that including interest groups during implementation is often an important step in successfully completing the policy process, or generally in administering society, and thus serves the civil servants' interests. So, the external component of bureaucratic politics entails consciously chosen interactions with interest groups by civil servants, as illustrated by these diverse case studies. For instance, those interactions serve to generate support, as was the case for the American Post Office. For the Houston police and the Rotterdam police, deliberately establishing and maintaining relations contributed to more successful policy implementation and administration of the society. These interactions somehow served the interests of civil servants, in functional or in strategic terms.

The literature on bureaucratic politics does not systematically study how bureaucracy-interest group interactions may contribute to an agency's or civil servants' interests. Instead, it offers anecdotal evidence of such interactions. The literature contains either typologies of such interactions, or case studies that show more descriptively how such interactions take place. What we can distill from these insights is that bureaucratic politics assumes that civil servants may benefit from interactions with interest groups both strategically and instrumentally. They thus deliberately engage in interactions, carefully picking and choosing those that serve their interests. In other words, bureaucratic politics assumes that bureaucrats are in control of their interactions with interest groups in order to serve their own or their agency's interests.

⁸ The case description is partly based on interviews by author; see also Poppelaars (2007).

2.4 The routine-driven bureaucrat

A final, often implicit, explanation in the policy network literature of bureaucracy-interest group interactions is that they are mutually beneficial and are therefore stable over time. The core idea of this network-based perspective is that policy making and policy implementation are inevitably based on interactions between many actors, who all have different interests yet need each other to achieve their goals. (Provan et al. 2005; Provan and Milward 2001; Toke and Marsh 2003; van Bueren, Klijn and Koppenjan 2003).

The basic idea behind these policy networks, namely interactions between government and other actors, is certainly not new. Policy community or policy subsystem studies were already concerned with relations between government and society. Initially, terms like 'iron triangle' and 'sub government' referred to rather closed systems of relationships between elected politicians, government officials, and interest groups. These systems were characterised by consensus among participants and were effectively closed to new interests (Salisbury et al. 1992). Gradually these terms were replaced by concepts such as 'advocacy coalitions' and 'issue networks,' referring to systems of relationships that were more open and flexible and often characterised by conflict (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Baumgartner and Leech 1998). Although over time closed networks seemed to open up, given the growth of interest communities, subsystems often appeared to be remarkably stable. This was the case, for instance, in US energy policy even after the 1970s oil crisis (Chubb 1983). Dutch policy making was also shown to take place in rather closed policy communities, in which policy advisors form 'an iron ring' around policy makers (Oldersma, Portegijs, and Janzen-Marquard 1999).

Pressman and Wildavsky (1984[1973]) coined the idea of 'complexity of joint action' to indicate the involvement of third actors and its consequences in policy implementation. Simply put, complexity of joint action means that the more actors are included during policy implementation, the more decision junctures along the process will occur. This growing number of decision junctures will increase the likelihood of conflicts and therefore delay or, even worse, distort output. Over the years, this complexity of joint action has become recognised as an important feature of policy implementation (Börzel 1998; Goggin et al. 1990; O'Toole Jr., Hanf and Hupe 1997). Interestingly, scholars examining policy implementation in developing countries had earlier indicated that implementation was exactly the stage of the policy process when interest groups were most influential. According to this literature, it becomes increasingly apparent during implementation how the groups' interests would be harmed and/or could be enhanced. Some of these scholars point to the difference between a weak and a strong state as a reason for such severe interest group involvement in policy implementation in developing countries (Grindle 1980; Migdal 1988; Smith 1973). Yet, in democratic states, the involvement of interest groups during implementation has been occasionally shown to alter or slow down implementation processes. The example of US residential home programs for the mentally ill in the late 1980s is such a case. Local decision makers had to take into account the conflicting interests of constituents' groups, which were split between pro-community and pro-institution groups, in establishing proper housing for the mentally ill. These two groups were

divided on whether to provide the mentally ill with a normal life in the community, or to put them away in concealed homes outside society (Miller and Iscoe 1990, 115-118). Obtaining legitimacy for the community option required taking the concerns of the pro-institution group seriously, which slowed down the establishment of proper housing. In the Dutch immigrant integration case, an instrumental approach toward immigrant organisations in order to accomplish swift and proper implementation, rather than high politics on normative immigrant issues, revealed a fundamental difference between policy making and policy implementation (Poppelaars and Scholten 2008). Getting the job done requires a different approach towards societal actors than articulating political ideas and designing policy advice.

Interacting with interest groups is an important part of policy network studies. What remains often implicit, however, is the assumption of stability most policy networks share (but see Baumgartner and Jones 1993). As Fritz Scharpf (1999, 19) argued: “The ‘network’ metaphor is justified by the fact that the set of participants specialising in certain policy domains is likely to remain relatively stable, and that semi-permanent patterns of mutual support or opposition are likely to emerge over time.” This underlying assumption of stability depends on the existence of mutual benefits exchanged by the actors within a given network, but this is often not made explicit by the proponents of network theories.

So, when governance and policy network approaches are employed to examine bureaucracy-interest group interactions, these studies are usually aimed at explaining how many and which actors are involved in policy making and how long-term interaction patterns, resulting from a perceived mutual benefit, influence eventual policy outcomes. Another consequence of such stable relationships, namely routine behaviour, is often not explicitly mentioned in policy network studies. What we can infer from this literature is that bureaucracy-interest group interactions serve a mutual benefit, tend to be durable, and could turn into routine behaviour over time.

2.5 The missing link

As diverse as the scholarly contributions on bureaucracy-interest group interactions are, they have one commonality. They all seek to explain particular, not fully responsive, patterns of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. A true null hypothesis underlying this common objective would account for interactions between bureaucracies and interest groups that include all relevant interests and do not discriminate among interest groups representing these interests. Such a null-hypothesis reflects the more normative statements and theories about the role of a bureaucracy and interests groups in a democracy. A central concern about the role of the bureaucracy in a democracy is how to reconcile the efficiency, stability, and order a bureaucratic organisation seeks to achieve with the need to be accountable and politically responsive in a democratic society (Burke 1986; Gormley and Balla 2004; Meier 1997). With regard to the role of interest groups in a democracy, this normative aspect is reflected in the concern that bias in the interest population may

afford the well-organised and powerful members too much influence in the policy process (Schattschneider 1970[1960]; Olson 1965).

From a democratic point of view, interactions between bureaucracies and interest groups should then indeed be more evenly distributed among interest groups representing each group of citizens or organisations targeted by a particular policy issue. In other words, bureaucratic agencies should be fully responsive to the entire general public (or at least those with salient interests in a policy area) and not only to a few carefully selected organisations. Full responsiveness, however, is often like a *fata morgana*; it simply does not exist in reality. Many authors thus turn to questions of who is more influential or powerful, the bureaucracy or interest groups (Hill 1991). The theoretical challenge then is to provide a systematic explanation of why bureaucrats reach out to a particular subset of existing interest groups, for what reasons, and how their reasons may vary under different circumstances. The bottom line is that we need to fully understand the circumstances which enable either bureaucracies or interest groups to dominate the start and maintenance of their interactions.

As has been discussed in the previous sections, three broad perspectives on bureaucracy-interest group interactions feature in the literature: bureaucratic politics, interest group studies and policy network studies. Each suggests that interaction patterns are not evenly distributed among various interests, albeit for different reasons. The bureaucratic politics perspective suggests that bureaucrats behave opportunistically to improve career options, to ensure their agency's survival, or to improve policy implementation. The interest group literature addresses the strategies of interest groups in approaching bureaucratic agencies, trying to explain interest groups' influence and success. Policy network perspectives suggest that there will be close ties between bureaucratic agencies, interest groups and elected politicians, influencing eventual policy outcomes. These ties not only appear to be close, but they also turn out to be rather stable over time, as they serve a mutual benefit.

So, the question of why bureaucrats cooperate with some interest groups rather than others can be answered by three general sets of propositions that follow from these three perspectives (see figure 2.1). First, interaction between bureaucracies and interest groups occurs because bureaucrats consciously and strategically pick and choose who to talk to serve their own interests. Or, secondly, interest groups can choose to interact with certain bureaucrats because they are influential enough to do so. Finally, other mechanisms, such as mutual benefit, allow such interactions to thrive.

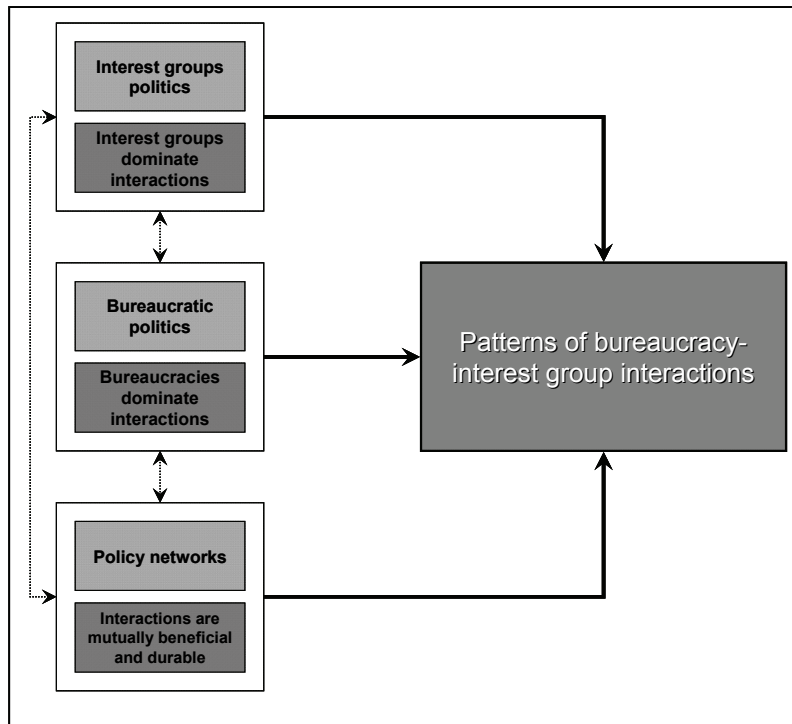


Figure 2.1 Three sets of explanations for bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

Each of these strands of literature illuminates a certain aspect of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, and each is rich with theories and illustrations. Thus, the basic problem is not that there is not enough information about bureaucracy-interest group interactions, but that we simply do not know under which circumstances which of these explanations will hold. Each of these strands of literature explains bureaucracy-interest group interactions from a different perspective or as part of a broader framework. We thus need a model that is able to differentiate between situations when either bureaucrats or interest groups are decisive in establishing and maintaining relationships and that can simultaneously distinguish between short-term and long-term interactions. Chapter 3 will discuss such a model

Why bureaucrats interact with interest groups

3.1 Introduction

Dutch civil servants did have strong incentives to interact with immigrant organisations. They needed those organisations to mediate their relationships with diverse immigrant communities. Similarly, New York's City administration needed such organisations to create 'communication channels' (Thompson 2005) to more quickly solve intercultural tensions in New York City's neighbourhoods. There seems to be something unique to the issues facing minorities, so that civil servants need such organisations, especially those that can constitute a link between governments and individual communities. The question is whether we can explain such bureaucracy-interest group interactions more generally. For instance, could this particular capacity to intermediate be similarly valuable in other policy areas? Or, under which circumstances could other driving forces of bureaucracy-interest group interactions be more important? To more fully examine such public bureaucracy-interest group interactions, we need a theoretical framework with which to systematically compare these interactions. Consider the following quotes,

We need each other; there is no question about it.¹

What does it take to be a successful lobbyist? Offering trustworthy information is the essential trick."²

This is how I perceived these women's organisations, as an entrance to the target group, they knew these kids.³

The insurance companies and their associations? They are powerful players in the field, because we need them for financing the system.⁴

These quotes are either from civil servants or interest groups, from different policy fields and different levels of government. Yet they share the same understanding, that some goods are traded for others. What the different theoretical explanations, which I discussed in the previous chapter, have in common is that they implicitly entail such exchanges as well. For instance, interest groups trade information and expertise for access; bureaucrats need public support; or, such exchanges are assumed to serve a mutual benefit so that they last over time. The key difference is

¹ Interview by author.

² Idem.

³ Poppelaars 2007, 17.

⁴ Interview by author.

that these different accounts vary in their assessment of which of the two sets of actors is more 'powerful:' the bureaucrats or the interest groups. So, amid the conceptual variety in the three strands of literature examined in chapter 2, a common element recurs: some goods are traded for others.

Such common ground is exactly what is needed to engage in comparative research. It provides an appropriate abstraction of bureaucracy-interest group interactions that moves beyond the idiosyncrasies of each individual explanation by capturing the idea of 'exchanging goods.' Such an exchange of resources is the main explanatory variable of interorganisational behaviour in the classic resource dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]) and will be used to explain bureaucracy-interest group interactions. In sum, the argument developed in this chapter is that by reconceptualising bureaucracy-interest group interactions as resource exchanges, it is possible to systematically compare those interactions across cases and over time. And, in doing so, this reconceptualisation allows us to distinguish between the explanations offered by the literatures on bureaucratic politics, interest group politics, and policy networks.

I proceed in several steps to develop the explanatory model of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. First, I briefly summarise the original resource dependence theory developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (2003[1978]). Second, I reconceptualise bureaucracy-interest group interactions based on resource dependence theory and I subsequently add a comparative and longitudinal perspective to this reconceptualisation. Finally, I develop a concrete explanatory model of bureaucracy-interest group interactions across cases and over time, based on the resource dependence reconceptualisation.

3.2 Reconceptualising bureaucracy-interest group interactions

Resource dependence theory has been developed as an instrument to understand organisational behaviour by examining the social context of organisations. According to resource dependence scholars, organisations are embedded in a network of interdependencies and social relationships (Aldrich and Pfeffer 1976; Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]). They argue that organisations interact with each other to obtain resources they do not control themselves. Such dependencies may serve a mutual benefit, but can also be highly asymmetrical when one organisation controls the most important resources needed by another.

Resource dependence theory, when applied to interest group politics, is often used to explain variance in access of interest groups to public policy making, based on the resources they control that are useful for policy makers. Illustrative is the use of resource exchange to explain the access of interest groups to the different institutions of the European Union. The institutions' varying needs for expertise or information explained the variance in access that certain interest groups were granted (Beyers and Kerremans 2004; Bouwen 2002; 2004).

Resources may come in many guises, but can generally be defined as the utilities an organisation needs to function effectively or even to survive. In their classic work, Pfeffer and Salancik (2003 [1978], xii) defined resources to include financial and physical means, as well as information. Benson (1975) argued that

not only financial means but also grants of authority are essential resources an organisation should possess.⁵ Unlike neo-institutionalist theory, intangible assets such as legitimacy or political support can also be defined as resources in resource dependence theory (Scott 2001). For example, civil servants have been shown to establish relations with networks of interest groups to strengthen their position towards their political superiors (Carpenter 2001), or to enable smooth implementation, a strategy also known as cooptation (Selznick 1953). A final resource that is important throughout the implementation of public policy is the organisational capacity to actually deliver (urban) services, a key variable in policy network analyses of service delivery (O'Toole Jr., Hanf, and Hupe 1997; Kjaer 2004). The resources included in exchange relationships may thus be very different in nature and can range from financial means to political support and from authority to implementation capacity.

3.2.1 Assumptions of resource dependence theory

Having something important to offer is one thing that explains interactions. Yet, resource dependence theory rests on several additional assumptions to explain interorganisational behaviour. First, it is not a purely deterministic explanation of interorganisational behaviour. Resource dependence theory recognises that organisations may behave strategically to steer or manipulate interactions with other organisations as they wish to acquire the resources they need. This entails strategic decision making about how to minimise interdependence with some other organisations, while maintaining beneficial relations. Some argue that the core function of organisations is such resource acquisition and that decision makers are fully oriented towards resource acquisition and securing a supply of adequate resources (Benson 1975).⁶ The organisations or actors in question deliberately choose to interact with each other and to maintain their relationships. In other words: “The organisations involved in the exchange [of resources, CP] make an implicit or explicit cost-benefit analysis on the basis of which they decide with whom to interact” (Bouwen 2002, 368). Thus, an organisation has to make up its mind about who to interact with, which necessarily entails some room to manoeuvre or to make strategic choices.⁷

Second, the role of subjectivity is important in selecting resources and the organisations from which to obtain these resources. Based on Weick's (1967) concept of the ‘enacted environment,’ Pfeffer and Salancik (2003[1978]) argue that

5 Benson (1975, 232) defines authority as follows: “the legitimation of activities, the right and responsibility to carry out programs of a certain kind, dealing with a broad problem area or focus.”

6 This differs from other contextual theories, such as population ecology and (neo-) institutionalism. Each of these perspectives focuses on the environment to explain an organisation's success or survival. Population ecology theory links natural selection processes to survival (Hannan and Freeman 1997; van Witteloostuijn 2000), whereas neo-institutional theory focuses on norms, values, and social expectations as key environmental factors influencing organisations (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003 [1978]; Scott 2001). Both strands of literature implicitly treat the natural selection or norms and values, respectively, in terms of ‘an unseen hand explanation’ similar to the logic of supply and demand equilibria in micro-economics. Natural selection, in the case of population ecology, and norms, values and social expectations, in the case of neo-institutionalism, are treated as simply ‘out there,’ determining an organisation's options for survival.

7 This responsiveness is necessarily limited, in the sense that conflicting demands or goals may arise and organisations can rarely respond to all conflicting demands (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]).

organisations give meaning to their environment, implying that the environment is subjective. “Organisational environments are not given realities; they are created through a process of attention and interpretation,” according to Pfeffer and Salancik (2003[1978], 13). In other words, organisations not only objectively select the resources they need; they also select those resources based on what they *perceive* to be important. A good example is political attention to what in the Netherlands is called ‘radicalisation.’ Radicalisation refers to the development of religious fundamentalism or fundamentalism in a general sense. Although Islamic radicalism, right-wing radicalism, and environmental radicalism might entail an equal threat to state security, Islamic radicalism receives far more attention than the other two types of fundamentalism.⁸ Islamic fundamentalism is thus perceived to be a top priority in ensuring public safety. Many actions of the Dutch government can be explained by this perception, as well as the resources they accordingly need. Inside information, for instance, is important in addressing radicalisation, which renders immigrant organisations very useful partners for the Dutch government (Poppelaars 2007). In sum, resource dependence theory assumes that organisations subjectively decide what is important, which resources they need, and from whom it is best to obtain them.

Although resource dependence creates interdependence, such interdependence is not necessarily asymmetrical. This is another assumption underlying Pfeffer’s and Salancik’s resource dependence theory (2003[1978]). Interdependencies can also be symmetric, symbiotic or even asymmetric and symbiotic at the same time. Consider, for instance, a hypothetical interest group ‘Defending the Blind’ that receives subsidies from the government to organise get-a-job trajectories for the blind. Representing the blind is clearly the *raison d’être* of the organisation. Yet, it exists by the virtue of those governmental funds to organise the get-a-job trajectories. In this sense, the relation is clearly asymmetric. But it is symbiotic at the same time. ‘Defending the Blind’ receives government funds, and as result of this funding, it can continue its representative tasks. Vice versa, it contributes to an important target of the government: decreasing unemployment. Both parties gain in this asymmetric relationship. Interdependencies between organisations thus assume a certain power division.⁹ From a resource perspective, one organisation is more powerful than another because it is less dependent on other resources, has direct access to resources, or is the only provider of an important resource.

Resource dependence theory further assumes that organisations try to manipulate their environments. Organisations seek to obtain adequate resources. To do so, they are dependent on their position in the market and their power to affect the flow of resources. They not only adapt to the environment, but they seek to create the most favourable environment for obtaining resources by, for instance, influencing regulation via financial contributions to political parties or via providing support to governing coalitions in order to get access (Benson 1975;

8 Nota *Radicalisme en Radicalisering* (Policy Memorandum *Radicalism and Radicalisation*; Parliamentary Papers, 2005-2006, 29754, nr. 26, 3).

9 ‘Power’ is usually defined as the ability of actor A to make actor B do what A wants him to do or severely affect actor B’s life (cf. McClelland 1996, 650). Power is extremely difficult to define (see Dahl 2005[1961]), and even more difficult to measure. Because of this, I refer to power in a general sense rather than a specific political concept throughout this study.

Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978] 188-222). As Pfeffer and Salancik (2003[1978], 190) note: “Organisational attempts to alter or adapt the external political or economic environment are almost limitless.” Economic regulation is a well-known example in which organisations not only adapt to but try to create the environment as well. Regulation policies are shown to often benefit the regulated industry, as a result of influential stakeholders (Posner 1974; Stigler 1971; Yackee 2005). In the language of the resource dependence theory, this is a result of individual firms manipulating the environment to minimise dependence.

Resource dependence theory assumes, in summary, that organisations interact with each other because they need resources that other organisations control. Such resources are very different in nature and include, for instance, financial means, political support, or a capacity to intermediate. Organisations subjectively decide what important resources are. Based on such a perception, they decide with whom they need to interact to obtain those resources. This necessarily entails strategic decision making. In addition, resource dependence theory assumes that organisations try to manipulate their interactions and their environment so as to minimise their dependence to finally achieve full autonomy.

3.2.2 Resource dependence between bureaucrats and interest groups

The idea of exchanging goods is a core element of resource dependence theory. As we have seen, the literatures on bureaucratic politics, interest group politics and policy networks share an implicit assumption of trading or exchanging goods. We can thus use this element of resource exchange to systematically compare bureaucracy-interest group interactions at a more abstract level.

Applying resource dependence theory to bureaucracy-interest group interactions assumes that variation in the types of resources controlled by interest groups results in variation in the interactions between them and bureaucracies. If interest groups do not control resources that are useful to policy makers, it will be hard for them to get access. Vice versa, if bureaucrats do not control or get access to appropriate resources, they will be less able to establish autonomy for their agency, to support their political superior, or to properly implement policy plans. In the approach taken here, each interaction between bureaucrats and interest groups will be defined as a resource exchange determined by two aspects: the characteristics of the resources in question, and contextual factors in the political-administrative environment.¹⁰ The first element allows a classification of these relations, while the second allows a systematic comparison. Concerning the characteristics of the resources in question, the following elements are important (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]): 1) the importance of a resource to the organisation(s) in question, 2) the discretion of an organisation to use that particular resource, and 3) the extent of an organisation’s control over a resource. By examining each of these characteristics, and how they vary under different circumstances, we should be able to fully specify a given situation of resource exchanges between bureaucrats and interest groups. Below, I first discuss the resource characteristics.

¹⁰ Implicitly, this assumes that every type of interactions can be characterised by a resource exchange. Indeed, even short informal talks often serve the exchange of some sort of information, yet contact for just making appointments would obviously not be characterised as a resource exchange.

The importance of resources

Resources vary in their importance. And, as a consequence, a given dependency relation will be more severe when a particular resource is extremely important to a certain organisation than when it is not. A resource's importance is determined by two factors: its relative magnitude within the total exchange, and its criticality to the organisation. The first component refers to the proportion that a resource constitutes of the total input or output of resources. One could easily imagine, for instance, that academic staff is an important resource of the total set of resources universities need to obtain to survive. They, however, do not necessarily make up the largest proportion of these resources. Students constitute a larger part of the resources a university needs to survive. The question is which of these two resources is more important for its survival?

This brings me to the second component of resource importance, its criticality to the organisation. By criticality, we mean the ability of the organisation to function effectively without that particular resource (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978], 46). A 'critical' resource does not necessarily constitute the largest proportion of the organisation's total input or output of resources. Consider the following example. A shipyard receives an order to build naval vessels to be used in UN peace-keeping operations. To build these vessels, the shipyard has to obtain several resources, such as material to construct the hull, and skilled engineers to prevent instability and other hydro-mechanical inconveniences. These resources, among others, allow these vessels to cruise the oceans. Yet, one important resource for them to become useful in UN peace-keeping operations is missing. Without any weaponry, these vessels will be unable to execute their main task of establishing, enforcing or maintaining peace. So, weaponry could be seen as the most important resource for this shipyard to obtain, despite its small proportion of the total amount of resources. This implies that the second dimension, criticality, is more important in determining the importance of a resource than its proportion to the total set of resources required by an organisation.

Based on this idea of criticality, we can rank resources based on their importance in enabling an organisation to determine what others have called the 'most problematic dependency' (Jacobs 1974). The most problematic dependency is the resource the organisation needs most to ensure its survival or to perform its tasks. Recall the example of racial violence in the city of New York, discussed in the introduction to this study. With knowledge of and contacts with key figures from the individual social groups, New York City might have been able to better probe the atmosphere in these communities. Communication channels could be termed a critical resource with which this crisis could have been prevented or more quickly solved, without having to resort to a massive use of police force. In this study, the importance of a resource will be defined in terms of being most problematic or critical to an organisation's survival.

Discretion over and control of resources

It is not only the importance of a resource that determines a resource exchange relationship. Discretion over resources refers to the ability to decide upon the allocation or use of resources. This may include the actual possession of a resource, access to it, or the ability to administer its use (for instance, via regulation). The

extent of control over resources refers to the degree of concentration of a resource within a given number of organisations. In other words, how many organisations control a given resource? When the resource you desperately need is in the control of a single organisation, you fully rely on that organisation to obtain it. This explains why immigrant organisations, albeit relatively weak in terms of financial and human capital, have an important function for the Dutch government. They are the only ones who can provide proper access to certain groups within society (Poppelaars 2007). In analytical terms, these second and third dimensions, i.e., the discretion over and the control of a given resource, can be combined. If you have discretion to decide upon a resource, you will also be able to control it. Or, vice versa, control over a resource implies a possibility to decide upon its use and its allocation, which implies discretion at the same time. So, these two dimensions can be combined into a single dimension of ‘concentration of control over a resource’ (hereafter ‘concentration of resources,’ for convenience). In sum, two elements define a given resource exchange situation: the importance of resources, defined by its criticality to the organisation, and their concentration in the environment, defined by the number of organisations capable of controlling such a resource.

3.3 Resource dependence across cases

Bureaucrats and interest groups do not interact in a complete vacuum. Their interactions will vary across different political-administrative dimensions. Systematic variation of these dimensions thus should enable systematic comparison of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. In order to systematically compare, we need to distil the systemic effects of the political-administrative environment (see chapter 4). I will use the position of bureaucrats as the point of the departure in defining such systemic effects, thereby distinguishing between institutional and policy-related contextual variables.¹¹ The systemic effects of the political-administrative environment that most significantly influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions are national interest representation regimes, the nature of political-administrative relations, the organisational culture, and the formal tasks of public agencies. Interest representation regime is often used as an important variable in explaining interest group behaviour and access, whereas political-administrative relations, organisational culture, and formal agency tasks relate to the immediate environment of bureaucrats, which is important in the bureaucratic politics literature. A second set of contextual variables refers to policy characteristics. Not just policy content, but also policy saliency, complexity and political sensitivity are likely to influence interactions between interest groups and bureaucrats. How policy is framed will also affect bureaucracy-interest group interactions. And finally, Europeanisation is an important factor to include. These variables relate to the literature on policy networks and interest group politics as

¹¹ In this study, as said, the bureaucrat will be the point of departure. To fully model bureaucracy-interest group interactions, one would need to include contextual dimensions important in explaining interest group behaviour as well. Yet given practical constraints, I opted for a focus on bureaucrats, implying that several contextual factors more important to interest groups are lacking in the model (but see chapter 6 for an empirical assessment of potentially relevant contextual factors in explaining interest group behaviour).

they are shown to be important in explaining interest group behaviour and interactions between interest groups and the government in general. Below, I will discuss each of these contextual variables more elaborately and hypothesise their effect on either resource concentration, resource importance or both.

3.3.1 National interest representation regimes

National systems of interest representation will significantly influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions, as they entail different ways of organising access for interest groups to government. The main difference of importance here lies in the extent to which access is institutionalised and hierarchically organised.¹² Traditionally, pluralism refers to a political system with an emphasis on the primacy of groups, in which any interest can and will be represented, at least in principle (Dahl 2005[1961]; Truman 1951). Corporatism is an equally broad perspective and refers to a more restricted pattern of interest group involvement in policy making (Molina and Rhodes 2002; Schmitter 1985; 1989). Here, the institutions and arrangements for participation and interaction are established by the government and are highly institutionalised. In a pluralist system, however, participation and interactions are much less institutionalised. And whereas corporatism implies a dominant state, pluralism does so to a far lesser extent. Interest groups' behaviour is inevitably affected by these organising principles, as are the choices of public bureaucracies to interact with them.

When we relate these organising principles to a resource dependence approach, bureaucrats in less-institutionalised systems have more options to choose among interest groups as partners to interact with, because access is less restricted than in highly institutionalised systems. The difference thus results in varying degrees of resource concentration. Due to the relatively highly institutionalised nature of interest representation in the Netherlands, for instance, civil servants may be less able to interact with interest groups that are not included in the institutionalised patterns or platforms of consultation. This means that the number of interest groups that have access to civil servants may be lower, which, in turn, results in higher resource concentration. So, we hypothesise that:

When national interest representation systems are highly institutionalised, the concentration of resources in the environment will be high. [H I]

3.3.2 The bureaucratic environment

Variation across national interest representation regimes is not the only important factor determining the political environment of bureaucrats. The organisational environment of bureaucrats is another important factor to take into account. In this study, the following variables will represent this organisational environment of bureaucrats: political-administrative relations, organisational culture, and a functional distinction between public agencies.

¹² I thus proceed from the organisational structure of interest representation. This reflects the key difference between what Schmitter (1989) terms concertation and corporatism (see chapter 2).

Political-administrative relations

How the political executive and (senior) civil servants relate to each other is an important factor to take into account as well. We thus need to examine how the political environment of bureaucrats touches upon their daily activities. For example, the composition of the government and constitutional characteristics are assumed to affect a civil servant's relationship with the political executive.¹³ As a representative of an interest group observes:

Civil servants are usually loyal to their political executives. Yet if there is a weak minister or secretary of state, civil servants will just say to us: "Let's see what we can do for each other." If the political executive shows strong leadership, however, the political beacons will be clearly set with less room to manoeuvre. Indeed, we see the games they play change when new political executives are in office.¹⁴

Political-administrative relations are likely to change when the government in office changes. One way to include such a 'political spill-over effect' on bureaucracy-interest group interactions is by examining political-administrative relationships. Political-administrative relations often refer to the extent of political control of the bureaucracy and the role in policy making bureaucracies normatively should, and empirically do have (see chapter 2). I refer to politicisation of the bureaucracy to capture such 'political spill-over effects'. Politicisation in this case does not refer to the number of political appointees within a bureaucracy, but is defined as the nature of the tasks of a bureaucracy (Peters and Pierre 2004). From this definition, we can assume that the more the tasks of a bureaucracy become politicised, the more room to manoeuvre civil servants will have in interacting with interest groups. Such a politicisation will imply a need for different resources. Senior civil servants engaged in political-strategic decision making on infrastructural projects, for instance, will prefer political support rather than consultation on the nitty-gritty of technical aspects. So, when civil servants are engaged in political-strategic decision making, they will most likely need another mixture of resources than those who are not, or are to a lesser extent, engaged in political-strategic decision making. At first sight, a larger role of political-strategic insights in a bureaucrat's job will result in a need for both different resources and a higher concentration of resources, since not all interest groups will be able to offer what the bureaucrat needs. For instance, a top civil servant at the department of macro-economics needs highly sophisticated models to anticipate future economic

¹³ This thus implies that I exclude institutional characteristics of constitutional design, the nature of the executive government and its political party system (cf. Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004; Lijphart 1999) as such from the analysis. For a model that focuses on interest groups as a point of departure, these factors may be more relevant as they directly influence the strategic decision making of interest groups as to where to seek access. Another feature of civil service systems that could be important is the distinct administrative culture apparent in different civil service systems. Two models are often invoked to explain administrative culture, 'Rechtsstaat' and 'Public Interest' (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004; see also Rutgers 2001), which represent variation in state dominance in organising public interests. This idea of administrative culture only seems to indicate some general variations. In addition, the difference in dominant or non-dominant states is reflected by the variable of interest representation regimes. Therefore, I excluded it from the model.

¹⁴ Interview by author.

trends. Not every organisation would be able to offer the necessary information or contribute to meeting this need. So, we can hypothesise that,

When civil service positions require high levels of political-strategic insight, the importance and concentration of resources will be high. [H2]¹⁵

Organisational culture

Organisational cultures consist of a set of norms and values determining how individual employees interpret the task of the organisation, their role within the organisation, and how he or she perceives the environment. As such, organisational culture will influence how bureaucrats interact with interest groups. Organisational culture may be an important aspect determining bureaucracy-interest group interactions, but a complicating factor is that it is notoriously difficult to examine systematically. Culture may apply to an entire national civil service system, or culture may differ from agency to agency within a nation's civil service system (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004, 54-63; Scott 2001). Also, while scholars see organisational culture as an important explanatory factor determining an organisation's success or failure, it is one that is hard to cast in prescriptive typologies or hypotheses (Carpenter 2001; Wilson 2000[1989]).¹⁶ Inter-organisational classifications that now exist typically distinguish only between public and private organisations (Hofstede 1998) and not between various types of public agencies. The main challenge, then, is that we cannot ascertain what aspects of organisational culture will matter for any given organisation, or how to systematically compare such aspects across different organisations.¹⁷ In sum, there is considerable scholarly agreement about the importance of organisational culture as an explanatory factor for organisational success, but there are few, if any, agreed-upon theories that specifically relate aspects of organisational culture to how different types of organisations survive.

Wilson's definition is an appropriate starting point to theorise about the effects of organisational culture on resource exchanges, given his external perspective on organisational culture. In his view, organisational culture is "a persistent way of thinking about the central tasks of and human relationships within an organisation." And, "organisational culture consists of those patterned and

¹⁵ I note that this relationship may be mitigated by the very same strategic position these civil servants occupy. As a result of their greater discretion, they will enjoy more leeway, allowing them to diversify the set of interest groups and perhaps even to dismiss those they do not approve of. This administrative leeway could thus mitigate a potentially high degree of dependence. For now, I exclude such potential mitigation effects from the hypothesis, as this effect is more uncertain than the main effect noted therein.

¹⁶ Carpenter differs from scholars such as Wilson in his view that bureaucracies do not necessarily require a culture (Carpenter 2001, 24, note 24). He defines bureaucratic culture as a prevailing metaphor of the organisation; therefore, the absence of a culture in his opinion exists if "employees and clients do not feel inclined to 'consume' any of the available metaphors, or when there are so many contending metaphors that none of them take hold." His conception of bureaucratic culture as 'buying into' a prevailing and powerful metaphor precludes the possibility of employees adhering to existing practices that could well be part of an organisation's culture, without consciously 'buying into it' and ignores the fact that refraining from adherence to a certain organisational metaphor can be defined a (sub)culture as well.

¹⁷ Such a lack of systematic research is attributed by some to the abundance of case studies characterising this field and the fact that nation states often remain the only available researchable unit of analysis (Hofstede 1998; cf. Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004, 54-63).

enduring differences among systems of coordinated action that lead those systems to respond in different ways to the same stimuli” (Wilson 2000[1989], 91, 93). In other words, behavioural norms within organisations allow similar organisations to respond differently to similar environments. This idea, among others, united the German army, a Texas prison and Carver High School. They all created a common understanding among their employees about the critical task of their organisation so that everyone complied with it. It distinguished their performance and success from fellow army organisations, prisons and high schools in similar circumstances.

The notion of a strong common understanding among the individual members of an organisation can explain variance in bureaucracy-interest group interactions. First, we might assume that an important factor in determining the perception of an interest group is the extent to which a public agency considers it a legitimate partner to work with. Such an idea of legitimacy directly relates to the question of whether interest groups represent broad or narrow interests within society. When they are perceived to represent broad interests and, in doing so, to contribute to democratic decision making, bureaucrats will be more responsive. On the other hand, if interest groups are assumed to only represent narrow interests, resulting in non-democratic decision making, bureaucrats will be less likely to be responsive. Put differently, if there is a strong common understanding within the agency that interest groups are legitimate partners, civil servants will be more inclined to interact with them than when they are perceived as illegitimate partners.

A next step is to relate the existence or non-existence of such a common understanding to resource exchanges. When there is a strongly shared bias against interest groups, bureaucrats are inclined to diversify the total set of organisations, including both interest groups and other types of organisations, and minimise contacts with interest groups. Illustrative is the case of a major fraud scandal in the Dutch construction sector (*Bouwfraude*). Its main interest groups had hardly any access to the ministry, because they were perceived to be untrustworthy (see also chapter 7). When there is a strongly shared bias toward interest groups, bureaucrats may be inclined to proactively reach out to various interest groups, in turn enlarging the set of interest groups they rely on. Both cases decrease the concentration of resources in the environment.¹⁸ In other words, organisational culture mitigates the effects of a dependence on interest groups, because it results in lower resource concentration. We can thus hypothesise that,

When there is a strong common sense within a public agency against or in favour of interest groups, the concentration of resources will be low. [H3]

Functional differences between public agencies

The functional distinction between different public agencies is also assumed to cause variation in bureaucracy-interest group interactions. An agency responsible for allocating agricultural subsidies, for instance, is likely to engage in interactions with different interest groups than those with which a policy advisory unit involved

¹⁸ In theory, there are four different options: strong common sense against interest groups, strong common sense in favour of interest groups, weak common sense against interest groups, and weak common sense in favour of interest groups. I focus on the first two options, as a strong common sense entails an organisational culture that influences individual behaviour more than a weak common sense would do.

in strategic decision making on future agricultural policy will interact. Or, the nature of the interactions with interest groups is likely to vary between different agencies. To theorise about how functional differences result in variance of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, I use Dunleavy's (1991) typology of functional differences as a point of departure.¹⁹ His typology is explicitly based on functional differences between government agencies. He distinguishes between several types of agencies, among them regulatory agencies, delivery agencies, taxing agencies, and control agencies (see Dunleavy 1991, 183-187).²⁰

We can derive a threefold functional distinction from Dunleavy's typology that is particularly relevant to bureaucracy-interest group interactions, namely: policy advice, regulatory and service delivery agencies. This three-fold typology of government agencies is important for explaining variation in bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Policy advisory agencies are important, as the literatures on both bureaucratic politics and policy networks focus on policy making and decision making. Examples are the organisational subunits located in the ministerial departments responsible for policy development. Policy delivery agencies are also useful to include, as a supplement to the dominant focus on policy formulation in the policy network literature. In the Netherlands, the immigration agency (*De Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst*) is a good example of such service delivery agencies. Finally, much of the interest group literature concerned with bureaucracy-interest group relations seems to concern regulation. To incorporate both regulation and control and supervision, the category of monitoring agency is added to the classification used in this study. Examples are the Dutch authority for the financial markets (*Autoriteit Financiële Markten*) or the Dutch health care inspectorate (*Inspectie Gezondheidszorg*).

These functional differences can be related to bureaucracy-interest group interactions, as they demarcate tasks of civil servants and thus identify the resources civil servants need to accomplish their tasks. That is, agency tasks mostly relate to the importance of resources, as variation in agency types will relate to the different nature of resources needed. Advisory agencies may require expertise more often than their colleagues at service delivery agencies, or may need a different type of expertise. Service delivery agencies may consider implementation capacity more important than expertise. And, in the case of monitoring or regulatory agencies, both expertise and implementation capacity may be important. So, we can hypothesise that,

The importance of resources will vary across different types of agencies. [H4]

19 See also Wilson (2000[1989], 159-171) for a functional typology of government agencies. According to Wilson's classification, which he insists we must use with caution (Wilson, 1989, 159), other types of organisations are: procedural agencies (only outputs can be observed, e.g. mental hospital), craft organisation (only outcomes can be observed, e.g. army during wartime), and a coping organisation (neither outputs nor outcomes can be observed, e.g. schools). Interestingly, on the basis of the costs and benefits a certain policy issue generates, and thus different collective action patterns an agency faces, he constructs another agency-typology (client agencies, majoritarian agencies, entrepreneurial and interest-group agencies). It remains unclear, however, how these two typologies relate to each other, and, if so, whether and when they overlap.

20 This typology was developed in part to contrast with classic budget-maximisation models of bureaucratic behaviour (Dunleavy 1991, 174-209). Taken in isolation, it nevertheless serves as a useful starting point to theorise about how agency differences would influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

3.3.3 Policy characteristics

In the literatures on interest group politics and policy networks, variation in policy issues and policy sectors is important in explaining interest group behaviour or interest groups' access to public decision making (see Baumgartner and Leech 1998). Several well-known policy typologies link content-related factors to variation in collective action patterns (Lowi 1964, 1972; Stone 1997; Wilson 2000[1989]). Yet, it remains difficult to deductively generate meaningful hypotheses on the relation between policy content and different types of collective action. The most pressing problem seems to be that these policy typologies assume that policy content results in different patterns of collective action. That is, they do not exclude the possibility that collective action patterns came first, and out of those patterns, certain public measures evolved (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Stone 1997). Also, these typologies have mostly been constructed and subsequently applied in cross-sectional research. Over time, however, costs might turn into benefits for the very same constituents, and conflict might shift to consensus. Differently put, issue perception may change over time (Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 41-43). Recollect the immigrant integration issue discussed in chapter 1. It has been shown that issue perception, or framing, of immigrant integration policies in the Netherlands has changed over time. Whereas in the 1990s social and economic issues were important in framing immigrant integration, over recent years, issues of culture and religion within a diverse society have become increasingly important (Poppelaars and Scholten 2008). This shift in issue perception may have consequences for getting access. Furthermore, several policy areas could contain regulative and redistributive elements. Agriculture, for instance, generally classified as a regulative policy area (Ripley and Franklin 1986; Blom-Hansen 2001), contains redistributive elements as well, such as subsidies to farmers in Europe and the tariff barriers they entail. And one could argue that every policy issue is in essence redistributive in nature, as redistribution or dispersal of negative consequences of citizen behaviour usually is the main goal.

In sum, these typologies help to signal different collective action patterns that are potentially related to issue content. However, they do not provide a firm basis from which to estimate the precise direction of the relationships between specific policy issues and certain types of collective action patterns (or vice versa). When theorising about variation in bureaucracy-interest group interactions across policy issues, we thus need to distil other characteristics of policy content likely to influence those interactions. Below, I discuss how issue salience, policy complexity, and political sensitivity relate to resource exchanges.

The salience of an issue

Let me first consider issue salience. Kollman (1998), for instance, combines issue salience, i.e. whether the public is inattentive or attentive, with issue popularity to explain interest group strategies to gain access and exert influence. However, whether or not issues are salient, interest groups will seek to exert influence whenever their private interests are negatively addressed by policy proposals. In other words, it is not a matter of *if*, but a matter of *how* they will do so. Indeed, interest groups adapt their strategies when issues become more or less salient (see for a discussion of the literature: Lowery and Brasher 2004, 175-177). Over recent

decades, immigrant integration has become a very salient issue in the Netherlands, thereby enlarging its scope of activity. It has developed from an issue of guest workers to an all-encompassing issue that is perceived to influence many aspects of society, including education, public safety and the labour market. Accordingly, the number and type of organisations and interest groups involved in the issue have been expanding. We now find not just traditional immigrant organisations, but also professional organisations, educational organisations, housing cooperations and so on. The number of organisations the government has to deal with to address this issue has increased over time.²¹ Issue salience thus matters for bureaucracy-interest group interactions as well. Once an issue becomes salient, resource concentration will decrease, as it moves from a 'hidden' issue to a 'more visible' issue about which other interest groups in society might have something to add. So, it seems that bureaucrats should benefit when issues become salient and we can thus hypothesise that,

When issues are salient, the concentration of resources in the environment will be low. [H5]

The complexity of an issue

The complexity of certain policy issues is also likely to result in different patterns of collective action. Complexity, or technical complexity, refers to the extent to which understanding of a specialist or expert is required. Or, according to Gormley (1983, 89-90), the problem requires in principle a professional appraisal rather than a normative account. Financial instruments and regulations to monitor financial markets are technically complex and usually require a high standard of professional expertise.²² Constructing innovative dams, bridges, and other devices to prevent the Netherlands from flooding needs highly technical expertise, which only a few organisations can offer. Complexity, in Gormley's definition, thus certainly would matter for bureaucracy-interest group interactions. High complexity means that resources will be highly concentrated and civil servants have little leeway to make strategic choices about with whom to interact. Thus, we can hypothesise that,

When issues are technically complex, the concentration of resources will be high. [H6]

The political sensitivity of an issue

Gormley (1983) combines technical complexity with what he terms 'consumer conflict' to explain the effectiveness of advocacy. Consumer conflict refers to the impact that policies might have and is high when a policy proposal is expected to benefit some people at the expense of many others. The rise of oil prices, for instance, is likely to become an issue with potentially high consumer conflict. Higher oil prices perhaps benefit the oil companies and petrol stations, but they are a strong disadvantage for transport companies and individual citizens when

²¹ Parliamentary Papers, 2003-2004, 28689, nrs. 8-9.

²² This may change, however, when the negative consequences of such technical financial instruments touch upon the daily lives of citizens, such as in the 2008 sub-prime mortgage and credit crises. Even highly technical issues may thus 'tip over' to issues involving highly normative accounts.

refuelling their cars. Both dimensions, technical complexity and consumer conflict, generate different options for either grass-roots advocacy (citizen groups) or proxy advocacy (government organisations representing residents from a certain jurisdiction in another government organisation's proceedings).²³ The 2007-2008 sub-prime mortgage crisis, for instance, has moved from a highly technical issue with low consumer conflict to an issue characterised by high complexity and high consumer conflict. Relatively few people benefit, whereas many suffer.

We may redefine Gormley's notion of consumer conflict in somewhat different terms to come to a sense of what is called political sensitivity. Politically sensitive issues not only potentially generate high consumer conflict, but, as a consequence, they will also give rise to conflict in parliament and thereby threaten the position of a political executive. Politically sensitive issues require civil servants to find an appropriate mix of interest groups with which they can interact to perform their job. The extent to which civil servants can diversify the resources they rely on to ground their advice and policy plans will matter considerably in politically sensitive issues. So, this tendency to diversify resources (Beyers 2004; Beyers and Kerremans 2004) will be even more important for politically sensitive issues than is normally the case. Politically sensitive issues may not only require a large amount of expertise to design a solid policy proposal. Obtaining legitimacy may be even more important. The recent public health reforms in the Netherlands not only required expertise on how to design a system in which insurance companies could properly cope with the insurance risks, how to implement market principles, and how to improve actual health care. These reforms also required, apart from the technical details, the approval of those involved in public health care. Obtaining expertise was one important element in this case; legitimacy and the need to ensure the appropriate amount of implementation capacity were perhaps even more important. The importance of various resources increased dramatically in this case.²⁴ So, in terms of resource exchange, the importance of resources becomes more relevant in politically-sensitive issues. We can thus hypothesise that:

When issues are politically sensitive, the relative importance of resources will be high. [H7]

3.3.4 Two additional contextual factors

Apart from factors specifically related to policy characteristics, two more abstract factors can be identified that are important in the interest group and policy network literature to explain group behaviour: the influence of ideas, or, 'framing.' And, secondly, Europeanisation in the context of EU member states. I discuss their effect on bureaucracy-interest group interactions more generally below.

²³ When complexity and consumer conflict are high, neither grass-roots nor proxy advocacy is effective (Gormley 1983). In these circumstances, we usually see a policy problem that lacks a solution or for which the outcomes cannot be easily perceived and there is a (fundamental) lack of agreement among the important actors about the nature of appropriate solutions. When issues are highly complex and there is low conflict, issues remain far from the public agenda (cf. Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 41).

²⁴ Discussion based on interviews by author.

The influence of ideas

Ideas matter in public policy making. They help certain issues to hit the political agenda when they fit the current dominant perception of what is important and what is not (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; 2005). They also help us to evaluate policy, learn from past experiences, adapt policy programs where necessary (Hall 1993), and to explain how policy develops and improves. Ideas may have different names, such as policy frames, policy paradigms, dominant world views, and policy discourse (Howlett and Ramesh 2003). What these different concepts essentially entail is a shared perspective on how the world works. In that sense, Weick's (1969) idea of enactment of the environment, important in Pfeffer's and Salancik's (2003[1978]) resource dependence theory, is nothing more than a set of ideas that determines how organisations and their members interpret their environment. Indeed, why do we perceive Islamic fundamentalism to be much more dangerous than Christian or Jewish fundamentalism, since all three are capable of resulting in a similar intolerance (Stern 2003)? Or, why did the Dutch environmental planning agency (NPM) struggle until 2006 to get its climate message heard, while in 2008 it is successful in doing so?²⁵ Major shifts in ideas by powerful agenda setters help to bring about a different perception of what is important or what is in desperate need for governmental action. Interest groups may be part of the policy communities either defending the status quo or trying to change it (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). Ideas thus will matter for bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

Ideas will determine who gets access or not, which resources are important, and to what extent such resources are concentrated within a given environment. When climate change, for instance, is predominantly framed as an economic issue (for instance, in terms of sustainable development and corporate responsibility), the set of organisations from which to obtain resources is much larger than when it is framed as environmental protection or wildlife preservation.²⁶ The type of resources will be different as well. Political support is perhaps much more important when national governments and the EU want to adopt stringent regulations to stimulate corporate responsibility among larger companies than when they want to add the house sparrow to the list of protected species. Such ideas may not only affect a single policy area, they may well have broader implications. Our current perception of Islamic fundamentalism in the Netherlands has a spill-over effect to, among other issues, public safety (how do we avoid terrorist attacks?), education (how do we prevent immigrant youth from dropping out and radicalising?), emancipation (how can we make sure that women from Islamic communities enjoy freedom of choice?), and even civil rights (what is more important to us, freedom of speech or freedom of religion?). Ideas, or framing, thus can be seen as a contextual variable that may operate at different levels of analysis. Returning to bureaucracy-interest group resource exchanges, we may assume that the current set of ideas on a particular policy or societal phenomena will influence both the importance of individual resources as well as their concentration in the environment.

²⁵ Private communication with members of the Dutch agenda setting project.

²⁶ cf. Parliamentary Papers, 2007-2007, 31209, nr. 1.

Enlargement of the environment

A final contextual factor to take into account, for European Union member states in particular, is that the institutional environment is not a given and fixed entity. European member states are increasingly confronted with a supranational governmental body that influences their internal and external affairs. As 'project Europe' steadily progresses, interactions between bureaucrats and interest groups are likely to be affected by what is often termed 'Europeanisation.' Europeanisation is a many-sided phenomenon (Olsen 2002), but a basic definition would at minimum entail the influence of Europe's supranational arrangements and laws on national institutions (Kohler-Koch 1997; Marks, Hooghe, and Blank 1996).²⁷ With respect to interest groups, Europeanisation is usually seen as influencing interest group strategies, as they endeavour to represent their interests when an additional level of government has emerged. The evidence of which governance level is more important to interest groups remains somewhat mixed. It seems, however, that despite ongoing Europeanisation, the national level remains the main target for national interest groups, although they engage in additional strategies to lobby Brussels (Beyers 2002; Visser and Wilts 2006; Wilts 2001).

In applying the argument to public bureaucracies and interest group interactions, a similar process is assumed to occur. Thus, while the environment and the number and type of actors within it in principle steadily expand, the main interactions will occur between national bureaucrats and national interest groups. Yet, similar to the studies on interest groups, both actors are assumed to employ additional strategies and engage in supranational or international interactions as well. As has become clear from the existing literature, Europeanisation is an ongoing process, the impact of which will vary from issue area to issue area and country to country. Additionally, it will depend on the degree of required compliance (regulation, directives, or the Open Method of Coordination) and the date of joining the EU. In the case of the Open Method of Coordination, for instance, Europeanisation will proceed slower given its noncommittal nature.

Given these multiple influences and the ongoing debate whether Europe influences member states or vice versa, it is difficult to pinpoint the precise direction of influence Europeanisation will have on bureaucracy-interest group interactions. On the one hand, we may assume that Europeanisation enlarges the environment. This renders the degree of dependence for bureaucrats less severe, since more organisations will be available to obtain resources from. In this case, Europeanisation results in lower resource concentration. Yet, on the other hand, EU policy making will demand a different type of resources, which may not be readily available within the current environment, thus resulting in higher resource concentration. Another effect could be that interest groups consider EU access to be more important than national access, rendering national civil servants more dependent on national interest groups. Furthermore, the 'EU factor' matters in different ways across different policy areas.

²⁷ Any definition of Europeanisation is not complete without taking into account its reciprocal nature. Differently put, studies of Europeanisation always suffer from the chicken-and-the-egg problem of what comes first, as national member states provide input for European decision making and European regulations affect national regulations in turn.

Given its many-sidedness, it would go beyond the purpose of this study to include it as a full explanatory variable in the model. Nonetheless, it remains a factor too significant to fully ignore and, therefore, it will be taken into account in the analysis in a more inductively-oriented fashion. A general impact of Europeanisation will be assessed, but concrete effects will not be hypothesised. It is left to the empirical analyses to reveal if and to what extent Europeanisation has an effect on the degree of dependence characterising national bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

3.3.5 A multidimensional view on resource dependence

As discussed above, bureaucrats and interest groups do not interact in a complete vacuum. The resource dependence assumed to characterise the relationships between these two sets of actors is thus undeniably affected by the political-administrative environment in which these interactions occur. I hypothesised that several contextual factors affect resource dependence between bureaucrats and interest groups, by stating their effect on either resource importance or resource concentration. These effects are listed in table 3.1

Table 3.1 The effect of contextual factors on the resource elements

Contextual factors	Effect on resource elements
Interest representation regime	When national interest representation regimes are highly institutionalised, the concentration of resources will be high.
Political-administrative relations	When civil service positions require a high level of political-strategic insight, the importance and concentration of resources will be high.
Organisational culture	When there is a strong common sense within a public agency against or in favour of interest groups, the concentration of resources will be low.
Agency type	The importance of resources will vary across different types of agencies.
Policy area	- When issues are salient, the concentration of resources will be low. - When issues are technically complex, the concentration of resources will be high. - When issues are politically sensitive, the relative importance of resources will be high.
Ideas	Dominant ideas will affect both resource concentration and resource importance.
EU	Europeanisation will affect both resource concentration and resource importance.

3.4 Resource dependence over time

Using the reconceptualisation developed in the previous section, we can compare whether, when, and to what extent bureaucrats are dependent on interest groups or vice versa. In other words, we can distinguish a bureaucratic entrepreneur from an interest group entrepreneur under different circumstances. An assumption underlying this model is that their behaviour is grounded in strategic rationality, an important yet implicit point of departure from the original resource dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978], 188-222). Put differently, resource dependence theory assumes that it is possible to end a relationship when it no longer suits your interests.²⁸ Indeed, why continue interacting when an

²⁸ The term strategic choice, and accordingly the terms strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality indicate how choices of either bureaucrats or interest group to obtain resources may be restricted or favoured

organisation cannot deliver the resource you need? Contemplating a long-term perspective immediately draws attention to potential limits to strategic rationality. It may well not be possible for the actors involved in the exchange relationship to end these interactions. In this case, other types of rationality will determine the interactions. But what types of rationality could be involved other than strategic rationality? Two theories may offer useful insights on the nature of such choices, namely long-term perspectives on decision making in the rational choice literature and historical institutionalism.

Let me first consider the long-term perspectives on decision making in the rational choice literature. Strategies of rational actors differ between single and repeated interactions, which are an important implication of adding a time dimension in decision making. Unlike single interactions, actors in a relationship that is assumed to take place repeatedly will take as an initial step a cooperative rather than non-cooperative position (Ostrom 1998; Ostrom and Walker 2003). This means that when interactions are assumed to take place repeatedly with the same actor, the actors in question are not likely to choose an initial action that fully maximises their own interests and entails negative consequences for the other actor. Reciprocity then becomes an important norm for repeated interactions. If you choose to cooperate initially, you want the other actor to cooperate afterward. One of the most well-known reciprocity strategies is *tit-for-tat*: First cooperate and then do whatever the other actor has done during the prior interaction (Axelrod 1984; Ostrom, 1998, 10).²⁹

Even in highly unlikely situations, cooperation on the basis of reciprocity might arise. For example, soldiers of hostile armies involved in the WW I trench war displayed often implicit but effective ways of cooperating with the enemy based on the logic of reciprocity. It is fairly easy to shell hostile food-supplying troops on the road to the trenches. However, you obviously can expect an equally heavy attack the next day when food suppliers bring your daily meal. Instead, trench soldiers on both the French and the German sides refrained from such attacks. Both sides developed a shooting scheme such that the other side knew when it was safe to crawl out of their trenches to have dinner. Their behaviour was based on tacit but essential reciprocity (Axelrod 1984). During interactions that take place repeatedly over time between the same actors, it has been shown that trust is positively related to successful interactions (Hardin 2002; but see Axelrod 1984, 174).

The longer interactions take place, the less likely it is that actors will behave opportunistically (Judge and Dooley 2006). If the actors can foresee that interactions will take place repeatedly and over a considerable period of time, they are likely to reciprocate. Diamond dealers, for instance, are famous for exchanging millions of dollars with a simple hand shake and a verbal agreement (Axelrod 1984, 177-178). They know that they will deal with each other in the near future, so it is no use cheating or pursuing other non-cooperative strategies.

by the context in which they take place, by anticipating (un)intended consequences in the near future, or by choices made in the past. In this sense, their use resembles yet is somewhat different from how these concepts are used in rational choice theory.

²⁹ Tit-for-tat, however, may also end up in a non-cooperative trap when one of the actors chooses a non-cooperative strategy as his/her first action.

Returning to resource exchange, we see something of the logic behind reciprocity strategies. Scharpf (1999, 19) argues that: “The ‘network’ metaphor is justified by the fact that the set of participants specialising in certain policy domains is likely to remain relatively stable, and that semi-permanent patterns of mutual support or opposition are likely to emerge over time.” Pfeffer and Salancik (2003[1979], 27) also note that interactions or dependencies are likely to persist over time, because they reduce uncertainty for participants. If interactions to obtain resources are successful, there will be incentives to retain these relationships. In other words, the desires to reduce uncertainty and increase trustworthiness become more important incentives to maintain relationships.

The bottom line is that when taking into account time, strategic choices still seem to underlie long-term interactions. Yet, such strategic choices are particularly constrained by the consequences participants envision to happen in the near future. For example, you might trust the person or organisation in question too much to end your relationship, the interaction might be too important in reducing uncertainties, or perhaps you know that you will need the other organisation or person in question in the foreseeable future. In other words, when the *anticipated costs* of terminating the interactions are too high, one will or cannot end the interaction. When applied to bureaucracy-interest group interactions, bureaucrats may maintain interactions precisely because of these reasons. So, rather than being the result of strategic rationality, bureaucracy-interest group interactions may well be the result of *anticipatory rationality*. Both are strategic in nature, yet anticipatory rationality emphasises consequences in the near future of today’s interactions.

Bringing in a long-term perspective, however, also raises the possibility of the absence of conscious or strategic choice. As Axelrod (1984, 173) notes: “The evolutionary process allows the successful strategies to thrive, even if the players do not know why or how.” Pfeffer and Salancik (2003[1978], 82) also state that interactions may result from commitments from the past. Not only a shadow of the future, but also a legacy of the past points to mechanisms that allow bureaucracy-interest group interactions to thrive. Put differently, relations between bureaucrats and interest groups may become ‘sticky,’ not only because actors intend these interactions to last, but also because those interactions could become a repetitive pattern over time without the actors consciously choosing that they become so. As a respondent reflects on the annual spring and fall meetings of the Dutch government with employers and labour unions: “We merely perform a ritual dance. Every year, we strongly oppose each other, for instance in terms of wage claims, just for the sake of it.”³⁰ Organisational behaviour may be quite resilient even when it does not result in efficient or effective outcomes.

The key question for this study is whether or not such interactions serve a rationally-chosen purpose even when they do not seem to be effective or efficient. An answer to this question may lie in the literature on path dependence. Could inefficiency and ineffectiveness in long-term interactions also be the result of a rational or strategic choice? The quest for efficiency can be considered an axiom in economics. Actors are assumed to pursue strategies that eventually result in the most efficient outcome. Outcomes will always end up in equilibria of maximum

³⁰ Interview by author.

efficiency because of decreasing returns. This means that each move away from an efficient equilibrium will be opposed by a countermove back towards that same equilibrium. If oil prices rise (move away from equilibrium), conservation will increase and new energy sources will be explored and exploited. As a consequence, oil prices will drop (move toward original equilibrium) (Pierson 2004). Decreasing returns, or in political science language, negative feedback, are processes that promote stability. Perturbations away from the equilibrium are particularly difficult, as the system forces a return to the equilibrium of optimal efficiency. In politics, such negative feedback is often constituted by counter mobilisation, resulting in a stable political status quo characterised by incremental changes (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Becker 1985).

The problem with this reasoning is that not all equilibria are efficient or the optimal solution to a problem. To explain such suboptimal outcomes, economists developed the idea of *increasing* returns as opposed to *decreasing* returns. Moves away from equilibrium benefit particular actors, who then have strong incentives to pursue a particular course of action (Pierson 2004). Put differently, in the case of increasing returns, the marginal benefits of moves away from equilibrium become larger rather than smaller as is the case with decreasing returns.

The concept of increasing returns is explicitly tied to economic theory, as it is used to explain inefficient outcomes. General terms that indicate similar mechanisms without an exclusive focus on efficiency, such as positive feedback or self-reinforcing mechanisms, are often used in political science to explain suboptimal outcomes (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Pierson 2004). In politics, reinforcing mechanisms are said to occur when, under initial conditions, several outcomes are possible so that multiple equilibria can evolve. When multiple equilibria are possible, other factors such as contingencies, small events, and timing seem crucial in determining which particular equilibrium will be realised. Once steps are taken along a certain path, negative feedback mechanisms similar to the case of optimal equilibria will ensure that this path will be pursued for at least a while (Pierson 2004, 44). In general, reinforcing mechanisms “induce further movement in the same direction such that over time it becomes difficult or impossible to reverse direction” (Mahoney 2000, 512).

Put differently, reinforcing mechanisms result in the institutional reproduction of a suboptimal or optimal outcome. When, at a certain time, multiple equilibria are possible, small events, contingencies and timing may explain the emergence of a suboptimal situation. In the case of optimal equilibria, the resulting outcomes are the most efficient or optimal solutions for a wide range of stakeholders. Moves away from an efficient equilibrium in the market affect both consumers and producers, for instance. In the case of suboptimal equilibria, initial circumstances allowed actors to pursue a path resulting in a suboptimal solution. The most important and influential stakeholders decide upon a course of action that suits their interests. Once the suboptimal equilibrium is established, it will be resistant to change as well, but a smaller set of stakeholders profits from the equilibrium. In the case of a suboptimal demand-supply equilibrium, for instance, consumers often pay the price, literally.

So, the stickiness of relationships may also result from strategic choices by actors willing to retain relations as the situation suits their interests. Several

mechanisms of behavioural persistence result in strategic choices to follow a certain path (Simon 1997[1947]). In Simon's view, certain behaviours persist because of three mechanisms. A first mechanism concerns what he terms *sunk-costs*: the costs of pursuing certain behaviour, albeit inefficient, are less than those involved in changing paths. In other words, the investments already made prohibit a change of direction. Secondly, the activity itself may generate *stimuli* that ensure completion. A page-turner exactly does the trick: you do not want to stop reading before you have reached the final page of the book. Finally, what Simon terms *make ready costs* allow behaviour to persist. Once a routine has been developed, it is easier to continue in that direction because of the time such a routine saves, in contrast to the time-consuming business of exploring new behaviours (Simon 1997[1945], 105-106). The costs of changing paths (sunk costs and make ready costs) as well as the benefits arising from the activity or institution itself cause the path to be continued. These mechanisms apply to both intra- and inter-organisational behaviour. In politics, these mechanisms are also visible, but they are differently guised. Counter-mobilisation could result from high costs involved in changing paths or from the stimuli an institution generates for a group of stakeholders.

Literature on path dependence is often concerned with explaining suboptimal outcomes by processes of negative feedback. Yet, behaviour persistence, or routines, may be a long-term reflection of an initial rational choice that still meets the purpose for which it was originally designed. In Simon's words (1997[1947], 89): "Even if an actor has developed a procedure quite deliberately and consciously, it may in time become wholly habitual, but still retain the same utility and purpose." A fundamental difference between the shadow of the future and the legacy of the past thus seems to be the difference between anticipatory and habitual rationality. A shadow of the future constrains the set of choices that can be made by incorporating considerations on potential consequences in the near future. For instance, when it has become more important to reduce uncertainty than maintaining the interactions per se. Yet, such choices still seem to be made deliberately and consciously. That is, one is trying to make the best of a given situation, but is constrained in his or her options to do so by future consequences.

The legacy of the past might have started with a rational and conscious choice, but gradually it has become a habit or routine. Sunk costs, make ready costs, or stimuli generated by the activity itself result in reproduction of an activity. This is what Simon calls habitual rationality. When habits take over, however, and are no longer the best answer to the problem posed by the environment, we may define it as institutional reproduction of a suboptimal solution, which is often denoted as path dependence in the literature. Both the shadow of the future and the legacy of the past thus induce different types of choices that are grounded in different behavioural logics. The shadow of the future points to anticipatory rationality, whereas the legacy of the past points to habitual rationality which may or may not reflect an optimal situation. Accordingly, we can hypothesise that,

When interactions between bureaucrats and interest groups cannot be ended, resource dependence between bureaucrats and interest groups will not only be based on strategic rationality, but also on anticipatory or habitual rationality. [H8]

3.5 Modelling bureaucracy-interest group interactions

In the previous sections, I have discussed a reconceptualisation of bureaucracy-interest group interactions to allow systematic comparisons of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, both across cases and over time. The underlying assumption of this reconceptualisation is that bureaucracy-interest group interactions can be conceptualised as resource exchanges. Based on resource dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]), the argument is that bureaucrats and interest groups interact because they need resources from each other in order to perform their tasks. Those resource exchanges are determined by both the importance of the individual resources and the extent to which these resources are concentrated in the environment. Thus, by measuring both resource importance and resource concentration, we should be able to establish a degree of dependence that, in turn, characterises the relationship between civil servants and interest groups. This degree of dependence can then be used to distinguish among the explanations of bureaucratic politics, interest group politics and network studies. To systematically compare the nature of these interactions, institutional and policy-related contextual variables have been included. A long term perspective, finally, draws attention to two rival explanations. That is, rather than a result of strategic rationality, resource dependence between bureaucrats and interest groups may also be the result of anticipatory and habitual rationality.

Thus, a reconceptualisation of bureaucracy-interest group interactions enables systematic comparison of these interactions over time and across cases. A final step, then, is to translate such a reconceptualisation into a concrete explanatory model of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Applying resource dependence to bureaucracy-interest group interactions, however, requires some assumptions, in particular about bureaucratic behaviour. I discuss these assumptions first, before developing the model itself.

3.5.1 Assumptions of a resource dependence model

A first important assumption underlying a resource dependence model is that resources are scarce. Indeed, if resources are widely available to the organisation in question, i.e. the organisation is able to control or possesses a certain resource itself, there will be no reason for it to interact with other organisations to obtain that resource (Levine and White 1961). What is more, classic resource dependence theory, due to its strategic rather than deterministic point of departure, assumes that organisations in the end seek to obtain full autonomy or at least try to minimise their dependencies (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]). Applying resource dependence theory to model bureaucracy-interest group interactions thus assumes that, first, bureaucrats are to some extent responsive to their environment and second, that bureaucrats enjoy some degree of autonomy.

The fact that governments purport to act out of a general public interest as well as from democratic accountability distinguishes a public organisation from a private one.³¹ Public organisations have to be democratically accountable to the

³¹ Many scholars have tried to demarcate what is public and what is not (see Pesch 2005; Rutgers 2004). But to date, there is considerable debate over whether there is a clear-cut public-private dichotomy or rather a

public. And, to preserve their legitimacy, states must to some extent be responsive to the demands of their citizens and their organised entities, and so must their public bureaucracies. These two key characteristics justify the use of a resource dependence approach to model bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

Public bureaucracies in democracies, however, cannot achieve full autonomy. Their formal function within a state, their relation to their political superiors, and their relations with citizens, whether collectively organised or not, do not permit full autonomy in the sense that private organisations might enjoy. Resource dependence theory explains how organisations respond to their environment and how they try to improve their relative position towards other actors in the environment in a search for autonomy. As has become clear from my discussion of political-administrative relations as a contextual factor, I assume that bureaucrats enjoy some degree of administrative leeway and thus a sense of at least some political or contingent autonomy. Bureaucratic autonomy is, however, not equivalent to full administrative freedom (cf. Carpenter 2001). Rather, it entails the ability, at maximum, to influence the preferences and choices of politicians or the public within an existing framework of general (legal and formal) constraints.

So, this research proceeds from the assumption that public bureaucracies behave in a democratically accountable way and are thereby responsive to citizens' demands. Second, it acknowledges both a certain degree of politicisation of bureaucracies and a certain amount of administrative leeway, which both entail some room for strategic choices to be made.

Now that the underlying assumptions are made explicit, the actual model can be discussed. This discussion will proceed in several stages. First, a core model of resource dependence between bureaucrats and interest groups will be developed. The second stage adds the comparative element to the model by including the contextual factors. And, finally, I include the rival rationalities that may underlie resource dependence between bureaucrats and interest groups.

3.5.2 Explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions

In principle, Pfeffer and Salancik (2003[1978]) offer an elegant and parsimonious explanation for interorganisational behaviour that we can apply to bureaucracy-interest group interactions. When we are able to measure both the importance of resources and the concentration of resources, we will be able to characterise a given situation of resource exchange. That is, both elements define the degree of dependence between two sets of actors. By interpreting the value of the degree of dependence, we can characterise the relationship between bureaucrats and interest

continuum on which the degree of publicness diminishes the further one moves along the continuum. In other words, public versus private is not an issue of black and white, but it is rather an issue of greyscales (Rutgers, 2004). Given public management reforms and the flourishing of public-private partnerships (Hood 1995; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000; Rhodes 2005), many scholars would indeed opt for the greyscales. To turn the usually normative black-white question into meaningful greyscales, several scholars have proposed to disentangle the grand dichotomy and employ several dimensions on which the public-private distinctions can be traced, such as legal, economic and organisational dimensions (Dijkstra and van der Meer 2003). Despite this conceptual variety, most scholars take for granted governments' most essential and formal differences from private organisations, namely its ultimate authority to use coercion and its monopoly on violence. They rather seem to focus on relations with the environment to distinguish between publicness and privateness.

groups. I include two additional elements to properly apply resource dependence theory to bureaucracy-interest group interactions. The first is the relationship between resource importance and resource concentration. Second, we must isolate resource concentration within the interest group environment from resource concentration in a broader environment.

Let me start with the first element. When more than one resource is involved in the exchange relationship, we need to know the relative ranking of the resource in terms of its importance and its availability in the environment. For instance, suppose that an interest group offers both expertise and intermediary capacity in an exchange with a bureaucrat. Both resources may not be equally available in the environment. This particular interest group could, for instance, be the only one that has such an intermediary capacity to offer, yet is among ten others to offer the expertise the civil servant in question needs. In addition, we need to know what is more important to the civil servant in question, expertise or intermediation capacity. For simplicity, I assume that every resource is characterised by a certain importance and that the end result of a dependence relation is the sum of both the importance and concentration of resources for each individual resource that is exchanged in a given bureaucracy-interest group interaction.

Second, in Pfeffer's and Salancik's (2003[1978]) definition, concentration of resources is an aggregate measure. It measures the concentration of resources within a broad environment of organisations. Had a general examination of resource concentration in the bureaucracy's environment been the subject of study, an aggregate measure would have been sufficient. As the focus of this study is bureaucracy-interest group interactions, however, an estimate that distinguishes between the concentration in the interest group environment and the remainder of the environment is necessary. When we want to know the extent to which resources are concentrated in the interest group environment, we need to isolate this particular environment from a broader environment of organisations. Indeed, interest groups are not the only organisations that have resources to offer bureaucrats. And, vice versa, bureaucrats may prefer to obtain certain resources from other types of organisations, such as highly qualified research institutes, rather than from interest groups.

So, resource concentration needs to be subdivided into what I term here 'inside resource concentration' and 'outside resource concentration.' Inside resource concentration refers to the types of resources that are available within an interest group community or population. Outside resource concentration refers to the availability of resources within a broader environment of organisations, being a diverse array of organisations that includes not just interest groups, but also advisory councils, research institutes, or consultancy firms. By distinguishing these two types of resource concentration, we are able to isolate resource concentration within the interest group environment from a broader organisational environment in general. By summarising these arguments, we find the following model:

$$D = \sum_{r=1}^N (Ir + C_i r + C_o r)$$

where,

D = degree of dependence of a given bureaucracy-interest group resource exchange relation

I = the importance of a particular resource (the value attributed to a particular resource)

C_i = inside concentration of a particular resource (the number of interest groups that control a particular resource)

C_o = outside concentration of a particular resource (the number of other organisations that control a particular resource)

The model outlined here provides a first indication of how resource concentration and resource importance can be related to each other and how they may determine the degree of dependence characterising the relationship between bureaucrats and interest groups. It is not my aim to develop a full formal model in this study. Yet, the advantage of a rudimentary formal model is that it emphasises those elements we can estimate and separates them from those we cannot, thus attributing to transparency in building the model and pointing to gaps in the theory (see also chapter 8). With this model, we are able to measure the degree of dependence in bureaucracy-interest group interactions based on the importance of resources and their concentration in the environment. It further reflects a degree of dependence when all contextual factors are held constant. Put differently, when various political-administrative contextual variables are included, the impact of resource importance and resource concentration on the final degree of dependence are likely to vary. This comparative aspect of the model will be discussed below.

3.5.3 Explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions across cases

Including contextual factors, such as those discussed in section 3.3, adds a comparative aspect to the resource dependence model developed above. Each of these contextual factors will influence either resource concentration or resource importance or both. Some will interfere with resource concentration more than with resource importance and vice versa. By including these contextual factors, the model accounts for the degree of dependence, and thereby the nature of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, under different circumstances. By systematically varying these contextual factors, we will be able to assess their impact on both elements of the resource exchange relationship between bureaucrats and interest groups and thus be able to examine which of the two sets of actors will be more dependent under a given set of circumstances. Figure 3.1 depicts the model graphically. It shows the different levels of analysis at which the independent variables can be measured and which element of the degree of dependence they are hypothesised to influence.

A first thing to observe is that the contextual variables operate at different levels of analysis. Interest representation regimes operate at a macro-level. Europeanisation and ideas operate at the macro, meso- or even at micro-level. Ideas, for instance, can apply to entire national political systems, but can also be tied to specific policy areas or agencies as well as the individuals working for those

agencies. Political-administrative relations, organisational culture and formal tasks, as well as policy salience, complexity and political sensitivity, operate at meso-level.

Another important aspect to observe is that no micro-level variables are included in the model. This is a deliberate choice. The focus of this study is on how context determines the choices of bureaucrats to interact, or how context determines the strategic room civil servants have to manoeuvre. Undeniably, micro-level variables, for instance, leadership style or other personal dispositions, will influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Yet, the focus in this study is on context and, therefore, they were excluded from the model.

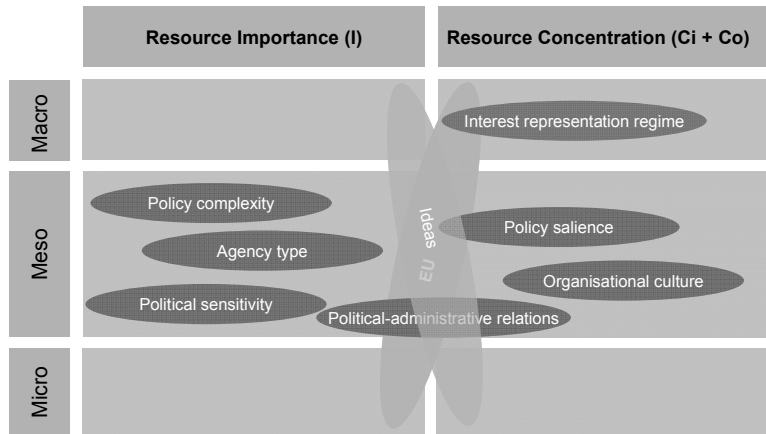


Figure 3.1 A comparative explanatory model of bureaucracy-interest group interactions

All in all, this model allows us to systematically compare bureaucracy-interest group interactions on the basis of their reconceptualisation in terms of resource exchange. Each contextual variable will influence resource concentration, resource importance, or both and will thus alter the degree of dependence. What this model cannot do, as yet, is study bureaucracy-interest group interactions over time. A final element to complete the model is thus incorporating a long-term perspective. Such a long-term perspective highlights forces other than strategic rationality in determining the resource dependence between bureaucrats and interest groups.

3.5.4 Explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions over time

The discussion in section 3.4 revealed two additional types of rationality in which resource dependence between bureaucrats and interest groups may be grounded. Not only may a strategic choice based on a cost-benefit analysis determine such resource dependence (strategic rationality). Habitual rationality and anticipatory rationality could be at stake as well. Habitual rationality and anticipatory rationality reveal themselves when we add a time perspective to the core resource dependence model. To explain this further, figure 3.2 illustrates several hypothetical directions in which a given degree of dependence could evolve. A given relationship between bureaucrats and interest groups may be determined by a degree of dependence D . At $t = (1 + x)$, we observe several possibilities. In the case of D_1 , the degree of dependence has become less severe over time, indicating, at face value, the presence of strategic rationality. And so does D_2 . A degree of dependence that has

become less severe suggests the opportunity to strategically pick and choose. Yet, had the path of D_2 been measured at $t = 2$, we would have characterised this relationship as grounded in anticipatory rationality rather than strategic rationality. The situation characterised by D_3 could indicate habitual rationality, when actors unconsciously interact with each other. Yet, D_3 could also indicate strategic rationality, when the interaction still meets the same strategic purpose of the past. Situation D_4 would, at face value, be characterised by anticipatory rationality, given a higher degree of dependence. It may, however, also reflect a situation of habitual rationality, where routine behaviour has taken over in a situation in which civil servants are relatively dependent on certain interest groups.

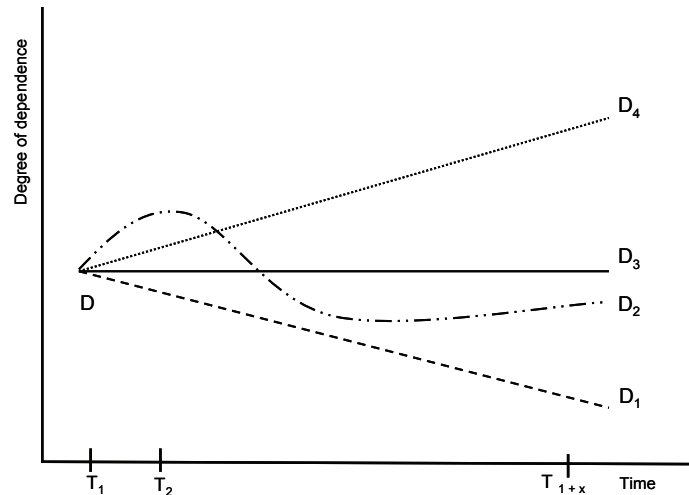


Figure 3.2 The evolution of degree of dependence

So, fluctuation of or a decrease in the degree of dependence indicates strategic rationality, whereas stability could point to habitual rationality. Rising degrees of dependence would indicate anticipatory rationality but may be habitual in nature as well. Whereas fluctuation would be a face value indicator of conscious decision making, stability or rising degrees of dependence might conceal different types of decision making. Unpacking these degrees of dependences into resource importance and resource concentration could reveal which type of rationality underlies the resource exchange. For instance, when the importance of a resource remains similar but concentration increases, the interaction could be characterised as grounded in anticipatory rationality. Or, when both importance and concentration decrease, the interaction could be grounded in habitual rationality where routine has taken over.

By examining how the individual resource elements evolve over time, under different circumstances, we can determine the types of rationality underlying a given resource exchange between bureaucrats and interest groups. In sum, this resource dependence model enables a systematic explanation of bureaucracy-interest group interactions across cases and over time. Chapter 4 outlines a research strategy to empirically assess the explanatory potential of the model.

Bureaucracy-Interest Group Interactions in Comparative Perspective

4.1 Introduction

We compare daily. We pick the best apples in the supermarket by comparing them to the rest; we compare restaurants by the quality of their food. Or, we compare different options to commute by evaluating their comfort, speed and anticipated delays. Either consciously or unconsciously, human judgment seems to be fundamentally grounded on comparisons. The same is true for the scientific endeavours we undertake. One of the most powerful empirical strategies, the experiment, is based on a cautious and rigorous controlled comparison of the presence or absence of independent variables and their impact on the dependent variable, i.e. the phenomenon to be explained. The importance of comparison is not only visible in the natural sciences. Social sciences also rely on comparison to a very large extent. Even in philosophy or theoretical politics, comparison is, albeit indirectly, important for conceptual development. Concepts and ideas in theoretical politics are often judged by comparing and contrasting them to the existing body of literature and evaluating how they contribute to contemporary thinking. Comparing thus seems to be a fundamental research strategy.

This study is explicitly designed to be comparative in nature. It is an attempt to develop a theoretical model to systematically compare bureaucracy-interest group interactions and thereby to contribute both conceptually and empirically to the literature on interest group politics and bureaucratic politics.¹ In what follows, I discuss the comparative design I employed in this research, the methods of data collection, and the dataset on bureaucracy-interest group interactions constructed to test the theoretical model developed in chapter 3.

¹ I interpret comparative research more as a general strategy of scientific inquiry. In public administration as well as in political science, however, comparative research is also often used to denote a particular type of research, rather than a general research strategy (Lijphart 1971). Interpreted as such, comparative politics or comparative public administration constitutes a sub-discipline of the political science or public administration disciplines, attracting specialised journals and a body of literature tailored to that end.

4.2 The challenges of the comparative method

In scientific research, we compare theoretical propositions with empirical reality or existing theories to rule out rival explanations, thereby lending confirmatory support to the formulated hypotheses. The field of comparative politics² relies heavily on Mill's methods of experimental inquiry, in particular his method of agreement and method of difference (Mill 1970[1843]). When two situations share a similar feature among many different ones, and when they share a similar outcome, according to Mill's method of agreement, this similar feature is said to result in the outcome that both situations share. Mill's method of difference explains the contrary situation. According to method of difference, the absence or presence of the outcome in a given situation is the result of a deviant feature in two otherwise similar cases.

Mill's methods of agreement and difference were originally designed for experimental research. And they encourage careful and controlled variation of independent and dependent variables in (quasi-)experimental research (see also Cook and Campbell 1979; King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). As said, the discipline of comparative politics heavily draws upon Mill's methods (see Lijphart 1971; George and Bennet 2005). Given the non-experimental or quasi-experimental nature of comparative politics, however, studies inspired by Mill's methods of agreement and difference need to address some of the difficulties that arise when one applies an experimental method in a non-experimental environment. Two of the major difficulties, the complexity in establishing causality and the pitfalls of poor equivalence, are addressed below.

4.2.1 Establishing causality

Mill explicitly noted that the methods of agreement and difference were designed for the experimental settings: "It is very seldom that nature affords two instances, of which we can be assured that they stand in this precise relation to one another (...) [so] a spontaneous experiment of the kind required by the method of difference, is commonly not to be found" (Mill 1970[1843], 256-157). In particular, these two methods are difficult to apply to a setting with what he calls 'permanent causes,' that is, causes that cannot be fully excluded or isolated from the environment. The influence the moon exerts on the surface of the earth is a good example. For such situations, he proposed a method of concomitant variation. This method states that when a particular variation of a phenomenon is related to a particular variation of another phenomenon, "[this particular phenomenon] is either a cause or effect of that phenomenon, or is connected through some fact of causation" (Mill 1970[1843], 263). To return to the example of the moon, we can observe that variations in the position of the moon are followed by variations in the time and place of high water. Mill explicitly warned us, however, that there is no way of knowing which of these phenomena are the effect or cause, until we are able

² For reasons of convenience, I will use 'comparative politics' to denote the distinct comparative research tradition in political science and public administration mentioned in footnote 1.

to ascertain that the variation of a (particular) set of phenomena produces the particular variation in the dependent variable (Mill 1970[1843], 263).³

It is not a big step to conclude that, although highly preferred, the methods of agreement and difference will be difficult to apply to the quasi-experimental settings we often encounter in political and public administrative research. Indeed, how can we remove from the scene the Dutch Prime Minister Balkenende and Minister Rouvoet, both Christian-Democrats, when we want to establish a causal relation between the regime of such Christian-Democrats and an increasing scepticism about current practices of abortion and euthanasia in the Netherlands? We can only establish, if at all, a relation between a particular variation in political persuasion and a particular variation in the tone of current public and political debates on such ethical issues. This very point, the fact that isolating or controlling independent and dependent variables is hard in real-life politics and public administration, is used by many authors to conclude that, although comparative research is necessary for establishing empirical relations and hypotheses, it should be applied in an extremely careful manner (cf. Brady and Collier 2004; King, Keohane, and Verba 1994; Lijphart 1971; Prezworski and Teune 1970; Ragin 1987; 2000). The competitive advantage of experimental research is thus clearly the ability to isolate or control the (in)dependent variables in order to establish causality. This, alas, is not fully allowed by the quasi-experimental environment that political science and public administration usually have to offer. One of the most complex issues scholars thus have to deal with is how to infer causality.

An important impediment to establishing causality in comparative politics is the multi-level and multi-context nature of political and administrative phenomena. According to Prezworski and Teune (1970) in their classic work *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*, for instance, the aim of comparative research, and at the same time its biggest challenge, should be to express characteristics of different social or political systems in general variables and in measurements designed to account for such systemic influences. Individual or meso-level relations may differ between political or social systems at a more aggregate level, such as nation states. What is it that makes interest groups behave differently in the Netherlands compared to the United States, for instance? A fundamental challenge facing comparativists is thus to incorporate systemic effects into their theories on meso- or micro-level social behaviour. One way to do this is to identify the different types of characteristics of such social and political systems, according to Prezworski and Teune (1970). Yet, this is precisely why comparative public administration is

³ Although these are the methods most often invoked to legitimate the method of comparison that is applied, they are not the only methods Mill developed. What he calls the 'indirect method of difference,' or the 'joint method of agreement,' applies when it is not possible to generate situations in which two instances agree in every antecedent but one, and differ in the outcome. What we can do in such cases is first examine instances that agree in the outcome a and factor A, and then search for situations that agree in not having outcome a and factor A. This joint method of agreement thus constitutes a double application of the method of agreement, where each application or proof is independent and confirms the other. Another method Mill suggested is the 'method of residues.' According to this method, when we subtract the antecedents from a phenomenon, which are previously proved to be the cause, the residue of the phenomenon is the result of the non-examined antecedents. Suppose we have factors A, B, and C followed by a, b, c, and suppose we established a causal relation between A and a and B and b, then by subtracting a and b from the total outcome we know that c is the effect of C (Mill, 1970[1843], 258-260).

difficult. As Peters (1990, 10-11) observes: "What we are less certain about, however, is how differences in structures translate directly into differences in the behaviour of members of the organisation, or in the outputs of the organisation." In order to engage in comparative studies on administrative phenomena, theorising their multi-level nature is, however, prerequisite.⁴

So, multi-level and multi-context characteristics of administrative phenomena threaten causal inferences. Additionally, the cumulative nature of political processes poses additional problems to causal inferences and comparative research. Concerning interest representation, for instance, community characteristics may influence to some extent an interest group's success in gaining access to public decision makers. In such processes, the dependent variable in one part of the process, limited access for interest groups, may be an independent variable in another process; for instance, mobilisation (Lowery and Gray 2004). In such cases, isolating variables is even more difficult. The solution may lie in segmentation of the process, such as the 'influence production process', and then comparing these segments across different political systems (Lowery, Poppelaars and Berkhout 2008; Pelassy and Dogan 1990). Such a segmentation strategy does not entirely circumvent the problem, as one still has to theorise the fine lines between two segmented parts of the entire process. Yet, by segmenting, we can control for the independent variables that are associated more directly with individual segments.

The very nature of political and administrative processes, i.e. their multi-level, multi-context and cumulative nature, renders it difficult to isolate or control independent variables in such a way that they allow firm inferences about causal relations. A more modest but still challenging aim is thus to establish relations between variations in (sets of) independent variables and the dependent variables, while at the same time incorporating their multi-level or cumulative nature into the theories characterising the relationships that one is to examine. In other words, the challenge is to embed Mill's method of concomitant variation in a multi-level, multi-context, and cumulative environment of political-administrative reality.

4.2.2 Establishing equivalence

Inferring causality is not the only threat to solid comparative politics. Unconsciously comparing things that are not similar may also be a problem. This phenomenon is known as the travelling problem, which indicates that concepts or measures based on experiences in one society are not necessarily meaningful when applied to other societies. Raising a hand may in one society indicate a way of

⁴ Another, related problem in comparative research is the total number of cases that can be handled and data collection strategies that are pursued in relation to causal statements. Comparative politics as a distinct sub-discipline usually involves a small or intermediate number of cases and has often been applied at the nation-state level (see Lijphart, 1971; for concrete examples and a theoretical discussion, see also Rueschemeyer and Mahoney 2003). Again, many authors have considered the advantages and disadvantages of using case studies in this respect, paying specific attention to causal relations and what kind of strategy to use (see Lijphart 1971; George and Bonnet 2005; Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003; Gerring 2006). An important trait that those studies have in common is a focus on paired comparison or structured, focused comparisons, reminiscent of and inspired by Mill's methods of difference and agreement. A particular difficulty concerning case study designs in establishing causal relations, is the small N these studies usually entail and thus a lack of necessary variation in (in)dependent variables (King, Keohane and Verba 1994; Ragin 1978; 2000).

saying goodbye, while in other countries it may be an offensive gesture. Cooperation may in a democratic society mean working together on an equal basis, whereas in authoritarian societies it could mean a more asymmetrical relationship. In that sense, the travelling problem seems to operate at two levels (Peters 1998, 86-92). Concepts may not only have different connotations or meanings, but measurement and operationalisation may also apply only to specific cases.

Researchers often engage in so-called concept-stretching to remedy the travelling problem. That is, they tend to broaden the concept so that it becomes more inclusive, without considering the range of characteristics that objects must possess to belong to that broadened concept (Sartori 1970). Concepts have often fallen prey to unconscious stretching attempts, resulting in vague concepts that can no longer be falsified. *Ideology* is a good example of a concept that has been stretched so much that it “never ceases to apply (it has no opposite)” (Sartori 1991, 249). Thus, hypotheses using the concept of ideology are very hard to falsify. When does a particular idea or set of ideas stop being an ideology or begin to constitute an ideology? Seen from this perspective, defining individual or organisational preferences as ideologies (see Tsebelis 2002) does not contribute to sound comparative research and solid falsification. When does someone’s preference stop being a preference when we cannot decide upon the demarcation of an ideology?

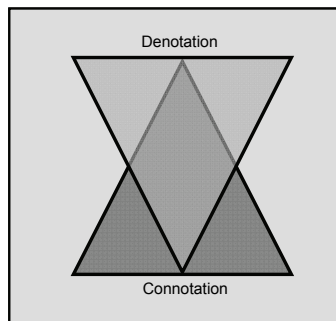


Figure 4.1 Sartori's ladder of abstraction

A careful and systematic way of defining and organising concepts is needed to address the travelling problem properly. Sartori (1970) developed a specific instrument to do so, a so-called ladder of abstraction. Its basic rule is that the connotation of a word (the collection of properties determining the things to which the word applies) and its denotation (the class of things the word applies to) are inversely related. So, to increase comparability, one should reduce its characteristics, and thus at the same time enlarge the class of things the concept applies to. Conversely, to make a concept more concrete and thus less comparable, one adds properties or characteristics (Sartori 1970; 1991). When one moves consciously up and down this ladder of abstraction, concepts and terms remain related to one another. These different levels of abstraction should be clearly related to each other, resulting in two pyramidal shapes that are inversely related (see figure 4.1). The further one climbs the connotation pyramid, the further one descends on the denotation pyramid.

Essentially, Sartori's strategy is about determining the absolutely vital elements of concepts and distinguishing them from those that are secondary or peripheral.

As he (Sartori 1984, 32) puts it, we must focus on “defining as opposed to accompanying properties.”⁵ Put differently, the challenge in comparative politics is thus to find the appropriate intersection of the connotation and denotation pyramid. In an early, previously unpublished, manuscript, part of which is now published in *West European Politics* (Mair 2005), Sartori offered an example of how this ladder of abstraction works. In the process of building a classification of political parties, he first identified a core analytical concept of political parties, i.e. organisational networks, and defined three functions central to such organisational networks: participation, electioneering, and expression. While political parties exhibit many other functions, these three are irreplaceable and apply to political parties throughout the Western world (Sartori 2005[1967]). But only the combination of the three denotes political parties. When we remove electioneering, the two remaining characteristics could denote any type of civil society organisation, NGO or ad-hoc protest organisation. And, when leaving out both participation and expression, it could denote such people as Barack Obama, John McCain, Jan-Peter Balkenende, or Wouter Bos running for president or prime minister. This example shows that political parties are somewhere in between the connotation and denotation pyramid shown above, and that it is often the exact combination of characteristics that defines a concept that may travel well.

An important principle underlying Sartori’s strategy to systematically unravel concepts is the idea that categories are hierarchically related. This means that some concepts are subordinated to others. This taxonomy, or hierarchical classification, can mathematically be represented as a tree diagram. Ultimately, all concepts, except for the ones down at the bottom of the classification, have at least one element or one category in common. An often-used example of such a taxonomic hierarchy is the scientific classification of organisms. On top of the tree diagram stands one particular category of organisms, for instance, mammals. A subcategory of mammals is big cats, a subcategory of big cats is tigers, and finally a Siberian tiger is a specific sub-species differing in its colour and striped pattern.

Moving up and down the connotation ladder (the collection of characteristics of organism) and denotation ladder (the class an organism belongs to) is relatively easy for such hierarchically organised concepts. Social categories are, however, not so neatly organised. Corporatism, for instance, is often defined by listing a set of commonalities, but not every commonality is apparent in countries classified as being corporatist (Collier and Mahon 1993, 846-849).⁶ Gerring and Barresi’s

5 Several scholars have built on Sartori’s strategy to define appropriate strategies to engage in comparative research. Pelassy and Dogan’s (1990) ‘functional equivalence’, for instance, is but one example. Functional equivalence refers to the idea that political systems necessarily fulfil certain fundamental tasks; yet these functions may appear in different guises in different nations. The task then is to define and compare those functions instead of their appearance. Functional equivalence thus refers to those elements of concepts that are, in Sartori’s words ‘irreplaceable.’

6 Corporatism, in Collier and Mahon’s (1993) words, is a type of family resemblance. Family resemblance occurs when cases each exhibit different combinations of commonalities without sharing one common feature. Another option discussed by these two authors is the idea of radial categories. In this case, secondary categories split up the original category rather than together constituting the overall concept. The authors give the example of democracy; many types have been constructed: liberal democracy, participatory democracy and popular democracy, for instance. They distinguish different types of democracy instead of a sub-type of an overall category of democracy

(2003) min-max strategy presents an alternative way to systematically organise the concepts of the phenomenon in question without necessarily relying on the hierarchical assumption that is so apparent in Sartori's organising structure. Their min-max strategy is a conjoined use of minimal and ideal-type definitions of the concept. Minimal definitions, they argue, contain the 'bare essentials' of a concept, are minimal in their attributes and maximal in their phenomenal range. Ideal types include all attributes that together define the concept, and are thus minimal in their phenomenal range (Gerring and Barresi 2003, 201). Both theorising about and systematically organising concepts are thus a matter of distinguishing what is really important about an entity (Goertz 2006). From a comparative perspective, it is not only a matter of what are the important and defining characteristics of a concept, but also of finding the appropriate level of abstraction that both allows falsification and travelling to other political-administrative systems.

Comparative research is important. Poor conceptualisation and overestimating the possibility of establishing causal relations, - so, not paying full attention to the complex multi-level and multi-contextual nature of political phenomena - seriously threaten sound comparative research in political science and public administration.

4.2.3 Why the resource dependence model does the comparative job

A reconceptualisation of bureaucracy-interest group interactions in terms of resource exchange has a strong potential to meet the demands of comparative research. First, it addresses the conceptualisation issue by defining the characterising elements of bureaucracy-interest group interactions: an exchange of resources under the assumption that bureaucrats are not able to achieve full independence because of the responsive and democratic nature of public administration.⁷ This conceptualisation enables us to move beyond different connotations of cooperation or asymmetrical contacts such as capture. Moreover, such resource exchanges can still be falsified. If no resource exchange takes place and there are still interactions, the model will be falsified.

Second, a reconceptualisation in terms of resource exchange addresses the multi-level and multi-contextual nature of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, given a careful consideration of each contextual factor that may affect the individual elements constituting the degree of dependence that characterises those interactions. The dependence model thus tries to incorporate systemic characteristics of the administrative-political environment in which these interactions take place. In doing so, this model attempts to contribute to comparative research on bureaucracy-interest group interactions by explicitly addressing the conceptual difficulties the travelling problem poses by a conscious reconceptualisation. In addition, it incorporates the multi-level and multi-contextual nature of the political-administrative context in which bureaucracy-interest group interactions occur. And, by systematically varying contextual factors, it aims to establish relationships between variations in a set of independent variables and variation in the dependent variable. It is thus an attempt to embed the method of concomitant variation in a multi-level and multi-contextual system.

⁷ These defining characteristics only hold for interactions in democratic societies, and would need refinement if applied to non-democratic countries.

4.3 A dataset of bureaucracy-interest group interactions

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and this also applies to the resource dependence model of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. One cannot properly judge a theoretical model without testing it. And most models will need at least some refining based on the findings such analyses generate. Interestingly, both testing and a dialogue back and forth between theory and the data (or, more generally, empirics) are often considered part of two distinct research traditions. The chasm between quantitative and qualitative researchers in public administration and political science reflects a longstanding fundamental debate between positivists and hermeneutics. Put differently, scholarly debates about the question whether we should deduce relationships from theories or construct relationships more inductively often end in stalemate. The argument is essentially about weighing the potential of explanation and understanding in social sciences. In other words, is it better to deduce hypotheses and try to explain (and perhaps even predict) reality based on general patterns of behaviour? Or, is it better to understand the idiosyncrasies of reality by interpreting them based on theories, and then derive patterns of behaviour from the very same idiosyncrasies? And, as in any debate, there are believers and non-believers. Deductive versus inductive approaches in social sciences are even today often juxtaposed as two equally valid yet unbridgeable approaches to knowing.⁸

This research explicitly proceeds from the proposition that these two traditions should not be juxtaposed, but should supplement each other to genuinely contribute to scientific research. That is, posing and answering research questions rather than methodology as such should lie at the heart of social sciences. This study relies on testing theories and thus proceeds from a positivist perspective. In this way, we can evaluate the theoretical model that has been developed. Yet, it also relies on more interpretative ways of conducting research, both in developing the theoretical model and in suggesting avenues for future research. In general, this study is firmly based on the assumption that answering research questions requires a conscious consideration of, and preferably a combination of, several methods, but at a minimum an objective attitude must be brought to the entire array of existing methods. All in all, this study is grounded in a pluralist philosophy of science that will be reflected in a strategy of mixed methods.

4.3.1 Data collection strategy: online survey

A theoretical model that is specifically designed to engage in comparative research requires a data-collection strategy that meets such demands at an operational level. To collect data on the different elements constituting the degree of dependence between bureaucrats and interest groups, I opted for a cross-sectional online survey instrument. Other instruments or strategies to collect data were less suitable for this particular topic. Information on interactions between bureaucrats and interest groups are not readily observable, so relying on existing databases is not useful here. And if there are such data available, they only contain part of what this model

⁸ The relatively recent trend to mixed methods (Bennet and Braumoeller 2005) is a fruitful attempt to bridge the gap.

tries to explain (Carpenter 2004; Yackee and Yackee 2006). Obtaining the data directly from bureaucrats and interest groups, the subjects under study, seemed therefore the most appropriate choice. In addition, as the aim was to test the theory, I needed a large N to perform the analyses in order to provide statistical leverage, as most of the variables cited in the model are included in the analysis.

Although best fitted for the purpose of this study, cross-sectional (online) surveys have some drawbacks that need to be taken into account before they can result in a solid database. Apart from the general cautionary tales regarding the reliability and validity of employing a survey instrument, which is often associated with a low response rate (Fowler 2002; Groves et al. 2004; Litwin 1995), adding online and cross-sectional elements requires perhaps even more caution. Survey research in comparative politics has a long tradition and has contributed to the development of standardised data sets and replicable procedures to test hypotheses on political behaviour (Rokkan 1969). Currently, almost a quarter of all articles and half of the quantitative articles use sample surveys (King et al. 2001).⁹

True development in theory building in comparative political and administrative behaviour, however, lies in a contextual approach to comparative surveys. Traditional survey research has focused on the individual, assuming that a person's behaviour stems from his or her preferences and experiences. But a contextual approach seems necessary to develop theories on political behaviour, as such behaviour will undeniably be influenced by the institutional setting in which it occurs (Verba 1969). Such an assumption was also reflected in the multi-level approach of Prezworski and Teune (1971) to comparative research in general. Comparative surveys are, however, notorious for biased results (King et al 2004) resulting from two main thresholds: conceptualisation and measurement techniques (King et al. 2004; Verba 1969). Bias, as a result of conceptualisation, stems from unconscious concept formation, which I discussed in section 4.2. Bias as a result of measurement techniques refers to the equivalence of individual questionnaire items and whether respondents interpret questions similarly. Such measurement problems thus relate to equivalence issues, which conceptualisation problems refer to on a theoretical level.

Although the interactive character and options to control question ordering are obvious advantages of online surveys as opposed to mail surveys, two drawbacks are worth mentioning here. Coverage error and the assumption of internet familiarity could result in significant bias (Orr 2005; Winne de, Plevoets, and Sels 2003). If only a certain proportion of the population has access to the internet, together with the fact that only people who are more familiar with the internet will be likely to fill out such a questionnaire, an online survey significantly bias the results. In addition, the possibility of multiple responses, when an individual respondent fills out the questionnaire twice or more, may cause the results to be unreliable. Although the latter issue can be relatively easily addressed, the former two are serious drawbacks that should be taken into account when online surveys are selected as a data collection method.

⁹ These results come from a content analysis conducted by the authors of five years (1993-1997) of the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, and the *British Journal of Political Science* (see footnote 1 in King et al. 2001).

In sum, there are several major challenges in using cross-sectional online surveys. Similar interpretation of questionnaire items and equivalence of concepts are challenges to cross-sectional surveys in general. In addition, online surveys add to this a potential sampling bias as a result of overrepresentation of those respondents who are more familiar with or have access to the internet. And, in general, surveys often result in high non-response or high non-item response. In what follows, I outline how I take these issues into account in developing comparative surveys for bureaucrats and interest groups so as to use them as solid data collection instruments.

4.3.2 Surveying bureaucrats

Who is a bureaucrat is often crystal clear to those outside the public bureaucracy. ‘They have a 9-5 job and drink a lot of coffee,’ seems an appropriate summary of a popular interpretation of ‘the bureaucrat.’ Those working inside public agencies or studying them, however, often point to considerable differences within bureaucracies, not to mention the differences between bureaucracies in different countries. Yet, for comparative research to produce solid findings, we have to establish at least some commonalities or equivalences between what we popularly call the bureaucracy. This section explains the rationale behind the definition of bureaucrats used in this study, and discusses the strategy employed to establish a population and to apply an appropriate sampling method.

Defining bureaucrats

There seems to be a scholarly consensus that public agencies and civil service systems are more alike across different environments than any other part of the political-administrative system. If we proceed from the Weberian ideal type of bureaucracy, there would indeed be very few differences. As Peters (1990, 9) suggests: “When one knocks on the door of bureaucratic offices, one is likely to find more similarities, than when knocking on the doors of legislators or even chief executives.” Recent reform trends also point to similarities or even convergence of national civil service systems (OECD 2003). However, those adhering to the parable of six blind men touching a giant African elephant are perhaps more likely to emphasise the vast differences among state agencies (Lowery and Brasher 2004, 197). Every blind person would indicate that they are touching a different animal, as they cannot imagine its overall shape when touching only its trunk or one of its legs. Comparative studies of national civil service systems indeed suggest that there are significant differences among them (Bekke, Perry, and Toonen 1996). Bringing in meso-level considerations further threatens any comparable endeavour, as the number of such differences may exponentially grow.

To steer a middle course between full variation in all public agencies and imposing overly exact similarities by too narrow sampling, I selected only a particular division within national bureaucracies to include in this research: senior civil services. Many countries have formally organised civil services, including an upper echelon, which I define as the senior civil service. The senior civil service includes the civil servants with highest rankings both in terms of salary and function. As such, these senior civil servants perform equivalent functions in terms of management and often have similar strategic positions within their

organisations (OECD 2003). The comparison in this research thus concerns national senior civil services rather than entire national civil service systems.¹⁰ Selecting senior civil services addresses the equivalence issue, as they are comparable across different national civil service systems.

A drawback of such a selection is, however, that it could result in a bias towards strategic interactions while ignoring other types of exchanges taking place. Strategic interactions are more likely to occur between senior civil servants and interest groups, as the first usually have important strategic positions in terms of policy advice. Moreover, they often have influential positions within the civil service system. Middle or lower-ranking civil servants are assumed to have interactions with interest organisations as well, but are more likely to exchange other types of resources. Their interactions are more likely to concern the substance of particular bills rather than the political strategy behind a set of similar issues or bills. As a lobbyist of a Dutch interest group puts it: “Civil servants that are truly important for us are involved with multiple issues at the same time.”¹¹ Or, as there may be a lower threshold for accessing middle and lower-level civil servants, this selection could also result in an under-representation of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. I addressed this issue by including the answer option of “junior employees (in Dutch, *beleidsambtenaren*) usually interact with interest organisations” in the questionnaire (item 4, see appendix I). This option was seldom chosen. Only 8.4 per cent of all respondents indicated that they did not interact with interest groups. Five of them replied that junior employees usually interacted with interest groups. All in all, comparing senior civil services meets the demands of equivalence. Yet, it may result in bias in the type and number of interactions that take place with civil servants.

Establishing a population of senior civil servants

The appropriate population of civil servants consists of those officials belonging to a country's senior civil service. Comparing senior civil services thus automatically results in a demarcation of the population. I used existing institutional configurations of senior civil services in each country to define the population. For the Netherlands, the population consisted of civil servants belonging to the Dutch senior civil service (*Algemene Bestuursdienst (ABD)*). The UK population consists of civil servants belonging to the Senior Civil Service (SCS).¹²

¹⁰ The selection of senior civil servants also controls for different levels of government. Namely, by selecting the senior civil services, I opt for a comparison at a national government level. Some indeed argue that differences exist in types of interactions between different levels of government. Local governments, for instance, would entail much smaller bureaucracies and, therefore, be more responsive to their environment or have a greater flexibility in their response (Scholz and Wei 1986). However, analysing such interactions in the case of immigrant integration policy in the Netherlands also reveals similarities across different levels of government, because the need for certain resources appears to be the same (Poppelaars 2007). If different levels of government were treated as a full explanatory variable, this variable would become intertwined with one of the explanatory variables in the model, namely the character of national interest group systems. In some cases, interest group representation and involvement could be different at local and regional levels. When including other levels of government, it will become hard to keep other variables constant while examining the level of government. Therefore, the analysis will be limited to the national level of government.

¹¹ Interview by author.

¹² To ensure a proper mix between advisory agencies and executive agencies (see chapter 5), I also included the Dutch civil-service candidates who have been selected as persons who could (potentially) fulfil a senior

Drawing a random sample from these two populations was hindered by one the drawbacks of sample surveys: a notoriously low response rate. The initial strategy was to randomly sample both populations.¹³ In order to ensure a sufficiently high response rate, given a high non-response, I opted for the following strategy. I sent questionnaires to the total population of Dutch senior civil servants (N = 996). In the case of the UK, I first randomly sampled 1,147 from a total of 3,306 senior civil servants at the time of conducting the initial surveys (based on *Dod's Civil Service Companion* 2007).¹⁴ As the initial response rate was very low, I decided to submit questionnaires to the remainder of the SCS population listed in *Dod's Civil Service Companion* as well.¹⁵ Given the low response rates, both anticipated and actually experienced, this was at that time the best strategy available. On the other hand, studying the entire population is a strength as well. Nevertheless, I will take this issue into account in the interpretation and conclusions of this study.

4.3.3 Surveying interest groups

Compared to the complexity of equivalence in comparative interest group research, the issues encountered in comparative research on civil service systems seem relatively easy. Quite ironically perhaps, for a study emphasising equivalence, a major and crucial difference among countries traditionally denoted as pluralist and corporatist, is the availability of data on interest group populations. In countries usually identified as neo-corporatist, there are no databases available containing information on individual interest groups, whereas in neo-pluralist systems such databases commonly exist. This difference posed a major challenge in sampling respondents for the interest group survey. Furthermore, there is a general agreement within the interest group scholarly literature that a common definition of interest groups does not exist. In this section, I will address both issues to justify the sampling techniques used for conducting the interest group surveys.

civil service position relatively soon (www.algemenebestuursdienst.nl). For the UK, level 6/7 civil servants were also included in the survey. For the US, civil servants from the Senior Executive Service (SES) were included. More specifically, the population of senior civil servants in the US was defined as those belonging to the SES, who are career employees and whose position is a competitive one, other than the non-career SES members who receive non-competitive positions. This selection was supposed to provide a better equivalence between the nature of the Dutch and US senior civil services (Federal Yellow Book 2007, fall and personal communication with dr. F. M. van der Meer, Leiden University, Department of Public Administration). For the Swedish case, I used the civil servants denoted as senior civil servants in the Swedish State Calendar. Although there is not a formal institutionalisation of a senior civil service, based on existing classifications (Page and Wright 2001) and the listing in the Swedish State Calendar, I could define a population of senior civil servants as equivalent as possible to those of the UK, the US and the Netherlands.

¹³ When the senior civil servant's survey in the UK and the Netherlands is discussed, 'I' should be interpreted as 'we' as I conducted these surveys together with Caspar van den Berg, a then colleague at the Department of Public Administration, Leiden University. As two populations in our individual research projects overlapped, we jointly conducted the survey.

¹⁴ Dod (2007), *Dod's Civil Service Companion*, London.

¹⁵ For the US and the Swedish cases, the sampling methods were as follows. From the Swedish State Calendar, I selected from each national agency the two most senior civil servants, from whom I tried to obtain contact details. I submitted a survey to those from whom I had been able to obtain the email addresses. For the US, I took a random sample of SES members to establish a sample for the survey.

A strategy to define an indefinable population

Despite the need for comparative research to truly assess the nature of individual interest representation systems, there is considerable disagreement and doubt about the feasibility of comparative research in this field. Quite fundamentally, there is no real consensus about what interest groups, the subject in question, exactly are. Part of the fuzziness seems related to the very concepts employed to designate the subjects under scrutiny. "Counting is not the issue", according to Jordan (2006, 2), "it is categorisation that is the problem." A listing of existing definitions by Baumgartner and Leech (1998, 29) aptly illustrates Jordan's conclusion. According to the literature, interest groups are:

Social or demographic categories of the population; membership organisations; any set of individuals with similar beliefs, identifications, or interests; social movements; lobbyists registered in legislatures; political action committees, participants in rule-making or legislative hearings; institutions, including corporations and government agencies; coalitions of organisations and institutions; prominent individuals acting as political entrepreneurs or lobbyists.

This is a colourful collection of definitions containing a wide variety of potential interest groups. What are we to make of such a collection, if one is to engage in comparative research? Most of these concepts refer to specific organisational configurations. What all these loosely (or very formally) organised entities have in common is that they intersect with government actions when they pursue their private interests. When governments adopt certain measures or rules affecting private interests, interest groups will try to influence these measures or regulations through elected and/or appointed government officials (Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Lowery and Brasher 2004; Salisbury 1984). So, what these entities have in common are two fundamental aspects, irrespective of whether they are an ad hoc protest group, a full-fledged peak labour organisation or something else in between. First, they pursue their private interests. And second, in doing so, they intersect with public policy or regulations. Theoretical issues determine which of these two aspects will dominate in a given research project. The aspect of pursuing private interests will merit more attention in studies of mobilisation, maintenance and population studies of interest groups, while the intersection with public policy may be more pronounced in studies of interest groups' influence, and strategies.

A definition of interest groups in functional terms meets the conceptual demands necessary for comparative research. In Sartori's (1970) words, we "move up the ladder of abstraction." A definition in functional terms also eliminates the idiosyncrasies associated with various individual types of interest groups that prohibit any meaningful comparison. When this strategy is consistently applied, groups of any type of organisational configuration that intersect with public policy should be referred to as 'interest-pursuing entities.' For reasons of convenience, I will continue to use the term 'interest groups,' while keeping in mind that it is not the specific organisational configuration that is of importance, but it is rather the activity of pursuing one's interests.¹⁶

¹⁶ A complicating factor in this definition may be that the extent to which such 'interest-pursuing entities' are successful in pursuing private interests relates to the organisational characteristics of these entities. In other

How to sample from an unknown population?

Not only do differences in definitions seem to exist, but available data on interest groups differs markedly between the two broad sets of interest representation regimes. In the UK and US, databases of interest group populations are available. In contrast, in the Netherlands and Sweden, such comprehensive databases do not exist. Two fundamental questions arise in this case. What should we sample from and what should we compare? For the Dutch case, I developed a strategy to deal with the non-existing database problem.¹⁷

There is no census of the existing interest groups in the Netherlands from which to draw a random sample. The important or ‘big players’ among the interest groups are often well-known to policy makers in the Netherlands. Beyond this familiar collection of interest groups, however, it is hard to get an overview of other relevant interest groups. Recent studies of membership organisations in the Netherlands also restrict themselves to the largest ones (de Hart 2005), concern sector specific studies (Akkerman 2005; Huitema 2005), or study a particular type of organisations, such as professional associations (Visser and Wilts 2006). Such studies do not accumulate and thus fail to provide a full overview of the interest group population. As a civil servant noted: “When there are problems with certain health and safety rules in a particular profession, we often meet interest groups that were completely unfamiliar to us before.”¹⁸ In general, there is no representative indication of the existing interest groups, outside those that regularly knock on policy makers’ doors. The scholarly literature on interest representation in the Netherlands very much reflects this political-administrative practice. Put differently, the literature does not provide a full overview of the existing interest groups in the Netherlands either.

By studying only those organisations that already have access, we cannot draw conclusions about the nature of interest representation. We do not know how many others there are, so we do not know (for instance) how severely access is limited. Conceptual models that explicitly draw attention to this issue thus cannot be fully applied. The question, then, is how to measure resource concentration when the boundaries of the interest population are unknown. When applying a resource dependence model, we need to include population dynamics, which require us to be aware of the total interest population (see chapter 6). Moreover, comparative research is further complicated by the fact that we cannot compare different systems when there are no comparably representative estimates of the interest populations available from which we can sample in an equivalent manner.

words, their organisational configuration may be a vehicle to a successful intersection with public policy and thus access. So, by excluding this, we might omit an important intervening variable. Still, such organisational characteristics are not an essential or fundamental characteristic of interest groups. Pursuing private interests and seeking access when interests intersect with public policy are, similar to Sartori’s definition of political parties, the bare essentials of this concept. In explaining differences in success, we should move down the ladder of abstraction and find parameters covering, for instance, organisational characteristics.

¹⁷ For Sweden, a similar full-blown strategy would have been appropriate, but given a lack of time and resources I opted for a satisfying rather than optimising strategy: selecting the organisations reported in the Swedish State Calendar and via an additional, snowball sampling web search adding other major interest organisations to establish a dataset of at least the major Swedish interest groups.

¹⁸ Interview by author.

Indeed, there are no legal requirements for interest groups to register in the Netherlands when they want to consult or contact political parties in parliament, ministers or civil servants. Such requirements to register not only contribute to more transparency in public decision making, but also provide scholars, for instance in the US, with a fairly satisfactory start for collecting data on interest groups (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). And whereas the multiple databases available on EU interest groups generate their own methodological and substantive problems, at least there is some census of the EU interest system (Berkhout and Lowery 2008). These databases allow researchers to define in a relatively satisfactory way a population from which to sample and eventually infer some general conclusions about interest populations at large. A lack of such a database thus results in a fundamental sampling issue when studying interest representation in the Netherlands. Indeed, how are we to generalise findings and results on the national interest population, if we are not familiar with the characteristics and size of this population?

Two databases have been constructed to provide a representative dataset for the Dutch national interest group population. One includes interest groups that are not necessarily known to policy makers and the other one includes those that are presumably familiar to policy makers. The two together provide an estimate of the entire national interest population.

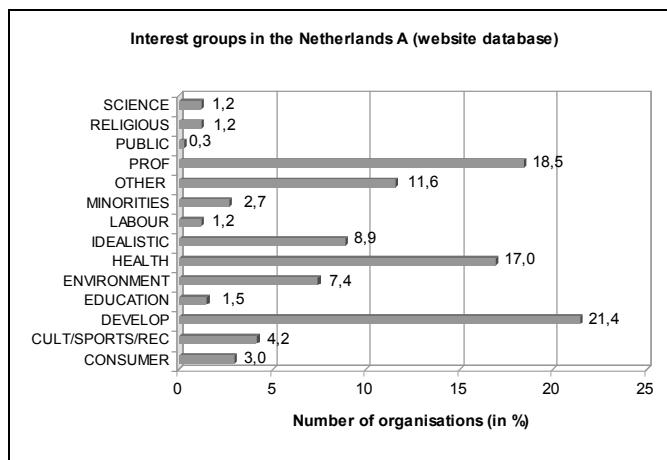
Let me discuss the database with interest groups not necessarily known to the government first. To establish such a database, I used the association and foundation database generated by the National Chamber of Commerce in the Netherlands (NCC). The NCC is an autonomous public agency (in Dutch: *zelfstandig bestuursorgaan (zbo)*) under the auspices of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The NCC not only administers the trade register, but also administers an association and foundation register (Register Act 1997). Essentially, every citizen in the Netherlands either planning to establish his or her own company or start any type of foundation or association needs to register with the NCC. These trade, association and foundation registers are available online and accessible via a NCC coding system, which provides codes for every type of firm or association. As all interest groups are formally registered as either a foundation or association, this database provides a good starting point to establish an estimate of the national interest population. To select candidate organisations, I searched the NCC database via their coding system. Based on classifications used by other scholars (Beyers and Kerremans 2004; Mahoney 2004), I categorised different types of interest groups to guide the selection of appropriate NCC codes (see appendix II).

Searching the NCC register on the basis of these codes resulted in an initial database of 58,220 organisations. However, two caveats needed to be addressed before finalising the dataset. First, as the NCC coding system is not mutually exclusive, duplicate organisations needed to be eliminated. Second, the NCC coding system only registers the location, name and type of organisations rather than its scope of activity. It was therefore necessary to distinguish between national and local organisations, as I was only interested in interest groups operating at the national level. In order to make this distinction, I manually searched the initial database of 58,220 organisations by organisations' names to distinguish the

national from local ones.¹⁹ Finally, as even this coding system turned out to be incomplete, I checked the database against an overview of the largest interest groups (de Hart 2005), and, whenever necessary, I added missing organisations to the database. This strategy eventually resulted in a database of 7,565 organisations.²⁰ From these 7,565 organisations, I took a random sample of 1000 organisations and gathered contact details for each via an internet search and by phone. This information was also used to ensure that organisations had a national scope of activities and to check whether they still existed.

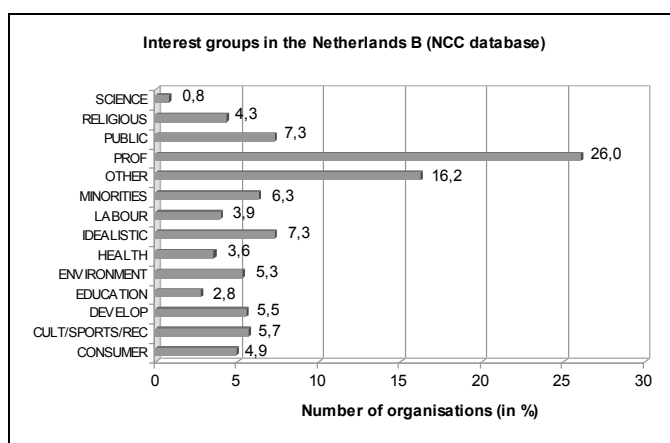
Second, to account for interest groups that were already familiar to policy makers, I examined websites from each central government department and from the organisations that are members of the Social and Economic Council. This did not, of course, provide a full overview of the collection of interest groups with which the government is familiar. Policy makers are not truly familiar with all of the groups, and some with which policy makers are familiar are still excluded. Assuming that familiar and non-familiar organisations are missing at random, this website database provides a fairly good estimate of the *characteristics* of the interest population known to the government rather than an estimate of the *total number* of organisations with which the government is familiar.

The two diagrams in figure 4.2 depict the results of the database searches. They show the different characteristics of each population based on random samples from both datasets. That is, they show the proportion of each type of interest group in the random samples drawn from the two datasets: the one containing organisations known by the government (A), and one not necessarily known by the government (B). I checked both samples to assess whether the organisations indeed had a national scope, still existed, or were international organisations. The NCC sample contained 507 national organisations and the website-based sample contained 336 national organisations. The results in figures 4.2 are based upon the number of national organisations, rather than the full sample.



¹⁹ In Dutch, I coded organisations with the following words in its title as possibly national interest organisations: *Nederlandse, nationale, landelijke, vereniging van/verenigde, koepel, platform*.

²⁰ This database excludes individual corporations as well as advisory councils.



Figures 4.2 The population of interest groups in the Netherlands

Two important aspects of these datasets need attention. First, the sample based on the Chamber of Commerce database contained 317 organisations that were untraceable. They either ceased to exist or could simply not be found via the internet, a phone book, or the yellow pages. The NCC database provided indeed a comprehensive start for establishing a database of national interest organisations, as it registers every type of organisational activity. Yet, it does not provide a complete and up-to-date registration, indicating that the database is not entirely reliable. Second, the website database most probably overestimates the number of NGOs, in particular development and environmental NGOs. For this dataset, I used snowball sampling. Via the websites of the central government departments and peak organisations, I collected organisations and member organisations respectively. The association of development organisations provided a separate, comprehensive website of its member organisations. The listing of the member organisations of the two professional organisations was not complete, however. This strategy may have resulted in an overrepresentation of development NGOs. Yet, these two datasets together provide a comprehensive view on the Dutch interest group population. As such, they offer a fairly equivalent database to those in pluralist systems. In addition, these datasets can provide more information on interest representation in the Netherlands than the case studies and the studies of particular types of interest groups have together offered until now.

I used these databases to take random samples, which are illustrated in figure 4.3 above. For the UK, I used the *Directory of British Associations, Edition 6* (CBD Research 2006).²¹ This directory contains a database of British and Irish associations, including 7,368 British associations and their contact details. Some, however, question its completeness and representativeness.²² Yet, for the purpose of this research, it was the best available option to conduct a comparative survey.

²¹ CBD 2006, *Directory of British Associations and associations in Ireland*, CD-ROM version, CBD research, Beckenham, Kent. I thank Prof. dr. W. Maloney for his suggestion and reference to this database.

²² Research project of Prof. dr. G. Jordan and Prof. W. Maloney; presented at the ESRC Conference on the Politics of Interest Representation: Counting interest groups, Aberdeen University, 02-07-2007.

From those 7,368 organisations, I randomly sampled 977 organisations.²³ For organisations without current email addresses, I called to ask the email address of the director, chief executive, or general secretary. After the database search and the telephone calls, I was able to collect contact details for 879 organisations, which included either personal or personal assistant's email addresses.²⁴

4.4 Assessing the quality of the survey dataset

Based on the surveys submitted to the random samples of bureaucrats and interest groups, I established a dataset of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. To measure each of the theoretical concepts of resource importance and resource concentration, questionnaire items were designed. In the following chapters, I will discuss the operationalisation and measurement of each of the theoretical concepts in more detail, including the individual questionnaire items.²⁵ I sent the questionnaires to the respondents via an online web tool, which allowed me to fully administer the surveys myself.²⁶ The questionnaires were sent via an email containing a unique link to the questionnaire.²⁷ The surveys were conducted between January 2007 and March 2008.

These surveys resulted in a database of bureaucracy-interest group interactions mainly from the UK and the Netherlands. Surveys were also sent to Sweden and the US. This particular set of countries was selected as they provided for variation in interest representation regimes (for a detailed discussion, see chapter 5). Table 4.1 shows the responses in total N.

Table 4.1 Total N dataset bureaucracy-interest group interactions

<i>Nations</i>	<i>Total N database</i>	
	Bureaucrats	Interest groups
The Netherlands	418	222
UK	406	133
US	82	38
Sweden	119	49

²³ This was done in two 'rounds.' I first randomly sampled 609 organisations, but as the response rate turned out to be very low, I additionally sampled 368 organisations to increase the response rate, as several reminders had not helped to increase the response rate of the first round.

²⁴ For the US, I used the database of interest groups based on the Lobbying Disclosure Act (see Baumgartner and Leech 1998) and selected a list of interest groups and lobbyist via the fields: issue codes; government entity contacted and year filed. For each issue, I selected the first 100 organisations that were listed after the query based on three fields: policy area (issue), Congress (government entity contacted) and 2007 (year filed). For the Sweden case, I listed the organisations included in the Swedish State Calendar and conducted snowball sampling via a website search.

²⁵ See chapters 5-7 for further discussion and appendix I for a full list of questions.

²⁶ See: www.zipsurvey.com; I thank Dr. T. Capelos for this very useful suggestion.

²⁷ I used a general email address (for the ABD survey: topambtenaren@fsw.leidenuniv.nl; for the UK, US and Sweden SCS surveys and the NLD, UK, US and Sweden interest group surveys I used: governance@fsw.leidenuniv.nl) to which respondents could respond and provide us comments on the questionnaire. Such a reply option allowed me to detect possible technical malfunctions or other questions regarding the survey, and prevented multiple responses from a single respondent. As a result, these options effectively addressed some of the drawbacks of online survey

Whereas in absolute numbers the bureaucrats' datasets of the UK and the Netherlands are comparable, the interest group dataset of the Netherlands is larger than that of the UK. And the total N generated by the Sweden and US surveys, both for the bureaucrats and the interest groups, is much smaller than the total N generated by the UK and Dutch surveys. Therefore, the Sweden and the US datasets are not used in this study. The UK and the Dutch datasets are, however, sufficient to assess the model's explanatory value. I can only use these datasets to measure the degree of dependence characterising bureaucracy-interest group interactions, however, when they meet the demands of reliability and validity. Below, I discuss these issues in turn.

4.4.1 Assessing the reliability of the questionnaires

One of the measures of the robustness of a dataset is reliability. Reliability in survey research often hinges on how consistently respondents have answered the questions, how well they have interpreted the questions, whether they have interpreted the questions in a similar way, and, finally, whether or not there is a bias resulting from a high non(-item) response. Testing the reliability of a questionnaire can be done in several ways. An obvious method is the test-retest method, since providing the same item twice to the same respondent with some period of time in-between is an obvious measure of consistency. In the case of multi-item measurements, checking the internal consistency of the respective items is an additional way to measure the reliability of a questionnaire (Fowler 2002; Groves et al. 2004). The questionnaires contained both single item and multiple item measurements. So, the obvious way to test reliability was the test-retest method, but that was not possible given practical limitations. Although the questionnaires did not contain true parallel form or multi-item measures, several items related to similar topics were included. Therefore, to gauge the reliability of the questionnaires, inter-item correlations (de Vaus 2002) were examined.

For the bureaucrats' dataset, I chose two items that were designed to measure interactions with interest groups and two items on the influence of the EU on interactions with national interest groups.²⁸ The internal consistency of the interest group dataset was also measured for items related to the importance of the EU and importance of civil servants for getting access to the policy making process. The inter-item correlations vary from 0.38 to 0.82, indicating a satisfactory internal consistency. Table 4.2 shows the inter-item correlations compared between the UK and the Netherlands for both the interest group and bureaucrats' datasets.

²⁸ The number of questions in a questionnaire is limited, as a questionnaire should not take too long to complete. This helps to increase both the response-rate and reliability (the longer it takes, the less people will be concentrating at the end of the questionnaire). For this particular research project, the questionnaire contained items measuring various aspects of interactions with interest organisations as well items measuring (the Europeanisation of) various competencies and activities of senior civil servants. These items were part of the empirical research of C. van den Berg (see footnote 13). As a consequence, the number of questions for our individual research projects was restricted.

Table 4.2 Inter-item correlations questionnaire-items

Datasets	Inter-item correlations	
	UK	NLD
Bureaucracy		
Interactions interest groups	0.83	0.82
Influence EU on interactions	0.69	0.53
Interest Groups		
Importance civil servants	0.44	0.50
Importance EU	0.38	0.51

The inter-item correlations for the bureaucrats' datasets are generally higher than for the interest group datasets. Whereas the values for the bureaucrats' dataset vary from 0.53-0.83, the values of the interest group dataset vary from 0.38-0.50.²⁹ Possibly, this difference is due to variance in uniformity. A dataset of senior civil servants may be less heterogeneous than a dataset of representatives of interest groups. Accordingly, this heterogeneity may be reflected in a lower internal consistency of the interest group dataset. For both questionnaires, the inter-item correlations for the EU are less high than those related to the importance of interest groups or civil servants respectively. This is most likely a result of sequencing. The EU questions followed those on the importance of civil servants and interactions with interest groups, respectively, and were asked almost at the end of the questionnaires. This could reflect lack of concentration, which often occurs at the end of questionnaires (Fowler 2002; Groves et al. 2004). Also, interviews revealed that the EU may be a complex topic, which could also entail lower consistency. Still, the inter-item correlations suggest a satisfactory internal consistency of the questionnaires. And as the interview data are generally in line with the survey results, we can infer that this survey dataset is fairly reliable.

4.4.2 Assessing the validity of the questionnaires

Validity, one could argue, is always in the eye of the beholder. The theoretical framework that is adopted very much determines whether questionnaire items are valid measurements or not. So, in the end, validity remains much more a matter of theoretical judgment rather than a rigorously tested characteristic of the dataset. Given the nature of the subject under study, I was able to address its face and content validity by conducting pilot tests.³⁰ Pilot testing included a group of peers in the field of public administration and political science who critically assessed whether the questionnaire items measured what they were supposed to measure. This phase included both native Dutch and native English speakers to ensure that

²⁹ According to several authors (de Vaus 2002, Field 2005), inter-item consistency, or internal consistency, can be measured by inter-item correlations and Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of the reliability of a scale and it measures how well the different items or components reflect a similar concept. According to a similar logic, that different items are designed to measure the same thing, we can use Cronbach alpha to check the reliability of multi-item measurement. The values of Cronbach's alpha vary from 0.68 to 0.91 for the civil service dataset and from 0.54 to 0.66 for the interest groups dataset. These values indicate a good to satisfying internal consistency.

³⁰ More sophisticated analyses of validity, such as criterion and construct validity, could not be used given the nature of the topic at hand (see Litwin 1995).

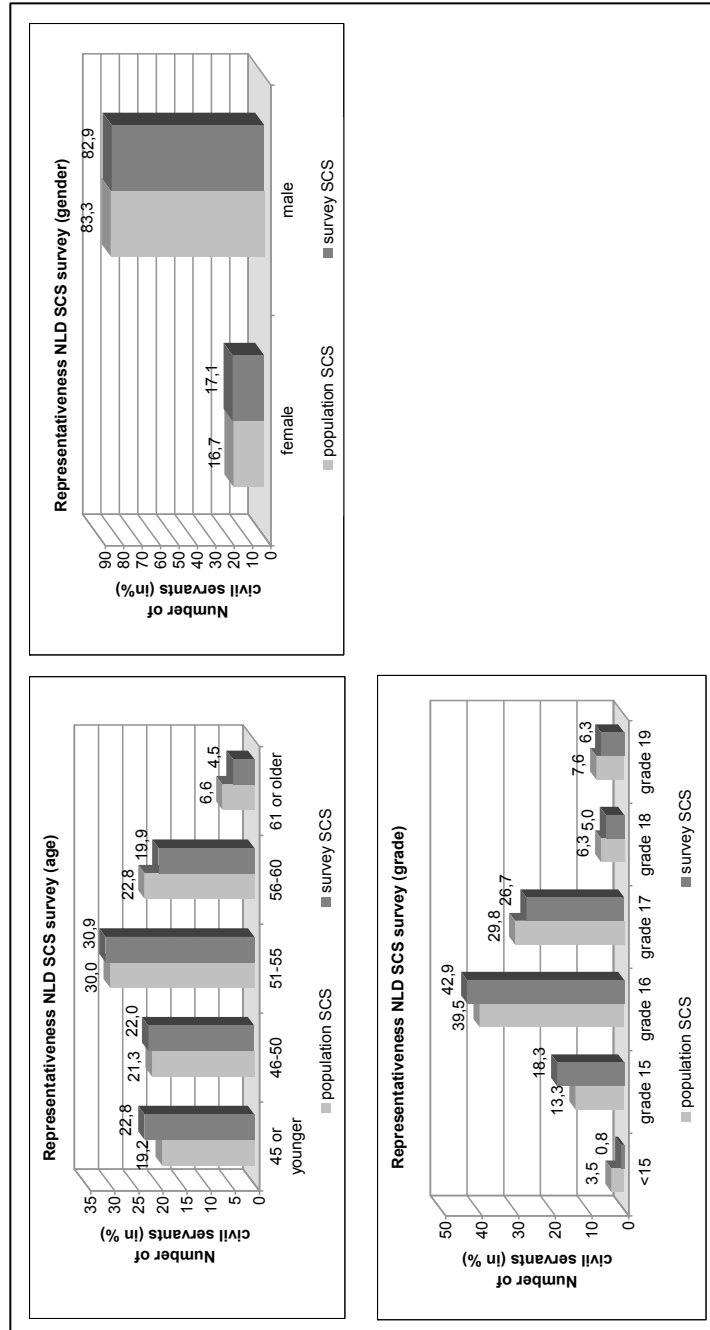
interpretation of the questions was as similar as possible. I refined the questionnaires based on their comments. I also pre-tested the senior civil servants' questionnaire with a small group of civil servants to check whether the items were meaningful and whether the questionnaire was not too long. Again, their comments resulted in improvement of the questionnaires. In addition, several experts in survey methods provided feedback on the wording and order of the questionnaire items.³¹ I did not assess the internal validity of the survey dataset as such, yet further analyses (see chapters 5-7) did not point to major internal contradictions that would indicate poor internal validity. I addressed the internal validity of the entire database, however, by including both surveys and elite interviewing as corroborative methods of data collection.

4.4.3 Assessing the response of the SCS survey

Assessing external validity in the case of survey research is usually based on the quality of the sampling method and an assessment of the relative response rate. The Dutch senior civil service, including the members of the candidate-programme, consisted of 996 members at the time the survey was conducted. I sent questionnaires to the total population and received 416 questionnaires (a response rate of 41.4 percent). Such a response rate allows generalisation of the results to the entire population of senior civil servants in the Netherlands.

To further assess the external validity of the Dutch dataset, I examined the differences between the dataset and the population in terms of gender, age, minority and grades. Figures 4.3 show the results of this analysis for the Dutch senior civil service. The proportion male/female is roughly similar, as are the figures representing age. Until the age of 55, the percentages are more or less similar. Above the age of 55, the survey dataset shows smaller percentages of these age categories. In terms of grades, the results show some minor differences. The survey dataset contains less people with a grade under 15, somewhat more people with grades 15 and 16, and less people with grades 17, 18 and 19 than the entire population. The results are quite satisfactory for the Dutch senior civil service dataset and they confirm the possibility to generalise the results to the entire population of senior civil servants in the Netherlands.

³¹ I thank both Prof. dr. P.L.H. Scheepers (Nijmegen University) and Dr. T. Capelos (at that time Leiden University, currently University of Leeds) for very useful feedback on the structuring and wording of the items.



Figures 4.3 Representativeness of the Senior Civil Service (SCS) survey in the Netherlands

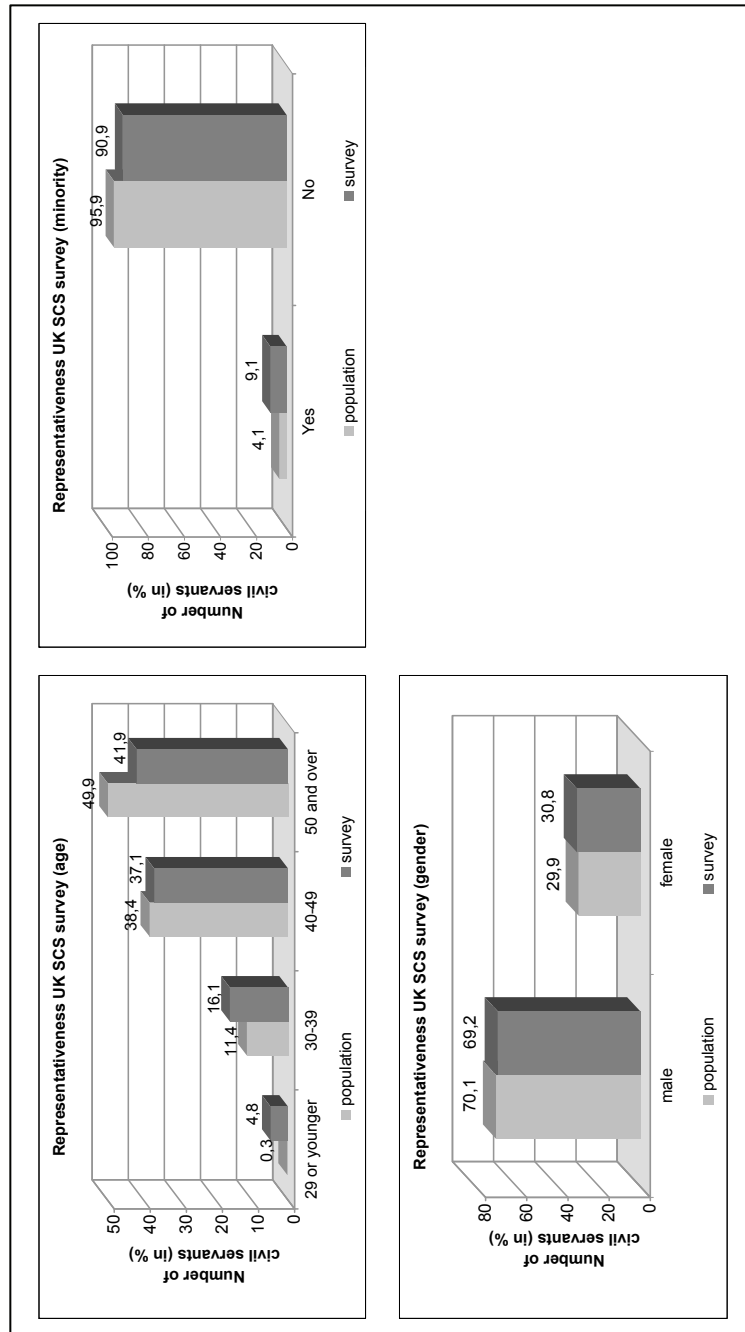
With regard to the UK SCS, I received 406 completed questionnaires from a total of 3,306 senior civil servants listed in *Dod's Civil Service Companion* (2007). This would have resulted in a response rate of 9.1 per cent, which is too low to justify generalisations for the entire senior civil service.

A further assessment of the external validity of the UK dataset, similar to the Dutch dataset, included figures of gender, age, minority and grades. Generalisation appeared to be somewhat difficult for this dataset given an almost completely inversed picture in terms of grade. The population of senior civil servants (SCS and level 6/7) contains 1.7 percent SCS civil servants, whereas the survey dataset includes 69.3 percent SCS civil servants. Clearly, something unexpected had happened during the process of collecting data for the UK civil servants. I had used *Dod's Civil Service Companion* (2007) to establish the population of senior civil servants in the UK, assuming that those listed in the database actually were senior civil servants. A further examination of the differences in grades between the survey database and figures of the entire UK SCS (National Statistics 2006; ORC International 2006) suggested something else. Dod's database encompassed some of the level 6/7 civil servants as well, rendering the response rate even lower.³²

To deal with this inconvenient situation, I decided to examine how representative the SCS respondents in the survey dataset were compared to the true population of SCS members in the UK. The respondents had indicated grades corresponding to their jobs in the questionnaire. Dod's Civil Service Companion, appeared to explicitly denote civil servants who were members of the SCS but not those belonging to level 6/7 and included about 600 SCS members. From other sources (National Statistics 2006; ORC International 2006), I was able to infer that the UK has a total population of about 4,455 senior civil servants. Comparing the number of SCS civil servants in the survey dataset (124) to the full population of senior civil servants, the response rate is only 2.7 per cent.³³ This is, of course, far too low for any legitimate and meaningful generalisation. Based on demographic figures, however, the set of SCS respondents appeared to be quite representative. Figures 4.4 show the results of the analysis.

³² Apparently, the organisation did not offer a systematic database of SCS-members based on specific criteria. The organisation works with the database of the previous year, updates it and sends it to the department directors for approval. Some civil servants will add information or request to be omitted from the database. Very likely, civil servants who have an external profile or have a very responsive disposition will be overrepresented in the database. Instead of a systematic and representative database of the UK SCS, it turned out to be a rather unsystematic database that contained both SCS members and level 6/7 civil servants (telephone call tot Dod's, 12-01-2008 after observing differences in grades).

³³ Inferred from *ORC International, SCS survey 2006*. The response rate of the latter was 67% of the entire SCS, including a total N of 2,985, which results in a full population of about 4,455. Since Dod's database includes about 600 SCS, this represents 13.2 percent of the full SCS population. Then, I figured out the percentage of true SCS members in the survey. The demographic and ranking questions were posed at the end of the questionnaire. As a result of non-item response throughout the questionnaire, I had to apply the ratio of level 6/7 and SCS-level answers to the initial set of respondents. About 30.5 percent of the respondents had answered that they were SCS members. Applying this percentage to the initial number of respondents, I estimated the number of senior civil servants in our dataset at about 124. The ratio of level 6/7 and SCS-level in the UK dataset rendered it less comparable to the Dutch SCS dataset, in which the percentage of true SCS-level civil servants is higher. This may affect the analyses. Yet, answers to the questions of whether civil servants interacted with interest groups and if not for what reasons, did not reveal significant differences between the two samples concerning interactions with interest groups.



Figures 4.4 Representativeness of the Senior Civil Service (SCS) survey in the UK

As can be observed from the figures, the numbers in terms of gender and minority are roughly similar between the population and the survey dataset. In terms of age, the figures are also rather similar, yet the survey produced a somewhat different proportion of younger and older people than the proportion apparent in the population. This may be a result of the online survey, as younger people may perhaps be more inclined to fill out an online based survey.³⁴ Based on the demographic statistics, we may, very cautiously, generalise the results to the UK SCS, while keeping the low response rate in mind. For the entire dataset, the results only apply to the civil servants that participated in the survey, as I was unable to determine the representativeness of the level 6/7 civil servants. However inconvenient *Dod's Civil Service Companion* database may be, it was the only database of UK (senior) civil servants available at the time of collecting data. So, acknowledging the low response rate and its consequences for generalisations is generally the best option for this study. But, given the fact that in demographic terms our SCS dataset is rather similar to the full population of SCS members, we may, if cautiously, generalise the results to the entire SCS population.

4.4.4 Assessing the response of the interest groups survey

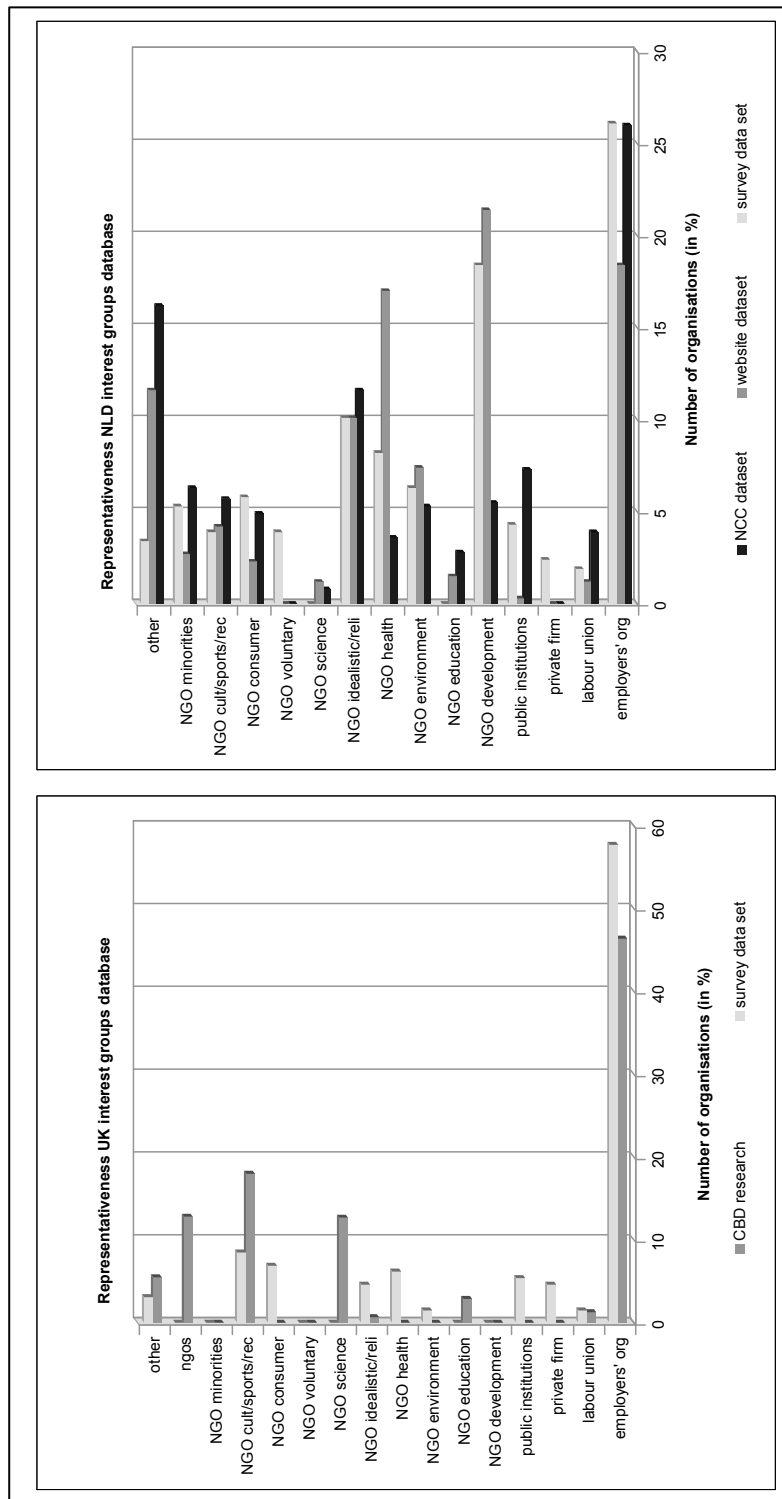
Response rates for the UK and Dutch interest group datasets were also quite low, as is common in interest group research (Gray and Lowery 1996a). I received 133 questionnaires from a sample of 879 organisations from a total population of 7,368 interest groups in the UK. The eventual response rate was 1.8 percent. For the Netherlands, however, it is difficult to formulate an exact response rate. Both samples consisted of national and non-national organisations. After establishing the number of national organisations and extrapolating the ratio to the population databases, I found a response rate of about 3 percent of the (estimate of) the total population of interest groups in the Netherlands.³⁵ Both datasets are thus not really satisfactory in terms of response rates and representativeness.

³⁴ It can also be the result of a difference in grades, as the SCS is more likely to consist of older people. Yet, the relatively large number of SCS in our survey suggests otherwise.

³⁵ The NCC sample contained 507 (51.0 percent) national organisations, and the website sample contained 336 (84.0 percent) national organisations. Extrapolating this to the entire database, this means that the full NCC database contains about 5,718 national organisations and the website database contains about 1,737 national organisations. Adding these two numbers and comparing it with the total number of respondents would result in an initial estimate of the response rate. Yet, we still have to take into account that both datasets may overlap. Comparing the two samples (only national organisations), 2 percent of the organisations in the website database overlapped with the NCC database. This means that we have to subtract about 35 organisations from the total website database before adding the total number of organisations to the NCC database. Based on these results, we can infer that there are roughly 7,420 national interest groups in the Netherlands.

Another estimate of the representativeness of the dataset was to compare the survey dataset and the population datasets in terms of characteristics of the interest group population. In other words, we could compare the datasets in terms of the relative contribution of each type of interest group to the entire dataset. When we compare the Dutch survey dataset with the two databases, we see that the distribution of different types of interest groups in the survey dataset falls between the NCC database and the website database. Some proportions of the types of interest groups are more similar to the NCC database and others are more similar to the website database. Estimating the representativeness of the UK interest group dataset was also difficult, as the CBD research database does not contain a mutually exclusive classification system. Some organisations are classified more than once, but it is impossible to discover which ones. If we compare the relative contributions of the types of interest groups between the survey dataset and the full CBD research database, the different categories are relatively similar. However, a major difference is that there is no category for NGOs in the CBD research database. So for those organisations, it is hard to determine the representativeness of the survey dataset. Figures 4.5 show the relative contributions of each type of interest group to the survey datasets and the other databases.

We observe a larger number of employers' organisations and NGOs in the UK interest group database than in the CBD database. The CBD dataset contains more organisations in the fields of science and culture/sports/recreation. In the case of the Netherlands, the survey dataset contains a similar percentage of consumer, employers, and minorities' organisations as the NCC database. The percentage of development NGOs and labour organisations is similar to those of the website database. In the case of idealistic, environmental and culture/sports/recreation organisations, the survey dataset is comparable to both the website and the NCC databases. The survey dataset contains fewer 'other' organisations and more voluntary organisations than the two population datasets. Easy generalisation of the results is not possible, because the survey dataset of Dutch interest groups, in terms of relative proportion of types of interest groups, falls between the two databases. With regard to the UK dataset, the relative contribution of each type of interest group renders the survey dataset to be roughly similar to the CBD research database. But as the response rate is also low, we need to be cautious with generalisations. When we compare the UK and NLD samples, there are some differences. In general, however, the ratio between professional organisations and NGO's is roughly similar. In the NLD dataset the percentage of NGOs is somewhat higher, whereas in the UK dataset the percentage of professional associations is somewhat higher.



Figures 4.5 Representativeness NLD and UK interest group surveys

In sum, generalisation of the results seems possible for the Dutch senior civil service, given the relatively high response rate and similar demographic figures of both the survey dataset and the entire population. In case of the UK SCS, generalisation is somewhat more complex, given the low response rate, yet similar demographic figures in the case of the senior civil servants seem to justify cautious generalisations. In the case of the interest groups surveys, the response is low, but this is common in interest group research. What is different in this study, at least for the dataset of Dutch interest groups, is that an attempt has been made to get a detailed picture of the broader population. This dataset allows for a comparison in the distribution of types of interest groups and permits a better judgement of the possibility to generalise findings. More broadly, despite a relatively low response rate, the resulting datasets allow a more systematic analysis of bureaucracy-interest group interactions than case studies would have allowed.

4.4.5 The quality of the dataset

So, what can we conclude about the quality of the datasets? In terms of validity, I relied on pilot testing, including peers from within the scholarly field as well as several civil servants and experts on survey methodology. Their comments and feedbacks substantively improved the questionnaires. Satisfactory inter-item correlations suggest a reliable database. The low response rate seems worrisome for generalisations. Generalising the results for the NLD senior civil servants dataset is possible given the relatively high response rate and representativeness in terms of demographic characteristics. Yet, we can only make cautious generalisations about the representativeness of the UK SCS survey in terms of the demographic characteristics, and in comparing the proportion of different types of interest groups between the populations and the datasets. All in all, this dataset can be used to test hypotheses on bureaucracy-interest group interactions and to make cautious inferences to the entire populations of civil servants and interest groups. The discussion of the findings of each of the analyses will refer to 'civil servants' and 'interest groups' more generally for convenience. Despite the usage of these general terms, the limits of easy generalisation are acknowledged.

Missing data

There is one important issue concerning survey research in comparative politics and administration that I have not dealt with so far. Surveys are notorious for their relatively high non-response or non-item response rate, resulting in incomplete datasets, which in turn complicate the robustness of statistical analyses. A recent survey of the literature shows that almost 94 percent of scholars use listwise deletion to remove entire observations from the analysis to address non-item response, resulting in missing data (King et al 2001). Generally speaking, we can observe three mechanisms of missing data. First, data can be missing completely at random (MCAR), which means that a missing response occurs only by chance. A second mechanism of missing data entails the option of missing at random (MAR). Responses are still missing at random, but may depend on other observed characteristics. Finally, data can be missing not at random (MNAR), meaning that missing responses are related to a value that could have been observed. For instance, people with a high income are more likely not to report their income

(Sinharray, Stern, and Russel 2001). Listwise deletion is only appropriate if the proportion of missing data is relatively small and if the assumption of MCAR holds; a situation that rarely occurs. Otherwise, using listwise deletion could result in biased results and inefficient data analysis (King et al 2001). In addition, listwise deletion means that potentially valuable data cannot be used for analyses.

The databases in this study are also characterised by a relatively large non-item response (see also chapter 5 and 6). To avoid biased results, I will use multiple imputation to generate complete datasets to test the hypotheses. Various methods exist to handle missing data, and multiple imputation is but one. Although contested, there seems to be a consensus that multiple imputation is generally the best solution (Sinharray, Stern and Russell 2001; Tabachnik and Fidell 2007).³⁶ Due to the contested nature of multiple imputation (Gelman, King, and Chuanhai 1998), I will compare results based on both datasets: the original incomplete dataset and the complete datasets after multiple imputation. Further details and the diagnostics of the multiple imputation process will be discussed in the context of the civil service (chapter 5) and interest groups analyses (chapter 6) respectively.

4.5 Approximating a longitudinal perspective

The dataset generated by the cross-national survey enables us to analyse current interactions between a bureaucracy and interest groups. The impact of time, however, can only be traced to a limited extent. Recall that the model developed in chapter 3 revealed the existence of alternative types of rationality that can only be unravelled by a long-term perspective. That is, habitual and anticipatory rationality may also determine resource exchanges between interest groups and bureaucrats, in addition to the strategic rationality implicit in resource dependence theory. A full appreciation of a time dimension in bureaucracy-interest group interactions, and thus the ability to examine the complete set of different types of rationality underlying those interactions, requires longitudinal data. Longitudinal data, preferably panel data, would enable us to comprehensively measure the nature of the degree of dependence characterising bureaucracy-interest group interactions over time. That is, measurement over time would make it possible to examine whether the resource exchanges are based on strategic, anticipatory, or habitual rationality or a combination of these types of choices. Unfortunately, establishing a longitudinal database was not possible in this study. Nevertheless, to address such a time perspective, I supplemented the dataset described above by semi-structured interviews with both civil servants and representatives of interest groups. I added this method of elite interviewing to the survey instrument to collect data, thereby employing a mixed-method strategy in the data analysis.

The underlying assumption of the mixed-method strategy in this research is twofold.³⁷ First, I used a combination of survey research and semi-structured elite

³⁶ A full examination of all mathematical assumptions underlying these different methods goes beyond the scope of this research. Instead, I rely on discussions and suggestions of scholars who are experts in these methodologies and their mathematics.

³⁷ In the literature on research methods, such combinations of research methods are often discussed in terms of 'mixed methods' (Bennet and Braumoeller 2005; Lieberman 2005) or, more generally, 'triangulation'

interviewing because this was the best mix of data collection methods available to generate the data necessary for testing the hypotheses within the boundaries of a relatively small-scale research project. I was able to use the resulting dataset with a number of analysis techniques to test the hypotheses discussed in the previous chapter. Combining statistical analyses with a version of fuzzy-set analysis, an in-depth content analysis and counterfactual analysis allowed me to measure the different types of rationality underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

Second, and equally important, combining various data collection and analysis methods helps to strengthen the internal validity of the research by establishing true triangulation. The semi-structured interviews with bureaucrats and interest group representatives provided an additional check on the survey data. More importantly, these interviews enabled me to allow respondents to reflect on their interactions with bureaucrats or interest groups, respectively, when explicitly considering them over time. Relying on several methods of data collection also allowed me to construct a dataset that would serve the application of multiple analysis methods necessary for testing the different types of rationality underlying the resource exchanges between bureaucrats and interest groups.

I restricted the interviews to the Netherlands.³⁸ Yet, to bring in the comparative element so important to this study, I chose two policy areas, macro-economics and public health, from which to select respondents. The choice of these two policy areas was based on an initial analysis of the survey results, which showed that these two policy areas involved civil servants interacting with a relatively large number of interest groups. I further opted for these specific policy areas for the following reasons. First, macro-economics, and social-economics, is the subject of most studies of corporatism and international political economy (Molina and Rhodes 2002). Explicitly addressing the two rival explanations, habitual and anticipatory rationality, for bureaucracy-interest group interactions regarding this policy area could result in an interesting contribution to this strand of literature. Second, public health in the Netherlands is a policy field that is not only characterised by a high number of interest groups, but also by a diverse array of interests. Many patient or consumer organisations are active in this field, as well as the very influential private firms, such as insurance companies and pharmaceutical firms, and associations representing them. The existence of many diverse organisations provides an interesting case to study how organisational characteristics may influence differences in access and the degree of dependence. Both policy areas thus allowed for an interesting additional perspective on bureaucracy-interest group interactions to that already offered by the survey dataset.³⁹ In total, I

(Peters 1998; term coined by Webb et al. 1967). What is often missing in existing mixed-method work is attention to the testing of rival explanations by using several research strategies. And this is exactly the point where the implicit logic behind mixed methods - using a supplementary research method to strengthen causal inferences regarding one theoretical model or set of hypotheses - no longer seems to apply. Put differently, various methods are often combined to test the same hypotheses, but various methods are seldom combined to test different hypotheses related to a single phenomenon.

³⁸ Interviews were held with SCS-level civil servants in the UK via telephone (N = 8). The quality of the data resulting from these interviews was not similar to the quality of the Dutch interview data. Therefore, I decided to limit the interviews to civil servants and interest groups in the Netherlands.

³⁹ The aim of these semi-structured interviews was to collect data on the impact of time on bureaucracy-interest group interactions. I therefore did not select on the basis of the dependent variable, for instance

conducted 39 interviews with civil servants and 18 interviews with representatives of interest groups. This resulted in a dataset of bureaucracy-interest group interactions that included information on these interactions over time. As I opted for an individual-level analysis (see chapter 7), the dataset includes information on 57 different instances of bureaucracy-interest group interactions varying across policy areas, agency types, and types of interest groups, with a set of indicators for different types of choices (see appendix II and chapter 7 for further details).

4.5.1 Reliability and validity in elite interviewing

Interviewing, in particular elite interviewing, poses challenges to the reliability and validity of the data collected by these interviews. To address these issues, I opted for the following two strategies: semi-structured interviews and a combination of interviewing civil servants and interest groups active in a similar policy area to collect multiple interpretations concerning a single topic. Using multiple sources is an obvious yet fundamental strategy to estimate whether the things respondents telling you are close to the truth (Berry 2002). I also used the results of the survey analysis to check whether answers to interview questions corresponded to the survey results, and vice versa. The semi-structured nature of the interviews enabled me to construct a dataset of comparable data so as to allow sound analyses. The additional room for manoeuvre such interviews offer allowed me to probe further when it was necessary and to dig deeper into issues that from the outset seemed interesting, yet were not at the core of the research project. Additionally, semi-structured questions and open-ended questions allow respondents to organise their answers within their own frame, which seems essential in the case of elite interviewing. Elite interviewees apparently do not like “to be put in a straightjacket of closed-ended questions” (Aberbach and Rockman 2002).⁴⁰ Semi-structured interviews are thus very suitable for elite interviewing when used for exploring alternative explanations of a particular phenomenon, as they both allow a researcher to establish a sound database and at the same time provide enough flexibility to engage in what should be interpreted as a good conversation by the respondents (Aberbach and Rockman 2002; Odendahl and Shaw 2002).

To address the political sensitivity of the topic, I promised confidentiality and anonymity and took into account the ordering of the questions (Leech 2002). That is, I started with general questions and gradually asked those that could reveal the

choosing one area with no or relatively few interactions and a policy area with many interactions. Such a selection would not serve the aim of the data analysis eventually to be conducted: examining the existence of different types of rationality revealed by long-term interactions. In addition, the comparison of two policy areas does not involve a detailed, structured, focused comparison (George and Bennet 2005). Rather, the selection serves to add an initial comparison of policy areas, types of interest organisations, and agency types to the in-depth analysis of the interview data so as to probe whether a mixture of different types of rationality would vary along these dimensions.

⁴⁰ The authors argue as follows: in the case of elite interviewing, or interviewing other highly educated people, respondents often comment on the rationale behind the answer options and try to suggest other ways of measuring what you want to measure (Aberbach and Rockman 2002, 674). Tellingly, the option of replying to our general email address in the survey research, as well as the option provided to the respondents to comment on the survey in a final open question, provoked exactly such commentary.

true nature of their interactions with bureaucrats or interest groups, respectively.⁴¹ I taped each interview and transcribed them so as to generate an accurate database for coding. A small-scale research project does not allow for multiple coders, so to deal with the intercoder-reliability issue, I coded half of the interviews twice to check the consistency of my coding (see also Chapter 7).

4.6 A summary of the research design

This study is truly comparative in nature, although I consider comparative research a general research strategy rather than constituting a distinct sub-discipline within public administration and political science. Establishing causal relations and sound equivalence both at a conceptual and measurement level require special attention in comparative research. I designed the research in such a way as to carefully consider both demands and to offer the best available options possible within the scope of this research project to address these issues properly.

First, in order to draw conclusions on bureaucracy-interest group interactions, I will rely on Mill's method of concomitant variation to examine whether a particular pattern of variation among a set of independent variables coincides with a particular pattern of variation in the dependent variable. As such, we can draw conclusions about how contextual factors relate to resource importance and resource concentration and how a degree of dependence may vary under different circumstances. Given the nature of this research project, it will be difficult to clearly establish causal relations, i.e. to infer which contextual factor results in which particular degree of dependence. Conclusions will thus be put in probabilistic rather than causal terms.

I address equivalence, a second important threat to comparative research, both at a conceptual and measurement level. In terms of conceptual equivalence, I use a reconceptualisation of resource exchange to measure bureaucracy-interest group interactions. To compare, we need to define a fundamental set of characteristics of a concept. The fundamental characteristic of bureaucracy-interest group interactions is the exchange of resources, be they tangible or intangible. Such a resource exchange renders it possible to distinguish between the different natures of such interactions as hypothesised by the literature on bureaucratic politics, on interest group politics, and on policy networks. Moreover, as the two elements determining such a resource exchange, resource concentration and resource importance, can be measured under different circumstances, we can also compare the nature of such interactions under such different circumstances. That is, we can compare the impact of contextual factors on the degree of dependence characterising bureaucracy-interest group interactions. In addition, the definitions of senior civil servants (civil servants belonging to a nation's senior civil service),

⁴¹ When respondents indicate that they want to tell you something 'off the record', you know that they are quite frank in general and in such cases are willing to give away some sensitive details. This happened in several interviews, which can be interpreted as a sign of relatively sound reliability. Yet, it is always important to keep in mind, as is well known, that each individual's answer offers a particular perspective to a given situation.

and interest groups (private interesting-pursuing entities that intersect with public policy) also take into account equivalence issues.

In terms of data collection and measurement, I opted for comparative online surveys, an instrument that perfectly fits the subject under study, yet has some drawbacks in terms of equivalence and reliability. Careful operationalisation, pre-testing, the usage of an online survey instrument and multiple imputation have been applied to address these issues. To generate equivalent populations of bureaucrats, this study has been restricted to the senior civil services. A lack of comparable databases of interest groups populations posed, however, a serious challenge to this comparative endeavour. Databases of interest groups were available for the UK (and the US), but the Netherlands (and Sweden) lack such databases. Therefore, I developed a strategy to establish a dataset of interest groups in the Netherlands to overcome this particular comparative problem. By examining the foundation and association database of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce (NCC) and an additional website search, I constructed a comprehensive dataset of a national Dutch interest group population. This dataset was rather equivalent to the existing datasets in pluralist systems. It thus allowed for both comparative research and for random sampling, a difficulty in comparative interest group research in general and, in particular, in corporatist regimes.

The surveys resulted in a reliable dataset of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, reflected in satisfying inter-item correlations. In terms of representativeness, the Dutch senior civil service dataset offers a sound dataset as well. The UK SCS dataset is a bit more complicated, as are both interest group datasets. For these three datasets, the response rates are very low. By examining demographic figures in the case of the UK SCS survey and comparing the types of organisations included in the survey and the population datasets for interest groups, I provided an additional check on external validity. Such constraints in terms of validity will be taken into account in the final interpretations and conclusions. Yet, as this study set out to generate a theoretical model to better compare bureaucracy-interest group interactions, an internally valid and reliable dataset is most important, and the survey dataset meets these demands.

To examine bureaucracy-interest group interactions over time and to provide a measure for the internal validity of this study's dataset, the survey dataset has been supplemented with 57 interviews of Dutch senior civil servants and representatives of interest groups in the areas of macro-economics and public health. A format of semi-structured interviews and partial recoding of the interview transcripts were used to address the issues of validity and reliability in elite interviewing.

All in all, by systematically addressing the methodological issues generated by comparative research, I have been able to construct a useful dataset of bureaucracy-interest group interactions containing both survey and interview data. As such, the data collection strategy has been a combination of different methods, just as the analysis strategy will also combine different analysis techniques. Chapters 5-7 measure the degree of dependence from a bureaucratic perspective, examine resource concentration within the interest group environment via population dynamics, and examine the set of multiple rationalities underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

Measuring Degree of Dependence: A Tale of the Bureaucracy

5.1 Introduction

“We simply need each other,” said a civil servant about his relationships with various interest groups, a reflection that is illustrative for most civil servants participating in this study. But is this a true symbiotic relationship where ‘give and take’ is perfectly balanced? Or, does this statement reflect an underlying asymmetric dependence, where each side’s needs are not equally balanced? Civil servants participating in this study mostly regarded national interest groups as actors becoming increasingly important for them to execute their jobs (61 percent). When asked, however, about the *nature* of their relationships with the interest groups they interact with, 50 percent of the civil servants reported that their relationship is ‘somewhat constructive.’ Only 7 percent judge their relationship ‘very constructive,’ whereas almost 17 percent consider them to be ‘somewhat conflictual.’¹ A majority of civil servants consider national interest groups to be an important player, but their interactions are not entirely unambiguous. “We need each other” apparently has multiple meanings and could point to both symmetric and asymmetric degrees of dependence underlying those relationships.

The resource dependence model developed in this study should help determine the nature of interactions between bureaucrats and interest groups. This chapter assesses the explanatory value of the model. An essential first step is to test the impact of resource concentration and resource importance on the degree of dependence, a test of the core model explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions. To address the comparative component of the model, the analysis includes several successive steps. Initially, I will test the independent effect of the contextual variables on the degree of dependence. After that, the impact of the contextual variables on each of the resource elements will be assessed. And, finally, I will test whether interaction effects exist between the contextual variables and the resource elements used to explain the degree of dependence.

Figure 5.1 provides a schematic overview of these individual steps, each of which includes several empirical analyses. In section 5.3, the empirical analyses of the core resource dependence model will be discussed (step 1). In section 5.4, the comparative empirical analyses will be discussed, as well as the full explanatory potential of the model (steps 2-5).

¹ Source: dataset of bureaucracy-interest group interactions compiled in this research project; see chapter 4. Results are based on the original dataset.

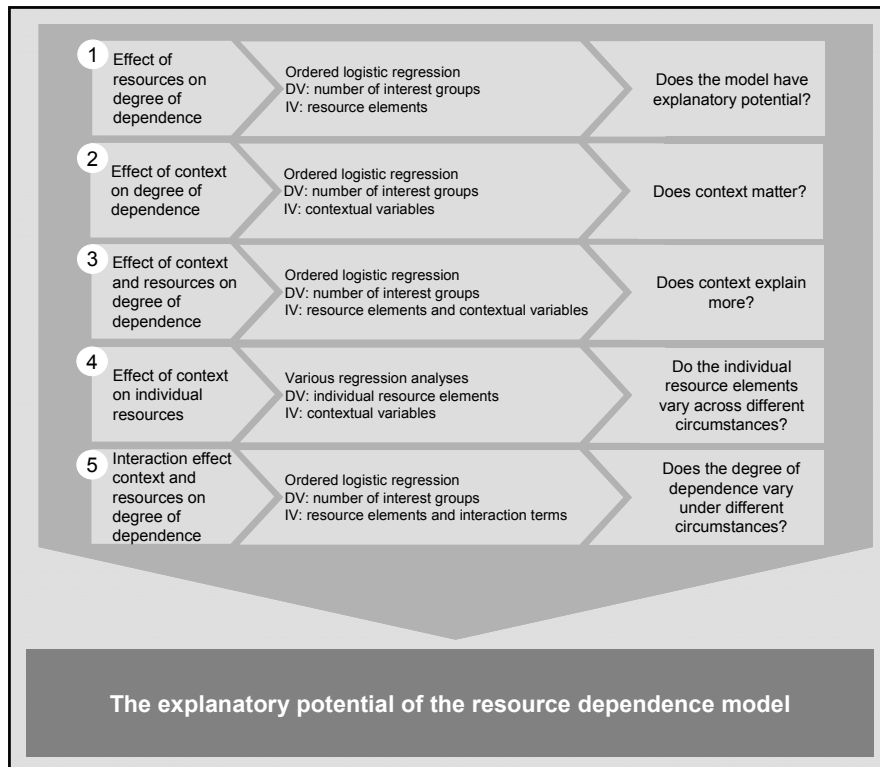


Figure 5.1 An assessment of the explanatory potential of the resource dependence model

5.2 Measuring degree of dependence

The core argument of the resource dependence model is that conceptualising bureaucracy-interest group interactions in terms of a degree of dependence facilitates better comparative research and thus may provide a better explanation of these interactions. This degree of dependence is determined by resource concentration and resource importance, both of which will vary along different political-administrative dimensions. Thus, by measuring the resource concentration and resource importance and by assessing the impact of contextual variables on each of these elements, we can estimate the degree of dependence for bureaucrats under different circumstances. Before turning to the actual analyses that probe the model empirically, this section discusses which indicators have been used to measure the contextual variables and the resource elements.² Questionnaires can be found in appendix I.³

² For practical reasons, not all of the contextual variables included in the explanatory model in chapter 3 will be included in the empirical analysis. To be precise, policy complexity, policy saliency, a policy's political sensitivity and the influence of ideas will not be included.

³ The UK SCS and interest group survey can be found in appendix I. Other questionnaires are available from the author, including the short version of the Dutch SCS questionnaire as well as the Dutch interest group questionnaire. The item numbers used in the text refer to the UK SCS survey, unless otherwise mentioned.

5.2.1 Concentration and importance of resources

A first set of variables that need to be addressed are the core explanatory variables for resource dependence: resource concentration and resource importance. First, resource concentration refers to the number of organisations in the environment that possess or are in control of resources that another organisation needs. This study distinguishes between two types of resource concentration, so that resource concentration in the interest group environment (inside resource concentration) can be isolated from resource concentration in a wider environment (outside resource concentration), as discussed in chapter 3.

Inside resource concentration refers to the number of other interest groups apparent in the environment. I measured this number by asking respondents how many interest groups in their area they were familiar with, but with which they did not interact (see item 10, appendix I). This number provides an idea of the set of interest groups known to a bureaucrat and thus the resource concentration within the interest group environment.⁴

Outside resource concentration refers to the number of other types of organisations in the environment. By other types of organisations, I mean organisations such as advisory councils, consultancy firms, research institutes, and so on. These organisations are assumed to interact with the bureaucracy as part of the set of organisations with which bureaucrats interact regularly to formulate and implement policy. To measure this type of resource concentration, I included an item in the questionnaire asking respondents to indicate with how many of such organisations they interact (item 12, see appendix I).

The *importance of resources* refers to the value civil servants attach to particular resources. Resources, as has been discussed earlier, have been operationalised in the literature as both tangible and intangible resources such as expertise, financial means or political support (see chapter 3). Yet, when using a survey instrument to collect data, asking respondents about ‘resources’ applies an abstract concept to their every-day reality. Therefore, to better understand how the respondents themselves understand resources, item 5 was included in the questionnaire (see appendix I). It required respondents to list the most important ‘reasons’ for them to interact with interest groups. Asking for reasons is an indirect way to measure the resources civil servants may exchange with interest groups, but listing reasons for interactions is easier to comprehend than the ‘resources they exchange.’

Four concrete reasons attributed to the resource dependence model are the need for expertise, the need for implementation capacity, the need for intermediation capacity and the need for legitimacy (political support). These resources are derived

⁴ In the original coding and order of the answer categories, ‘I don’t know/ hier heb ik geen zicht op’ followed the final substantive option ‘more than 15 organisations.’ Interpretation of this option can be as follows: “there are so many other organisations, I cannot tell.” Yet, this option is open to multiple interpretations, as it could also mean: “I really don’t know how many other organisations there are.” This may seem an unimportant difference, yet in terms of resource concentration, the first option indicates a small degree of concentration (as there are so many organisations, you can’t tell, but you know of them) and the latter option indicates a high concentration of resources (since you really don’t know of any other organisations). To address such a difference, the analyses were run both with the original coding and a recoding reflecting the second option. Generally, there were no differences between the analyses, other than a negative sign attached to the values of the coefficients as a result of the reverse order of coding.

from the literature on bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Expertise is usually mentioned as one of the most important resources interest groups have to offer and with which they try to obtain access (Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Bouwen 2002). In addition, political support is often mentioned, not only in the interest group literature but also as a reason why civil servants working at regulatory agencies may be vulnerable to capture (Wilson 2000[1989]). Implementation capacity has been derived from policy network studies in the field of policy implementation. It reflects the governance notion that the current role of the government is to deliver services and implement policy in co-production (O'Toole Jr. 2000; O'Toole Jr., Hanf, and Hupe 1997). Finally, intermediation capacity is derived from the initial case study and the literature mentioning the need for such intermediates (Beyers and Kerremans 2004; Brown 1999; Poppelaars 2007; Thompson 2005). The *degree of dependence*, finally, is measured by the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact (see item 3, appendix I).

5.2.2 Contextual factors

An important element of the explanatory model outlined in chapter 3 is the comparative aspect in explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Each of the resource elements is assumed to vary along different political-administrative dimensions. Below, I discuss how these contextual variables will operationalised.

Interest representation regime

National interest representation systems refer to existing practices of interest group involvement in political and policy processes. I hypothesised that variation in institutionalisation of interest representation regimes will influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions (H1). In this sense, and at a minimum, the analytical distinction between pluralism and corporatism indicates the degree to which venues and patterns of interest representation are formally arranged and institutionalised. For example, the Social and Economic Council in the Netherlands (*Sociaal-Economische Raad, SER*), is a venue where collective bargaining about social-economic issues is formally arranged and, as such, reflects a high degree of institutionalisation. Ideally, developing indicators based on this definition would include, for instance, an inventory of such formal institutional arrangements and/or consultation practices. Such an elaborate operationalisation, however, goes beyond the scope of this study. Instead, I rely on existing classifications of the pluralist-corporatist continuum as an indicator of the degree of institutionalisation of interest representation. Various rankings and classifications are available. Lijphart and Crepaz (1991), for instance, offered such a ranking on the basis of existing scholarly scales and rankings. More recently, the OECD (1997) and Siaroff (1999) offered rankings based on prior scholarly contributions, including the Lijphart and Crepaz ranking. The Siaroff ranking is very similar to the Lijphart and Crepaz ranking and represents the consensus among scholars on a country's position on the pluralist-corporatist scale. I therefore opted for this classification as an indicator of the degree of institutionalisation of interest representation systems,

under the assumption that such systems have fairly consistent patterns of interest intermediation across policy areas.⁵

Table 5.1 shows the Siaroff ranking. The table indicates where countries are positioned along a pluralist-corporatist continuum; their standard deviation from the Siaroff ranking; the number of contributions classifying the respective countries; and finally, the Lijphart and Crepaz ranking.

Table 5.1 Ranking of countries on a pluralist-corporatist continuum

	Mean ^I	Standard Deviation ^{II}	(N) ^{III}	Lijphart/Crepaz Score ^{IV}
<i>Nations considered to be strongly corporatist</i>				
Austria	5.000	0.000	23	1.600
Norway	4.864	0.351	22	1.531
Sweden	4.674	0.556	23	1.396
<i>Nations considered to be moderately to strongly corporatist</i>				
Netherlands	4.000	0.989	23	1.006
Denmark	3.545	0.999	22	0.518
Germany (West)	3.543	0.940	23	0.480
<i>Nations considered to be moderately corporatist</i>				
Finland	3.295	1.043	22	0.427
Belgium	2.841	0.793	22	0.258
<i>Nations considered to be weakly or only somewhat corporatist</i>				
Ireland	2.000	1.015	18	- 0.528
New Zealand	1.955	0.907	11	- 1.106
Australia	1.688	0.873	16	- 1.025
UK	1.652	0.818	23	- 0.862
Italy	1.477	0.748	22	- 0.851
<i>Nations considered to be not at all corporatist, but rather pluralist</i>				
Canada	1.150	0.489	20	- 1.335
USA	1.150	0.489	20	- 1.341

Source: Siaroff 1999, 184

Note: **I** = Siaroff's scale, based on scholars' assessments; 5 = country classified as strongly corporatist; 1 = classified as pluralist. **II** = standard deviation: variation in scholarly consensus. **III** = number of scholarly contributions the scale in column (I) is based on. **IV** = Lijphart & Crepaz ranking: 2 = strongly corporatist; -1.5 = pluralist (Lijphart and Crepaz 1991, 239-240).

Although different in scale, both the Siaroff and Lijphart and Crepaz rankings are relatively consistent in their assessment of the level of corporatism, as we can see in the table above. The countries classified in the Siaroff ranking as only weakly or somewhat corporatist (Australia, the UK, and Italy, for instance) are in the Lijphart and Crepaz ranking designated as relatively pluralist (compare the second column to the left and the final column). Interestingly, the Lijphart and Crepaz ranking assumes a midpoint on a continuum of corporatism-pluralism, implying that there could be countries that can be classified as neither corporatist nor pluralist. Countries that have a moderate position on the corporatist scale (Siaroff's ranking)

⁵Most of the scholarly contributions on which Siaroff grounds his ranking concern macro-economic and/or social economic policy and deliberation between the state, labour unions and business associations. My research is, however, not exclusively aimed at labour-business-state relations. Notwithstanding the bias toward social-economic issues in the corporatist literature, using this ranking more generally assumes a similar degree of institutionalisation across the different policy areas.

seem to have a relatively high standard deviation. Consensus among scholars is thus more obvious on the countries positioned at the far ends of the continuum.

To use this ranking as a proper indicator, I assume that each country represents a certain degree of institutionalisation of interest representation regimes. Evidence remains inconclusive, however, about whether the nature of interest representation regimes is subject to change.⁶ It is therefore best to select values of this indicator that represent diverging degrees of institutionalisation to capture variation of the countries along the continuum. For this research, the US, UK, the Netherlands and Sweden have been selected so as to represent such different degrees of institutionalisation. That is, the US represents a pluralist system (a 1.150 score on Siaroff's ranking), the UK a mostly pluralist system (a score of 1.652), the Netherlands a mostly corporatist system (a score of 4.000) and Sweden a fully corporatist system (a score of 4.674). These 4 countries represent different degrees of institutionalisation of interest representation regimes and two of them (UK and NLD) will be included as such in the empirical analyses.

Political-administrative relations

The concept of political-administrative relations is operationalised in this study as the work division between bureaucrats and interest groups. Work division refers to the extent to which the activities of civil servants and elected officials are intertwined or are purely separate. This is reflected in varying degrees of political-strategic insight (see hypothesis 2). There are very few solid typologies unequivocally classifying these interactions (Pollit and Bouckaert 2004). Many authors also indicate that most state bureaucracies are to some extent politicised and engage in political-strategic advice (Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman 1981; Bekke and Meer van der 2000, 281-282; Peters and Pierre 2004). The lack of clear typologies renders it difficult to infer solid classifications and systematic differences based on the literature. In addition, a phenomenon that seems to be characteristic of civil service systems in many countries is that the top echelons of the civil service are relatively politicised. I therefore rely on a direct measurement of the degree of political-strategic insight involved in a senior civil servant's job (see item 17, appendix I). The coding of the answers provided by the respondents is used to measure the degree of political-strategic insight in the analyses. This is, in turn, is used as indicator for the degree of politicisation of a bureaucrat's job.⁷

⁶ Despite the consensus about the positioning of individual countries on the continuum, the scholarly literature about the changing nature of formerly corporatist states remains inconclusive. General conclusions about the current state of interest representation in the Netherlands, for instance, fail to pinpoint the nature of changes to the overall pattern of interest representation (Akkerman 2005; Huijtema 2005). There is some evidence for a trend towards lobbyism (Torenvlied 2005), but this is atypical for the Netherlands, which is usually depicted as extremely to fairly corporatist (Siaroff 1999). Such developments have been observed for Scandinavian countries as well (Blom-Hansen 2001; Lindvall and Sebring 2005; Rommetvedt 2005). When applying the analysis of corporatism to the meso-level, conclusions about a decline or continuation of corporatism remain inconclusive and controversial (Blom-Hansen 2001). It could well be, for instance, that "the decline of corporatism usually means that the efficacy and frequency of the use of corporatist structures have decreased not that these structures themselves have disappeared or are being dismantled" (Lijphart 1999, 173). And, contrary to those who signal a decline of corporatism, still others argue that corporatist tendencies in small European states are reinforced by the process of Europeanisation (Katzenstein 2003).

⁷ Questions 23 and 24 of the unabbreviated Dutch questionnaire explicitly asked respondents to indicate how important different tasks were for their job by requiring them to indicate percentages of their working time

Functional differences between public agencies

Government agencies are characterised by vast differences in function, formal organisational structures and cultural aspects. A broad classification will certainly do no justice to this complexity. Yet, a general distinction between policy advice and policy implementation, including regulation and monitoring, is relevant for this study, as this distinction appears in the three sets of theoretical explanations of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. And these three strands of literature implicitly focus on one or two of these functional types of agencies. The literature on bureaucratic politics, for instance, is often focused on advisory agencies, while the literature on capture is often concerned with monitoring and regulation. So, instead of relying on a detailed analysis of agency differences, I use Dunleavy's (1991) classification to construct a typology of agencies that are relevant to the distinction of policy advice and policy implementation (see also chapter 3). The selection of agency types is listed in table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Classification of functional tasks of public agencies

Type of agency	General task description
Advisory agency	Agencies that provide policy advice to their ministers and are involved in decision-making. They are usually located in central departments.
Monitoring agency	Agencies concerned with regulating, supervising and controlling constituents, can be located at central departments, but also outside central departments.
Service delivery agency	Agencies concerned with translating policy plans into specific projects and actions, and/or providing services to clients; are usually located outside central departments.

The table lists the definitions of three types of agencies that have been defined using Dunleavy's classification. They reflect the broad distinction between policy advice, monitoring and regulation, and service delivery. Examples of these three types of agencies include the Dutch centres for work and income (*Centra voor Werk en Inkomen*) in the case of service delivery, and the Dutch food and consumer product safety authority (*de Voedsel en Warenautoriteit*) in the case of monitoring agencies. As for the policy advice agencies, they are usually located in an agency's central department and reflect those parts within central departments that are involved in policy development. This three-fold classification will thus be used as an indicator for the functional distinction between public agencies, which is hypothesised to influence the importance of resources (H4). Item 1 of the questionnaire (see appendix I) served as a measurement for these differences by asking respondents to classify the agency they work for.

Policy area

Policy-related variables have been hypothesised to influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions, albeit at a more abstract level (complexity (H5), salience (H6), and political sensitivity (H7)). Measures of issue complexity, salience and political sensitivity have not been included in the analyses for practical reasons. Yet, to

spent at specific tasks. These items offered a more detailed measurement of political-administrative relations. Unfortunately, they were only included in the first round of the survey for the Dutch civil service. Due to a very low initial response rate, I decided to shorten the questionnaire to obtain a higher response rate, and I removed these items. For this reason, I used one element, 'political-strategic insight' from question 17 of the UK SCS and its equivalent in the abridged Dutch civil service questionnaires, asking respondents to value the importance of each of the listed tasks on a 5-point Likert scale.

gauge an initial sense of the relevance of policy-related factors in bureaucracy-interest group interactions, I used an issue-topic coding scheme. Although issue coding only provides a distinction between substantive differences, it could indicate whether substantive differences matter for resource exchanges between bureaucrats and interest groups. To measure these substantive differences, the questionnaire contained an item asking respondents to choose a policy area with which they were mostly involved (see appendix II).

Europeanisation

Although measuring the impact of Europeanisation on national bureaucracy-interest group interactions was not the central aim of this study, a proper model of such interactions in EU member states cannot exclude it. Therefore, I chose to include a general indicator of the influence of Europeanisation; that is, the time bureaucrats spent in EU-related activities. Such a composite measurement obviously fails to do justice to a multidimensional variable such as Europeanisation. Yet, it provides a first indication of its influence on national bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Item 21 of the questionnaire has been used to measure the time bureaucrats spend in EU-related activities. This item required respondents to note, in percentages, the time they spend at specific EU-related activities per week. These activities were listed in the previous question (item 20) and included, for instance, preparation of national input for EU-level meetings; participation in meetings organised by the European commission; transposition of EU directives; and involving national interest groups in EU-related decision making and policy making (see items 20 and 21, appendix I). So, while a percentage of working time is a relatively crude indicator to measure EU involvement, it does refer to some specific EU-related activities. The indicator of time per week (in percentages) has been included as an independent variable in the analyses to measure the impact of Europeanisation on the degree of dependence. Section 6.5 will discuss various aspects of Europeanisation related to bureaucracy-interest group interactions in greater detail. Table 5.3 summarises the contextual variables, resource concentration, and resource importance discussed above.

The left column of table 5.3 lists the contextual variables as well as the resource concentration and resource importance variables. In the column entitled 'Coding,' the different answer categories are listed, except for the variables interest representation regime, political-strategic insight and outside resource concentration. In the case of interest representation regime, the categories represent the countries in which the survey was conducted. As was discussed in chapter 4, the Sweden and US surveys are excluded from the analysis mainly due to the large differences in response rate.

Table 5.3 Operationalisation of (in)dependent variables

Variable	Coding	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Missing
Interest representation regime	NLD (1) UK (0)	0.51	0.50	0	1	0
Agency type	Ministry (1) Executive agency (2) Other (3) ^I	1.83	0.57	1	3	7
Political-strategic insight	Very relevant (3) Somewhat relevant (2) Not relevant (1) ^{II}	2.65	0.56	1	3	320
Degree of dependence <i>Number of interest groups with which civil servants interact (item 3)</i>	None (0) 1-5 org (1) 6-10 org (2) 11-15 org (3) More than 15 org (4)	2.58	1.40	0	4	55
Influence EU	Self-coding open question ^{III}	9.46	14.84	0	100	354
Inside resource concentration <i>Familiarity with other interest groups than those civil servants already interacted with (item 5)</i>	None (0/1) 1-5 org (1/2) 6-10 org (2/3) 11-15 org (3/4) More than 15 org (4/5) I don't know (5/0) ^{IV}	1.84/2.35	1.49/1.86	0	5	218
Outside resource concentration <i>Number of other types of organisations with which civil servants interact (item 12)</i>	Recoding, based on midpoint ordinal response categories	20.22	14.49	0	106	256
Importance of resources	0 = not important 1 = important	Expertise: 0.66 Implementation: 0.67 Legitimacy: 0.48 Intermediation: 0.41	0.47 0.47 0.50 0.49	0	1	159

Note: **I** = Inspectorates and project organisations are both coded as executive agencies; **II** = The initial categories are recoded to the 3 categories reported in the table; **III** = Time in percentages per week; **IV** = Two different codings, based on varying interpretation of 'hier heb ik geen zicht op' and 'I don't know' (see footnote 4). Political-strategic insight has been included as a continuous variable rather than ordinal, which is often done in statistical analyses (de Vaus 2002, Tabachnik and Fidell 2007).

The response categories of political-strategic insight were recoded because the original distribution of answers resulted in a non-discriminating variable (de Vaus 2002, 52-53). Finally, outside resource concentration was recoded so as to represent a total number of other types of organisations. A midpoint was set for each of the original ordinal answer categories. By adding up these midpoints, a total number of organisations with which civil servants interact could be derived. Intuitively, 106 organisations is a large number of organisations to interact with. Yet, civil servants directly involved in, for instance, granting subsidies or organising consultation meetings, may interact with a relatively large number of organisations. So, these results reflect an *indication* of the number of other types of organisations with which civil servants interact rather than an *absolute number* of organisations (see also section 5.4.3). The final column lists the number of missing observations and reveals an increasing non-item response throughout the questionnaire.

5.2.3 Missing data

As the relatively large numbers of missing data in the column entitled ‘Missing’ in table 5.3 already indicate, not every item on the questionnaire resulted in an absolute N of 821. Indeed, non-item response gradually increased from the first set of questions to the last set of questions. For each analysis, a total N of between 420 and 520 (roughly) could be used after listwise deletion of all cases missing a value for one of the variables. Running a missing-value analysis showed that Little’s MCAR test was significant, indicating a non-random pattern of missing data (Nurosis 2007; Tabachnik and Fidell 2007). The EU variable appeared to be problematic, and I initially opted to run the analyses both with and without the EU variable to get an indication of its effects. Listwise deletion, however, may result in biased effects of the model (King et al. 2001). So, I used the program *Amelia* (see Honaker, King, and Blackwell 2007)⁸ to impute the missing data. The program *Amelia* deploys multiple imputation to fill in missing data, generates by default five different imputed datasets, and offers several diagnostics to check the fit of the imputation model and the imputed data. These diagnostics indicate whether the imputed data is not too distant from the originally observed values, the extent to which the program is able to predict the true value of the data, and whether the imputations are consistent and are not dependent on the value from which the process started (Honaker, King, and Blackwell 2007, 16; see appendix II).

Overall, the imputation model generates a good fit. Interpretation of the final results will be based on analyses that are conducted with the original and imputed (complete) datasets. The results for the complete dataset are actually the average coefficients and average standard errors based on 3 out of 5 imputed datasets.⁹ The average standard errors do not yet reflect the variance across the standard errors based on the three datasets, nor do they reflect the total variance of the average regression coefficients.¹⁰ Nonetheless, these average standard errors serve as a sufficient though somewhat crude indication for comparison among the models based on the original and imputed datasets. Finally, the significance of the coefficients varied slightly across the different imputed datasets. The *p*-levels reported for the analyses based on the complete dataset reflect the lowest significance level found. For instance, when there are two results significant at $p \leq 0.01$ and one that is significant at $p \leq 0.05$, the latter value is chosen as a representative of the significance levels across the imputed datasets. Comparing results from the original and complete datasets will provide an estimate of the potential bias in the original data and allow for a better examination of the model. If the results of the two datasets vary to a great extent, at a minimum there will be

⁸ The program was developed at Harvard University (see: <http://gking.harvard.edu/amelia/>)

⁹ The SPSS package used in this study does not include a feature to analyse multiple imputed datasets as if they were one dataset. Therefore, each analysis had to be rerun for each imputed dataset, after which the average regression coefficients had to be computed. Using three rather than five datasets saved some time, but should give a fair estimate of the average based on five imputed datasets.

¹⁰ To measure an appropriate standard error for the average regression coefficients, the variance between the coefficients of the individual datasets should be computed in addition to the average regression coefficient and the average standard error. The average standard error and the variance across the individual coefficients could then be used to measure an overall standard error (See for a computation of these values: Sinharay, Stern and Russell 2001, 324).

reason for concern about potential bias affecting the results and thus the interpretation of the explanatory value of the model. Roughly similar results from both datasets would imply, however, that the results are not severely biased, and allow for a useful interpretation of the results to assess the model. Multiple imputation is thus used as a check of the analyses based on the original dataset and serves to assess the potential bias of the results.

5.3 Examining degree of dependence

The quote, “we need each other,” with which I introduced this chapter, reflects a certain resource exchange that may be either asymmetric or symmetric in nature. Recall the resource dependence model outlined in chapter 3. By measuring the degree of dependence between bureaucrats and interest groups, we should be able to explain why these two sets of actors interact and to determine the asymmetry of their relationships. A first step in measuring the explanatory potential of the resource dependence model is thus to test the impact of the individual resource elements on the degree of dependence. Inside and outside resource concentration, as well as resource importance, were hypothesised to explain the degree of dependence characterising bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Inside resource concentration is measured by the number of interest groups with which a civil servant is familiar in his/her area, but does not interact with. Outside resource concentration refers to the total number of organisations with which a civil servant may interact in his/her area. Resource importance, finally, is measured by the value that civil servants attribute to particular reasons for interacting with interest groups. In this case, a reason is coded as either important or unimportant.

To assess the model’s explanatory value, I tested whether the individual elements result in a degree of dependence. I assumed that the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact reflects the degree of dependence. When civil servants interact with a large number of interest groups, the degree of dependence is likely to be less severe. Vice versa, the degree of dependence is likely to be higher when they interact with only a small number of interest groups.¹¹

I conducted an ordered logistic regression analysis to test the model, including the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact as the dependent variable and the individual resource elements as independent variables. Ordered logistic regression was chosen to take into account the ordinal level of analysis of the dependent variable.¹² Two different models have been tested for two datasets:

¹¹ Obviously, this is a relatively crude measure as many organisations can offer different resources, rendering the dependency on a single organisation very severe. For the purpose of these analyses, which is to indicate the explanatory value of the model, such a measurement is sufficient.

¹² Logistic regression is generally used for analysing categorical dependent variables, be they either binominal or multinominal. *Ordered* logistic regression is used in case of ordinal dependent variables and is a way of expressing a nonlinear relationship in a linear way (Agresti 2007; Long 1997). The main reasons for conducting ordered logistic regression are to retain the information of the ordered nature of the response categories, as well as addressing the violation of several assumptions of (multiple) regression, namely normality and linearity. Despite the advantage of its straightforward interpretation and its robustness to violation of normality (de Vaus 2002, Field 2005), and the relaxed attitude that is often adopted to treat

the original dataset and the dataset generated by the process of multiple imputation (the complete dataset). The models tested with the complete dataset are represented by an additional 'MI' (thus, model 1 and model 1 MI). Table 5.4 reports the results of the analyses.

Table 5.4 Ordered logistic regression analysis of the effect of resource elements on the degree of dependence (number of interest groups with which civil servants interact)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable: Degree of dependence	
	Model 1	Model 1 MI
Inside resource concentration I (none)	-0.14 (0.28)	-0.22 (0.23)
Inside resource concentration II (1-5 org)	-0.69** (0.29)	-0.70*** (0.23)
Inside resource concentration III (6-10 org)	-0.58** (0.26)	-0.61*** (0.22)
Inside resource concentration IV (11-15 org)	-0.41 (0.34)	-0.68** (0.26)
Inside resource concentration V (> 15 org)	-0.68 (0.48)	-0.69** (0.32)
Outside resource concentration	0.09*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)
Expertise	0.74*** (0.20)	0.55** (0.14)
Implementation capacity	0.71*** (0.20)	0.78*** (0.15)
Legitimacy	-0.23 (0.19)	0.09 (0.14)
Intermediation capacity	0.59*** (0.20)	0.66*** (0.16)
Cut-points	0.79; 2.06; 2.78	-0.76; 0.73; 1.47; 1.93
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.36	0.36
χ^2 model	208.12 (10)***	343.20(10)***
N	517	821

*** $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; * $p \leq 0.10$; all two-tailed tests.

Note: For inside resource concentration, the reference category is 'I don't know'; in Dutch: 'hier heb ik geen zicht op'. In the case of model 1 MI, four cut-points were generated, whereas model 1 only generates 3 cut-points. The difference is a result of the 'routing'-scheme in the questionnaire on which the original dataset is based. Routing was applied in the survey with the answer-category 'none,' so that respondents automatically skipped questions related to interactions with interest groups. As a result of listwise deletion, answers for that category are omitted from the analysis. Model 1 MI is based on the datasets generated with multiple imputation, and does not incorporate missing values due to routing logic and non-item response.

A first observation is that both models result in satisfactory values of the pseudo R² (0.36 for both models), meaning that the overall explanatory potential of the model is reasonably good.¹³ What about the individual variables? Consider the variables

ordinal variables or Likert scales as if they were continuous (de Vaus 2002), I did not opt for multiple regression, but rather for ordered logistic regression to match the original data better.

¹³ The goodness-of-fit statistics in the case of the complete datasets show significant results, indicating that the expected values of the model significantly differ from the observed value. The test of parallel lines in case of model 1 MI is significant at $p = 0.1$. Model 1 meets the assumptions of the goodness-of-fit and parallel lines tests: both have insignificant results. It is important to note that when various categorical variables are included in the model, and when there are several cells with low expected values, the goodness-of-fit statistics

related to resource concentration. *Inside resource concentration* - the number of interest groups with which a civil servant is familiar but does not interact - produces significant coefficients for some of the dummy variables. Inside resource concentration II (-0.69; $p \leq 0.05$ in model 1, or -0.70; $p \leq 0.01$ in model 1 MI) and inside resource concentration III (-0.58; $p \leq 0.05$ in model 1, or -0.61; $p \leq 0.01$ in model 1 MI) relate to the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact. That is, a relatively small number (1-5 organisations) or intermediate number (6-10 organisations) is likely to indicate that civil servants interact with a smaller number of interest groups. In the case of model 1 MI, all inside resource concentration variables, except inside resource concentration I, produce significant coefficients. Their levels of significance vary, but at a minimum they are significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level. So, familiarity with a smaller number of organisations than the reference category of 'so many, I cannot tell' is likely to be associated with a smaller number of interest groups with which civil servants interact.

Outside resource concentration - the total number of organisations with which a civil servant interacts - is also related to the number of interest groups with which a civil servant interacts, yet to a relatively small extent (0.09, model 1, or 0.08 in model 1 MI, $p \leq 0.01$ level). An increase in the number of other types of organisations with which civil servants interact is likely to result in an increase in the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact.

Consider the other determining element of the degree of dependence, the *importance of resources*. In this case, we see that the importance of expertise (0.74 or 0.55 respectively), implementation capacity (0.71 or 0.78 respectively) and an intermediation capacity (0.59 or 0.66 respectively) are related to the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact (all $p \leq 0.01$; but $p \leq 0.05$ for expertise in model 1 MI). When the importance of these resource increases, the number of organisations with which civil servants interact is likely to increase as well. Apparently, civil servants engage more organisations in obtaining expertise, and in finding partners that can help to implement public policies and serve as spokespersons. Legitimacy is not related to the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact. Apparently, the importance of the other types of resources is more decisive in explaining the number of interest groups with which a civil servant interacts.

What do these results suggest for the resource dependence model? The dependent variable of the model was the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact. In contrast to multiple regression, however, we cannot straightforwardly derive precise conclusions about the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In logistic regression, the coefficients say something about how much the log of the odds that an event occurs (the value of the dependent variable) will change (Nurosis 2007, 70). Interpreting coefficients is thus somewhat more complex than in the case of multiple regression.

What we can cautiously derive from the model is, first, that if a civil servant is familiar with fewer other interest groups than the reference category 'there are so many I cannot tell,' he/she is likely to interact with fewer interest groups.

for ordered logistic regression are not entirely reliable as a measure of the overall fit of the model (see Nurosis 2007).

Remember that the number of interest groups with which a civil servant interacts is inversely related to the degree of dependence. In terms of the resource dependence model, this means that a higher inside resource concentration is likely to contribute to a higher degree of dependence. When a civil servant interacts with more other types of organisations, the number of interest groups with he/she interacts is likely to increase. This means that a lower outside resource concentration results in a less severe degree of dependence. The effect of outside resource concentration, however, seems to be very small. In the case of the importance of resources, we may conclude that when a civil servant considers resources such as expertise, implementation capacity and intermediation capacity to be important, he/she is likely to interact with a larger number of interest groups. The importance of resources thus contributes to a degree of dependence that is less severe. This is perhaps a less than straightforward result. We would expect that, when resources are more important, such an importance would render the degree of dependence more severe. This result could imply that when these resources are important, a civil servant tends to enlarge the group of interest groups with which he/she interacts, thus making him/her becoming less dependent on an individual interest group. In sum, a higher degree of inside resource concentration results in a more severe degree of dependence. A lower outside resource concentration and increasing importance of resources result in a smaller degree of dependence.

Interestingly, the model shows that resource importance is not the only variable contributing to bureaucracy-interest group interactions. The concentration of resources is shown to be relevant as well. This is a part of Pfeffer and Salancik's theory (2003[1978]) that is not often included in recent applications of resource exchange theory (see, for instance, Bouwen 2002; 2004, but see Beyers and Kerremans 2007). They tend to focus on the relative importance of resources in explaining variation in access and rarely include the extent to which resources are available in the environment. Also, the model suggests that it is not only expertise that is an important trading good. A capacity to intermediate and a capacity to implement are also important. The latter is in line with network theories in implementation studies (Kjaer 2004). The first confirms earlier analysis of the importance of such a capacity to intermediate in immigrant integration policy (Poppelaars 2007), or the importance of political support more generally (Beyers 2004). This finding indeed suggests a broader area of application. And exactly this broader application brings me to the next step in the analysis: assessing the comparative potential of the resource dependence model (step 2 in figure 5.1).

5.4 Resource dependence in comparative perspective

Could such a degree of dependence be less severe in the UK compared to the Netherlands? Or, could civil servants working for advisory agencies be more or less dependent on interest groups than those working for executive agencies? Each of the individual elements constituting the degree of dependence may independently vary across different circumstances. Measuring the degree of dependence in comparative perspective thus requires a strategy of successive analyses. I first examine to what extent the contextual variables explain the number of interest

groups with which civil servants interact. Second, I examine to what extent the contextual variables and resource elements jointly explain the degree of dependence. These analyses (steps 2 and 3, figure 5.1) will generate a first assessment of the impact of context. Two other steps are necessary, however, to precisely assess the comparative potential of the model. First, the extent to which the contextual variables influence each of the individual resource elements needs to be assessed (step 4, figure 5.1). And second, we need to know how the impact of the resource elements on the degree of dependence varies across different contextual dimensions (step 5, figure 5.1). This set of analyses should provide an overall assessment of the comparative potential of the resource dependence model.

5.4.1 Does context matter?

A first step is thus to measure whether the contextual variables by themselves explain the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact. Comparing the results of this analysis with those of the previous analysis of the resource dependence model will show the differences in their explanatory potential. An ordered logistic regression has been conducted to measure the impact of the contextual variables, since the dependent variable is similar to the previous analysis. The independent variables in the model are the type of interest representation regime, the difference between functional agencies, the type of political-administrative relations, the type(s) of policy area, and, finally, EU involvement.¹⁴ Recall that interest representation is measured by a coding scheme based on the Siaroff ranking of the degree of corporatism; political-administrative relations are measured by the degree of political-strategic insight; the functional difference between agencies is measured by coding according to a functional classification of agencies; policy area is measured by issue coding used by agenda-setting scholars; and, finally, EU involvement is measured by the percentage of working time spent in EU-related activities (see also table 5.1). Similar to the previous analysis, the models have been tested with the original dataset (model 1) and with the complete or imputed datasets (model 1 MI). Table 5.5 shows the results of these analyses.

Compared to the resource dependence model, these models all have much lower pseudo R^2 (0.16 and 0.12 respectively), implying that the overall explanatory value of the contextual model on its own is smaller than that of the degree of dependence model. Nevertheless, most of the contextual variables seem to be statistically significant and are associated with the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact.

¹⁴ A drawback of including all contextual factors simultaneously is that potential interaction effects between the contextual factors remain obscure. These analyses do not measure how and to what extent a particular contextual variable may have an impact on another contextual factor's impact on the dependent variable. To examine such effects we have to both theorise and measure such interaction effects. This goes beyond the purpose of this study as the main aim of the statistical analyses is to examine whether context matters for the degree of dependence that characterises bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Exploring and measuring how contextual factors relate to each other thus remains a subject for future studies.

Table 5.5 Ordered logistic regression analysis of the effect of contextual variables on the degree of dependence (number of interest groups with which civil servants interact)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable: Degree of dependence	
	Model 1	Model 1 MI
Interest representation regime	-1.11*** (0.19)	-1.01*** (0.24)
Political-strategic insight	0.64*** (0.16)	0.55*** (0.28)
EU Involvement	0.01** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)
Advisory agency	1.01** (0.43)	0.34 (0.31)
Executive agency	0.72 (0.44)	0.29 (0.33)
International affairs	-1.08*** (0.41)	-0.84*** (0.05)
Macro economic affairs	-0.82** (0.36)	-0.54** (0.001)
Employment, social affairs	0.15 (0.48)	-0.23 (0.32)
Internal affairs	-0.56 (0.42)	-0.37 (0.14)
Immigration, integration policy	-0.45 (0.57)	-0.22 (0.26)
Public safety policy	-0.94** (0.37)	-0.66** (0.04)
Public health policy	-0.16 (0.42)	0.06 (0.25)
Education, science, culture policy	-0.69* (0.41)	-0.49 (0.07)
Transport and water management policy	-0.38 (0.37)	-0.07 (0.16)
Public housing policy	-0.18 (0.60)	-0.21 (0.24)
Cut-points	-1.37; 0.36; 1.31; 1.81	-1.01; 0.11; 0.95; 1.44
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.16	0.12
χ^2 model	75.22 (15)***	99.39 (15)***
N	458	821

*** $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; * $p \leq 0.10$; all two-tailed tests

First, *interest representation regime* is in both models a highly significant variable (-1.11 or -1.01 respectively; $p \leq 0.01$). When the interest representation regime becomes more corporatist, civil servants are likely to interact with fewer interest groups. This finding is in line with the traditional literature on corporatism and pluralism. That is, in (neo-)corporatist countries, the number of organisations that interact with decision makers is likely to be smaller due to the hierarchical organisation of such interest representation regimes (Schmitter 1985; 1989). Peak organisations represent many member organisations in their interactions with the government. So, the number of organisations that interact with the government is smaller than the actual number of interest groups in the environment as a result of the organising principles of corporatist systems.

What about political-administrative relations and the differences in agency type? An increase of *political-strategic insight* is likely to be associated with an increase in the number of interest groups (0.64 and 0.55 respectively; $p \leq 0.01$). Apparently,

civil servants involved in considerable political-strategic decision making tend to interact with somewhat more organisations than those civil servants who are to a less extent involved in such political-strategic decision making. The difference in *type of agency* is a significant variable only in the original dataset (model 1). Advisory agency is related to the number of interest groups (1.01, $p \leq 0.05$). According to model 1, civil servants in advisory agencies are likely to interact with more interest groups compared to the reference category of other types of organisations.

EU involvement also has a significant impact on the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact, although a very small one. Its coefficient is barely discernible from zero (0.01; $p \leq 0.05$ and 0.02; $p \leq 0.01$ respectively). An increase in EU-involvement is likely to relate to an increase in the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact. Yet, the impact of EU involvement is almost zero.

Finally, consider *policy area*. We cannot draw any conclusions about a direction of influence, as the coding only reflects a substantive difference. Yet, such substantive differences in policy area apparently matter. The areas of international affairs (-1.08 or -0.84 respectively; $p \leq 0.01$), macro-economics (-0.82 or -0.54 respectively; $p \leq 0.05$), and public safety (-0.94 or -0.66 respectively; $p \leq 0.05$), and, for model 1, education policy (-0.69, $p \leq 0.1$) are associated with a smaller number of interest groups with which civil servants interact, as opposed to environmental policy (the reference category). The macro-economics field is among those policy areas that result in a smaller number of interest groups with which civil servants interact. What is interesting is that such variation across policy areas may explain why authors provide different analyses of, for instance, the nature of Dutch interest representation (Akkerman 2005; Huitema 2005; Torenvlied 2005). Their conclusions about the level of corporatism characterising the Dutch interest representation system varies across the different areas they studied (see also Blom-Hansen 2001 for similar variation in Denmark). The sheer numbers of interest groups with which civil servants interact, shown to be different across various policy areas in the analysis above, could also indicate varying levels of corporatism.

So, what can we derive in general terms from this comparative model? As discussed earlier, we cannot derive conclusions about the effect of independent variables on the dependent variables as straightforwardly as would be possible with multiple regression analysis. With some care, however, we can derive some likely conclusions. If you are a civil servant in the UK, for instance, you are likely to interact with more interest groups than your colleague in the Netherlands. Or, if you are working for a policy advisory agency, you are likely to interact with more interest groups than your colleagues at executive and other agencies. And, if you are involved in international affairs, public safety or macro-economics, it is likely that you interact with fewer interest groups than your colleagues involved in environmental policy.

All in all, the model shows that the contextual variables have a small yet significant effect on the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact. In the case of the complete, imputed dataset (model 1 MI), not all assumptions of ordered logistic regression are met. That is, the goodness-of-fit statistics produce significant results. This could be the result of including a relatively large number of categorical variables. This can result in many cells having small expected values, rendering the statistics unreliable. Goodness-of-fit

statistics should only be used to assess the fit of a model that has reasonably large expected values in each cell (see Nurosis 2007, 77-78). As for the test of parallel lines, both models result in a significant test of parallel lines, depending on the significance level ($p = 0.04$ or $p = 0.03$ respectively). Yet, when the policy variable is excluded from the analysis, both models meet the assumptions.¹⁵ We might thus assume that the contextual variables have a small yet significant effect on the number of interest groups with which civil servants tend to interact.¹⁶

In terms of the degree of dependence, we can infer that it is higher in corporatist regimes, is smaller when the importance of political-strategic insight decreases, and, according to model 1, is smaller for advisory agencies. The degree of dependence is smaller for civil servants involved in international affairs, macro-economics, public safety, and according to model 1, education, than for those involved in environmental policy.

5.4.2 Does context explain more?

Context by itself does matter to a certain degree. The question is whether adding context to the resource elements may explain more of the variance in the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact than either the contextual model (table 5.5) or the core dependence model (table 5.4) can on its own. A logistic ordered regression was conducted to measure this effect. The number of interest groups with which civil servants interact was included as the dependent variable, and both the resource and context variables were included as the independent variables. Table 5.6 reports the results of two models based on the original dataset (model 1) and the complete dataset (model 1 MI).

When we combine resource and context variables, they offer a satisfying explanation for the variance in the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact (a pseudo R^2 of 0.44 and 0.42 respectively). This basically implies that, when put together, these models do not explain much more than the resource dependence model does on its own. In the case of the *resource variables*, the same variables as in the core resource dependence model significantly contribute to the dependent variable. So, outside resource concentration (the number of other types of organisations a civil servant interacts with) again significantly contributes to the model. Inside resource concentration (the number of other interest groups civil servants are familiar with) produces for some of its dummy variables significant results similar to those in the model reported in table 5.4. In model 1, only inside resource concentration II and III significantly contribute to the model, while in model 1 MI, inside resource concentration II, III, IV and V significantly contribute to the model. Expertise, implementation capacity, and intermediation capacity produce significant coefficients in both models. Again, legitimacy is not related to the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact.

¹⁵ Based on the original dataset, the pseudo R^2 is 0.13 when policy area is excluded, and interest representation regime (-0.95 ; $p \leq 0.01$); political-strategic insight (0.60 , $p \leq 0.01$), advisory agency (0.86 , $p \leq 0.05$) and EU involvement (0.01 , $p \leq 0.1$) are all related to the number of interest groups. This is roughly similar to model 1 in table 5.6. Goodness-of-fit statistics and test of parallel lines are now both insignificant.

¹⁶ Since the assumptions for ordered logistic regression were barely met, I conducted a multinomial logistic regression analysis. This produced relatively similar coefficients and the same problems with the goodness-of-fit statistics. Yet, for ease of interpretation, I report the results of the ordered logistic regression analysis.

Table 5.6 Ordered logistic regression analysis of the effect of context and resources on the degree of dependence (number of interest groups with which civil servants interact)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable: Degree of dependence	
	Model 1	Model 1 MI
Outside resource concentration	0.11*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)
Inside resource concentration I (none)	-0.42 (0.33)	-0.29 (0.24)
Inside resource concentration II (1-5 org)	-0.66* (0.34)	-0.74*** (0.29)
Inside resource concentration III (6-10 org)	-0.59** (0.30)	-0.69*** (0.22)
Inside resource concentration IV (11-15 org)	-0.54 (0.40)	-0.76** (0.29)
Inside resource concentration V (> 15 org)	-0.79 (0.54)	-0.77** (0.33)
Expertise	0.46** (0.23)	0.40** (0.15)
Implementation capacity	0.71*** (0.23)	0.70*** (0.15)
Legitimacy	0.06 (0.24)	0.25 (0.16)
Intermediation capacity	0.47** (0.23)	0.56*** (0.17)
Interest representation regime	-1.07*** (0.25)	-1.00*** (0.15)
Political-strategic insight	0.34* (0.20)	0.32** (0.13)
EU Involvement	0.01 (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)
Advisory agency	1.53*** (0.56)	0.56 (0.34)
Executive agency	1.43** (0.58)	0.58 (0.35)
International affairs	-0.13 (0.48)	0.02 (0.32)
Macro economic affairs	-0.21 (0.42)	0.01 (0.29)
Employment, social affairs	0.73 (0.56)	0.31 (0.38)
Internal affairs	-0.32 (0.51)	0.06 (0.34)
Immigration, integration policy	-0.73 (0.65)	-0.06 (0.44)
Public safety policy	-0.23 (0.43)	0.02 (0.29)
Public health policy	-0.46 (0.48)	0.11 (0.33)
Education, science, culture policy	-0.85* (0.48)	-0.36 (0.33)
Transport and water management policy	-0.43 (0.43)	0.03 (0.30)
Public housing policy	-0.34 (0.70)	-0.41 (0.46)
Cut-points	2.28; 3.73; 4.47	0.19; 1.56; 2.35; 3.80
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.44	0.42
χ ² model	219(25)***	413.60(25)***
N	421	821

*** $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; * $p \leq 0.10$; Note: For inside resource concentration, the reference category is 'I don't know;' ('hier heb ik geen zicht op'); for policy area, the reference category is environmental policy, and for agency type, the reference category is other types of agencies; all two-tailed tests.

As for the *contextual variables*, interest representation regime produces significant coefficients (-1.07 and -1.00; $p \leq 0.01$ respectively). Political-strategic insight produces significant variables as well, although the significance levels vary across the models (0.34; $p \leq 0.1$, and 0.32; $p \leq 0.05$ respectively). In model 1 MI, EU involvement significantly contributes to the number of interest groups civil servants interact with, although its effect is almost zero. In model I, both advisory (1.53, $p \leq 0.01$) and executive agencies (1.43, $p \leq 0.05$) are associated with the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact. In model I, the issue area of education (-0.85, $p \leq 0.1$) also significantly contributes to the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact.

The analysis including both context and resource elements produces similar results to the core resource dependence model. That is, the same independent variables are related to the dependent variable as in the model solely examining the resource elements. As for the contextual variables, the effects are also largely similar to the analysis that solely examines context.¹⁷ In both models, interest representation regime and political-strategic insights are associated with the number of interest groups, but there are a few differences regarding policy area, agency type and EU involvement. All in all, these two models confirm that not only the individual resource elements but also the contextual variables influence the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact. They also show that the additional explanatory value of the contextual variables is relatively small, although significant. A next step, then, is to examine whether the individual resource elements significantly vary under different political-administrative circumstances to better assess the models' comparative explanatory potential.

5.4.3 What is the impact of context on the resource elements?

Is expertise more important for civil servants working at advisory agencies or for those working at executive agencies? And, could resource concentration be more severe for civil servants in the Netherlands compared to those in the UK? The answers to these questions are important, because knowing if and to what extent the contextual variables influence each individual element of the degree of dependence will reveal how the resource dependence model needs to be adapted in order to become truly comparative in nature. This section will measure each of the individual resource elements by conducting several regression analyses in which each resource element is included as the dependent variable.

Outside resource concentration

To measure outside resource concentration, item 12 asked the respondents to indicate how many of the different types of organisations they interact with. They were asked, for instance, to choose the number of advisory councils or research institutes (from set answer categories) with which they usually interact. This procedure resulted in several dependent variables. That is, for each type of

¹⁷ However, the model has difficulties in meeting the assumptions of the test of parallel lines, which is significant, as well as the goodness-of-fit statistics. These difficulties could be caused by including a relatively high number of categorical variables. Multinomial logistic regression analysis resulted in similar results, yet for ease of interpretation the results of the ordered logistic regression analysis have been reported.

organisation, a certain distribution of ordinal answer categories was available. For ease of interpretation, I decided to collapse these response categories into one overall measure of outside resource concentration. The resulting variable would thus represent the total number of other types of organisations with which civil servants interact. To obtain this variable, a midpoint was chosen for each answer category; for instance, 3 for the category 1-5, 8 for the category 6-10, and so on. The total sum of these midpoints resulted in an overall number of other organisations with which respondents interacted. This method has two obvious drawbacks. First, by adding up midpoints for each category of organisations, important information regarding the various individual types of organisations is lost. Second, the overall absolute number resulting from the recoding should be interpreted with care. As the overall number is the result of adding up midpoints, it does not indicate the absolute number of organisations the respondent in question interacted with. Further, adding up these numbers in some cases resulted in an unlikely high number of organisations with which civil servants interact. To illustrate, figures 5.2 show the distribution of this recoded variable.

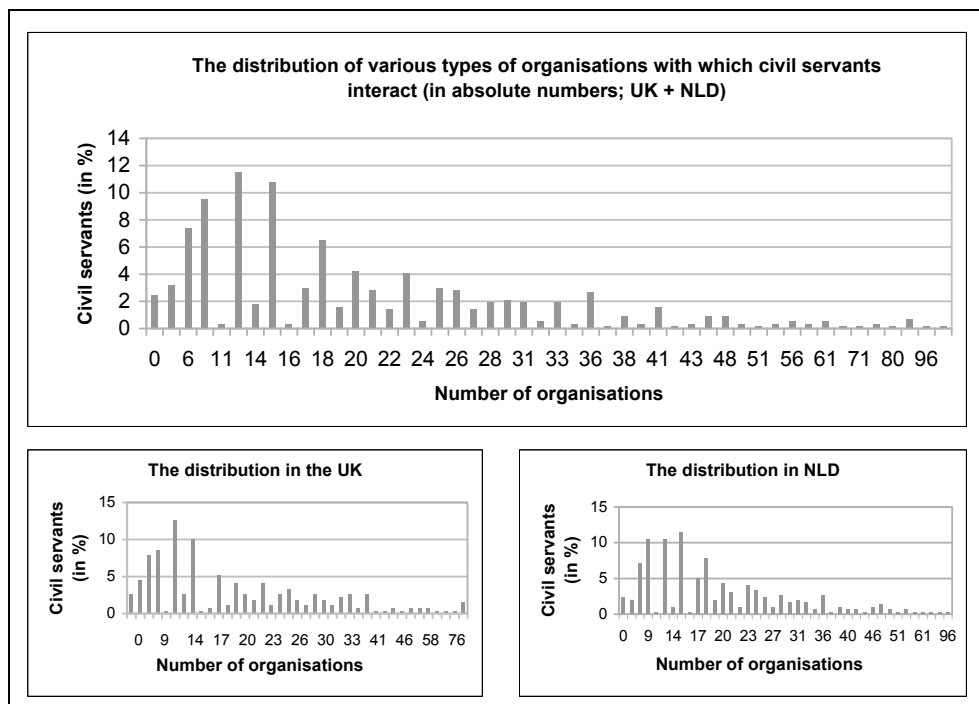


Figure 5.2 The distribution of other types of organisations with which civil servants interact

The distribution shows that, generally, most civil servants interact with 20 or fewer other types of organisations. Given the relatively large numbers of organisations with which civil servants seem to interact, this recoded variable should not be interpreted as a measure of the absolute number of organisations with which civil servants interact. Rather, it is a general indicator of the number of organisations with which respondents are *likely* to interact. So, conclusions about outside resource concentration can only be made in relative terms.

What these distributions also show is that the observations do not follow a normal distribution. The deviation from a normal distribution was significant (Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were significant, even after several transformations of the data). So, I initially opted for ordered logistic regression, since the distribution of outside resource concentration was not normal. For that, I had to divide the overall number into ordinal categories again. Tests of parallel lines turned out to be significant. But given the many recodings and transformations of the original data, this seemed a logical outcome. Therefore, I opted for a linear multiple regression. In doing so, I accepted the violation of the normality assumptions and the need to take this into account in interpreting the results.

Table 5.7 reports the results of this analysis. The number of other types of organisations with which civil servants interacted is included as the dependent variable. Interest representation regime, political-strategic insight, functional agency differences, differences between policy areas and EU involvement are included as independent variables. Model 1 is based on the original dataset, whereas model 1 MI is based on multiple imputation of the data.

A first important conclusion is that the combined impact of the set of contextual variables is very small, given the small values of the adjusted R^2 (0.06 and 0.08 respectively). Checking the assumptions of the regression model for both the original dataset and imputed datasets indicates a fairly good fit. Checking the VIF and tolerance value did not indicate a concern for multicollinearity. Case-wise diagnostics showed that 4-5 percent of the cases had standardised residuals equal to or above 2, and 1.46-1.8 percent of the cases had standardised residuals above 3, indicating a fairly accurate model. So, apart from the violation of the normality assumption, which is relaxed by some authors (de Vaus 2002), the model seems to fit well. This implies that the effect of contextual variables on the number of other types of organisations with which civil servants interact is very small.

Agency type, *political-strategic insight*, and *EU involvement* apparently do not matter for the total number of other organisations with which civil servants interact. In the case of *interest representation regime*, model 1 MI produces a significant coefficient (-1.59, $p \leq 0.1$). This implies that civil servants in corporatist regimes are likely to interact with fewer other types of organisations. In the case of *policy area*, we observe a few interesting and significant differences. The reference category is the policy area of macro-economics. In the case of international affairs, both models indicate a smaller number of organisations. For public safety, only model 1 indicates a smaller number of other types of organisations. Educational policy, health care, public housing and environmental policies are related to a higher number of other types of organisations in both models. Model 1 MI generated a positive coefficient for employment and transport issues as well. Apparently, other types of organisations are less important in macro-economics than in other policy areas.

Table 5.7 Multiple regression analysis of the effect of contextual variables on outside resource concentration (the number of other types of organisations civil servants are familiar with)

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Dependent Variable: Outside resource concentration</i>	
	Model 1	Model 1 MI
Interest representation regime	-0.90 (1.36)	-1.59* (1.01)
Political-strategic insight	1.92 (1.19)	2.25 (0.90)
EU involvement	0.04 (0.05)	0.05 (0.04)
Advisory agency	-2.03 (3.04)	-2.77 (2.35)
Executive agency	-3.60 (3.19)	-1.99 (2.33)
International affairs	-5.51** (2.79)	-4.59* (2.03)
Employment, social affairs	1.46 (3.04)	5.66* (3.09)
Internal affairs	4.10 (2.88)	2.32 (2.17)
Immigration, integration policy	0.97 (4.07)	3.61 (2.90)
Public safety policy	-4.12* (2.43)	-2.66 (1.82)
Public health policy	4.91* (2.74)	5.86** (2.11)
Education policy	6.08** (2.70)	6.30*** (2.02)
Transport policy	3.29 (2.42)	5.63** (2.20)
Public housing policy	10.04** (4.08)	10.14*** (3.00)
Environmental policy	4.72* (2.60)	7.10*** (2.03)
Constant	16.29*** (4.66)	13.76*** (3.55)
Adjusted R ²	0.06	0.08
N	460	821

*** $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; * $p \leq 0.10$ The reference code for agency type is 'other types of agencies,' and for policy area the reference category is 'macro-economics'. Interest representation regime and political-strategic insight: one-tailed test; all other independent variables: two-tailed tests.

So, outside resource concentration is to a very small extent influenced by contextual factors. In corporatist regimes, outside resource concentration is higher and it varies across different policy areas. The number of other organisations with which civil servants tend to interact is usually larger in other policy areas than in macro-economics. This implies that the outside resource concentration for civil servants working in those other areas is less severe than for those working in macro-economics. This may be an interesting result for studies on corporatism. They usually focus on bargaining mechanisms and include labour unions and business organisations (Visser and Hemerijck 1997; Visser and Wilts; Becker 2001; 2005), but often ignore the relevance of other types of organisations. The dependence of civil servants on social partners in macro-economic and social economic issues is likely to be more severe than for civil servants in other areas. This, in turn, could explain variation in the levels of corporatism scholars use to characterise the Dutch interest representation system.

Inside resource concentration

We have seen that outside resource concentration varies to a small extent across different political-administrative dimensions. The question is whether this is also true for inside resource concentration. Item 10 of the questionnaire (see appendix I) is used to measure this type of resource concentration. Logistic regression rather than multiple regression is applied to examine the effect of contextual variables on inside resource concentration.¹⁸ The number of interest groups with which civil servants are familiar is included as the dependent variable. Interest representation regime, political-strategic insight, functional differences between agencies, differences between policy areas and EU involvement are included as independent variables. Table 5.8 reports the results of this analysis. Model 1 is based on the original dataset; model 1 MI is based on the complete dataset.

The overall explanatory value of the model for inside resource concentration is even smaller than that of the model explaining outside resource concentration (presenting pseudo R^2 values of 0.06 and 0.03 respectively). In fact, the overall result is hardly discernible from zero. Both models do not meet the assumption of parallel lines. Strictly speaking, another model should have been applied to better fit the data; for instance, multinomial regression analysis that does not require the assumption of parallel effects. But for ease of interpretation, especially with several categorical independent variables, I opted for ordered logistic regression.

So, what can we conclude from these analyses? *Interest representation regime* and several of the *policy variables* produce significant coefficients. In more corporatist interest representation regimes, the number of interest groups with which civil servants are familiar is somewhat higher. The policy areas of internal affairs, public safety and transport and water management produce significant different coefficients compared to the reference category of environmental policy in both models. Model 1 produces a significant coefficient for immigration and integration policy as well. The other contextual variables do not seem to be related to the number of interest groups with which civil servants are familiar. That is, *political-strategic insight*, *EU involvement* and functional differences in *agency types* are not related to the number of interest groups with which civil servants are familiar.

What can we conclude from these coefficients in terms of degree of dependence? Civil servants in corporatist regimes are likely to be familiar with somewhat more interest groups, rendering the degree of dependence smaller. Civil servants responsible for internal affairs, public safety and transport and water management, and, according to model 1, immigration policy as well, are less likely to be familiar with a higher number of interest groups as opposed to civil servants working in the environmental policy area. These results suggest that inside resource concentration is somewhat higher in these policy areas, in contrast to the reference category of environmental policy. Overall, the contextual variables seem to have only a small effect, if at all, on inside resource concentration.

¹⁸ In the previous analysis, multiple dependent variables had to be recoded into one overall measurement. The resulting dependent variable was best analysed by multiple regression. In this case, the dependent variable concerns only one variable, which is measured at the ordinal level. To better reflect the nature of the data, logistic regression analysis was chosen as method of analysis.

Table 5.8 Ordered logistic regression analysis of the effect of contextual variables on inside resource concentration (the number of interest groups with which civil servants are familiar)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable: Inside resource concentration	
	Model 1	Model 1 MI
Interest representation regime	0.31* (0.19)	0.24* (0.13)
Political-strategic insight	-0.15 (0.16)	-0.004 (0.11)
EU involvement	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.004)
Advisory agency	0.27 (0.44)	-0.09 (0.30)
Executive agency	0.13 (0.46)	-0.16 (0.31)
International affairs	-0.06 (0.40)	-0.46 (0.29)
Macro economic affairs	-0.34 (0.35)	-0.31 (0.26)
Employment, social affairs	-0.49 (0.44)	-0.31 (0.32)
Internal affairs	-1.00** (0.42)	-0.79** (0.31)
Immigration, integration policy	-1.01* (0.55)	-0.55 (0.39)
Public safety policy	-0.87** (0.36)	-0.75*** (0.27)
Public health policy	0.04 (0.40)	-0.11 (0.29)
Education, science, culture policy	-0.58 (0.39)	-0.44 (0.29)
Transport and water management policy	-0.87** (0.35)	-0.55** (0.27)
Public housing policy	-0.79 (0.57)	-0.45 (0.41)
Cut-points	-1.86; -1.03; 0.01; 0.46; 0.66	-1.65; -0.59; 0.11; 0.51; 0.17
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.06	0.03
χ ² model	25.78(25)**	26.45(15)**
N	426	821

*** $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; * $p \leq 0.10$; The reference code for agency type is 'other types of agencies,' and for policy area the reference category is 'macro-economics.' Interest representation regime and political-strategic insight: one-tailed test; all other independent variables: two-tailed tests.

Both models on resource concentration illustrate that differences in policy area are important, yet to a small extent. Meso-level analyses thus may be justified and even prerequisite to meaningful conclusions about a nation's interest representation regime, as the levels of corporatism may vary from one policy area to another. This finding is line with Blom-Hansen's research (2001) on Denmark, where he concluded that differences are to be observed between various policy areas. These corporatist variations across policy areas are also in line with recent studies on the changing nature of the Dutch interest representation regime (Torenvlied 2005). The differences found in the models are relatively small, however. So, for this study, we may proceed with the assumption that the degree of institutionalisation of interest regimes is similar across the various policy areas. Yet, for future research, such differences need to be taken into account. A general conclusion of the previous analyses is that resource concentration varies only to a small extent along the political-administrative dimensions included in the models.

The importance of resources

Now that the impact of context on resource concentration has been examined, we need to assess the extent to which the importance of resources varies across similar political-administrative dimensions. To measure this effect, several binary logistic regression analyses were conducted for each individual resource. In the questionnaire, these resources were phrased as reasons for which respondents could choose to cooperate with interest groups (item 5, see appendix I). Each resource was recoded as being either important or unimportant for the civil servant in question. The recoding allowed for binary logistic regression analyses.¹⁹ Models 1 and 1 MI result in insignificant goodness-of-fit tests except in the case of the capacity to intermediate. The models include each individual resource - expertise, implementation capacity, legitimacy, and intermediation capacity - as dependent variables. The independent variables are similar across all four models and include the interest representation regime, political-strategic insight, functional differences between agency types, differences between policy area and EU involvement. Table 5.9 reports the results of these analyses. In the left column of the table, the independent variables are listed. The results for each resource are listed in two columns, representing the results for both the original dataset and the dataset generated by multiple imputation of the data (the column 'expertise 1' reports the results based on the original dataset, and the column 'expertise MI' reports the results based on the complete dataset).

A first observation is that the importance of several resources is rather context-driven, given the pseudo R^2 values (ranging from 0.08-0.20). Before discussing the results, one particular aspect of logistic regression needs to be addressed in order to interpret the results correctly. Binary logistic regression models predict the odds of a certain outcome occurring. In the case of binary logistic regression, this prediction rests on the initial distribution of the answer options. That is, binary logistic regression models predict the odds of the answer option that occurs most often in the dataset. Given the variation in the frequency of the importance of the individual resources, the individual binary logistic regression analyses explain different outcomes. In the case of expertise and implementation capacity, they explain the odds that these resources will be considered important. In the case of

¹⁹ To examine the influence of the institutional and policy-related variables, I used binary logistic regression for each of the resources. Techniques that analyse the relationship between multiple dependent variables and a set of independent variables are available, yet require both continuous dependent variables and continuous independent variables (or both categorical and continuous ones) (see Tabachnik and Fidell 2007). This is not the case here. Therefore I opted for separate binary logistic regression analyses. To measure the importance of resources, I asked respondents what the most important reasons were for them to interact with interest groups (see also section 5.1). Since I phrased the question in this way, I could not obtain a concrete ranking of importance. Yet, we can examine which resources are considered important and which are not at a more aggregate level. As respondents could check all of the reasons (resources) which they considered most important, this item resulted in multiple answers per respondent. I recoded the responses according to a so-called multiple-dichotomy method (de Vaus 2002, 12). This method interprets every resource as a single variable. This requires recoding: a 'yes' code, in this case '1', to the options chosen by the respondent, and a 'no-code', in this case '0', to the options not chosen by a particular respondent. At the individual level, the recoding system loses the ranking information inherent in choosing several options. At an aggregate level, we can count how many times each option is chosen to derive a general indication of which reasons are important or unimportant.

Table 5.9 Binary logistic regression analyses of the effect of contextual variables on resource importance (the value civil servants attach to individual resources)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable: The importance of resources interest groups have to offer							
	Expertise 1	Expertise MI	Implementation capacity 1	Implementation capacity MI	Legitimacy 1	Legitimacy MI	Intermediation capacity 1	Intermediation capacity MI
Interest representation regime (UK)	1.04*** (0.24)	0.54*** (0.16)	0.87*** (0.24)	0.73*** (0.16)	-1.19*** (0.22)	-0.85** (0.16)	0.72*** (0.22)	0.72*** (0.16)
Political-strategic insight	0.50** (0.20)	0.43** (0.13)	0.29 (0.20)	0.52** (0.14)	0.23 (0.20)	0.23a*/*** (0.14)	0.46* (0.20)	0.62** (0.15)
EU involvement	-0.41 (0.61)	0.25 (0.35)	0.72 (0.52)	0.43 (0.35)	1.54*** (0.58)	1.81*** (0.50)	-0.74 (0.51)	-1.21*** (0.36)
Advisory agency	-1.31** (0.62)	-0.40 (0.37)	0.23 (0.53)	0.25a (0.37)	1.37** (0.59)	2.52*** (0.51)	-0.75 (0.53)	-1.21*** (0.37)
Executive agency	0.01 (0.01)	0.001 (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.01)	0.01a*/*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.001 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
International affairs	0.22 (0.55)	0.19 (0.34)	-0.12 (0.52)	0.58a** (0.35)	-0.31 (0.49)	-0.70 (0.35)	-0.16 (0.47)	-0.58 (0.35)
Macro economic affairs	-0.07 (0.44)	-0.19 (0.31)	0.01 (0.44)	-0.58a** (0.32)	-0.11 (0.44)	-0.36 (0.32)	0.65 (0.41)	0.02 (0.32)
Employment, social affairs	-0.40 (0.54)	-0.07 (0.39)	-0.30 (0.55)	-0.14 (0.40)	0.54 (0.54)	0.17 (0.39)	0.77 (0.51)	0.51 (0.38)
Internal affairs	-0.28 (0.53)	-0.19 (0.36)	-0.47 (0.51)	-0.61 (0.37)	0.10 (0.50)	-0.21 (0.37)	0.32 (0.49)	-0.13 (0.37)
Immigration, integration policy	0.17 (0.69)	0.27 (0.47)	0.58 (0.75)	-0.29a** (0.47)	1.32 (0.84)	0.04 (0.47)	0.79 (0.64)	0.12 (0.48)
Public safety policy	-0.38 (0.45)	-0.37 (0.31)	-0.71 (0.44)	-0.72 (0.32)	-0.80* (0.44)	-0.78** (0.33)	-0.24 (0.43)	-0.50 (0.33)
Public health policy	0.34 (0.53)	0.49 (0.37)	0.18 (0.51)	-0.18 (0.36)	0.14 (0.47)	-0.18 (0.36)	0.04 (0.46)	-0.19 (0.36)
Education, science, culture policy	-0.51 (0.49)	-0.35 (0.34)	-0.07 (0.50)	-0.38 (0.36)	0.18 (0.46)	-0.42 (0.35)	0.10 (0.45)	-0.31 (0.34)
Transport and water management policy	-0.03 (0.44)	-0.06 (0.32)	0.04 (0.44)	-0.14 (0.35)	-0.002 (0.42)	0.16 (0.32)	0.33 (0.42)	-0.09 (0.33)
Public housing policy	-0.63 (0.70)	-0.17 (0.50)	0.50 (0.85)	0.20 (0.50)	0.19 (0.68)	0.20 (0.48)	0.03 (0.67)	-0.53 (0.52)
Constant	-0.26 (0.82)	-0.84 (0.53)	-0.50 (0.77)	-1.87a*/*** (0.54)	-1.53* (0.80)	-2.24*** (0.64)	-1.40* (0.76)	-0.136** (0.55)
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)	0.16	0.08	0.12	0.09	0.20	0.17	0.08	0.09
χ^2 model	52.88***	30.86***	36.58***	56.75***	68.75***	111.73***	26.90**	58.28***
N	428	821	428	821	428	821	428	821

*** $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; * $p \leq 0.10$. Note: The reference category for interest representation regime is: the Netherlands; for agency type the reference category is: other types of agencies; for policy area, the reference category is environmental policy. All two-tailed tests.

intermediation capacity, the model explains the odds that this will be considered unimportant. Legitimacy is a complex case. Model 1 explains the odds of legitimacy being considered important, whereas model 1 MI predicts the odds of it being considered unimportant.²⁰ It is possible to explain variation in the case of legitimacy, but not in which direction the variation occurs, given these differences.

So, under what circumstances are these particular resources considered to be more important? *Interest representation regime* produces significant coefficients for each resource; *political-strategic insight* does so in the case of expertise and intermediation capacity, and in model 1 MI for legitimacy and implementation capacity as well. *Advisory agency* produces significant coefficients in the case of legitimacy, in model 1 MI for intermediation capacity, and in model 1 for expertise. *Executive agency* produces significant coefficients for legitimacy and implementation capacity in both models, but it produces coefficients that are not discernibly different from zero. *EU involvement* produces significant coefficients for both intermediation capacity (in model 1 MI) and legitimacy. Differences in *policy area* generate some significant coefficients as well. International, macro-economic, and immigration policy are related to implementation capacity in model 1 MI, and public safety is related to legitimacy in both models.

Interpretation of the significant coefficients results in the following.²¹ Civil servants in the UK tend to find expertise, implementation, and intermediation capacity to be more important than their colleagues in the Netherlands. Civil servants in the UK have different opinions to those in the Netherlands about the importance of legitimacy. Civil servants working at executive agencies and advisory agencies also attach a different value to legitimacy. Civil servants at advisory agencies find expertise less important than their colleagues at executive and other types of agencies. Intermediation capacity is considered to be less important by civil servants working at advisory agencies, as opposed to their colleagues at executive and other types of agencies. Civil servants involved in macro-economics and immigration issues are likely to consider implementation capacity less important than their colleagues involved in environmental issues. Yet, civil servants involved in international affairs consider implementation capacity to be more important than their colleagues involved in environmental policy.

What we can generally conclude from these models is that the *importance* of resources seems to be more context-driven than the *concentration* of resources. And, regarding this, interest representation regime, political-administrative relations and agency type seem to be the most important explanatory factors. This is an interesting finding, as the variation in the importance of resources interest groups have to offer is only rarely systematically addressed in the literature on interest representation (but see Bouwen 2002; 2004 for variation in critical dependence across different EU institutions). Apparently, civil servants differ in what they want from interest groups. Such a variation in preference is important to include in studies that explain interest groups' access and tactics.

²⁰ In the original dataset, the majority of the respondents indicated it to be important, whereas in the complete dataset generated by multiple imputation, for the majority of the respondents this resource turned out to be unimportant.

²¹ Given the differences between model 1 and model 1 MI, I will discuss the results for model 1 for legitimacy.

Table 5.10 Main findings on the effect of contextual variables on resource concentration and resource importance

Contextual variables	Individual elements of the resource dependence model					
	Outside resource concentration (number of other organisations)	Inside resource concentration (number of interest groups familiar with)	Expertise	Implementation capacity	Legitimacy	Intermediation capacity
Interest representation regime	When interest regimes become more corporatist, the number of other types of organisations decreases*	When interest regimes become more corporatist, the number of interest groups with civil servants are familiar increases	In more pluralist regimes more important	In pluralist regimes more important	Importance varies across different types of interest regimes**	In pluralist regimes more important
Political-administrative relations			When political-strategic insight becomes more important, expertise is more important	When political-strategic insight becomes more important, implementation is more important*	Differs when importance of political strategic insights varies*/**	When political-strategic insight becomes more important, intermediation is more important
Agency type			Less important for advisory agencies*	Differs between agency types**	Differs between agency types**	Less important for advisory agencies*
Policy area	Varies across different policy areas	Varies across different policy areas		Importance varies across policy areas*	Importance varies across policy areas**	
EU					Importance varies when EU involvement differs**	becomes less important when EU involvement increases*

Note: * indicates that a significant relationship is observed for one of the datasets, all other effects concern both datasets. ** the results were mirrored for the original versus the complete dataset, so it is difficult to indicate a direction of the relationship.

5.4.4 How context influences individual resource elements

The main conclusions from the preceding analyses are that the effect of the contextual variables on each of the individual resource elements is small yet significant, and that both macro and meso-level contextual variables matter in explaining variance in the resource elements. Table 5.10 shows the main results of the analyses. It contains a short summary of the significant effects of the contextual variables on resource concentration and resource importance.

In general, interest representation regime often explains variance of the individual resource elements. The importance of political-strategic insight seems to be related to the importance of resources and functional differences between agency types. Differences in policy area seem to matter for both the importance and concentration of resources. EU involvement is the least important contextual variable in explaining resource importance and resource concentration. In general, resource concentration is less context-driven than is the importance of resources.

The hypotheses formulated in chapter 3 to capture the comparative element of the resource dependence model point to an impact of contextual variables on either resource importance or resource concentration or both. The findings of the empirical analyses are interesting regarding these hypotheses. In the case of *interest representation regime*, it appears that the number of other types of organisations with which civil servants interact (outside resource concentration) is somewhat smaller in the Netherlands than the UK. In corporatist interest representation regimes is the number of interest groups with which civil servants are familiar somewhat higher than in a more pluralist interest representation regime. Although a higher degree of institutionalisation of interest representation regimes seems to reduce the total number of other organisations with which a civil servant cooperates, it seems to increase the number of interest groups with which a civil servant is familiar. Yet, the overall explanatory value of both models is very small. In that sense, it is somewhat difficult to accept or reject hypothesis 1, although the effects that have been measured point to rejection of the hypothesis. Given the small overall explanatory values of the models, either rejecting or accepting the hypothesis seems not legitimate.

An additional effect, which was not hypothesised, is the relation between interest representation regimes and the importance of resources. Expertise, implementation and intermediation capacity seem to be more important in pluralist regimes than in corporatist regimes. The importance of legitimacy differs between interest representation regimes, but the direction cannot be derived from the analyses. So, whereas interest representation regimes seem to have only a small impact (or none at all) on resource concentration, they have a more explicit impact on the importance of resources. These findings are relevant for studies on interest groups' strategies to obtain access. First, the importance of what interest groups have to offer is valued differently by civil servants in different interest representation regimes. And whereas expertise is generally seen as the most important resource interest groups have to offer in exchange for access (see Baumgartner and Leech 1998, 126), from a comparative perspective it may not be

the only resource that matters. Apparently, a civil servant needs more than just expertise, but these needs vary along different dimensions of the political-administrative system. This, in turn, may have consequences for obtaining and maintaining access. Second, interest representation regimes seem to have a small effect on the number of interest groups with which civil servants are familiar and the broad array of organisations with which they interact. Resource concentration may be determined to a greater extent by other contextual variables, and not just by the differences between interest representation regimes.

The hypothesis on *political-administrative relations* states that a higher degree of political-strategic insight results in a difference in resource importance and increased resource concentration. The empirical analyses did not find a relation between political-strategic insight and concentration of resources, but political-strategic insight does seem to result in variation in the importance of resources. So, the analyses do confirm the difference between the relative importance of resources along different levels of political-strategic insights. They do not, however, confirm the hypothesised effect on resource concentration. An increase in the importance of resources may suggest an increase in resource concentration, but we cannot infer this effect from the analyses.

What about the hypothesis on *agency type*? This hypothesis states that the importance of individual resources is likely to vary across different types of agency. The analyses seem to confirm this hypothesis. The importance of the resources included in the model indeed seems to vary across different types of agencies and across different rankings within the civil service system. That is, those who are to a larger extent involved in political-strategic decision making tend to value resources differently from those who are to a lesser extent involved in such decision making. And, there are differences to be observed between advisory and executive agencies' perceptions of what are and are not important resources. How variations in agency type and political-administrative relations precisely relate to each other could not be assessed in this study. Yet, in general, such variations are in line with findings in the literature on bureaucratic politics on individual motives and agencies (Downs 1967; Dunleavy 1991). Yet, these findings introduce an external perspective to bureaucratic politics more prominently than previous studies of individual motives of bureaucrats or differences in agency types have done. They also suggest the need for more systematic analyses of bureaucrats' motives to explain the phenomenon of bureaucratic politics. Civil servants' motives may be more context-driven than the current literature on bureaucratic politics suggests.

The effect of *policy areas* was hypothesised to be important in terms of complexity, salience and political sensitivity, rather than in terms of substantive variation as such. Including such substantive differences in the various models, however, could provide an initial assessment of a potential effect of policy area on both resource concentration and resource importance. The empirical analyses indeed showed that both the total number of other organisations and the number of familiar interest groups varies across different policy areas. In addition, the results show that both implementation capacity and legitimacy significantly differ between policy areas. Differences in policy areas are apparently important, and further analysis in terms of complexity, salience and political sensitivity may be useful. These analyses seem to point to differences in bureaucracy-interest group

interactions across different policy areas and introduce questions about the nature of different policy areas and interest group activity. Existing typologies (Lowi 1972; Stone 1997; Wilson 2000[1989]) have difficulties in unequivocally explaining such patterns. Bringing in policy variables to explain interest group activity more explicitly and systematically may reveal such general patterns more clearly.

Finally, *EU involvement*. EU involvement was included in the analyses, yet was not explicitly hypothesised to affect the resource elements. The analyses suggest that EU involvement only relates to the legitimacy and intermediation resources. Even in the case of legitimacy, a direction of influence could not be established, given the differences in predicting importance and unimportance of legitimacy across the two models. In addition, both coefficients are barely discernible from zero, indicating a very small effect. From these analyses, we can infer that EU involvement is not related to the individual resource elements (but for a more elaborate discussion of the impact of EU involvement, refer to section 6.5).

All in all, the contextual variables included in the model have a small yet significant influence on the individual resource elements. Some of these effects are in line with the hypotheses that have been formulated to capture the comparative elements of the model, and some are not. In any case, the results suggest that the impact of contextual variables is important in explaining variance in both resource concentration and resource importance.

5.4.5 Does dependence vary under different circumstances?

A final step, after examining the impact of contextual variables on the individual resource elements, is to examine the extent to which the contextual variables interact with the resource elements, to determine the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact. Put differently, to what extent does the variation in the impact of the resource elements on the degree of dependence coincide with variation in the contextual factors? Such a test allows for a true assessment of the comparative potential of the model. The interaction effects between each resource element and each of the contextual variables should be examined to capture how the impact of the resource elements on the degree of dependence is influenced by the contextual variables. Interactions between variables occur when the regression coefficient of an independent variable varies as a result of another independent variable (Kahane 2001; Kennedy 2003). For instance, in the current study, resource concentration may be higher in highly institutionalised interest representation regimes than in those that are less institutionalised. Including interaction effects is thus a way to assess the impact of the contextual variables on each of the resource elements so as to eventually explain the degree of dependence.

To account for such relationships, interaction effects between each resource element and each of the contextual variables should all be included in the model. Naturally, a model with more than 40 variables is somewhat problematic for interpretation. A first, obvious concern is multicollinearity. A check of the correlation matrix shows that some of the interaction variables of political-administrative relations and the resource elements highly correlate, at around 0.8., although other correlations are relatively low. Still, there is no real reason for concern given the large number of observations. Ordered logistic regression is used

to examine the effects of the resource elements to match the previous analyses, in which the number of interest groups was included as a dependent variable as well.

Table 5.11 reports the results of the analysis, including the coefficients of the individual resource elements, the contextual variables, and the interaction effects of each of the contextual variables on the resource elements. An interaction effect is depicted by multiplication, for instance: 'interest representation regime * inside resource concentration' reflects the extent to which inside resource concentrations varies along different types of interest representation regimes. Inside resource concentration is included as a continuous variable, as are agency type and policy area.²² The column entitled 'model 1' refers to the analysis based on the original dataset, and the column 'model 1 MI' reports the results of the analysis based on the complete, multiple dataset.

What we observe is that for both datasets, the explanatory value of the models is higher than the models that only include the resource elements (0.48 and 0.43, respectively versus 0.36 and 0.36, respectively). The values of pseudo R² for the interaction models are roughly similar to those for the models that separate the resource elements and contextual variables (0.48 and 0.43, respectively versus 0.44 and 0.42, respectively). The interaction models, however, have difficulties in meeting the assumptions. In both cases, the goodness-of-fit tests show a significant result, indicating that the predicted values significantly differ from the observed values. In the case of model 1, the model meets the assumptions of the test of parallel lines, whereas model 1 MI does not. Although the collinearity correlations do not give serious reasons for concern, the sheer number of categorical variables included in the model could easily result in a violation of the assumptions.

Despite the drawbacks of a model that includes so many variables and has difficulties in meeting the appropriate assumptions, we can still use it to gauge how the independent variables interact with each other. Remember that the individual interaction effects are depicted by multiplication. When we examine the table, we observe that in the case of model 1, outside resource concentration produces a significant coefficient (0.19; $p \leq 0.01$), as well as implementation capacity (-2.44, $p \leq 0.1$), interest representation regime (-2.03, $p \leq 0.01$) and EU involvement (0.05, $p \leq 0.05$). In addition, 6 interaction terms produce significant coefficients, namely, expertise * interest representation regime (1.00, $p \leq 0.1$), implementation capacity * interest representation regime (-1.20, $p \leq 0.05$), intermediation capacity * interest representation regime (0.97, $p \leq 0.05$), implementation capacity * political strategic insight (1.23, $p \leq 0.05$), outside resource concentration * policy area (-0.001, $p \leq 0.1$), and intermediation capacity * EU involvement (0.04, $p \leq 0.05$).

²² The analyses of the core resource dependence model, and the analyses which separated the core resource dependence model and context, included inside resource concentration as an ordinal variable. Accordingly, inside resource concentration was dummy-coded in those analyses. When inside resource concentration was included as a continuous variable in both analyses, it did not produce significant results. So, significant coefficients of the individual inside resource concentration dummy variables remain unknown based on the analysis reported in the table above. The same applies to agency type and policy area. The reason for including inside resource concentration, agency type and policy area as interval variables was to reduce the number of variables. The following significance levels apply: *** $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; * $p \leq 0.10$; All two-tailed tests.

Table 5.11 Ordered logistic regression analysis of the effect of resource elements and context including interaction effects on the degree of dependence

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable: Degree of dependence	
	Model 1	Model 1 MI
Inside resource concentration	-0.07 (0.39)	0.03 (0.27)
Outside resource concentration	0.19*** (0.07)	0.11** (0.04)
Expertise	-0.59 (1.42)	0.05 (0.66)
Implementation capacity	-2.44* (1.46)	-0.29 (0.67)
Legitimacy	0.06 (1.33)	1.32 (0.93)
Intermediation capacity	1.56 (1.46)	1.78** (1.05)
Interest representation regime	-2.03*** (0.68)	-1.37*** (0.35)
political-strategic insight	-0.66 (0.58)	0.15 (0.31)
agency type	-0.19 (0.60)	0.06 (0.31)
policy area	0.09 (0.01)	0.05 (0.06)
EU involvement	0.05** (0.03)	0.03 (0.01)
Inside resource concentration * regime	0.05 (0.12)	0.06 (0.09)
Outside resource concentration * regime	0.01 (0.03)	-0.002 (0.01)
Expertise * regime	1.00* (0.53)	-0.01 (0.31)
Implementation capacity * regime	-1.20** (0.53)	-0.20 (0.31)
Legitimacy * regime	0.70 (0.48)	0.75** (0.31)
Intermediation capacity * regime	0.97** (0.50)	0.31 (0.34)
Inside resource concentration * political-strategic insight	0.08 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.08)
Outside resource concentration * political-strategic insight	-0.003 (0.02)	-0.004 (0.01)
Expertise * political-strategic insight	0.19 (0.40)	0.15 (0.26)
Implementation capacity * political-strategic insight	1.23*** (0.43)	0.44* (0.27)
Legitimacy * political-strategic insight	0.05 (0.40)	-0.07 (0.27)
Intermediation capacity * political stragic insight	-0.40 (0.45)	-0.49 (0.32)
Inside resource concentration * agency type	-0.18 (0.12)	-0.03 (0.08)
Outside resource concentration * agency type	-0.01 (0.02)	0.02* (0.01)
Expertise * agency type	0.27 (0.41)	0.02 (0.26)
Implementation capacity * agency type	0.32 (0.42)	-0.12 (0.26)
Legitimacy * agency type	-0.26 (0.41)	-0.88*** (0.27)
Intermediation capacity * agency type	0.23 (0.40)	-0.32 (0.26)
Inside resource concentration * policy area	0.03 (0.02)	0.008 (0.01)
Outside resource concentration * policy area	-0.001* (0.001)	-0.005** (0.002)
Expertise * policy area	-0.08 (0.07)	-0.004 (0.05)
Implementation capacity * policy area	0.02 (0.07)	0.03 (0.05)
Legitimacy * policy area	-0.001 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.04)
Intermediation capacity * policy area	-0.01 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.05)
Inside resource concentration * EU involvement	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.003 (0.003)
Outside resource concentration * EU involvement	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Expertise * EU involvement	-0.001 (0.01)	-0.001 (0.01)
Implementation capacity * EU involvement	0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)
Legitimacy * EU involvement	-0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)
Intermediation capacity * EU involvement	0.04** (0.02)	-0.02* (0.01)
Cut-points	-0.61; 0.90; 1.67	-0.07; 1.82; 2.16; 3.56
X ² model	241.04(41)***	429.08(41)***
Pseudo R square (Nagelkerke)	0.48	0.43
N	421	821

In model 1 MI, outside resource concentration (0.11; $p \leq 0.05$), intermediation capacity (1.78; $p \leq 0.05$), and interest representation regime (-1.37, $p \leq 0.01$) produce significant coefficients. Model 1 MI also includes 6 interaction terms that produce significant coefficients; legitimacy * interest representation regime (0.75, $p \leq 0.05$), implementation * political strategic insight (0.44, $p \leq 0.1$), outside resource concentration * agency type (0.02, $p \leq 0.1$), legitimacy * agency type (-0.88, $p \leq 0.01$), outside resource concentration * policy area (-0.005, $p \leq 0.05$), and intermediation capacity * EU involvement (-0.02, $p \leq 0.1$).

When we compare these interaction models with the core resource dependence model (table 5.4), we observe that by including interaction terms, fewer of the individual resource elements produce significant coefficients. This could mean that although the interaction is not indicated by the model, several elements in the model do affect each other. We also observe that the interaction terms that relate to the degree of dependence concern both the importance and concentration of resources. Yet, the majority of the interaction terms include resource importance rather than resource concentration. And those that include resource concentration generally produce very small effects. This result is in line with the previous analyses that incorporated the individual resource elements as dependent variables. The overall result of those analyses was that resource importance seemed to be more context-driven than resource concentration. Also, most interaction terms (except outside resource concentration * agency type and intermediation capacity * EU involvement) overlap with the results of the analyses that include the individual resource elements as dependent variables. Put differently, the interaction terms suggest similar contextual effects to the individual analysis of the impact of the contextual variables on the resource elements.

It is difficult, however, to estimate under which *exact* circumstances the impact of each of the resource elements on the degree of dependence is either reinforced or mitigated. This is so for two main reasons. First, the inclusion of several categorical variables as continuous variables obscures their impact and how they are to be influenced by the contextual variables (see also footnote 22). Second, the constitutive elements of the interaction model cannot be interpreted as we would do in normal linear regression models (Brambor, Clark and Golder 2005). For instance, we observe in model 1 MI that intermediation capacity contributes to the odds that civil servants interact with a higher number of interest groups (and thus to the odds of a smaller degree of dependence). In addition, the interaction term 'intermediation capacity * political-strategic insight' also significantly contributes to the number of interest groups with which civil servants are likely to interact. Its negative value suggests that the effect of intermediation capacity is reduced as the degree of political-strategic insights increases. In other words, when political-strategic insight becomes a more important part of a senior civil servant's job, a mitigating effect of intermediation capacity on the degree of dependence is reduced. The point is that from these results we do not know until what point (in this case the exact level of political strategic insight) this effect holds. To precisely measure this, we should provide results for meaningful values of political-strategic insight to determine how its effect influences the impact of intermediation capacity on degree of dependence (see Brambor, Clark and Golder 2005, 76). Since this interaction model includes relatively many categorical variables and has difficulties

in meeting the statistical assumptions, I will not proceed with estimating the precise effect of the contextual variables on the resource elements. Instead, I will use this model and its results for a general interpretation of the comparative potential of a resource dependence model in explaining why bureaucrats interact with interest groups.

Generally, the interaction model confirms that context does matter and should be taken into account when modelling bureaucracy-interest group interactions as resource dependence relationships. Despite its flaws, this interaction model is important in the assessment of the explanatory potential of the core resource dependence model. The interaction effect of inside resource concentration, as said, (the number of familiar interest groups) is somewhat concealed in the interaction model, however, as a result of including it as a continuous variable. But what the interaction model suggests is that concentration of resources is indeed to a lesser extent affected by context than is the relative importance of resources. It also shows that the importance of resources is important to explain the degree of dependence, but that its effect varies along different political-administrative dimensions. Given the explanatory value of the resource dependence model ($R^2 = 0.36$ and 0.36 respectively) and the interaction models ($R^2 = 0.48$ and 0.43 respectively), we could conclude that these tests offer a promising start for the resource dependence model. In this respect, the empirical analyses reflect the method of concomitant variation (Mill 1970[1843]) on which this study rests. That is, the empirical analyses showed that a particular variation of the resource elements along different political-administrative dimensions is related to a particular variation in the degree of dependence. Although in need of refinement, for instance, exactly measuring the values of the contextual variables that influence the core resource elements, the resource dependence model offers a promising tool to systematically explain bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

5.5 The explanatory value of the resource dependence model

The aim of this chapter was to empirically examine the resource dependence model to test its potential for explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions. First, I tested a model that only included resource importance and resource concentration. It thus included the core elements hypothesised to explain bureaucracy-interest group interactions. This model offered a satisfactory explanation for the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact, which served as a measure of the degree of dependence. The next step of the analysis examined if and to what extent the contextual factors influenced the degree of dependence. When the contextual variables were added to the model, the explanatory value of the model increased slightly. This implied that contextual variables can improve its explanatory value. When their impact was tested on each of the resource elements separately, small yet significant effects confirmed the impact of context. Such effects of contextual variables have been hypothesised as part of the theoretical model, although some of those effects contradicted or were different from the effects that were hypothesised. Table 5.12 summarises the effects of the contextual variables stated by the hypotheses and indicate whether the results confirm (indicated by +), deny

(indicated by -), or offer partial confirmation (indicated by $\pm$). The grey coloured rows report the effects that were explicitly hypothesised as part of the explanatory model. The striped area reports the effects that were not explicitly hypothesised, but were included in the empirical analyses on a more exploratory basis.

Table 5.12 Status of the hypotheses after the empirical analysis

Hypotheses		Status hypotheses after analyses
Interest representation regime	When national interest representation regimes are highly institutionalised, the concentration of resources will be high.	$\pm$
Political-administrative relations	When civil service positions require a high level of political-strategic insight, the importance and concentration of resources will be high.	-
Agency type	The importance of resources will vary across different types of agencies.	+
Policy area	- When issues are salient, the concentration of resources will be low. - When issues are technically complex, the concentration of resources will be high. - When issues are politically sensitive, the relative importance of resources will be high.	$\pm$
EU	Europeanisation will affect both resource concentration and resource importance.	$\pm$

For *interest representation regime*, we can infer that the effect is too weak to confirm the hypothesis. Although the result points in the same direction as that hypothesised, a more solid finding is necessary to confidently confirm this hypothesis. Second, for the *political-administrative hypothesis*, no concentration effects were found, but there seems to be variation in the importance of resources. The results for *agency type* confirm the hypothesis that the importance of resources varies across agency type due to the different nature and tasks of these agencies. The results for *policy area* are interesting, but cannot confirm or reject the hypotheses. The results here concern substantive differences, whereas the hypotheses concern more abstract characteristics of policy areas. Yet, they point in the direction of variation across policy areas. Finally, *EU involvement* was not included in the model, but was included in the empirical analyses. It does not seem to be related to either resource concentration or resource importance, except in the case of legitimacy. Although the effect of EU involvement was not formally included in the model, the analyses suggest that EU involvement influences national bureaucracy-interest group interactions only to a very small extent. We will see more on the EU factor in the next chapter.

A final step in the assessment of the explanatory potential of the resource dependence model was to examine the extent to which the effect of the resource elements would vary along different political-administrative dimensions. This is a test to truly assess the model's comparative qualities. To measure these effects, an

interaction model was examined, incorporating each individual resource element and contextual variables together with interaction terms for the contextual variables and each of the resource elements. This model showed that context indeed matters to a small extent, and that the impact of the resource elements varies to a certain degree along the political-administrative dimensions included in the model. Concentration of resources appears to be influenced to a smaller extent by context than the relative importance of resources is. Taken together, the analyses provide a thorough examination of the explanatory potential of the resource dependence model. The results suggest that it is a promising tool to systematically explain bureaucracy-interest group interactions from a comparative perspective.

The explanatory value of resource concentration and resource importance are interesting for the literature on interest group politics and bureaucratic politics, as well as for classic resource dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]) in which the explanatory model of this study is grounded. Let me discuss the implications of these analyses for the classic resource dependence theory first. The analyses reveal two additional important aspects of resource exchange relationships that deserve attention. First, the importance of resources varies across different political-administrative dimensions. Usually, such a comparative aspect is ignored. The importance of expertise has been shown to vary across different EU institutions (Bouwen 2002; 2004). Yet, an explicit preference of civil servants or, more generally, of governments has not yet been studied, and neither has the effect of other types of variables such as political-administrative relations, differences in public agencies, and variation across policy areas. Expertise is clearly not the only important resource to be exchanged between interest groups and the government; other resources matter as well. The importance of resources is thus rather context-driven. And, in order to properly apply the idea of classic resource dependence to government and interest group interactions, it is necessary to include such contextual variables more explicitly.

Second, the model and the analyses suggest that not only resource importance should be included in the model, but that resource concentration is an important determinant of resource exchange as well. Availability of resources can have important consequences for a preference for certain types of resources. And, perhaps more importantly, concentration of resources seems to be important in distinguishing the various types of rationalities that underlie resource exchanges between bureaucrats and interest groups. To illustrate, if only a single organisation controls a particular resource, there will not be much room left to strategically choose with whom to interact to obtain this resource (see also chapter 7). So, it is important that the interaction between these two elements is incorporated in explanations of resource exchange. The effect of the contextual variables on resource concentration offers interesting results as well. Interest representation regimes, for instance, seem to influence resource concentration to a small extent.²³ These regimes have usually been studied to explain differences in the degree of

²³ The effect might be more explicit when more extreme values on the corporatism-pluralism indicator are included. That is, including the US and Sweden as indicators in the analysis may reveal a stronger effect of interest representation regime. For practical reasons, this was not possible in this study, but it is an interesting matter for further studies.

institutionalisation and access of interest groups to decision making (and more dominantly, the coordination system to facilitate such decision making: see Molina and Rhodes 2002). Perhaps interest representation regimes are converging in so far as their effects on access go. This is a trend that raises fascinating research questions, part of which have been addressed by studies reporting that the degree of corporatism in so-called corporatist countries is declining (see for instance Rommetvedt 2005). In addition, access may be determined to a larger extent by other contextual variables (see also chapter 6) than simply by variation across different interest representation regimes. The results for agency type, policy area and political-administrative variables suggest that systematic comparative analysis of bureaucracy-interest group interaction should not only focus on national comparisons, but should focus on the sub-national level as well. This finding is in line with recent studies that point to different levels of corporatism across different policy areas (Blom-Hansen 2001; Torenvlied 2005), as discussed earlier.

The effect of political-strategic insight on bureaucracy-interest group interactions is also interesting for the literature on bureaucratic politics. Political-administrative relations and agency strife, what I termed an internal component of bureaucratic politics, should be more systematically related to bureaucracy-interest group interactions, what I termed an external component of bureaucratic politics. The literature on bureaucratic politics seldom links these two components (but see Carpenter 2001; Hill 1991; Suleiman 1974). These two components, and more importantly, the interactions between them, are relevant to explain bureaucratic motives. Bureaucracy-interest group interactions may serve the position of the bureaucrat as opposed to his/her political superior. Or, vice versa, a civil servant's position in the bureaucracy may influence his/her relations with interest groups. The same applies to the differences in agency types. In sum, these analyses suggest that studies of bureaucratic politics should more systematically include such variation and link internal aspects to external aspects to better explain bureaucrats' motives. Systematic comparative research on bureaucratic politics that incorporates both an internal and external perspective could provide better insights into this phenomenon than the public choice driven accounts of bureaucrats' motives and case studies that have been offered until now.

5.5.1 The entrepreneurial or the captive bureaucrat?

The results show that the resource dependence model offers a promising explanation for bureaucracy-interest group interactions. But what does this all say about the entrepreneurial bureaucrat? If you were a civil servant in the UK in need of expertise, for instance, you would face a somewhat less severe dependence on interest groups than if you were a civil servant in the Netherlands with a similar need. That is, the importance of expertise is higher in pluralist regimes, but a higher importance of resources results in more interest groups with which civil servants interact. This eventually results in a degree of dependence that is less severe. The importance of expertise, implementation and intermediation capacity increases when you are top civil servant involved in considerable political-strategic decision-making. Depending on the interest representation regime, your dependence will be less severe (in the UK), or somewhat more severe (the

Netherlands). Or, if you are working for an executive agency, you may be more dependent on expertise than your colleagues at advisory agencies. Given these general patterns, we would assess the degree of dependence characterising your interactions with interest groups as 'it depends.' For a detailed assessment of a bureaucracy's entrepreneurial behaviour, an assessment of the importance and concentration of a resource in a specific case and how these two elements vary along relevant political-administrative dimensions is necessary. In general, however, the importance of resources seems to be much more context-driven than is resource concentration. And, some aspects of the political-administrative environment may matter more than others in allowing entrepreneurial behaviour.

In sum, the analyses provide a first assessment of the explanatory potential of the resource dependence model. That is, we can to a certain extent measure bureaucracy-interest group interactions by modelling them in terms of degree of dependence. In addition, tests of the model provide an initial assessment of how entrepreneurial behaviour might vary under different political-administrative circumstances. To precisely distinguish between the entrepreneurial and the captive bureaucrat, we need to examine the interest group environment in more detail. In doing so, we should be able to gain insights into other contextual dynamics that may influence resource concentration, which was shown to be affected only to a limited extent by the contextual variables included in the model. This will be done in the chapter 6.

The Interest Group Environment: A View from Within

We prefer the imperial route. That is, we always negotiate with civil servants first to obtain what we want. If this strategy fails, we will seek to exert influence via politicians or the media. But we always prefer the civil servants' route. When you're not successful in this stage, you did something wrong.¹

6.1 Introduction

This statement represents the opinion of several respondents in this study; such an 'imperial route' is preferred by most of the interest groups included here. They also indicate that they aim to bring solid information, or bring in examples of best practices, so that they will be considered a trustworthy partner for civil servants to interact with. They thus try to trade high-quality expertise for influence, a resource explicitly shown to be useful in obtaining access to European institutions as well (Bouwen 2002, 2004; Beyers 2004).

Earlier, I examined what kind of resources civil servants consider to be important to obtain from interest groups and the extent to which such resources are available in the interest group environment. The interest group environment has thus been studied through the eyes of the civil servant. Which kind of resources, however, do interest groups themselves find most important to offer to civil servants, and how do they perceive their immediate environment? Do they experience severe competition with each other, or are they more likely to join forces in achieving what they want? And, most importantly, do they consider civil servants an important partner to cooperate with? Answering these and other questions about the interest group environment helps to more fully interpret the degree of dependence that characterises bureaucracy-interest group interactions. When interest groups do not consider bureaucrats to be an important means for exerting influence, for instance, bureaucrats may be more dependent on those very interest groups than when those bureaucrats are considered to be an important means for accessing public decision making.

To provide such a broader perspective on bureaucracy-interest group interactions, this chapter offers a detailed inspection of the resources and their availability in the interest group environment. That is, it examines the characteristics and availability of resources that interest groups may have to offer and how such availability may vary in a changing environment. To do so, I will examine the type of resources interest groups have to offer, how they perceive

¹ Interview by author.

cooperation with and competition from fellow interest groups, and to what extent they consider civil servants to be an important access point through which to exert influence. I will also examine the impact of Europeanisation on national bureaucracy-interest group interactions. In other words, this chapter studies the interest group environment in more detail, to better assess the explanatory potential of the resource dependence model.

6.2 Measuring degree of dependence

A comprehensive empirical analysis of the comparative potential of the resource dependence model requires a full scale analysis from the perspectives of both the bureaucracy and interest groups. For the latter, we need to generate hypotheses about relevant contextual factors that would influence interest group behaviour. As the focus of this study has been and still is the bureaucracy, such a comprehensive analysis of resource exchange from an interest group perspective goes beyond the scope of this research. Nonetheless, I will consider several contextual factors, albeit in a more exploratory fashion, to provide some initial insights into how interest group dynamics may influence the dependence relationship.

6.2.1 Concentration and importance of resources

The importance of resources was incorporated in the survey by asking respondents to indicate the most important reasons for them to interact with civil servants. This item does not explicitly refer to 'exercising influence.' "Influence sounds too bad," as one respondent honestly puts it,² and interest groups generally seem to be keener to focus on what they bring to the negotiation table rather than the act of exerting influence. Therefore, to avoid socially undesirable answers, the reason 'to exercise influence' was deliberately omitted from the list of options.³ I further included items in the questionnaire asking respondents to indicate whether they cooperate with similar interest groups, whether they experience competition from fellow interest groups, and whether they interact with other types of organisations, such as advisory councils or research institutes (item 8-12, see appendix I). These indicators do not directly measure resource concentration, yet they gauge how many interest groups may offer equivalent resources and to what extent access may be limited as a result of competition. Cooperation with similar interest groups is thus assumed to be an indicator of the number of similar kinds of interest groups, whereas competition says something about the number of organisations civil servants may be familiar with. These two indicators are thereby indirect measures of inside resource concentration. Cooperation with other types of organisations is used as an indirect measurement of outside resource concentration.

² Interview by author.

³ Only a few mentioned this aspect in the 'other, please specify' category. So, on the whole, respondents seem to have been quite comfortable with the reasons that were presented to them. In addition, I phrased this item in terms of 'reasons' rather than in terms of 'resources', as 'resources' obviously is a theoretical construct and most likely will not fit in the respondents' framing of why they interact with civil servants (see also section 5.1 for a similar use of 'reasons').

6.2.2 Contextual factors

First, similar to the bureaucracy analysis, interest representation regimes are hypothesised to make a difference for the interest group environment. The degree of institutionalisation of interest group involvement and the hierarchical organisation of interest representation will influence whether and how interest groups are able to interact with civil servants and with each other, as well as the kind of resources that are available (see also section 5.1).

Second, I assume that differences in kinds of interest groups, for instance employers' organisations versus voluntary organisations, are relevant for the resources they have to offer and how they perceive the bureaucracy. For an operationalisation of different kinds of interest groups, I apply the classification I used to construct the interest group datasets (see chapter 4).

A final contextual factor that has been defined is the extent to which interest groups receive government grants for their activities. In this sense, the Dutch government, for instance, is known for 'organising and financing its own adversaries' (see Duyvendak et al. 1992), a trend the European Commission also seems to follow. That is, the European Commission organises an active civil society by encouraging or sometimes even formally requiring member states to involve interest groups in policy making or the transposition of EU directives (COM 2002, 704). Often, such organisations receive government grants in order to represent their members and to actively participate in public decision making. Although they lag behind in terms of (financial) resources, they are often invited to the negotiation table. In the words of one civil servant: "When people try to represent a certain group of people in their spare time, you have to respect such organisations despite their obvious disadvantage in resources and time."⁴ Or, as an interest group representative indicates: "They [civil servants; CP] respect our formal position at the negotiation table, although we are inferior compared to the big boys in terms of resources. You see, our head office fits in the entrance hall of one of the major organisations representing the insurance sector."⁵ Usually, civil servants gather both types of organisations around the negotiation table so as to formally represent a diverse array of societal interests.

Two interesting questions arise. Does such active governmental outreach to interest groups, and the amount of public money interest groups receive, make a difference in how they get access to the government? And do these governmental initiatives affect what kind of resources the interest groups bring to the table? To examine whether there is such an effect from receiving government grants, I asked respondents to indicate which percentage of their budget consists of public grants (item 5, see appendix I).⁶ So, three contextual factors, interest representation regime, kind of interest organisation, and government grants will be included in the analyses of the interest group environment when appropriate.

⁴ Interview by author.

⁵ Idem.

⁶ For each country, the question was asked somewhat differently. Therefore, I recoded the Dutch data by adding up the percentages for each type of financial resources provided by the respondents to an overall percentage of government grants and assigned them the values attached to the categories of government grants in the UK survey (see item 5, appendix I).

Table 6.1 below reports the contextual factors and the elements of resource concentration and resource importance. In the first column, the (in)dependent variables are listed; the second column reports the answer categories and how they were coded. In the remaining columns, several descriptive statistics are reported, including missing data.

Table 6.1 Operationalisation of (in)dependent variables

(in)dependent variables	Coding	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Missing
Interest representation regime	NLD (1) UK (0)	0.62	0.49	0	1	0
Kind of interest group (item 2)	Private firm (1) Employers' organisation (2) Labour union (3) (association of) Public institution (4) NGO voluntary (5) NGO education (6) NGO consumer (7) NGO development (8) NGO environment (9) NGO health (10) NGO minorities (11) NGO religious/ idealistic (12) NGO science (13) NGO culture/sports/recreation (14) Other (15)	6.24	4.40	1	15	8
Government Grants (item 5)	We receive no grants (0) 1-25% of our total budget (1) 26-50% of our total budget (2) 51-75% of our total budget (3) 76-100% of our total budget (4)	0.66	1.21	0	4	23
Importance of resources (item 17)	Unimportant (0) Important (1)	Information: 0.78 Expertise: 0.68 Grants: 0.30 Implementation: 0.32	0.42 0.46 0.42 0.47	0	1	127
Inside resource concentration (1) <i>Interactions with similar interest groups (IG)</i> (item 8)	None (0) 1-5 similar interest groups (1) 6-10 similar interest groups (2) 11-15 similar interest groups (3) > 15 similar interest groups (4)	2.22	1.34	0	4	42
Inside resource concentration (2) <i>Competition experienced from other interest groups</i> (item 10)	No competition not at all (1) Not so much (2) Don't know / not applicable (3) Somewhat (4) Very much (5)	Access to politicians: 2.27 Access to civil servants: 2.10 Access to policy process: 2.40 Access to implementation: 2.35 Access to grants: 2.48	1.17 1.12 1.18 1.15 1.14	1	5	83 86 85 85 84
Outside resource concentration <i>Cooperation with other organisations</i> (item 12)	None (0) 1-5 organisations (1) 6-10 organisations (2) 11-15 organisations (3) > 15 organisations (4)	Advisory council: 0.92 Consultancy firm: 0.81 Scientific organisation: 0.97 Research institute: 0.73 Think tanks: 0.61 Public agencies: 1.01	0.92 0.86 0.87 0.77 0.72 0.93	0	4	84 88 85 88 241 ¹ 78

Note: 1 = The large number of missing variables is a result of excluding the category 'think tanks' from the Dutch survey.

6.2.3 Missing data

Table 6.1 reveals, similar to the senior civil servants' survey, a considerable amount of missing data. To avoid bias in the results, I used a similar technique to that applied to the civil servants' survey (multiple imputation). Appendix II shows the diagnostics of the multiple imputation process run by *Amelia*. These diagnostics indicate whether the imputed data is too distant from the originally observed values, the extent to which the program is able to predict the true value of the data,

and whether the imputations are consistent and do not depend on the value from which the process started (Honaker, King and Blackwell 2007, 16). The datasets meet the assumptions of the three diagnostics that the program *Amelia* offers, indicating a fairly good fit for the multiple imputation process. Again, as was done in the previous chapter, analyses will be conducted both with the original and imputed datasets and results for both analyses will be depicted (see also section 5.2.3). Model 1 represents the analyses based on the original dataset; model 1 MI represents the analyses based on the complete dataset.

6.3 Examining the interest group environment

Interest groups may try to build coalitions to be better able to exert influence or to better implement their goals (Gray and Lowery 1998; Hojnacki 1998; Mahoney 2007). As a respondent notes:

The lobby for smoke-free restaurants and pubs was very successful. Part of its success was the decision to build a coalition with several major health organisations such as The Netherlands Heart Foundation (*Hartstichting*) and the Dutch Cancer Society (*Koningin Wilhelmina Fonds*). We agreed with them that we would be the official spokesperson for this particular campaign as this issue is at the heart of our organisation. For other issues, such as a campaign to stop smoking, other organisations will have the lead.

Interest groups not only form coalitions, they are also likely to experience competition from fellow interest groups when attempting to get access to public officials on their own. “There are two relatively large patient organisations in the Netherlands,” a respondent in this study observes, “and while the other one is our largest partner to cooperate with, at the same time, we compete with them over the budget and over our position as an important spokesperson for patients in the Netherlands.” Such patterns of cooperation and competition will shape the interest group environment and shed some light upon how resources are dispersed or concentrated within the environment. Patterns of cooperation between similar interest groups may reveal the number of interest groups that potentially have similar resources or other useful resources to offer for a particular policy problem.⁷ The members of the above-mentioned coalition of various health organisations, for instance, had similar and additional expertise and information to offer on the effects of (passive) smoking on public health. Competition in getting access may reflect to what extent civil servants interact with a smaller subset of the existing population. The two major umbrella patient organisations represent somewhat different groups in society. By talking to only one interest group, civil servants miss the perspective of the other groups. Cooperation with other types of organisations may provide an indication of the availability of resources relevant to a specific policy area in a broader environment than interest groups represent.

⁷ On the other hand, cooperation may also reduce the number of organisations with which civil servants are able to interact. When only a few organisations act as spokespersons, for instance, the actual number of organisations with which civil servants interact in this case is relatively small. However, cooperation patterns do reveal something of the true dispersal of resources in the environment by showing what kind of relevant interest groups exist in respect of a specific policy issue.

In other words, revealing such interaction patterns within the interest group environment provides some additional information on the extent to which resources are concentrated in a bureaucracy's environment.⁸ This section studies different aspects of interaction patterns within the interest group environment: cooperation with similar interest groups, various types of competition interest groups may face, and, finally, to what extent interest group interact with a broad array of other types of organisations.

6.3.1 Cooperation with fellow interest groups

Let me first consider cooperation with fellow interest groups. Figure 6.1 shows the percentage of respondents that report that they cooperate with a particular number of fellow interest groups. For instance, 20.8 per cent report that they cooperate with 6-10 other fellow interest groups.

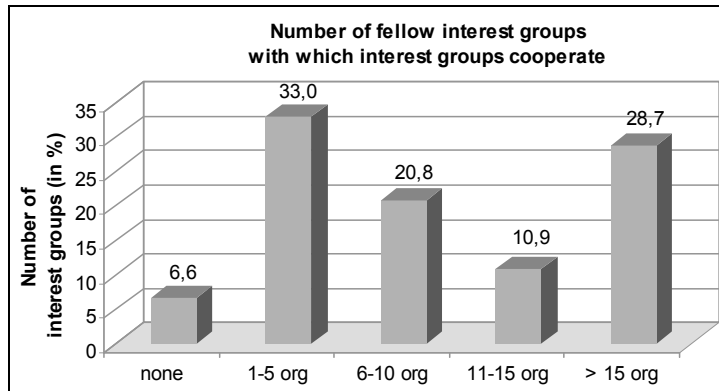


Figure 6.1 Cooperation with fellow interest groups

When asked with how many fellow interest groups they interact (i.e., interest groups involved in a similar policy issue), it appears that interest groups either interact with a relatively small number of interest groups (33 percent interact with 1-5 fellow interest groups) or with a relatively large number of other organisations (28.7 percent interact with over 15 fellow interest groups). These interaction patterns raise two questions: do these patterns vary across different interest representation regimes, or do they depend on the kind of interest group? To examine the influence of these factors on the number of fellow interest groups with which interest groups interact, I conducted an ordered logistic regression analysis. Ordered logistic regression was an appropriate choice as the dependent variable has been measured at an ordinal level. Both models meet the assumptions: the test of parallel lines and goodness-of-fit statistics are insignificant. The results are shown in table 6.2. Model 1 is based on the original dataset and model 1 MI is based on the complete datasets.

⁸ This is obviously only part of the story. A true measurement of how many interest groups may have to offer appropriate resources requires a detailed analysis of each of the interest groups included in this study. However, for practical reasons, I have opted to use cooperation with and competition from familiar organisations to approximate the extent to which resources are concentrated in the environment.

Table 6.2 Ordered logistic regression analysis of the effect of contextual variables on inside resource concentration (interactions with fellow interest groups)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable: Inside resource concentration	
	Model 1	Model 1 MI
Interest representation regime	-0.88*** (0.25)	-0.68*** (0.23)
Grants	0.25 (0.10)	0.19** (0.09)
Private firm	-0.89 (0.64)	-0.53 (0.57)
Labour union	1.31 (0.85)	1.24 (0.81)
(association of) Public institution	-0.23 (0.52)	-0.26 (0.48)
NGO voluntary	-1.01 (0.70)	-0.99 (0.65)
NGO consumer	0.29 (0.48)	0.003 (0.42)
NGO development	-0.60 (0.38)	-0.64* (0.36)
NGO environment	0.55 (0.55)	0.30 (0.50)
NGO health care	0.49 (0.43)	0.38 (0.40)
NGO minorities'	0.76 (0.70)	0.57 (0.58)
NGO religious/idealistic	-0.36 (0.42)	-0.33 (0.39)
NGO culture/sports/recreation	-0.19 (0.51)	-0.23 (0.44)
Other	-0.63 (0.69)	-0.50 (0.59)
Cut-points	-3.25; -0.86; 0.07; 0.59	-3.12; -0.86; 0.06; 0.63
pseudo R ² (nagelkerke)	0.13	0.07
Model χ^2	38.41(14)***	32.96(14)***
N	299	345

*** $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; * $p \leq 0.10$ Note: dummy variables 'NGO science' and 'NGO education' were omitted because the sample did not contain scientific and educational organisations. The reference category for different types of interest groups is 'employers' associations.' All two-tailed tests.

The original dataset reveals a stronger relationship between the variables and a stronger overall effect than the complete dataset (pseudo R² of 0.13 versus 0.07, respectively). In the case of the original dataset, *interest representation regime* (-0.88; $p \leq 0.01$) produces significant results. Model 1 MI produces significant coefficients for *interest representation regime* (-0.68; $p \leq 0.01$) and receiving *grants* (0.19; $p \leq 0.05$), and *kinds of interest groups*, in this case development NGOs (-0.64; $p \leq 0.1$) as compared to the reference category of employers' associations. A change in interest representation regime from the UK to the Netherlands is likely to result in fewer fellow interest groups with which interest groups seem to interact. This finding indicates that the characteristics of interest representation regimes could influence cooperation patterns. The tendency to build coalitions could be less apparent in a highly institutionalised interest representation system. An increase in government grants, on the other hand, is likely to result in a larger number of fellow interest groups with which interest groups interact, according to model 1 MI. While the exact nature of such a relationship is impossible to unpack within the limitations of

this study, a possible reason could be that organisations receiving grants are often invited to collective meetings with other subsidised organisations and/or they are urged to work together with other interest groups. In this sense, government grants could stimulate cooperation. Or, as grants are most likely to overlap with the kind of interest organisations, certain kinds of interest organisations may be more inclined to cooperate. However, a change from employers' organisations to development NGOs is likely to result in fewer interactions with fellow interest groups (model 1 MI). In general, however, the model has a small explanatory value.

What could these cooperation patterns imply for the distribution of resources within the environment? More generally, we can say that interest groups are inclined to interact with either a relatively small or a relatively large number of fellow interest groups. As the number of fellow interest groups with which interest groups tend to cooperate is likely to decrease from the UK to the Netherlands, one could conclude that the concentration of resources is slightly higher in the Netherlands than in the UK. Yet, the effect is very small. So, due to cooperation with at least a few organisations, concentration of resources may always be somewhat mitigated. Providing government grants seems to increase cooperation patterns and thus decreases the concentration of resources. In that sense, providing grants could help civil servants to better pick and choose the resources they want. This finding parallels the case of subsidising immigrant organisations discussed in the first chapter. Grants could help agencies to keep in touch with a variety of organisations, which in turn could be stimulated to interact more often with each other. As a respondent in the Rotterdam case study notes: "The most important side-effect of grants is that we can keep in touch."⁹ Grants have been shown to affect the behaviour of interest groups in the field of immigration policies. Examined from the perspective of the political opportunity structure literature, these grants create opportunities for immigrants to establish and then maintain their organisations. Such patterns vary across countries, depending on their immigrant integration regime (Koopmans and Statham 2000; Soysal 1994; de Zwart and Poppelaars 2004; 2007). The effect of government grants on the behaviour of interest groups is interesting to study further, as it may influence the nature of the relationship between civil servants and interest groups.¹⁰

6.3.2 Competition from fellow interest groups

It is not only cooperation patterns that shape the interest group environment. The competition interest groups experience also influences their immediate environment and is an indirect measure of inside resource concentration. When

⁹ Interview by author.

¹⁰ Separate analyses of the UK and the Netherlands would help to better interpret an effect of the funding variable. Yet, conducting these analyses resulted in models that did not meet the necessary analytical assumptions. In particular, in analysis for the UK, the absence of observations for some categories of interest groups rendered the results unreliable. For the Netherlands, some of the separate analyses of the imputed datasets and the analysis based on the original dataset produce significant coefficients for the variable 'receiving grants'. Although neither of the models based on the Dutch data met the test for the parallel lines assumption, we could think of the following hypothesis: Providing grants affects patterns of cooperation, but this effect may be related to the type of interest representation regime. Put differently, providing grants and corporatism correlate highly.

facing severe competition, interest groups will certainly behave differently toward each other and also towards civil servants. In addition, access could be seriously restricted by severe competition. The extent to which interest groups believe that they experience competition from each other is shown in figure 6.2. The figure shows the percentages of respondents that report experiencing a particular degree of competition with respect to different aspects of exercising influence. The figures include a perception of competition regarding access to politicians, access to civil servants, access to the policy-making process, getting involved in implementation processes and, finally, in receiving government grants.

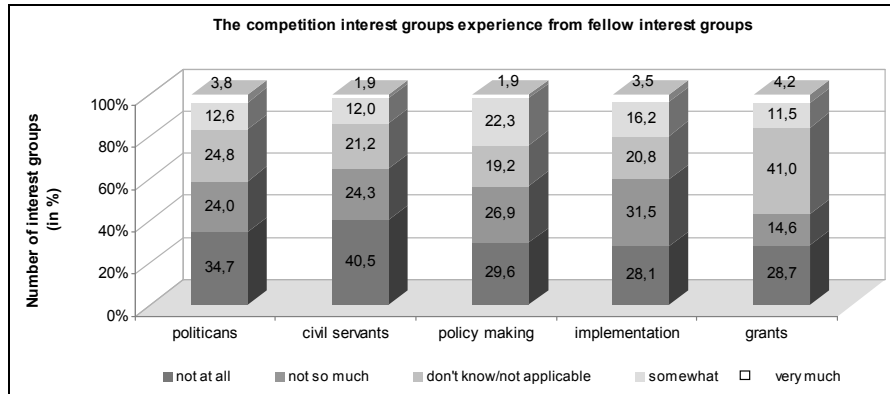


Figure 6.2 Interest groups' perceptions of competition

Not many interest groups believe that they face severe competition. Across all of the categories, a maximum of 4.2 per cent of the respondents indicate that they experience competition to a relatively large extent. In the case of getting grants, a relatively large percentage of the respondents indicate that competition is either not applicable or that they are not aware of such competition. A relatively large proportion of the sample consists of employers' organisations, which usually do not, or only to a small extent, receive government grants. This could explain the large percentage of respondents who do not encounter competition in getting grants. In getting access to either politicians or civil servants, only 16.4 or 13.9 percent of the respondents indicate that they face 'somewhat' to 'very much' competition. Yet, in both cases, roughly one-fourth to one-fifth of the respondents indicate that they are not aware of competition, or that competition is not applicable in their case. However, when they get involved in policy making, a relatively large percentage of respondents indicate that they experience 'somewhat' or 'very much' competition (24.2 percent).

The bottom line is that, although some respondents indicate that they experience competition, the perception is that overall competition is not very severe. A perception of competition, however, should not be confused with the actual existence of competition. These patterns of perceived competition are similar to those found in a study of interest group representatives in the American states. Roughly 40 percent of the associations and membership groups in that study indicated that they sometimes face competition from other interest groups (Gray and Lowery 1996b, 103). These authors argue, however, based on niche theory

used in population biology, that a perception of competition does not automatically imply the absence of competition. Population biology tells us that overt conflict with allies, or interacting and cooperating with them, suggests that a particular resource is not vital to an organisation's survival. A lack of interaction, on the other hand, could indicate severe competition. Existing interactions between interest groups can be seen as the partitioning of resources, which is a vital survival strategy that has been shown to result from competition. Rather than engaging in overt conflict when in direct competition with species that thrive on similar resources, partitioning occurs (Gray and Lowery 1996b). Interest groups that depend on the same Member of Parliament for getting access to government, for instance, are less likely to directly compete with one another for his/her attention than to seek different ways of approaching him/her. Thus, a 'perception' of competition provides only a particular perspective on this phenomenon and does not in itself explain actual competition. When interest groups indicate that they are not aware of competition processes, they may still be involved in severe competition.

Does variation in the type of interest representation regime or in the kind of interest organisation explain variation in the degree to which interest groups perceive their experience of competition? Illustrative is the following observation by a respondent of one of the largest professional associations in the Netherlands: "The Socialist Party and our organisation? We are only natural opposites; their opinion is always contrary to ours."¹¹ Also, according to other respondents, whether you are an employer's organisation or an NGO appears to make a difference in getting or seeking access to politicians. Could this example point to a more general pattern of differences in getting access? Table 6.3 reports the values of a chi-square test and Cramer's V for the association between interest representation regimes and competition in getting access to either civil servants or politicians, and between different interest groups and competition in getting access to either civil servants or politicians.¹² Model I is based on the original dataset; model I MI is based on the complete dataset.

The strength of the relationship between these two variables is relatively small. According to model I, the differences between *kinds of interest groups* explain variation in the perception of competition in getting access to politicians ($\chi^2 = 73.12(48)$, $p \leq 0.05$; Cramer's $V = 0.27$, $p \leq 0.05$). Overall, we can conclude that interest groups usually experience competition only to a small extent.

Interestingly, the level of competition could in theory work both ways. If interest groups face a modest degree of competition in getting access to politicians or civil servants, this means that, for civil servants or politicians, the concentration of resources will be less severe as several interest groups compete for their attention. On the other hand, if interest groups face severe competition, this could mean that only a few have real access, and thus resources could be more concentrated for civil servants. Whether competition reduces or induces concentration of resources is likely to depend on whether these interest groups already enjoy access. When

¹¹ Interview by author.

¹² I conducted other types of analyses, yet the statistical assumptions of these individual models were not met and the coefficients were insignificant. Therefore, I opted for these analyses for interest representation regime and type of organisations and excluded grants as it proved to be an insignificant variable.

outside interest groups face considerable competition, the organisations civil servants interact with may be restricted and the outside groups could remain unknown to civil servants. So, severe competition negatively affects access for interest groups that cannot cope with severe competition and are not able to secure access. The analyses above show that there is only a small to modest level of perceived competition. This would suggest that the degree of dependence is likely to be mitigated. If these organisations are unknown to civil servants, however, then such modest levels of competition could result in a higher resource concentration. Whether competition results in a higher or lower degree of dependence could thus very much hinge on familiarity of the civil servant with an interest group

Table 6.3 The relationship between context and competition

Model 1	Access to politicians		Access to civil servants	
	χ^2	Cramer's V	χ^2	Cramer's V
Interest representation regime	6.98(4) N = 262	0.16	4.13(4) N = 260	0.13
Kinds of interest group	73.12(48)** N = 259	0.27**	61.68(48) N = 257	0.25

Model 1 MI	Access to politicians		Access to civil servants	
	χ^2	Cramer's V	χ^2	Cramer's V
Interest representation regime	8.35(4)	0.15	4.11(4)	0.10
Kinds of interest group	67.34(48)	0.24	58.24(48)	0.21

*** $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; * $p \leq 0.10$; Model I MI: N = 345; all two-tailed tests

6.3.3 Interactions with other organisations

A final indirect measure of resource concentration, in this case outside resource concentration, is the extent to which interest groups cooperate with other types of organisations, such as advisory councils, consultancy firms or research institutes. Again, such a cooperation pattern is not a direct measure of concentration of resources. But it may indicate whether interest groups expand their scope of activity to achieve what they want, or the extent to which they share their resources with other types of organisations. Figure 6.3 shows such cooperation patterns. It reports, by organisation type, the percentage of respondents who indicated that they tend to interact with such organisations, and how many.

Interest groups appear to interact with other types of organisations, but only with a few of them. Consultancy firms seem to be the least attractive to interest groups; 38.5 percent indicate that they never interact with consultancy firms. For each category, roughly 50 percent of the respondents indicate that they interact with only 1-5 organisations of that particular type. On average, 8 percent of the respondents indicate that they cooperate with 6-10 organisations, and only 2 and 3 percent on average tend to work with 10-15 organisations or with more than 15, respectively. Interest groups apparently expand their scope of activity only to a limited extent.

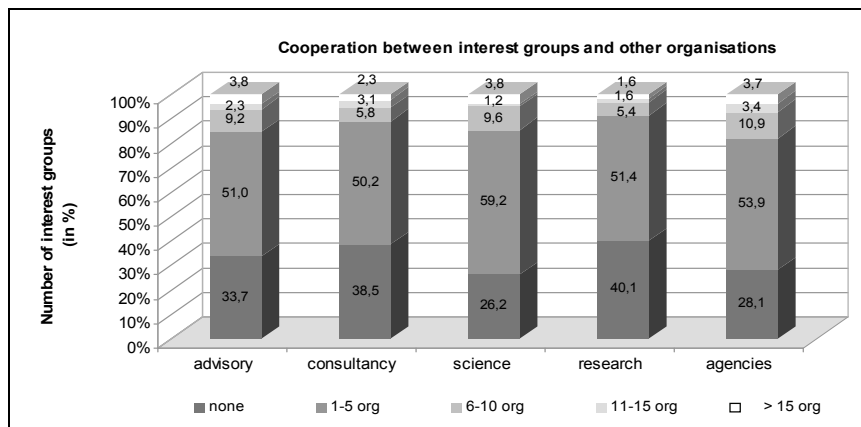


Figure 6.3 Cooperation between interest groups and other organisations

A better assessment of such interaction patterns and, eventually, a better understanding of its relation to bureaucracy-interest group interactions, are needed. As the resource dependence model is designed to be a comparative model, it is important to additionally examine whether such cooperation patterns may change across different interest regimes or vary across different types of interest organisations. To measure such an effect, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. In doing so, I followed a similar strategy as in the case of civil servants (see section 5.3.3).¹³ Examination of diagnostics concerning multicollinearity and heteroskedasticity did not show cause for major concern. However, again similar to the civil servant analysis, for both the original and complete datasets, the dependent variable deviated from normality, even after several transformations. Yet, multiple regression is said to be rather robust for violations of normality (see de Vaus 2002), and the sample is large enough to use these analyses for interpretation, albeit carefully. Table 6.4 below reports the results of the regression analyses. Model 1 represents the analysis based on the original data; model 1 MI represents the analysis based on the complete dataset.

The contextual variables only to small extent explain variance in interaction patterns between interest groups and other types of organisations, given the values of the adjusted R^2 (0.13 and 0.17 respectively). Apparently, interaction patterns with a broader set of organisations are not to a large extent influenced by the contextual variables in the model. The explanatory value of this model is larger than the explanatory value of the model explaining cooperation with fellow interest groups.

¹³ I established a midpoint for each response category, and, to estimate a total number of other organisations with which interest groups interact, I added up these midpoints for each organisation. The disadvantage of this approach, similar to the civil servant analysis, is that information on separate types of organisations is lost. Moreover, it does not provide an indication of the absolute numbers of other types of organisations with which interest groups usually interact. Instead, it provides an indication of the size of interaction patterns between interest groups and other types of organisations such as advisory councils or research institutes. However, the recoding resulted in a variable that could be interpreted as continuous and, given the easier interpretability of multiple regression analysis, this approach was chosen.

Table 6.4 Multiple regression analysis of the effect of contextual variables on outside resource concentration (interactions with other organisations)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable: Outside resource concentration	
	Model 1	Model 1 MI
Interest representation regime	-6.80*** (1.80)	-6.62*** (1.62)
Grants	3.90*** (0.75)	5.16*** (0.73)
Private firm	-0.47 (4.97)	-1.06 (4.03)
Labour union	-7.60 (6.44)	-12.69 (5.17)
(association of) Public institutions	1.60 (4.01)	-5.48 (3.76)
NGO voluntary	-5.90 (4.76)	-6.41 (4.68)
NGO consumer	-5.33 (3.40)	-3.60 (2.98)
NGO development	-6.59** (2.73)	-5.65* (2.51)
NGO environment	-1.30 (4.00)	-1.96 (3.53)
NGO health	-0.94 (3.27)	-2.30 (2.86)
NGO minorities	-6.30 (5.47)	-4.01 (4.20)
NGO religious/idealistic	-0.05 (3.20)	-1.91 (2.75)
NGO culture/sports/recreation	-6.10 (3.89)	-4.92 (3.16)
Other	-7.21 (4.83)	-3.24 (4.15)
Constant	18.41*** (1.45)	18.20*** (1.30)
Adjusted R ²	0.13	0.17
N	267	345

*** $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; * $p \leq 0.10$. Note: dummy variables NGO science and NGO education were omitted because the dataset did not contain scientific and educational organisations. The reference category for different types of interest groups is 'employers' associations'; all two-tailed tests.

Interest representation regime significantly contributes to the number of other organisations with which interest groups interact. Its coefficients (-6.80 and -6.62; $p \leq 0.01$, respectively) imply that when an interest representation regime becomes more corporatist in nature, interest groups tend to interact with fewer other organisations. This finding corresponds with the results on interactions with fellow interest groups. It is difficult to ascertain whether a similar mechanism is at stake here, i.e. whether increasingly limited access reduces the tendency to cooperate with other organisations. Yet, it can be concluded that interest regimes do have a certain impact on cooperation patterns.

Government grants also produces significant coefficients (3.90 and 5.16; $p \leq 0.01$, respectively). When an organisation receives government grants, it tends to cooperate with more other organisations. This finding is also similar to the case of cooperation with fellow interest groups. Grants seem to induce cooperation among both fellow interest groups and other types of organisations. Similar to the interaction pattern with fellow interest groups, the effect of government grants is

rather complex. Inspection of correlations between types of interest groups and receiving grants reveals two patterns. First, organisations do not seem to receive large grants.¹⁴ Second, receiving grants seems to overlap with a certain kind of interest groups. The majority of employers' organisations report that they do not receive grants at all or only small ones, whereas the organisations with a relatively large proportion of grants usually are different types of NGOs. It could well be the case that NGOs are more inclined to build bigger coalitions, perhaps to enhance their reputation or their visibility, or as a strategy to ensure better access.

Finally, in the case of differences in *kinds of interest groups*, only the difference between development NGOs and employers' organisations seems to significantly explain the number of other organisations with which they cooperate (-6.59 ; $p \leq 0.05$ and -5.65 ; $p \leq 0.1$ respectively). Development NGOs tend to cooperate with fewer other organisations than employers' associations. This finding is contrary to the observed effect of grants and the correlation patterns between grants and different kinds of interest groups. The types of organisations included in the sample, such as consultancy firms, advisory councils and executive agencies, are perhaps more natural cooperation partners for employers' organisations than for development NGOs. This could explain the difference. The opposite findings of government grants and kinds of interest groups are still a bit puzzling, however. Government grants seem to be correlated with variation in kinds of interest group, in particular NGOs. Grants seem to increase interaction patterns, whereas development NGOs, compared to employers' organisations, tend to interact with fewer other types of organisations. A methodological answer to such a puzzle is that this finding may be a result of the relatively large proportion of development NGOs included in the sample. The proportion of development NGOs seems to be constituted of middle-range to small-range organisations, which perhaps cooperate with fewer other types of organisations. A theoretical answer to this problem is that the various contextual factors are intertwined and will have a different impact on the behaviour of interest groups, depending on their precise configuration. A full analysis of the degree of dependence for interest groups should address the complex interplay between different contextual factors to model them accordingly.

6.3.4 Supply of resources revisited

What can we learn from these findings on cooperation patterns and competition between interest groups? In general, the interest groups in this study interact with either a relatively small or a relatively large number of fellow interest groups; they believe that they do not experience severe competition from each other; and they tend to interact with only a few other types of organisations, such as advisory councils and research institutes. The interaction patterns between interest groups, such as cooperation and competition, will not only influence the survival prospects of the interest groups themselves (Gray and Lowery 1996b), but will influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions as well.

¹⁴ However, we must take into account that this information could be biased, either because of an unwillingness or an inability to report a percentage of the total budget that consists of government grants. Annual financial reports would provide more accurate indicators, yet that goes beyond the scope of this study.

More generally, population dynamics within the environment will influence how interest groups seek access and to what extent they are able to do so (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Leech et al. 2005; Lowery and Gray 1995). For the dependence model developed in chapter 3, we can infer the following. Modest interaction patterns with fellow interest groups show the extent to which resources may be dispersed in the interest group environment. When fellow interest groups interact, they share some resources that civil servants could need. Large packs of organisations that interact could signal a wide dispersion of resources. Small collections of interest groups that interact could signal high resource concentration. This is also true for interaction patterns with other types of organisations, which may reveal variation in resource concentration as well. Levels of competition can also say something about the dispersal of resources necessary for civil servants. Severe competition may result in limited access for certain, in particular outside, interest groups. When newcomers try to get access, they could have difficulties in doing so when competition is severe. Severe competition may thus result in limited access, and at the same time render the resource concentration higher for civil servants, especially in the case of interest groups that do not yet have access. Put differently, when certain groups cannot get access because of severe competition, they remain unknown to civil servants. This phenomenon could contribute to a higher concentration of available resources from a civil servant's perspective.

These cooperation and competition patterns have been shown to vary across contextual dimensions, such as particular interest representation regimes, extent to which an interest group's budget consists of government grants, and the different kinds of interest groups. Although these analyses were not based on a fully-fledged theoretical model, these first results show that the contextual variables affect population dynamics and thereby resource concentration. Interest group population dynamics and how they vary along different political-administrative dimensions is thus an important aspect to include in a model explaining resource exchanges between bureaucrats and interest groups. It could have a significant impact on resource concentration, thereby having consequences for the actual degree of dependence characterising interactions between civil servants and interest groups. However, as I have previously discussed, not only does resource concentration determine the degree of dependence, but resource importance is also an important determinant. Below, the resources interest groups have to offer will be examined in more detail.

6.3.5 Resources on the negotiation table

Obviously, interest groups want to exert influence on relevant policy proposals that have an impact on the people or organisations they represent. In order to be successful in interest representation, they bring resources to the negotiation table and ask for others in return. To examine the resources that interest groups bring to the negotiation table, and those which they would like to take away from it, I asked respondents to indicate the most important reasons for them to interact with civil servants.¹⁵ Four reasons were included in the list of reasons given to respondents:

¹⁵ As in the civil servants' survey, I used 'reasons' to frame this question on resources, mainly because 'resources' is not a familiar concept for interest organisations to frame their interactions with civil servants. It

information, expertise, receiving grants, and participating in implementation of public policy. Figure 6.4 shows to what extent respondents consider these resources to be important or unimportant. Many respondents (78 percent) rated as important the provision of information, and 68 percent so rated the provision of expertise. In contrast, roughly 70 and 68 percent rated as unimportant the receipt of grants and participation in implementation, respectively (see figure 6.4).

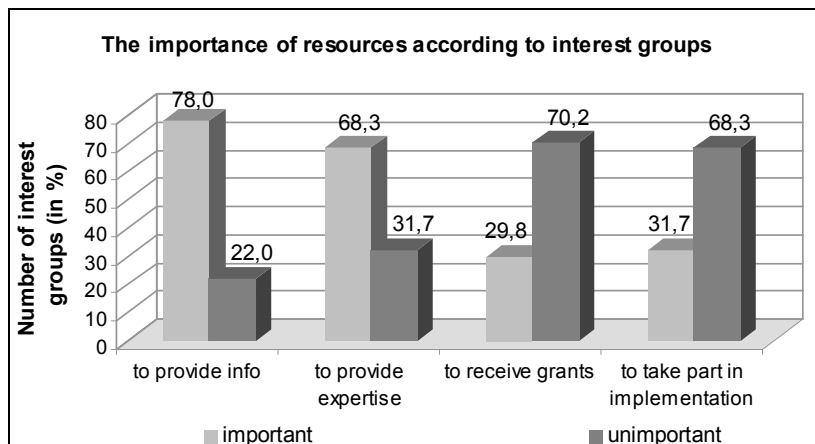


Figure 6.4 The importance of resources for interest groups

Apparently, interest groups do not find it altogether important to take part in implementation of policy proposals.¹⁶ Such an interest group perspective might explain why, in recent studies of interest groups' access to EU institutions (and indeed the access of interest groups in general), information and expertise are the main explanatory variables to obtain access and exercise influence (Austen-Smith 1993; Bouwen 2002, 2004; see for an overview Baumgartner and Leech 1998;). Interestingly, if we compare this to the results on what bureaucrats find important, a difference emerges. Although both parties value information and expertise, civil servants clearly value the role that interest groups may play in implementation more than the interest groups themselves do. From the perspective of civil

is a theoretical concept used to allow better comparison between bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Also similar to the civil servants' survey, respondents could check as many reasons they found important and add one(s) they thought were missing. As discussed earlier, I left out 'to exert influence' and 'to provide political support' to avoid biases due to socially desirable answers. This means, however, that we cannot tell from this question whether interest groups perceive their role in providing political support to be important. Yet, the open-question option would indicate if obvious reasons were missing from the list, and the answers given did not contain references to 'political support' or a related phenomenon.

¹⁶ Binary logistic regression analyses have been conducted to examine the importance of the individual resources, similar to the analysis of the reasons civil servants stated for interacting with interest groups (see section 5.3.3). Each analysis included an individual resource as a dependent variable and interest representation regimes, different types of organisation, and receiving grants were included as independent variables. These analyses all resulted in highly insignificant results, except for 'grants.' The extent to which interest groups receive grants also significantly explains whether they would like to obtain grants. This may sound like circular reasoning, and to a large degree it is circular reasoning indeed. Yet, the fact that interest groups receive grants does not necessarily imply that they consciously want to obtain such grants. They may, for instance, have been receiving grants for so many years or perhaps are so well-established that receiving grants is not an issue any more.

servants, interest groups have to offer more than just information and expertise. These different perspectives may have implications for the resource exchange relationship. If interest groups do not consider themselves partners in implementation, bureaucrats may have difficulties in finding interest groups willing to offer that resource. On the other hand, when interest groups are aware that they can deliver important information or expertise, they may 'sell it for a higher price.' We cannot here determine the exact effect of this difference in perceptions in this study, yet such diametrically opposed notions of what resources are important may well imply a less or more severe degree of dependence and should thus be taken into account.

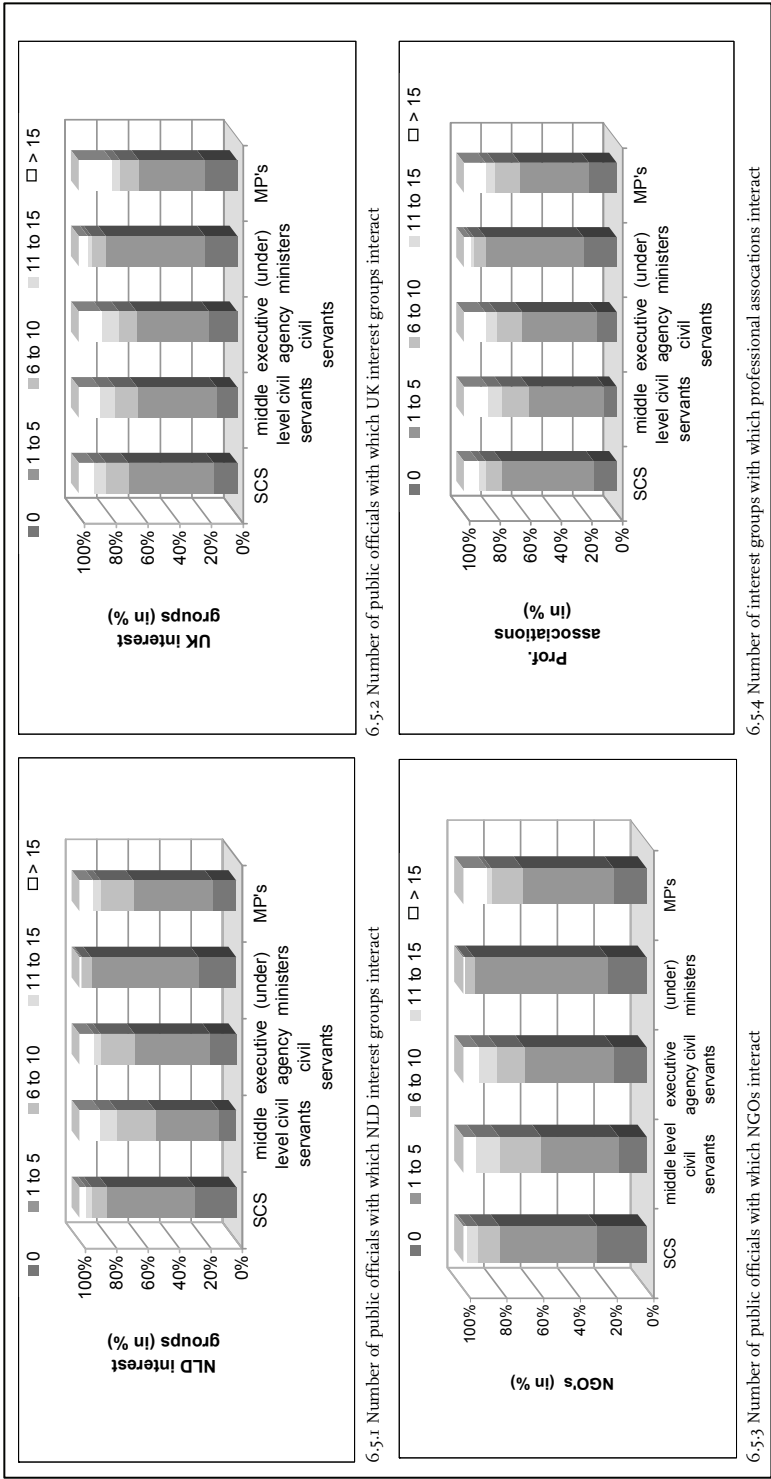
These different perceptions of resources and the population dynamics previously discussed will together determine the degree of dependence that characterises bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Based on the findings of these analyses, we cannot not exactly determine their effect, but we nonetheless obtain a fair impression of their relation to the degree of dependence and whether they should be included in a full resource dependence model. These factors will not be the sole determinants of such dependence, however. Equally important is how interest groups value the access to public policy making offered by bureaucrats. This will be examined in the next section.

6.4 Access to the bureaucracy

How interest groups value the 'imperial route,' as noted in the introduction to this chapter, is important for estimating the degree of dependence that characterises their relationship with civil servants. If the bureaucracy is at the bottom of their list of priorities, bureaucrats will be more dependent on them than if the opposite applies. In other words, the idea of an imperial route, suggests that bureaucrats' dependence on interest groups may be mitigated. So, to better interpret the degree of dependence for bureaucrats examined in the previous chapters, we need to know how often interest groups interact with civil servants, how important they perceive civil servants as opposed to other decision makers, and how they assess individual aspects of interacting with civil servants.

6.4.1 With how many public officials interest groups interact

A first indication of how important the bureaucracy is for interest groups lies in measuring with how many (senior) civil servants interest groups usually interact. This is depicted in figures 6.5, including civil servants, (under-)Ministers, and Members of Parliament. The figure indicates the percentage of interest groups interacting with each category of public officials and with how many of those public officials they interact. A distinction is made between the Netherlands and the UK and between NGOs and professional organisations.



Figures 6.5 Number of public officials with whom interest groups interact

All four panels show a somewhat similar pattern. Interest groups in the Netherlands interact with fewer senior civil servants than in the UK. In the Netherlands, 17.2 percent of the interest groups interact with more than 6 senior civil servants, versus 31.2 percent in the UK. The situation is reversed for interactions with middle-level civil servants: 48.3 percent of the Dutch interest groups interact with more than 6 middle-level civil servants, versus 36.9 percent in the UK. And finally, for executive agency civil servants: roughly 25 percent of the UK interest groups interact with more than 11 civil servants working at executive agencies, whereas in the Netherlands, it is only 13.4 percent.

Members of Parliament seem to be more popular with interest groups in the UK than interest groups in the Netherlands. Roughly 26 percent of the UK interest groups report that they have interacted with more than 11 Members of Parliament a year, whereas in the Netherlands only 13.6 percent have so interacted. This variation seems to reflect differences in interest representation regimes. The fact that interest groups in the Netherlands interact with a smaller number of senior civil servants than in the UK may reflect a hierarchical organisation of interest groups and limited access. Similarly, the fact that interest groups in the UK interact with a larger number of Members of Parliaments suggests a pattern of lobbyism that is less obvious in the Netherlands. Interest groups tend to interact with more agencies in the UK than in the Netherlands, however, which may have something to do with the process of agencification as a result of recent reforms in the UK (Pollit and Bouckaert 2004). So, interest groups in the UK seem to be keener to interact with either senior civil servants or civil servants working at executive agencies, whereas in the Netherlands, interest groups tend to interact more with middle-level civil servants. And Members of Parliament are more popular among UK interest groups than with their Dutch counterparts.

Comparing the average number of public officials within each category between the Netherlands and the UK, we observe interesting results. When conducting t-tests to compare whether the average numbers vary across the UK and the Netherlands, we find a significant result for the number of senior civil servants ($t(209) = -2.71, p \leq 0.01$) and a significant result for the number of (under-)Ministers ($t(206) = -2.20, p \leq 0.05$).¹⁷ Overall, interest groups tend to interact with fewer senior civil servants and (under-)Ministers in the Netherlands than in the UK. The difference in number of officials with whom interest groups interact between these two countries thus lies in the senior officials. Perhaps contrary to the expectation of hierarchical interest representation, organisations in the Netherlands seem to interact with fewer senior public officials than their English colleagues.

When we examine differences between various kinds of interest groups and the number of public officials they interact with, there are no real differences. The same types of public officials seem to be popular among employers' and non-governmental organisations. Yet, there is a difference to note in access to senior civil servants. That is, 15.1 percent of the employers' organisations versus 27.5 percent of the NGOs do not have access to senior civil servants. This may hint at a

¹⁷ Strictly speaking, a t-test is not appropriate here given the non-normal distribution of the data (the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was significant) and its ordinal level of measurement. Its non-parametric counterpart, a Mann-Witney test, produced almost similar results to the t-tests, however (see Field 2005).

bias in getting access in favour of the employers' organisations. Yet, such a bias may have less severe consequences, as access to other types of public officials seems to be rather equally dispersed. So, in terms of the number of public officials with whom interest groups interact, there is very little difference between civil servants and political appointees or parliamentarians.

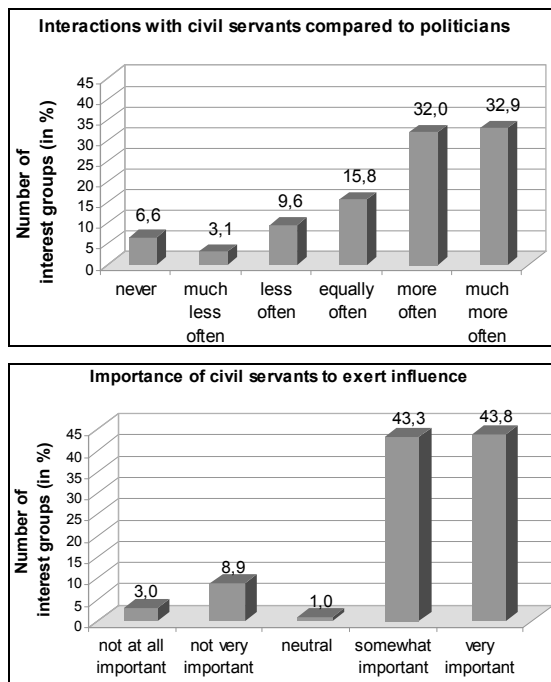
When we test whether different kinds of interest group interact with more or less different officials, we perceive some differences. Comparing the average number of officials between professional organisations versus all other kinds of interest groups did not result in significant results. However, the average number of officials across the individual categories of interest groups resulted in several significant differences.¹⁸ The number of senior civil servants ($\chi^2(12) = 27.92$, $p \leq 0.01$), the number of middle-level civil servants ($\chi^2(12) = 29.77$, $p \leq 0.01$), and the number of civil servants at executive agencies ($\chi^2(12) = 20.84$, $p \leq 0.1$) turned out to be significantly different across the different kinds of interest groups. So, there is a significant variation across different kinds of interest groups and the number of various civil servants they interact with, rather than variation in the number of politicians versus civil servants. In that sense, a trend to lobbying parliamentarians may be also related to other factors than differences among interest groups.

6.4.2 Importance and frequency of interactions with public officials

So, there are some differences in the sheer number of different public officials with whom interest groups tend to interact. But on the whole, there is only a small variation to be observed. Would there be a similar small variance if we examined *how often* interest groups interact with civil servants and *how important* they perceive their interactions with civil servants, compared to those with politicians? Figures 6.6 show the frequencies of the answer categories to these questions. What we observe is that most of the interest groups interact less often with politicians. Indeed, 64.9 percent indicate that they interact more often or much more often with civil servants than with politicians. In addition, most interest groups perceive civil servants to be an important partner for exerting influence; 87.1 percent indicate that civil servants are important or very important for them in this regard.

Examining the differences in frequency between the Netherlands and the UK and across different kinds of interest groups, we find a significant difference ($t(201) = 2.90$, $p \leq 0.01$) for interest representation regime and for kinds of interest groups ($\chi^2(12) = 30.27$, $p \leq 0.01$). On average, interest groups in the Netherlands interact somewhat more often with civil servants than their UK colleagues. And, apparently, the frequency of interacting with civil servants also significantly varies across different kinds of interest groups. Additionally, when we compare the average value that interest groups attach to civil servants, there are significant differences across different interest representation regimes ($t(201) = 1.77$, $p \leq 0.1$) as well. Interest groups in the Netherlands find civil servants more important in exerting influence than interest groups in the UK. However, the various kinds of interest groups do not significantly differ in how important they consider civil servants for exerting influence.

¹⁸ Given the non-normal distribution of the data, I used a non-parametric test to examine whether there are significant differences in number of officials to be observed.



Figures 6.6 The importance of civil servants to interest groups

In short, interest groups tend to interact with roughly similar numbers of civil servants and politicians. The importance of civil servants for interest groups and the frequency with which they interact with civil servants generally varies between the UK and the Netherlands. Dutch interest groups tend to interact more often with civil servants and tend to find them more important than their UK colleagues. In addition, the importance of civil servants varies only across different kinds of interest groups. And UK interest groups interact with more senior civil servants and executive agencies, whereas their Dutch colleagues interact with more middle-level civil servants.

6.4.3 Why bureaucrats are important

Civil servants are important, albeit not in numbers. But why are they more important for interest groups than politicians? In other words, are there some general tendencies to observe underlying the importance of bureaucrats for interest groups? One way to examine this is to conduct a factor analysis for various propositions concerning the mechanisms that explain the importance of bureaucrats for interest groups. Factor analysis, or principal component analysis, is a technique for identifying a group or a cluster of variables that are related to each other. Variables that correlate highly, and are together relatively independent from others, are considered as belonging to a single cluster and thought to reflect an underlying shared dimension or meaning (Tabachnik and Fidell 2007). Principal component analysis and factor analysis, however, are theoretically not the same. The difference between the two is whether variables are associated with a factor or with a component. Factors are thought to cause the variables; that is, the

underlying construct is what produces scores on the variables. Components, on the other hand, are aggregates of correlated variables. So, here the variables seem to produce the component (Tabachnik and Fidell 2007, 609-610). Practically, the two methods of analysis seem to result in similar findings and, accordingly, the term factor and component are often used interchangeably (de Vaus 2002; Field 2005).

In this study, I will explore whether various propositions on the importance of bureaucrats for interest groups are the result of one or more underlying latent variables. The questionnaire contained two items consisting of nine sub-items designed to reflect different aspects concerning the importance of bureaucratic access (items 19 and 20, see appendix I). To reveal the underlying processes, if any, I used principal component analysis with oblique rotation to take into account the multifaceted phenomenon of exerting influence. Rotation is a technique used to better interpret the results of principal component analysis or factor analysis. A factor can be mathematically visualised as one of the axes of a graph (see Field 2005, 634-635). Using the terminology of these methods, when there are obvious underlying factors, individual variables 'load highly' onto a factor, meaning that they correlate highly with an underlying variable. Returning to the imaginary graph, they will concentrate along one of the axes. Usually most variables load highly on one factor and to a smaller extent on another. This renders interpretation relatively difficult and that is why the technique of rotation is used. We simply rotate the axes so as to make sure that as many variables as possible are located on one of the axes representing a factor. Orthogonal rotation assumes that the factors are independent from each other. Visually, this means that the axes of the graph remain perpendicular. Oblique rotation is used when the underlying factors are assumed to correlate theoretically. With oblique rotation, the axes do not have to remain perpendicular, but may be given any angle (Fidell and Tabachnik 2007).

I used oblique rotation (direct oblimin) because the underlying factors are likely to correlate. Exerting influence is a multifaceted phenomenon, which will be constituted of different but related aspects in a causal process. That is, exerting influence is only possible if one knows the right person to talk to. And, for getting access, one needs to bring valuable resources to the negotiation table. The underlying factors that render a bureaucracy important for interest groups are thus hypothesised to be multifaceted phenomena with aspects that correlate.

Table 6.5 reports the results of the principal component analysis. It displays the individual variables (or sub-items) and the extent to which they correlate with an underlying factor.¹⁹ Two factors or components seem to emerge from these nine sub-items, as we can observe two clusters of variables. Model 1 is based on the original data and model 1 MI is based on the complete dataset generated by multiple imputation.

¹⁹ The values for the complete dataset are based on two of the imputed files; factor analysis on the third dataset revealed three factors, rendering it difficult to average the values.

Table 6.5 Principal component analysis of the importance of civil servants to interest groups

<i>Individual aspects concerning the importance of civil servants</i>	Model 1		Model 1 MI	
	C I	C II	C I	C II
Without civil servants we miss important access	0.82		0.76	
Without civil servants we would not be involved in the implementation of public policies	0.78		0.81	
Without civil servants we do not have as much influence	0.71		0.55	
Without civil servants we are not included in a set of familiar organisations	0.68		0.81	
Without civil servants we do not get grants as easily	0.58		0.55	
Civil servants ask us to give input		-0.87		0.85
Civil servants use our input to adapt policy		-0.83		0.83
Civil servants find legitimacy important		-0.77		0.77
Civil servants see us as partner in implementing policy		-0.75		0.61

Note: C = component; Model I: KMO-test: 0.79; Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi^2 = 323.86(36)^{***}$; N = 110; Model I MI: KMO-test: 0.80; Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi^2 = 1014.45(36)^{***}$; N = 345

Closer examinations of the individual items that load on the same factor suggest a distinction between what we could term 'participation in public decision making' and 'limited access.' Participation in public decision making refers to the ability to genuinely provide input and a sense of whether civil servants actually use the input of interest groups to change or improve policy proposals. Individual items that belong to this factor include, for instance, (dis)agreement with the statement that 'civil servants use the input of interest groups to adapt policy proposals,' or (dis)agreement with the statement that 'civil servants ask interest groups to provide input.' Such activities or observations relate to interest groups' actual participation or contribution to policy making. The second factor relates to an interest group's ability to get access as such, even before it is able to provide input or to exert influence. Items that load on this factor include, for instance, (dis)agreement with the statement that 'without civil servants, interest groups could not contribute to implementation;' or (dis)agreement with the statement that 'without civil servants, interest groups would not be included in the set of organisations that get access to the (under-)Minister.' These items all relate to whether the door is open for interest groups and do not include a sense of actual participation in the policy-making process. An open door is a necessary condition for the possibility to actually participate in decision making. However, access does not automatically guarantee that input will be taken seriously or will actually be used, as is illustrated by a respondent. "It is not about getting access per se; these days it is not so difficult to find a civil servant to talk to. It is about getting to the right person and that you really are able to exert influence."²⁰

So, from the perspective of interest groups, interacting with civil servants is important, first, to secure access and, second, to be actually taken seriously. Apparently, civil servants are a more important partner for achieving this than politicians are, given that we see differences in importance as well as a similarity in the sheer numbers of public officials that interest groups interact with.²¹ This

²⁰ Interview by author.

²¹ Although the samples are too small to justify separate factor analyses for both the UK and the Netherlands, I conducted separate analyses to see whether there are differences to observe. Interestingly, the factors that emerge in both countries are quite similar. For the UK case, a third factor emerges: the fact that civil servants involve interest groups in implementation. This may be a distinctive underlying mechanism for the UK, which is an interesting hypothesis to examine further.

finding suggests the need to examine how important each of the public actors is for interest groups in exerting influence. Only focusing on the resources interest groups have to offer may explain access, but not necessarily influence. It is therefore important to consider additional factors, for instance, political-administrative relations or agency type, to unravel the interdependent mechanisms of getting access and exerting influence. Such a meso-level analysis is not only important in determining the nature of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, but also in more systematically explaining access and influence of interest groups.

Now that resource concentration and resource importance in the interest group environment have been examined, as well as how interest groups value the bureaucratic entrance, one final environmental factor has to be studied. That is the extent to which bureaucracy-interest group interactions, and the underlying resource exchanges, will vary as a result of Europeanisation.

6.5 How far away is Europe?

Europeanisation, as has been discussed previously, can mean a variety of things, as we have seen earlier. An important question for this study is to what extent relations between national civil servants and national interest groups are influenced by the process of Europeanisation. Consider figure 6.7 depicting the relevance of two EU-related activities for civil servants.²² It shows the percentage of the respondents indicating how relevant for their job they consider the transposition of EU directives and how relevant for their job they consider the involvement of interest groups in EU-level decision making.

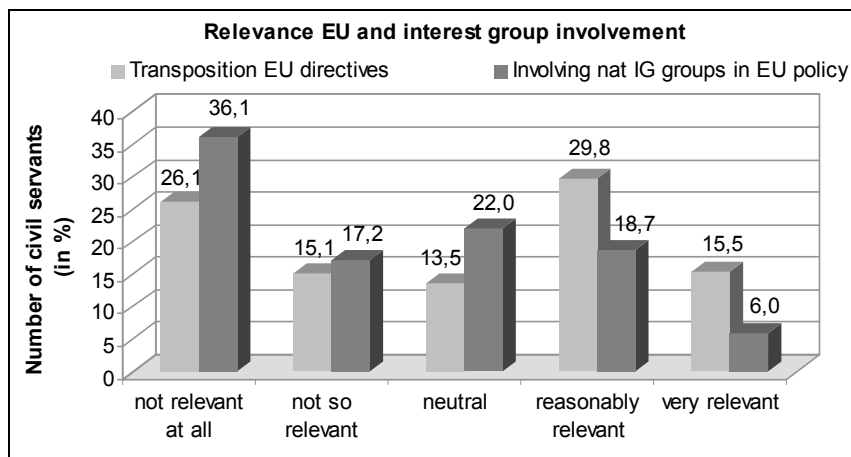


Figure 6.7 Civil servants' opinions about the relevance of EU transposition and involving interest groups in EU policy

Roughly 54 percent of the civil servants indicate that transposition of EU directives is not relevant at all, not so relevant, or neither relevant nor irrelevant. The involvement of national interest groups in EU-level policy making and decision

²² Based on the original bureaucracy-interest group dataset.

making is for 75 percent of the civil servants not relevant at all, not so relevant, or neither relevant nor irrelevant. Only 25 percent of the civil servants indicate that it is somewhat relevant to very relevant for their job to include national interest groups in policy making and decision making related to EU issues or with an EU-related component.

What these figures seem to suggest is that the involvement of interest groups in EU-related policy activities is relatively small. To unravel how Europeanisation relates to national bureaucracy-interest group interactions, I will examine whether both sets of actors notice an impact of Europe on their interactions or whether they are otherwise involved in European affairs. I first examine whether and how various aspects of EU involvement relate to national bureaucracy-interest group interactions from a bureaucratic perspective. This includes whether interest groups often refer to European regulations, and whether national civil servants interact with EU level interest groups (item 28 and 29, see appendix I). Figures 6.8 show to what extent civil servants how often interest groups refer to EU regulations and with how many EU level interest groups national civil servants interact.²³

Panel 6.8.1 depicts the percentage of respondents indicating how often interest groups refer to EU regulations when they interact with them. We notice that 47.2 percent report that interest groups only occasionally mention EU regulations (the category 1-25 percent of the time). Only 11.6 percent of the respondents indicate that interest groups refer to EU regulations more than half of the time they interact with each other (categories 51-75 and 76-100 percent of the time). When asked with how many EU level interest groups they interact, 66.0 percent of the civil servants report that they do not interact with EU-level interest groups at all, and 31.7 percent say that they interact with 1-5 EU-level interest groups. Only 2.3 percent interact with 6 or more EU-level interest groups. Interactions with EU-level interest groups thus seem to be a relatively rare phenomenon (see panel 6.8.2).²⁴

²³ There was no significant effect to be observed from the contextual variables included in earlier analyses. To estimate the effect of EU regulations on interactions between national bureaucrats and interest groups, I ran ordered logistic regression analyses. I conducted logistic regression analyses of how often interest groups refer to EU regulations; and with how many EU-level interest groups the civil servants interacted. The contextual variables included in the models were the same as in the analyses of the resource dependence model of chapter 5, i.e. interest representation regime, political-administrative relations, agency type and policy area. These models resulted in non-significant overall results and non-significant results for the individual parameters. Apparently, how often national interest groups refer to EU regulations, and with how many EU-level interest groups national civil servants interact, does not vary significantly across the set of contextual variables included in the analyses.

²⁴ Source: original dataset, interest group survey.

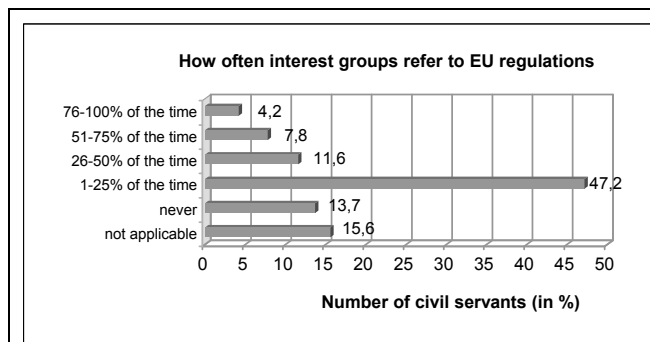


Figure 6.8.1

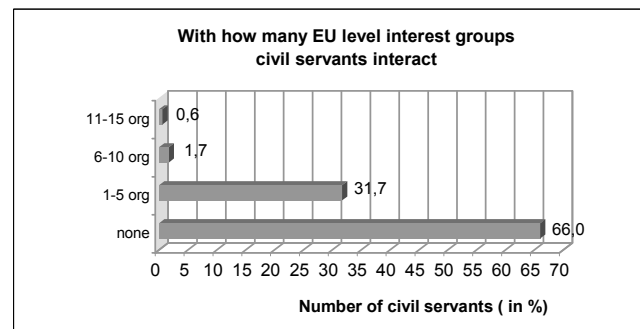


Figure 6.8.2

Figures 6.8 EU aspects concerning national bureaucracy-interest group interactions

These figures indicate that the overall relevance of EU level governance to national bureaucracy-interest group interactions is quite small. It is important to note that what has been measured is the *perceived* impact of EU regulations, rather than a direct, more objective effect. We do not know from these questions to what extent existing or upcoming EU regulations and directives truly influence the behaviour or strategic opportunities of interest groups. Rather, we know the extent to which they are aware of EU regulations, and that interest groups apparently do not seize the opportunity to strategically use EU regulations at the national level. The EU seems to be only to a limited extent important for bureaucrats in their interactions with interest groups. True multi-level governance, entailing interactions with EU-level interest groups, seems to be a rare phenomenon as well.

But how do national interest groups cope with Brussels at home? The figures below show whether the interest groups included in this study lobby EU institutions, whether such EU lobbying affects their national lobbying, and how they perceive the importance of Europe more generally. A further set of items probed the strategic use of EU regulations by interest groups in their national lobbying (items 31-37, see appendix I). Figures 6.9 show the percentage of the respondents indicating the extent to which the various EU-related activities or EU aspects are important for their organisations.

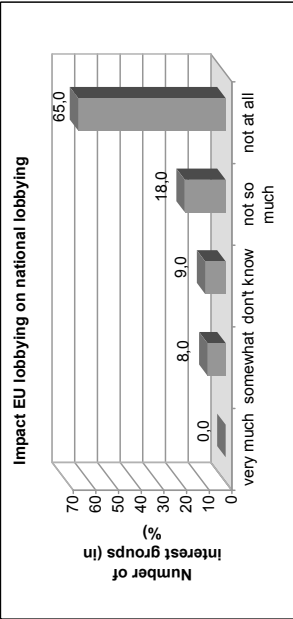


Figure 6.9.1

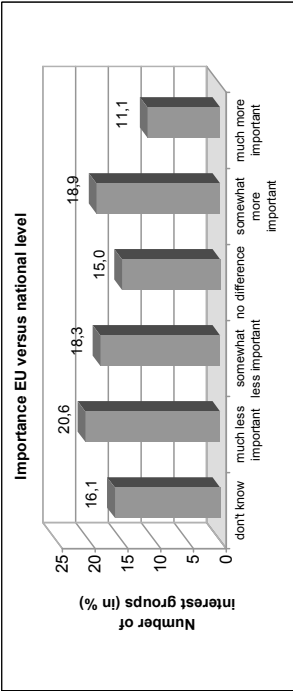


Figure 6.9.3

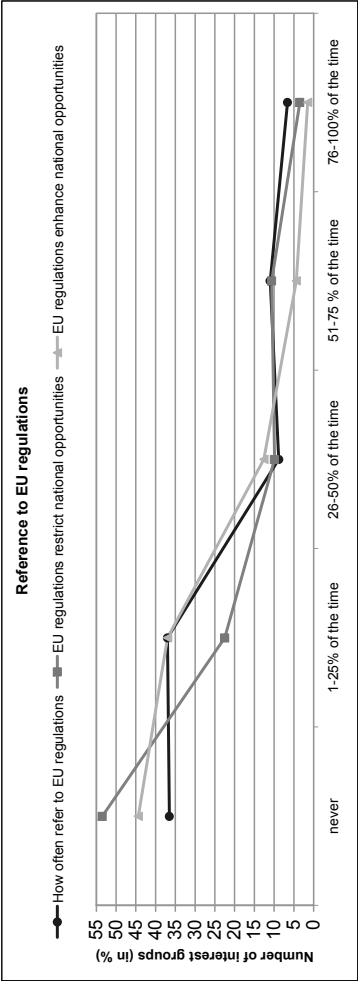


Figure 6.9.2

Figures 6.9 EU-related aspects of national interest groups' behaviour

Roughly two-thirds of the organisations in the sample note that they never interact with EU institutions (see figure 6.8.2). And 65 percent of those interest groups that do interact with EU institutions say that their interactions do not have any impact on their interactions with national government. None of them report that EU interactions affect their national interactions very much, and only 8 percent indicate that their EU interactions somewhat influence their national interactions. Panel 6.9.2 shows several aspects related to the strategic use of EU regulations at the national level. All three lines converge to a very small proportion of the respondents, indicating that these aspects are not so relevant for the major part of their interactions. Relatively more interest groups either never (36.5 percent) or only occasionally (37 percent, 1-25 percent of the time) refer to EU regulations during their interactions with national civil servants. And 17.6 percent of the respondents indicate that they do so more than 50 percent of the time (51-75 plus 76-100 percent of the time).

When asked how often EU regulations influence their opportunities at the national level, most respondents indicate that this is never the case. Restrictions on national opportunities never occur, according to 53.5 percent of the respondents. Enhancement of national-level opportunities also never occurs, according to 44.4 percent. Occasionally, interest groups perceive an impact of EU; 22.5 percent indicate restriction, and 37 percent indicate enhancement up to 1-25 percent of the time. Only 3.5 percent of the organisations indicate that EU regulations usually (76-100 percent of the time) restrict opportunities at the national level. This is true for 1.5 percent of the respondents in the case of enhancing national opportunities. More generally, 30 percent say that the EU is either somewhat more important or much more important than the national level today (see panel 6.9.3).

So, most interest groups indicate that the EU level is less important or that they cannot draw a conclusion about the importance of the EU level compared to the national level today. These figures seem to indicate that although on average they consider Europe to be somewhat important, most interest groups have only to a small extent changed their focus toward Brussels. Moreover, they are either not able or not aware of the opportunities or challenges that EU regulations or directives may have to offer for their strategic position at the national level. This general picture is confirmed by interviews with Dutch interest groups:

The air-quality directive was a little disaster I would say. We should have lobbied the EU much more proactively to influence European decision making on this topic. We did not notice and so we were too late to change anything.

The air quality directive, and some others, was a signal to us that we should be involved in EU decision making to a much larger extent.

Europe is important and I would like to have more than one person working in Brussels, but it is always difficult to make sure our member organisations understand the added value of lobbying Brussels.

Yes, Brussels is important and I certainly would like to have more employees working on it, yet I do not have enough money to do so.²⁵

²⁵ All quotes are from interviews by author.

Adapting their behaviour to reflect a changing governmental environment or, put differently, transitioning to a situation of multi-level governance, thus seems laborious for interest groups. Only a small part of the interest groups included in the survey indicate that the EU is really important for them. Yet, most of the interview partners argue that Europe is indeed important, but remains difficult for them to 'get a grip on.' It is not always a question of enough (financial) resources at one's disposal. Even in the case of one of the professional associations in the Netherlands, usually one amongst those that are quite active in Brussels, Europe is not always top priority. As a civil servant comments:

Europe is really underexposed. The other day, there was a meeting of the advisory committee of social partners and national governments. Representatives of one of our national peak organisations could not make it to Brussels and asked me to present their point of view. Isn't that a bit odd? The first ten minutes, I was presenting the national government's point of view, and five minutes later I had to ensure that everyone knew that I was representing the interest groups' view rather than that of my own government. It was like performing a play. But apparently they did not consider it important enough.²⁶

In some cases, even large national interest groups do not seem to consider Europe to be one of their top priorities and leave the responsibility for representing their members to a national civil servant. Neglect of the EU may not be only a result of a lack of financial resources, but may be also part of framing. What organisations consider important or not does not necessarily reflect an objective situation (see Weick's (1969) concept of the 'enacted environment,' discussed in chapter 3). The EU seems much less popular in the Netherlands nowadays than it was before.²⁷ This may not be helpful in directing influence strategies towards Brussels. Dominant national ideas on the importance and relevance of Europe could be a determining factor explaining why interest groups are slow in turning their gaze towards Brussels in addition to more traditional arguments of missing resources.

In sum, although the EU is seen as an important factor, national civil servants and interest groups only to a small extent have broadened their view to Brussels. These findings indicate that the national governance level is apparently the most important locus for interest groups to exert influence, despite a growing importance of the EU. A full appreciation of the effect of the EU on national bureaucracy-interest group interactions, however, goes beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, these results indicate that EU interest representation and national interest representation are two relatively separate worlds. Multi-level governance, in the sense of a true interplay of different levels of governance, is, in the case of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, a rare event. For now, we could cautiously conclude that Europeanisation so far does not have major consequences for interactions between national bureaucrats and national interest groups. Europeanisation, so far, thus has fewer consequences for the degree of dependence characterising national bureaucracy-interest group interactions than the objective importance of the phenomenon itself suggests.

²⁶ Idem.

²⁷ NRC (2008), 17-18 May, p. 3-4; *The Economist* (2008), May 3rd, p36.

6.6 The resource dependence model revisited

This chapter shed light on several aspects of the interest group environment, including interaction patterns among interest groups, the perceived importance of bureaucracies to interest groups, and Europeanisation. Interaction patterns among fellow interest groups are characterised by either a relatively large or a relatively small number of fellow interest groups. UK interest groups tend to interact with a larger number of fellow interest groups than their Dutch colleagues do. Interactions with other types of organisations, such as advisory councils, consultancy firms or research institutes, are usually limited to a small number of these organisations. Apart from interacting with each other and other types of organisations, interest groups do not experience severe competition from fellow interest groups. Such a perception of competition is not related to differences in interest representation or kinds of interest groups for the respondents in this study. In the case of access to politicians, however, there is a difference to be observed between different kinds of interest groups in the level of competition they face.

What do interest groups consider important to bring to the negotiation table? Expertise and information are much more important than contributing to implementation or getting grants, according to interest groups. Their perception differs from that of the civil servants, who consider the contribution interest groups can have in implementation important as well.

Interest groups find the bureaucracy an important source of access to public policy making and exerting influence. This is not, however, reflected in the number of public officials, including civil servants and elected officials such as Ministers and Members of Parliament, with whom they interact. In general, namely, there is not much difference between the numbers of different public officials with whom interest groups interact. But we see some variation across different interest representation regimes. UK interest groups seem to interact with more senior civil servants and (under-)Ministers than their Dutch counterparts. Dutch interest groups interact with a larger number of middle-level civil servants than their UK colleagues. In sheer numbers, however, there is not much difference between civil servants and elected officials. Yet, in terms of frequency and perception, there is. Interest groups tend to find civil servants more important than politicians and interact more often with them in trying to exert influence. In this case, Dutch interest groups interact more often with civil servants than UK interest groups do. Various kinds of interest groups also vary in how often they interact with civil servants. And, on the whole, interest groups in the Netherlands consider civil servants to be more important for exerting influence than their UK colleagues.

What is it that makes civil servants so important for interest groups? Interest groups consider civil servants to be important in ensuring access to public policy making. And second, civil servants are important for interest groups to actually provide input for policy proposals, indicating that their input is actually used to adapt policy proposals. Civil servants are thus considered to be more important in securing access and actually contributing in some way to the decision-making process compared to politicians, given the similarity in numbers and yet the different value interest groups attach to civil servants as opposed to politicians as a source for access and exerting influence.

Finally, a major change in the environment of interest groups in the Netherlands and the UK, namely Europeanisation, does not seem to have a large impact on national bureaucracy-interest group interactions. The national governance level is still the most important level for interest groups in exerting influence. Both civil servants and interest groups rarely engage in true multi-level governance or consciously anticipate strategic benefits or disadvantages coming from EU regulations.

6.6.1 The interest group environment and the dependence model

These environmental dynamics, being cooperation and competition patterns, interest group perceptions of the importance of the bureaucracy, and the small impact of Europeanisation, all have implications for the degree of dependence model. First, cooperation and competition patterns have consequences for resource concentration in the interest group environment. When we observe cooperation patterns among fellow interest groups, this could imply that there are several organisations controlling a similar resource. Such cooperation patterns may thus create a resource concentration that is less severe than otherwise could be the case. That is, cooperation patterns could imply that civil servants have alternative organisations to interact with. Competition, on the other hand, could result in a degree of dependence that is more severe. Severe competition could hamper some interest groups in gaining access to civil servants. In this way, a civil servant may be unaware of several relevant interest groups, which would thus render the number of interest groups with whom he/she interacts smaller than it could be. So, competition and cooperation patterns influence resource concentration in the environment. For the resource dependence model to fully explain bureaucracy-interest group interactions, such population dynamics need to be considered.

Resource concentration is not the only determinant of resource dependence. How interest groups value the resources they can bring to the negotiation table is also important. It appears that, particularly in the case of implementation capacity, their perception of important resources varies from civil servants' perceptions. This difference in perception could have implications for the degree of dependence. When interest groups are not directly aware of the value of what they offer to civil servants, this may be beneficial to civil servants. However, such unawareness could also result in a higher degree of dependence, because civil servants are not able to find interest groups that can offer or are willing to offer the resource they want. When interest groups are aware of the importance of the resources they can offer, this may enhance their bargaining position. They could, as it were, try to 'sell their resources at a higher price.' The resource dependence model thus needs to take into account different perceptions of the importance of resources.

To what extent population dynamics and the importance of resources determine the eventual degree of dependence also depends on how interest groups value the bureaucracy or civil servants in getting access. Access to public policy making is an important resource for interest groups. Although interest groups do not interact with a larger number of civil servants, they find civil servants more important for gaining access and exerting influence. They also interact more often with civil servants than with politicians. The importance of this particular resource for

interest groups may balance, or in some cases even mitigate, the degree of dependence for civil servants. In other words, the value interest groups attach to civil servants may enhance the bargaining position of civil servants.

A final implication of the environmental dynamics examined in this chapter is the impact of Europeanisation. The analyses suggest that while both sets of actors perceive Europe to be a relatively important factor, they seem unable to actually incorporate it in their daily business. This implies that, so far, EU-related changes in the environment do not affect national bureaucracy-interest group interactions or the degree of dependence. Theoretically, however, Europeanisation could have implications for the degree of dependence, as it may affect both resource concentration and resource importance. Offering expertise, for instance, could become less important for national civil servants when most of the regulations are designed at the European level. Europeanisation could imply that the environment becomes larger, including more interest groups, but at the same time entailing a gradual shift of attention towards Brussels. In other words, while there are more interest groups, the value they attach to national bureaucracies for gaining access may change. This implies that resource concentration may become more severe for national bureaucrats. Not so much because of population dynamics within the national interest group populations, but as a result of a changing broader environment in which these national populations exist.

What these environmental and population dynamics suggest is that a full resource dependence model should not only include contextual variables that are particularly important for civil servants' behaviour. A full resource dependence model would thus measure the degree of dependence from a civil servant's perspective, while taking into account the impact of contextual variables related to interest group population dynamics, the value of resources, and broader environmental changes as well. The challenge in doing so is to theorise how exactly these contextual variables relate to each other. Including contextual variables that mostly relate to civil servants' immediate environment does not take into account how interest group population dynamics may render the eventual degree of dependence less or more severe.

6.6.2 The dependence model and interest group politics

The analysis of environmental dynamics not only has implications for the model of resource dependence developed in this study. It also has several implications for the literature on interest group politics more generally. First, interest representation in Europe is not only an issue of lobbying Brussels. It is also an issue of how national interest groups are coping with Brussels back home. In other words, we need to better understand the consequences for interest group behaviour at the national level arising from the multi-level governance system of the EU. Currently, most attention is, quite understandably, focused at the European level (Berkhout and Lowery 2008; Beyers and Trondal 2004; Coen 2007; Eising 2007; Wilts 2001). Europe, at least in an objective sense, is becoming more important. Therefore, it is not surprising that most attention is paid to EU interest representation. Yet, it is also not unlikely that, for the foreseeable future, the national governance level will remain important. And thus interest groups will

mostly focus on national governments. From that perspective, we need to better understand how national interest groups and national bureaucracy-interest group interactions are influenced by the process of Europeanisation. Are interest groups really too much tied to their immediate environment to turn their gaze more swiftly to Brussels (Beyers, Kerremans 2007; Visser and Wilts 2006)? Also, how do institutional and public interest groups cope with Europeanisation? Such phenomena are now to a lesser extent the subject of interest representation studies. But to understand European integration better, a true understanding of what multi-level governance really means for national interest representation and national civil society seems prerequisite.

Second, focusing on what interest groups have to offer to explain access is not enough. Civil servants' preferences and how they vary across different political-administrative dimensions are also important in explaining interest groups' access, as we have seen in the previous chapter. In addition, not only what interest groups have to offer, but what they perceive to be important to offer also explains access to the bureaucracy. Access and real influence are important resources for interest groups, but they do not mean the same thing. A more detailed examination of the payoff of different access options in exerting influence is therefore important in understanding the role of interest groups in decision making.

This brings me to a third implication of the analyses in this chapter. The necessity to include interest group population dynamics draws attention to a gap in the literature on interest representation regimes in corporatist countries. The attention in the literature on corporatism has been mostly directed to macro-economic issues, the involvement of the social partners therein, and how to improve coordination mechanisms of such tripartite bargaining (Meer van der et al. 2003; Molina and Rhodes 2002; Visser and Hemerijck 1997). Yet, very often, issues relevant in social-economic policy or macro-economic policy do not only touch upon classic labour and financial system related issues. Issues such as corporate responsibility, environmental issues, and ethnically diverse societies all very much relate to a nation's economic life as well. Illustrative are the findings from the interviews in this study. As several respondents from the established interest groups and NGOs noted, the Social Economic Council (SER) often reaches out to NGOs in order to consult them on several policy issues. On the other hand, respondents also indicate that it is sometimes difficult for NGOs to get access to these institutional platforms of interest representation. Other respondents say that the role of NGOs has been changing and that they are becoming increasingly important for both civil servants and parliamentarians. The major parties currently involved in macro-economic policy making may be less well-equipped to address additionally relevant issues. They often lack the knowledge and access to specific issues or groups within society.

Understanding why such bargaining systems remain relatively closed to other types of interest groups, or why the role of such interest groups is different from the traditional social partners, requires a broader study of interest representation than only the traditional coordination mechanisms apparent in the corporatism literature. This implies that studying influence in decision making or evaluating policy outcomes may not be enough. Studying the characteristics of the entire population of interest groups may help to provide additional insights about who

gets access and who does not. And, such a broader, more population-based view may help to explain from whom and when the traditional interest groups experience competition. Such population studies have become popular only relatively recently in the US (Aldrich et al. 1994; Lowery and Gray 2004). And while interaction patterns among interest groups have been studied, the literature is relatively silent on these issues in traditionally corporatist countries. It may be time to focus on population dynamics in traditionally corporatist countries as well.

This chapter added a more detailed perspective on the bureaucrats' environment, and in particular, the interest group environment. It shows the relevance of adding interest group population dynamics to better explain the degree of dependence characterising bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Chapters 5 and 6, however, have not addressed important rival explanations for the nature of the resource exchange determining bureaucracy-interest group interactions. That is, the possibility of anticipatory and habitual rationality has not yet been included in the analyses. These two behavioural logics will be examined in chapter 7.

Degree of Dependence: Multiple rationalities at work?

Twee theorieën over een verschijnsel zijn geen legitimatie voor intellectuele non-interventie, maar een uitdaging voor een overkoepelende theorie!

7.1 Introduction

A pendulum will never change direction but will slow down and ultimately stop swinging as a result of the air's friction. When such a friction is counterbalanced, however, the pendulum will infinitely swing back and forth between the two ultimate points that determine its movement.² Interactions between the Dutch government and the country's major social partners and NGOs seem to be determined by a similar swinging back and forth. The government may take opposite directions, either in favour of interactions with such interest organisations or against them, but the end result always seems to be a government characterised by a steady pattern of interactions with its well-known national interest groups. Such interactions may vary in intensity, however, as a result of variation in the political affiliation of the reigning coalition and the economic life cycle (see Meer van der et. al 2003). Nonetheless, the big picture of bureaucracy-interest group interactions in the Netherlands seems to be that of a punctuated equilibrium (cf. Baumgartner and Jones 1993), where the punctuations are neither complete nor very severe. The notion of "we need each other," indicated by many respondents with regard to initiating reforms and anticipating future developments, seems too strong to allow for complete interruptions to these interactions. Apparently, the bureaucracy-interest group interaction pendulum is dictated by other than exclusively strategic choices.

Would deliberately interrupting these relations be possible? The possibility of strategic decision making, which is central to resource dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]) and which has been incorporated in the model tested in the previous chapters, implies the option of 'exiting' such interactions whenever necessary. Indeed, when one aims for full independence or when the resources one has to offer are no longer needed, why continue such interactions? From the perspective of resource dependence theory, long-term interactions exist because they are strategically chosen to last, but can be ended any time.

¹ Prof. dr. C. Teulings (2008), 'Markt en Moraal gaan hand in hand, alleen aan jezelf denken loont niet in de evolutie', NRC Handelsblad, zaterdag 2 februari, Opinie en Debat, p. 11.

² The air's friction can be counterbalanced by an electro-magnetic field. As a result, a pendulum will swing endlessly. This is called a mathematical pendulum, and Foucault used it to demonstrate the earth's movement ('de historie van de slinger', www.rug.nl/fwn/nieuws/pr/jaar-natuurkunde/slinger/historie/index)

When considering such long-term interactions in more detail, however, we encounter two other, even rival, explanations. First, long-term interactions can be the result of habitual rationality. That is, they may either unconsciously serve a strategic or rational purpose decided upon some time ago, or they may constitute a situation where routine has taken over and the interaction no longer serves its initial strategic purpose (Simon 1997[1947]). Second, these long-term interactions can be dictated by anticipatory rationality. If you anticipate that you will need a particular interest group in the near future, you may opt to continue working together today, although you might prefer not to do so (see chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion). So, bureaucracy-interest group interactions can also be determined by anticipatory or habitual rationality in addition to, or instead of, the strategic rationality implicit in resource dependence theory.

This final empirical chapter tests the existence of these different types of rationality and examines their explanatory potential. As I discussed in chapter 3, multiple rationalities are only to be revealed when studied over time. A true longitudinal research design was not possible in this research, and therefore I followed the following strategy to unravel the potential existence of both anticipatory and habitual rationality. First, I included several items in the questionnaire designed to reveal behaviour related to either habitual rationality or anticipatory rationality. Section 7.1 discusses the results of these analyses.

To study the (joint) contribution of the three types of rationality in explaining dependence relations between civil servants and interest groups, I tested whether they are necessary conditions for long-term relationship by conducting a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). The reasoning behind this necessity analysis is that, rather than conducting true longitudinal research, I assume, based on interview results, that interactions are stable. I further assume that anticipatory and habitual rationality are necessary conditions for such stable interactions. This strategy tests, following the reasoning of logics, whether long-term interactions imply either habitual rationality, anticipatory rationality, or both. Such a strategy does not require research over time, yet could provide initial insights into the existence of multiple rationalities that may motivate bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Section 7.2 presents the results of these analyses and, in section 7.3, various mechanisms behind each type of rationality are examined in detail.

7.2 Interactions with interest groups: multiple rationalities?

Bureaucrats and interest groups choose to interact for apparently sound reasons. They engage in a conscious exchange of goods that they want to acquire or with the goal of obtaining access and exerting influence. But this may be only part of the story. To examine whether choices other than those resulting from strategic rationality determine bureaucracy-interest group interactions, other types of rationality need to be examined as well. Below, the potential existence of both habitual and anticipatory rationality will be examined based on the surveys.

7.2.1 Bureaucrats routinely interact with interest groups

A first indication of whether such other types of choices play a role in explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions is whether bureaucrats tend to interact with familiar interest groups. If a large proportion of the groups with which they interact appear to be already familiar to them, this will indicate that other types of rationality may be at work. That is, diversifying the set of interest groups with which one interacts reveals conscious thinking about which groups would be (strategically) relevant. Interacting with familiar groups, on the other hand, does not immediately reveal such a choice. Those interactions could be the result of habitual, anticipatory, or strategic rationality. It may well be the case that a familiar set of groups perfectly meets a strategic purpose, yet it may equally be that such interactions are rational but constrained by future consequences or result from a habitual choice. The persistence of a relationship does not reveal whether strategic choice is operating, whereas an obvious diversification of the collection of interest groups with which one interacts reflects at face value a strategic choice. So, a high percentage of familiar groups can indicate the existence of other types of rationality, which would point to a more detailed analysis of such interactions.

Figure 7.1 shows whether civil servants interact with familiar interest groups (see items 3 and 7, appendix I). That is, it depicts the percentages of civil servants interacting with particular numbers of interest groups and how many of these interest groups were already familiar to them. Pairing these two should reveal whether civil servants tend to interact with familiar groups.

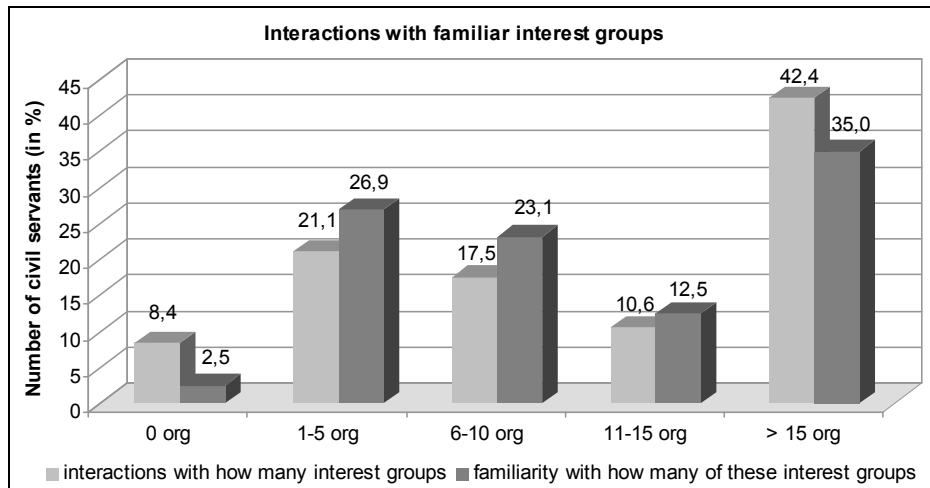


Figure 7.1 Interactions with familiar interest groups

A first thing to notice is that the percentage of interest groups with which civil servants say they interact and the number of interest groups that were already familiar to them are relatively similar. What we also observe is that the set of interest groups with which they are familiar is usually larger than the total number of interest groups they report to have interacted with recently. When civil servants report that they interact with more than 15 interest groups, then we observe that the number of familiar groups is smaller than the number of groups with which they

interact. This could indicate that when civil servants interact with a relatively large number of interest groups, some of these interest groups may be not familiar to them. In general, however, the relatively large proportion of familiar groups suggests that different types of rationality, and not simply strategic rationality, determines these interactions.³

To examine whether this pattern of interactions with a relatively large proportion of familiar groups points toward different types of rationality, the existence of habitual or anticipatory rationality is assessed based on the survey dataset. Consider habitual rationality. Habitual rationality can be operationalised as a set of indicators that point to a common way of interacting with interest groups. Questionnaire items, however, cannot probe in detail whether such habitual rationality really results from strategic rationality in the past. They can, however, provide a first measure of potentially habitual behaviour. These items asked respondents about routine behaviour in interacting with interest groups, whether they have always interacted with such groups, or whether their predecessor had passed the relationships with particular interest groups on to them (item 4, see appendix I). These items were thus designed to serve as indicators for a common way of interacting with interest groups. Yet, such interactions may not only evolve from habitual behaviour; they may also be the result of a formalised or legally required pattern of behaviour. Such a legal requirement to interact with interest groups has therefore been included in the analysis as well. Figure 7.2 shows the percentage of civil servants who indicated that reasons related to habitual rationality are important, next to the resource-related reasons (see chapter 5).

Although the resources included in the resource exchange analysis in the previous chapters are important, other reasons seem to be important as well. Roughly half of the civil servants indicate that an important reason for them to interact with such interest groups is that they usually do so (50.3 percent). Also, 24.5 percent indicate that such interactions result from a formal requirement. The fact that a predecessor passes on his or her contacts does not really seem to explain why interactions between bureaucrats and interest groups occur (1.7 percent). So, apart from reasons that are related to a strategic exchange of resources, civil servants indicate that reasons related to habitual rationality are important as well.

³ One possible flaw in this reasoning is related to the way respondents may have answered these questions. As the items were not consecutive, some of the answers may be not entirely reliable. It may be difficult to recollect the total number of interest groups you interacted with and figure out how many of these were already familiar to you. This difficulty could result in an incorrect absolute number of familiar interest groups, yet would still provide a fairly good indication of familiarity. Or, respondents may have indicated the total number of interest groups that they were familiar with. In this way, the number of interest groups with which they interacted last year and the number of familiar interest groups could be seen as two different sets. When the number of interest groups interacted with is a subset of the total number of familiar interest groups, we could infer that all of the interest groups were already familiar. If the number of familiar interest groups is a subset of the total number of interest groups they interacted with, we could infer that they did indeed interact with a few unfamiliar interest groups. One way to examine the reliability of the combination of these items is to measure the value of Cronbach's alpha. As the value of Cronbach's alpha for these two items on the questionnaire is 0.90, their correlation is high. This does not provide a clear-cut answer to the measurement issue discussed above. But a relatively high value for Cronbach's alpha could imply that the number of interest groups with which civil servants interact is similar to those they were already familiar with. Put differently, civil servants tend to interact with few unfamiliar interest groups.

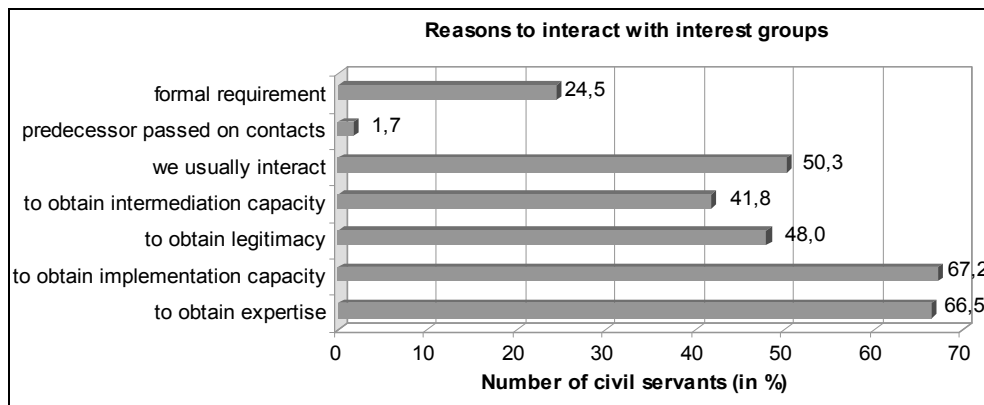


Figure 7.2 Reasons for civil servants to interact with interest groups

Similar to the reasons related to strategic resource exchange, the reasons related to habitual rationality are likely to vary under different circumstances. To measure such a variance, binary logistic regression analyses were conducted. To match these analyses to those of the resources related to strategic rationality (see chapter 5), they resemble the analyses of those resources in every respect. A similar recoding was applied, and the same independent variables were included in the model (see also sections 5.1 and 5.3.3). The reasons ‘usually interactions occur’ and ‘formal requirements’ are included in the model as the dependent variable.⁴ To maximise the explanatory value of the model with a binary logistic regression analysis, one aims to explain the odds that the outcome constituting the largest part of the initial sample occurs. In the case of formal requirements, the majority of the civil servants indicated this to be an *unimportant* reason. In the case of usual interactions, the majority of the civil servants indicated this to be an *important* reason. So, the two binary logistic regression models explain two different outcomes. Model I (usual interactions) explains the odds of civil servants considering this reason to be *important*. Model II (formal requirements) explains the odds that civil servants consider this an *unimportant* reason. Table 7.1 reports the results of the analyses.⁵

Overall, the contextual model of usual interactions has a better explanatory potential than the model explaining formal requirements, given the differences in values for the pseudo R^2 (0.29 for usual interactions and 0.15 for formal requirements). Interest representation regime produces in both models a significant coefficient. In model I (usual interactions), *interest representation regime* is related to the odds that civil servants in the UK are likely to consider this reason more important than their Dutch colleagues (1.77, $p \leq 0.01$). In addition to interest representation regime, the *policy area of public safety* is related to the reason of ‘interactions usually occur.’ In public safety, this reason is likely to be less

⁴ In this chapter, the analyses have only been conducted based on the original dataset, as the survey data is not the only data source that will be used to analyse the different choices underlying resource exchanges between bureaucrats and interest groups. Therefore, the EU variable has been omitted, as this variable resulted in non-random patterns of missing data and was not found in the earlier analyses to be especially important (see chapter 3, 5 and 6, sections on missing data).

⁵ A similar cautionary tale applies to the interpretation of the results of the analyses as was mentioned earlier in this study. These analyses do not fully reveal the interaction effects between the contextual factors (see also footnote 22, chapter 5)

important (-0.76 , $p \leq 0.1$) than in environmental policy, the reference category. In model II (formal requirements), *interest representation regime* is related to the odds that formal requirements are considered to be *unimportant*. The UK interest representation regime contributes to the odds that formal requirements are more unimportant (1.34 , $p \leq 0.01$). In this model, the *policy area of public transport* is, in addition to interest representation regime, related to the unimportance of formal requirements (1.14 , $p \leq 0.05$). As opposed to environmental policy, involvement in public transport policy is likely to contribute to higher odds that formal requirements to interact are considered to be an unimportant reason.

Table 7.1 Binary logistic regression analysis of the effect of contextual variables on the importance of resources (reasons to interact with interest groups)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	
	I Usual interactions	II Formal requirement
Interest representation regime (UK)	1.77*** (0.22)	1.34*** (0.25)
Political-strategic insight	0.03 (0.2)	0.44 (0.23)
Advisory agency	0.83 (0.56)	0.07 (0.63)
Executive agency	0.62 (0.58)	0.14 (0.65)
International affairs	-0.22 (0.49)	-0.67 (0.56)
Macro-economic affairs	-0.18 (0.42)	-0.43 (0.50)
Employment, social affairs	-0.08 (0.51)	-0.35 (0.58)
Internal affairs	-0.13 (0.48)	0.06 (0.53)
Immigration, integration policy	-0.37 (0.67)	1.01 (0.69)
Public safety policy	-0.76* (0.43)	-0.24 (0.49)
Public health policy	-0.06 (0.47)	-0.14 (0.53)
Education, science, culture policy	-0.74 (0.47)	-0.22 (0.50)
Public transport and water management policy	0.16 (0.42)	1.14** (0.45)
Public housing policy	-0.30 (0.64)	-0.45 (0.76)
Constant	-1.30* (0.78)	-3.10*** (0.92)
Model χ^2	86.44(14)***	48.94(14)***
Pseudo R2 (Nagelkerke)	0.29	0.15
N	462	462

* $p \leq 0.1$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.01$. Note: The reference category for policy area is 'environmental policy'; the reference category for agency type is 'other agencies' All two-tailed tests.

The variation between policy areas is difficult to explain, as the model only included substantive differences at a relatively high level of abstraction. A fuller explanation of such differences would require more in-depth knowledge of specific policy fields. What we can conclude, however, is that these reasons most likely vary from policy area to policy area. In the area of youth welfare work in the Netherlands, to

give an example, there is no extensive pattern of regular interactions because of the simple reason that very few organisations relevant to the target group exist.⁶

The difference between interest representation regimes, however, results in an interesting finding. It appears that the reason of 'usual interactions' is likely to be more important in the UK than in the Netherlands. In addition, formal requirements are more unimportant in the UK than in the Netherlands. At first sight, one may expect such routines ('we usually interact') to occur in a corporatist country like the Netherlands in which interest representation is more institutionalised. On the other hand, formal requirements seem to be more important (that is, less unimportant) in the Netherlands than in the UK. So, when not legally required to interact, civil servants in the Netherlands may act less upon a habitual rationality than their UK colleagues.

So far, this analysis has shown that there is reason to suggest that habitual rationality plays a role in explaining interactions between civil servants and interest groups. The number of familiar organisations with which civil servants are likely to interact is relatively high. In addition, patterns that refer to routine behaviour ('we usually interact, so today we will do so as well') and formal requirements to interact were also shown to be important for civil servants. These findings may thus be an initial indication that the strategic choice implicit in resource dependence theory may not fully explain bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Habitual rationality may be important as well.

7.2.2 Bureaucrats anticipate future consequences

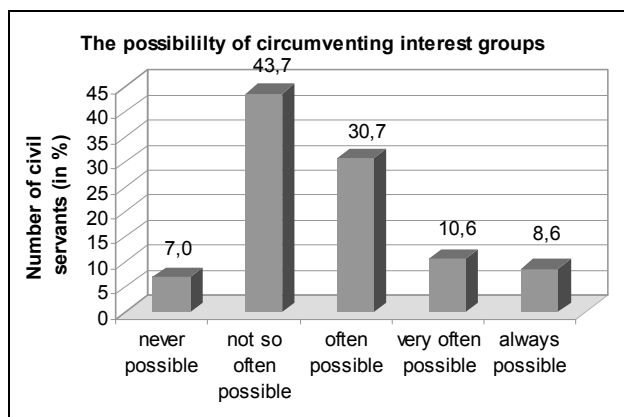
Most likely, habits matter when it comes to interactions with interest groups alongside or instead of strategically picking and choosing interest groups to interact with. But what about strategic choices limited by consequences in the near future? Put differently, could anticipatory rationality also determine bureaucracy-interest group interactions? The existence of anticipatory rationality is explored by means of counterfactual analysis. The generic form of counterfactuals usually takes the following structure: 'if event X had not occurred, event Y would not have happened.' Counterfactuals have often been used by historians and international relations scholars, among others, to explain the occurrence of events or sequences in history as they actually occurred (Lebow 2000). Examples abound, and an interesting popular example is in the novel *Fatherland*, by Robert Harris (1992). Harris sketches a scenario to the following counterfactual: what would have happened if Hitler had won World War II? To be sure, we would not have known about the Jewish mass killings if a *Kriminalpolizei* investigator and an American journalist had not discovered the *Endlösung* after investigating systematic murders of senior Nazi officials in Nazi Germany in April 1964. Although extremely intriguing, scholarly application of counterfactuals is often questioned on methodological grounds, both in quantitative and qualitative traditions. Whereas in qualitative traditions the logical inference of causal relationships and the legitimacy of the counterfactual model have been discussed, in quantitative traditions, the critique is focused on its strong model dependence and lack of empirical data (see Fearon 1991 and King and Zeng 2007, respectively).

⁶ Example based on interviews with respondents.

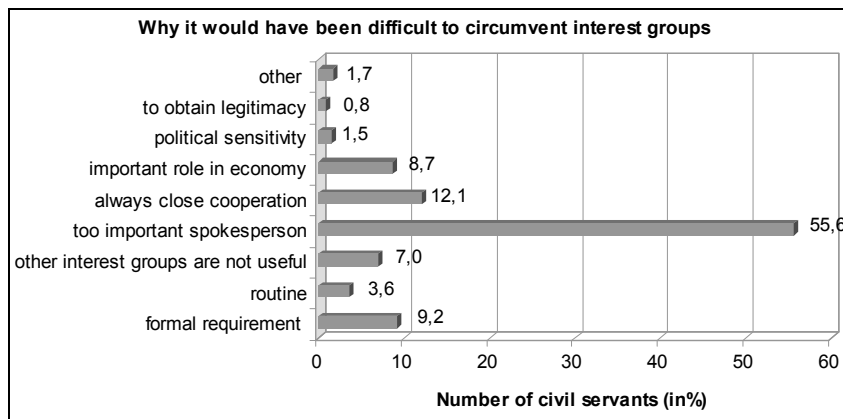
I do not use counterfactual analysis to make any causal inferences (see Carpenter 2001, for a somewhat similar application of counterfactuals); I rather use it to explore the possibility of anticipatory rationality underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions. The counterfactual I employed was twofold. First, I asked respondents to what extent it would have been possible to sidestep the interest groups with which they interacted last year, if they had wanted to. This would provide a first indication of anticipatory rationality.

Second, if respondents indicated that circumvention would have been difficult, they were asked why this would have been so difficult. This, in turn, would provide an indication of the underlying factors related to anticipatory rationality, if any (see items 8 and 9, appendix I). Phrasing the question in terms of a counterfactual condition, which uses the logic of counterfactual reasoning, allows respondents to explore a wider range of contingencies (as has been proven by experimental research), or to make more explicit their latent uncertainties about historical junctures (Lebow 2000). By requiring respondents to contemplate the possibility of sidestepping interest groups or not interacting with interest groups in the first place, they are stimulated to consider the nature of their interactions in more detail. Then, asking what would be the most important reason for not being able to circumvent these interest groups would reveal potential mechanisms behind anticipatory rationality.⁷

Figures 7.3 show to what extent civil servants consider it possible to circumvent interest groups and for what reasons it might be difficult to do so. They represent the extent to which respondents indicated that circumvention of interest groups is possible (in percentages) and the reasons for which such a possibility would be difficult (again, in percentages). The figures apply to the entire dataset, including Dutch and UK civil servants.



⁷ Using items based on counterfactual logic has both a drawback and an advantage. As for the drawback, asking a 'what if' question runs the risk of being incomprehensible to respondents. To address this issue, I included an open-answer category to allow respondents to indicate whether they had not understood the question. The advantage of adding such an item to a survey is that both the anonymity and the 'what if' structure allow a respondent to explore these options more freely. Otherwise, if respondents had been asked about a real-life situation, this question could have been a politically incorrect question resulting in biased answers.



Figures 7.3 The possibility of circumventing interest groups

Roughly 50 percent indicate that it is not often or never possible for them to circumvent interest groups if they would have wanted to. But almost 31 percent indicate that it may often be possible to do so. And, roughly 20 percent indicate that this is very often or always possible. So, roughly half of the civil servants argue that it is rather difficult to circumvent interest groups, whereas the other half indicates that it is not so difficult at all. But what causes the difficulties? Respondents argue that difficulties mostly arise from interest groups' role as an important spokesperson for a target group. To a somewhat lesser extent, civil servants argue that interest groups are difficult to circumvent because they are formally required to interact, because of the role such interest groups play in the nation's economy, or because other interest groups are not as useful to them as those they have already interacted with.

To evaluate these reasons in more detail, I analysed the extent to which the possibility of circumventing interest groups varies under different circumstances. Table 7.2 reports the results of a logistic regression analysis with the possibility of circumventing as the dependent variable. The model includes interest representation, the functional differences between agency types, political strategic insight and the differences between policy areas as independent variables, so as to be consistent with the analysis of contextual variables in chapter 5.⁸

We see that the explanatory value of the overall model is very small (pseudo $R^2 = 0.10$).⁹ A few independent variables are related to the possibility of circumventing interest groups. First, *interest representation regime* produces a significant coefficient (0.57, $p \leq 0.01$). A more corporatist interest regime is likely to contribute to the odds that circumvention is possible more often. The functional difference in *agency types* also produces a significant coefficient (-0.21, $p \leq 0.1$). As opposed to the

⁸ The independent variable 'EU involvement' is again omitted from the analysis, because of the non-random pattern of missing variables (see also footnote 4).

⁹ The test of parallel lines was significant, indicating that we need to reject the hypothesis that the independent variables vary in a similar way on each of the logits of the dependent variable. Therefore, a multinomial logistic regression analysis would have been more appropriate here, as it does not assume such a similar variance. Yet, for ease of interpretation, given the relatively large number of categorical variables, I opted for reporting the ordered logistic regression analysis instead.

reference category of other types of agencies, working at an executive agency is likely to result in the odds that circumvention is possible less often. Apart from a difference in interest representation regime and agency types, differences in *policy area* also seem to be related to the possibility of circumventing interest groups. The policy areas of international affairs (1.21, $p \leq 0.01$), public safety (1.20, $p \leq 0.01$), education (1.08, $p \leq 0.01$), and public housing (0.93, $p \leq 0.1$) are all related to the odds of how often circumvention is possible. As opposed to environmental policy, involvement in these policy areas is likely to contribute to the odds that circumvention is more often possible.

Table 7.2 Ordered logistic regression analysis of the effect of contextual variables on the possibility to circumvent interest groups

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Dependent Variable: Possibility of circumventing interest groups</i>
Interest representation regime	0.57*** (0.19)
Political-strategic insight	0.11 (0.17)
Advisory agency	-0.79 (0.44)
Executive agency	-0.21* (0.47)
International affairs	1.21*** (0.49)
Macro-economics affairs	0.91 (0.36)
Employment, social affairs	0.16 (0.44)
Internal affairs	0.16 (0.42)
Immigration, integration policy	-0.55 (0.59)
Public safety policy	1.20*** (0.37)
Public health policy	0.54 (0.40)
Education, science, culture policy	1.08*** (0.39)
Public transport policy	0.45 (0.36)
Public housing policy	0.93* (0.54)
Cut-points	-2.09; 0.66; 2.18; 3.14
Model's χ^2	45.43(14)***
Pseudo R^2	0.10
N	451

* $p \leq 0.1$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.01$ Note: The reference category for policy area is 'environmental policy;' the reference category for agency type is 'other agencies' All two-tailed tests.

It seems to be somewhat easier to circumvent interest groups in the Netherlands, whereas it is somewhat more difficult for executive agencies. And, in the case of international affairs, public safety, education policy and public housing, it is easier to sidestep interest groups than in the case of environmental policy, which is the reference category. What do these results tell us? First of all, the model with these contextual variables has a small explanatory value. This means that the effect of the contextual variables on the possibility of circumventing interest groups is very

small. Nevertheless, the possibility to circumvent interest groups seems to occur more often in the Netherlands than in the UK. This is an interesting finding, as one would expect that in a relatively institutionalised and hierarchical interest representation system, it would be less often possible to circumvent than in those interest representation systems that are not so institutionalised. For agency types and policy areas, the difference is also hard to explain, although it suggests the importance of meso-level variables in explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions once again. Indeed, several policy areas are related to the possibility of circumvention. Such an option may well be dependent on the substantive issues and, related, variation in interest groups involved in those issues. This may also explain the surprising finding on interest representation regimes. It could be that the possibility of circumventing interest groups is more related to meso-level variables, such as agency type and policy area, than to a macro-level variable, such as national interest representation regimes. However, the general message is that the possibility of circumvention does not seem to be very dependent on the contextual factors included in the model.

7.2.3 First signs of multiple rationalities

In general, the existence of anticipatory rationality has been indicated by the findings of the survey analyses, revealing a difficulty in circumventing interest groups. When we examine the reasons provided by civil servants in more detail, we see a mix of different types of choices. The position of interest groups in the nation's economy, their important role as a voice for a target group, and the fact that other interest groups might be less useful all indicate anticipatory rationality. For a certain policy proposal, a civil servant might want to do the initial development without interest groups, but their position as a major spokesperson forces him or her to involve such interest groups nevertheless. Formal consultation procedures, routines that are hard to change, and the fact that there has always been close cooperation, reflect habitual rationality. What we can infer from the reasons civil servants report for having difficulties in circumventing interest groups is that a complex mix of choices underlies bureaucracy-interest group interactions, related to either anticipatory or habitual rationality. What we can conclude from this survey analysis more generally is that resource exchanges between bureaucrats and interest groups are not only determined by strategic choices, but that other types of rationality are important as well. What is missing so far is some indication of whether these different types of mechanisms jointly explain long-term bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Below, the interplay between different types of choices will be examined.

7.3 Unravelling habitual and anticipatory rationality

The analysis of the survey provides initial evidence to suggest that both habitual and anticipatory rationality could be important in explaining dependence relations between bureaucrats and interest groups. A next step is to adopt a longitudinal research design to unravel to what extent resource exchanges are based on either of these types of rationalities or on a combination of them. A way to do this, without

the option of a true longitudinal design is to assume durability of bureaucracy-interest group relations. That is, rather than studying whether these interactions are durable by examining them over time, respondents were asked to reflect on the stability and durability of their relations with interest groups and vice versa. A next step, then, is to assume that both anticipatory and habitual rationality are necessary conditions for long-term relationships.

In the terminology of logics, a necessary condition means that when such a condition is absent, the outcome would not occur. If we assume that P is a condition and Q is the outcome, we can also say that Q implies P. A sufficient condition is a condition that in itself is all that is needed for the outcome to occur. In other words, P implies Q (Forbes 1994; Ragin 1987; 2000). For instance, breathing is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the existence of a human being. Without breathing there is no human life. Yet breathing is not the only condition that allows human beings to exist; a pumping heart is required as well. In this case we could say that several conditions are jointly necessary for human life. Returning to bureaucracy-interest group interactions, necessity and sufficiency tests can help to explain the complex interplay between the different choices underlying resource exchanges. When we know which conditions are necessary and/or sufficient for interactions to thrive, we can obtain insights into how they operate together and how they together may explain such interactions. In this way, we can, without conducting research over time, cautiously assess whether habitual and anticipatory rationality could explain bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is an analysis technique that explicitly incorporates necessity and sufficiency to explain why certain conditions contribute to a given outcome. In the sections below I briefly describe the method of QCA and analyse two cases of long-term bureaucracy-interest group interactions to examine whether habitual and anticipatory rationality explain long-term interactions.

7.3.1 Exploring stability via QCA

QCA, initially developed by Charles Ragin (1987; 2000) was designed to bridge the gap between variable-oriented quantitative methods and case-oriented qualitative methods, and it does so by considering cases to be configurations of variables. As such, it is argued that QCA allows for causal complexity by examining the co-existence of conditions, their mutual relations, and if and how they jointly explain the outcome in question. In other words, qualitative comparative analysis is well suited for situations in which outcomes may result from different combinations of independent variables and are related to different explanations of a single phenomenon. As this may be true for bureaucracy-interest group interactions, QCA is useful in exploring the different rationalities underlying these interactions.

The independent variables, or conditions in QCA terms, are coded according to the terminology of logics as QCA is grounded in Boolean algebra. This requires the researcher to assign either a 0 or 1 membership to the variables in question. This means that the researcher has to determine whether the variable or impact of the variable is apparent in a particular case. In QCA, 0 indicates non-membership and 1 indicates full membership. However, only a few social science concepts allow for such a clear demarcation between full and non-membership. An extension of the

QCA method with fuzzy-set logic allows for a more flexible assignment of membership. Apart from 'fully in' and 'fully out', the two options available in binary QCA, the researcher may opt for 'almost fully out,' 'more out than in,' 'not in, not out,' 'more in than out' and 'almost fully in,' in addition to 'fully out' and 'fully in' in a single model (this is a seven-scale fuzzy-set membership).¹⁰ The added value of using QCA/fuzzy-set analysis is that it relies on the algebra of logic, thereby enabling the examination of how a set or combination of independent variables may jointly explain the outcome for an intermediate number of cases, and tolerate the inclusion of rival explanations.¹¹

The data for QCA is provided by 57 semi-structured interviews. These interviews included civil servants and representatives of interest groups involved in the areas of (social)economics and public health (see chapter 4). The QCA accordingly included 57 cases of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Each case represents a set of interactions between one civil servant and various interest groups, or one interest group and various civil servants. This analysis thus involves an individual level application of QCA (see Rihoux and Ragin 2004).

The individual cases have been restricted to the issues of (social-)economics and public health.¹² These policy areas have been chosen for two particular reasons. First, they are characterised by long-term interactions with many interest groups and thus allow for a thorough analysis of underlying behavioural logics. A drawback is that this selection only allows for a limited assessment of the different logics, as it does not include 'negative' cases. Both policy areas exhibit a high value for interactions, whereas a full assessment of the different behavioural logics requires a selection that also includes cases with no or only a few interactions.

Second, these policy areas have been chosen because they are interesting in substantive terms to include in the analysis. Macro-economics and labour-market politics have been the predominant area in studies of corporatism and are closely related to the field of political economy. This field has been dominated by studies restricted to the national level. Furthermore, evidence about the decline and effectiveness of the major tripartite bargaining method in the Netherlands remains inconclusive. In *A Dutch Miracle*, for instance, Visser and Hemerijck (1997) argue that the Dutch corporatist structures enabled the necessary adaptation and reform of the welfare state. Some, however, question this finding (Becker 2001; Woldendorp and Keman 2007). Adding a meso-level analysis of interest

¹⁰ Such a ranking of membership could be interpreted as a ratio-interval scale with both a fixed minimum and maximum (1 = full membership; 0 = non membership; Ragin 2000).

¹¹ Interestingly, multiple regression analysis and other statistical techniques that allow for multiple independent variables do roughly the same thing. Yet, they focus on the unique contribution of each of the independent variables, whereas in QCA the focus is on the combination of the independent variables and their joint contribution to a given outcome. A fundamental methodological question would be to what extent these methods really differ, apart from terminology and a sheer difference in number of cases or observations. I use the terminology of indicators / independent variables rather than causal conditions. Causality cannot be assumed here, as this is not a controlled comparison of cases, but rather a first exploration into the potentially explanatory value of habitual and anticipatory rationality in explaining long-term relationships between bureaucrats and interest groups.

¹² By selecting two policy areas in a single country, I control for national characteristics and thereby avoid the interplay between macro-level and meso-level characteristics.

representation from a different perspective to this field can contribute to the existing literature by generating different insights into the same phenomenon.

Public health policy is characterised by a diverse array of interest groups, ranging from large insurance companies and their professional associations to voluntary organisations representing the interests of individual patients. Given the assumed bias in interest representation, the expectation is that there are at least differences among these various kinds of groups regarding their options to secure access or exert influence. Individual patient organisations could be less powerful than the large societies of professionals in health care. Yet, they have been encouraged to professionalise to become a countervailing power to the influential interest groups in public health care in the Netherlands (Trappenburg 2005).

Additionally, public health is a good example of a policy area where private partners are responsible for the implementation of public health care. A strong reliance on private partners for implementation could render bureaucrats in this field more dependent on such interest groups. If this is true, anticipatory rationality would certainly be revealed.¹³ Both the diverse interest population and the role of private partners in policy implementation render public health an interesting policy field for studying bureaucracy-interest group interactions. The selection of these two policy areas provides a good locus for examining the various types of rationality that may determine bureaucracy-interest group interactions.¹⁴

Measuring anticipatory and habitual rationality

To examine anticipatory and habitual rationality, four indicators have been developed. Participation in or the organisation of consultation meetings is used as indicator for habitual rationality. The extent to which civil servants and interest groups consider trust to be an important aspect of their interactions is used as indicator for institutional reproduction. This reflects the possibility that habitual rationality may not only be the unconscious proliferation of a strategic choice but could also reflect a suboptimal situation. Finally, to measure anticipatory rationality, the importance of legitimacy, and the perceived influential position of interest groups, and the importance of civil servants for obtaining access, respectively, have been developed as indicators.

To start with the first, participation in or organising consultation meetings refers to the regular meetings organised to consult relevant interest groups. They usually take place as a regular part of the process of drafting bills, policy proposals or programmes and serve to probe the approval or disapproval and further comments of major societal groups. As it is a routine part of most policy trajectories, this is a good indicator of habitual behaviour.

¹³ In this sense, although it is not mentioned as such, it could be argued that public health is an extreme case for measuring anticipatory rationality. The extreme case method selects cases because of the extreme values of either the dependent or independent variables. The logic behind this method is to try to maximise variance so as to gauge the entire spectrum of values a variable can have. However, it is only when the researcher knows the entire population that these cases can be used to generalise. In other instances, one is able to draw conclusions about the range of values an (in)dependent variable can exhibit (See Gerring 2006, 98-103).

¹⁴ The selection of these two policy areas was not meant to result in a fully controlled comparison. Rather, limiting the analysis to two interesting, yet contrasting, policy areas minimised variation in respondents which could hamper sound interpretation of the results. The selection of these two areas provides an initial assessment of how these sets of different behavioural logics may vary across different policy fields, if at all.

The importance of trust will be used as an indicator for institutionalisation. When actors trust each other, this is likely to benefit their relationships (Hardin 2002). In other words, trust facilitates cooperative behaviour. When trust becomes more important than the initial reason to interact, we might observe institutional reproduction. Put differently, bureaucrats might interact with certain interest groups because they are really trustworthy, even if there are other interest groups that could deliver better expertise, for instance. In this sense, when either civil servants or interest groups consider trust to be very important, this would point to institutional reproduction.¹⁵

Anticipatory rationality will be measured by two indicators: first, to what extent legitimacy is considered to be important, and, second, to what extent both sets of actors perceive each other to be important or influential. In the case of legitimacy, however, it is not so much a question of obtaining legitimacy as such, but much more what *kind* of legitimacy is vital for deciding upon and implementing policy proposals. Political support from the major business organisations may contribute to swift decision making and implementation. Public support, however, may be vital for parliamentary consent. Which one is more important will vary among other things, according to the circumstances and policy issue at hand. In any case, the importance of legitimacy to a civil servant gives an indication of anticipatory rationality, as legitimacy is a fundamental resource for democratic governments.

Finally, to what extent civil servants consider interest groups to be influential (and, vice versa, to what extent interest groups consider civil servants to be important for getting access) is another indicator for anticipatory rationality. Civil servants may sometimes want to avoid interest groups, but simply decide not to do so as they are too influential to sidestep.¹⁶ When a civil servant perceives that an interest group is highly influential (or, vice versa, an interest group perceives that a civil servant is highly important), and they interact on this basis, then this is a good indication of anticipatory rationality. Table 7.3 summarises the four indicators.

¹⁵ Regular consultation could also indicate institutional reproduction when it does not serve the purpose for which it was originally intended: to address a variety of societal interests. Perhaps the question is whether civil servants really use the information and perspectives they collect during such meetings. In any case, taking part in such meetings is often 'part of the job,' yet at the same time benefits democratic decision making. Therefore, I include it as an indicator for habitual rationality, although I acknowledge that for it to be a full measure of habitual rationality, the outcome of such meetings should be examined as well.

¹⁶ Those familiar with James Mahoney's (2000) article 'path dependence in historical sociology' may wonder whether legitimacy and an influential position are not two explanations for path dependence rather than anticipatory rationality. Indeed, he includes these two explanations, together with a functional and utilitarian explanation, in a typology of different types of path dependence. I would argue that the major difference between how I operationalised these behavioural logics, or types of rationalities, and Mahoney's typology of path dependence lies in a different focus. First, path dependence focuses on deviant outcomes rather than inter-organisational processes. Second, the emphasis in studying path dependence is on the contingency that triggered a deterministic sequence of events, resulting in a particular institutional arrangement. In this study, the focus is not on contingencies but rather on a strategic choice that was perfectly logical in the beginning, but where routine behaviour has taken over so that the resulting institutional arrangement may no longer fit the current situation. Most importantly, anticipatory rationality is a concept that captures anticipated consequences, whereas historical institutionalism often explains consequences from the past. Anticipatory and habitual rationality, or put differently, the heritage of the past and the shadow of the future, result in similar 'locked-in' mechanisms that explain the stability of institutional arrangements. An interesting theoretical challenge is to precisely explain the nature of these locked-in effects (see section 7.4).

Table 7.3 Indicators of different types of rationality

Behavioural logic	Indicator
Habitual rationality	Participation in or organisation of consultation meetings
Institutional reproduction	The extent to which trust is perceived to be important for interactions
Anticipatory rationality	- The extent to which legitimacy is considered indispensable - The extent to which an actor is perceived to have an influential position

Consultation and influence outweigh trust

The indicators listed above have been used to code the transcripts of the interviews, based on a seven-scale fuzzy-set membership coding. The results of the coding can be found in appendix II, and include cases seen from the perspectives of civil servants and interest groups.¹⁷ Table 7.4 reports how often (in percentages) each fuzzy-set membership value occurs for each of the indicators.

Table 7.4 The importance of individual types of rationality

Indicators types of rationality	Fuzzy set values (7-scale)						
	0	0.17	0.33	0.50	0.67	0.83	1.0
Civil servants							
Consultation	0.0	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	92.3
Trust	0.0	0.0	5.1	35.9	28.2	5.1	25.6
Legitimacy	2.6	2.6	0.0	2.6	12.8	25.6	53.9
Influential position of interest groups	0.0	0.0	2.6	7.7	38.5	25.6	25.6
Interest groups							
Consultation	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	94.4
Trust	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.2	11.1	44.4	22.2
Legitimacy	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	11.1	5.6	72.2
Importance of civil servants	0.0	0.0	5.6	0.0	16.7	77.8	1.0

Note: the table displays how often each of the fuzzy-set values occurs for a given type of choice or rationality (in %)

We can derive from the table the extent to which trust, consultation, legitimacy and an influential position (for interest groups, the importance of civil servants) are important for bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Consider the results for the cases based on the interviews with civil servants. In roughly 90 percent of the cases, they indicated that consultation is a very important factor (indicated by a membership value of 1). When it comes to trust, we observe a more nuanced result. In almost 36 percent of the instances of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, trust is neither important nor unimportant (indicated by a value of 0.5), and, in roughly 26 percent of the cases, trust is considered to be very important (a value of 1). Roughly 80 percent of the civil servants considered legitimacy to be very important (indicated by the values 0.83 and 1). And, finally, the influential position of interest groups provides a mixed picture. In 38.5 percent of the cases, the

¹⁷ Assigning fuzzy membership values is based on transcripts of the recorded interviews. Such a direct assignment has obvious disadvantages in terms of reliability (see Verkuilen 2005), and a solution to this would be the equivalent of inter-coder reliability in content analysis. To enhance the reliability of the membership assignment, I coded part of the interviews twice and compared the first and second coding, which revealed a relatively high consistency.

influential position of interest groups is considered to be somewhat important (indicated by a value of 0.67); in 25.6 percent of the cases as really important (a value of 0.83), and 25.6 percent of the cases very important (a value of 1).

What about the interest groups' perspective? Consultation seems to be as important in explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions to interest groups as it is to civil servants. In 94.4 percent of the cases, it is considered to be very important (a value of 1). Interest groups consider trust to be more relevant than civil servants; 66.6 percent of the interest groups consider it to be important (a value of 0.83 and 1). In the case of legitimacy, a full membership value of 1 is assigned to 72.2 percent of the cases. Both civil servants and interest groups consider legitimacy to be important. Finally, in almost 80 percent of the cases (values 0.83 and 1), civil servants are considered to be an important source for securing access. Apparently, the influential position of civil servants is more important for interest groups than vice versa. A general conclusion is that from both perspectives, civil servants and interest groups, these four indicators seem to be important, yet to varying degrees.

7.3.2 Multiple rationalities: mutually exclusive or mutually reinforcing?

We can assess the explanatory potential of habitual and anticipatory rationality by testing whether the four indicators that measure these types of rationality are necessary conditions for long-term interactions to occur.¹⁸ By revealing the necessary conditions for long-term interactions, we can infer whether habitual rationality and/or anticipatory rationality determine bureaucracy-interest group interactions in addition to the strategic rationality implicit in resource dependence theory. Testing necessity with QCA is done by comparing the values of the indicators and the values of the outcome. An indicator is seen as a necessary condition in fuzzy-set QCA when the value of the indicator is larger than or equal to the value of the outcome. This reflects the necessity rule that without the indicator there is no outcome. Or, vice versa, that a certain outcome implies the occurrence of a certain condition. Testing necessity in fuzzy-set QCA thus means testing whether the outcome is a subset of the indicator(s).

The tables below show the results of the necessity tests based on probabilistic criteria for both the civil servants' and the interest groups' perspectives. They test whether the proportion of cases is significantly larger than a set benchmark of 0.80. Setting a benchmark of 0.80 implies that it is almost always the case that

¹⁸ Two issues are important. First, as a result of a selection criterion emphasising the existence of long-term interactions between bureaucrats and interest groups, the set of cases for the analysis does not contain cases in which the outcome is absent. Therefore, only an analysis of necessity will be conducted. Second, Coding the outcome, i.e. 'thriving relationships,' was somewhat more complex than coding the indicators. The question was not so much whether these relationships did thrive, as I selected two policy areas where survey respondents indicated many interactions existed and that are known for extensive and long lasting relationships. The issue was rather whether assigning full membership (coded 1) was legitimate. Full membership would mean that these relations absolutely thrive no matter what happens. And although most relationships were usually remarkably stable, there have been some upsurges and interruptions. Therefore, when respondents indicated that the collection of organisations had been rather stable for a long time, I assigned it 0.83; when they more explicitly mentioned interruptions, I assigned 0.67.

durable interactions result from a particular behavioural logic.¹⁹ In addition, it also tests whether the absence of the individual types of choices contribute significantly to the outcome (absence is indicated by the ‘~’ sign). Finally, the necessity analyses have been conducted twice, once without and once with an adjustment factor of one fuzzy-set membership level. This basically means that, if the outcome is but one fuzzy-set level higher, then the cause will not be seen as a violation of necessity. The cause will then be included in the proportion of cases for which it follows that the values of the outcomes are smaller than or equal to the value of the cause. To illustrate, suppose that a certain outcome is coded with a fuzzy-set level of 0.83 and the indicator is coded with a value of 0.67. When no adjustment factor is applied, the indicator is not seen as a necessary condition. When we apply an adjustment factor of one level of fuzzy-set membership to the indicator, this combination is no longer a violation of the assumption that the outcome is a subset of a (set of) indicator(s) (see Ragin 1987; 2000). Applying an adjustment factor is legitimate, as a seven-scale fuzzy-set membership is a rather rough measurement. Combined with interview data, the coding may be open to different interpretations and thus imprecise measurement (see Ragin 2000, 272-273). Conducting the analyses twice takes into account potentially imprecise measurement.

Several of the conditions produce significant results. First, when we examine the bureaucratic perspective, we find that *consultation procedures* are related to stable, long-term interactions (0.92, $p \leq 0.05$). After applying an adjustment factor of one fuzzy-set level, i.e. including the cases for which the outcome is one fuzzy-set level higher than the cause, we find that several conditions are related to durable interactions. Not only *consultation procedures* (0.95, $p \leq 0.05$), but also the *powerful position of interest groups* (0.90, $p \leq 0.1$) and *legitimacy* (0.92, $p \leq 0.05$) seem to be necessary conditions for durable interactions to occur. Significant results are also observed for the interest groups’ perspective. In this case, *consultation procedures* are a necessary condition for durable interactions to occur (0.94, $p \leq 0.1$). Applying the adjustment factor in this case (again including cases for which the outcome is only one fuzzy-set level higher than the cause) reveals two necessary conditions. *Consultation procedures* are again a necessary condition (0.94, $p \leq 0.1$), as well as the *importance of civil servants* in securing access (0.94, $p \leq 0.1$).

Several necessary conditions for interactions to endure are revealed by these tests. From both perspectives, consultation procedures appear to be a necessary condition for durable interactions. This suggests the existence of habitual rationality. In the case of civil servants, legitimacy and the powerful position of interest groups can be considered necessary conditions as well. These two indicators reveal anticipatory rationality. In the case of interest groups, we see that the importance of civil servants is also a necessary condition, again revealing anticipatory rationality. Both habitual and anticipatory rationality play a role in durable interactions between interest groups and civil servants.

¹⁹ This test is based on a z-test that assesses the degree to which the observed proportion exceeds the benchmark proportion relative to the standard error of the benchmark proportion. When the number of the cases is less than 30, a binominal probability test should be used (in this case, for the interest group perspective). This test assesses the probability of observing a specific range of ‘successful’ outcomes, given an expected probability of success which is provided by a set benchmark, in this case 0.80 (Ragin 2000, 111; 112).

Table 7.5 Individual necessary indicators for durable bureaucracy-interest group interactions

<i>The Bureaucrats' Perspective</i>		
<i>Indicators</i>	Proportion of cases: Cause $\geq$ Outcome	Adjusted proportion of Cases: Cause $\geq$ Outcome
Trust	0.26	0.67
Legitimacy	0.85	0.92**
Powerful position of interest groups	0.59	0.90*
Consultation	0.92**	0.95**
~Trust	0.10	0.13
~Legitimacy	0.00	0.03
~Powerful position of interest groups	0.03	0.03
~Consultation	0.08	0.08
<i>The Interest groups' Perspective</i>		
<i>Indicators</i>	Proportion of cases: Cause $\geq$ Outcome	Adjusted proportion of Cases: Cause $\geq$ Outcome
Trust	0.67	0.83
Legitimacy	0.78	0.89
Consultation	0.94*	0.94*
Importance civil servants	0.78	0.94*
~Trust	0.00	0.06
~Legitimacy	0.00	0.00
~Consultation	0.06	0.06
~Importance civil servants for getting access	0.06	0.06

* $p \leq 0,1$; ** $p \leq 0,05$; *** $p \leq 0,01$; Note: the sign (~) indicates the absence of a particular condition

What we do not know yet is the extent to which they could jointly explain durable interactions between civil servants and interest groups. We want to know, in the case of the civil servants' perspective for instance, whether consultation together with legitimacy together with an influential position jointly explain long-term interactions. With fuzzy sets, the operation of 'and' tests the possibility of jointly necessary conditions. It requires taking the minimum of the individual values; that is, the value the individual conditions share. Logical 'and' is represented by the sign: ' $\cdot$ '. Using this terminology, we want to know whether,

- (1) consultation $\cdot$ legitimacy $\cdot$ influential position $\rightarrow$ long-term interactions, and
- (2) consultation $\cdot$ importance of civil servants $\rightarrow$ long-term interactions

To test these two hypotheses, I used a similar technique as was used in the necessity analysis above. This requires testing whether the proportion of cases that exhibits a value of these variables is significantly larger than a benchmark criterion of 0.80. Testing the hypotheses against this criterion means testing whether it is almost always the case that, for instance, 'consultation together with legitimacy together with an influential position of interest groups' is a jointly necessary condition for long-term interactions. Again, the test has been conducted twice, including one with and one without an adjustment factor of one fuzzy-set membership level. That is, values of the outcome one fuzzy-set level higher than the joint conditions were not considered a violation of the necessity test. The tables below show the results of these tests.

Table 7.6 Jointly necessary indicators for durable bureaucracy-interest group interactions

Combination of indicators	Proportion of cases: Cause $\geq$ Outcome	Adjusted proportion of Cases: Cause $\geq$ Outcome
Interest groups		
Consultation · importance CV	0.83	1.00**
Civil Servants		
Consultation · legitimacy · powerful position	0.56	0.87

* $p \leq 0.1$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.01$. the sign ‘·’ indicates logical ‘and’

Significant results can be observed only when an adjustment factor has been applied. For interest groups, the combination seems to be jointly necessary. Consultation procedures together with the importance of civil servants (1.00, $p \leq 0.01$) relate to durable interactions after applying the adjustment factor of one fuzzy-set level. For the civil servants’ perspective, the conditions do not seem to be jointly necessary. However, when the test was repeated with a benchmark of 0.67 rather than 0.80 (usually the case rather than almost always the case), a significant result (0.87 $p \leq 0.01$) was found for the combination of ‘consultation procedures · legitimacy · influential position of interest groups.’²⁰ Therefore, in the case of bureaucrats, it is fair to suggest that a combination of habitual and anticipatory rationality may explain their interactions with interest groups.

Multiple rationalities along political-administrative dimensions

While QCA compares the cases along their values of the indicators for habitual rationality, institutional reproduction and anticipatory rationality, we have not yet included comparison between contextual variables included in earlier analyses. Could these different types of choices, and thus the nature of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, differ between civil servants and interest groups involved in macro-economics or public health? To measure such variance, I compared whether the values of the indicators, on average, varied across agency type and policy area. No significant results were found. Apparently, the types of choices that result in long-term bureaucracy-interest group interactions do not vary for the respondents involved in either macro-economics or public health. Interestingly, the role of interest groups in implementation of public health policy is not reflected in a more influential position vis-à-vis civil servants, with a corresponding impact of anticipatory rationality.

For the variance in *agency type*, however, a significant difference was found for the influential position of interest groups ($t(37) = -1.81$, $p \leq 0.1$).²¹ This indicated that, on average, civil servants in advisory agencies found the influential position of interest groups more important than their colleagues at regulatory agencies. This is an interesting finding, as the literature on capture usually finds that interest groups in the environment of regulatory agencies are relatively powerful (Yackee 2005; Yackee and Yackee 2006). Similar t-tests for the interest group data do not reveal a significant variance across macro-economics and public health. When the average

²⁰ A z-value of 3.23, indicating 0.01 significance.

²¹ Strictly speaking, a t-test is not appropriate here, given the non-normal distribution of the data. The values for its non-parametric counterpart, the Mann-Whitney test (see Field 2005), however, are similar.

values are compared across different *kinds of interest groups* - professional associations versus NGOs - there is a significant difference to be observed between the kind of interest group and the importance of civil servants ($t(16) = 1.78, p \leq 0.1$). Professional associations find civil servants slightly more important than NGOs do.

The variation in policy area apparently did not make a difference for the respondents in this study. So, the underlying logics do not significantly differ across these two areas. Given the different position of interest groups in macro-economics and public health, however, an influential position could have multiple meanings. An influential position may indicate implementation influence in one policy area, whereas it may mean an influential advisory position in another. This means that we cannot draw a conclusion about the nature of the influential position as such. Yet, variables such as agency type and kinds of interest groups seem to matter in explaining the role of either an influential position of interest groups or the importance of civil servants, respectively. These findings cannot readily be generalised, as the respondents in this study are not a representative sample of the civil servants and interest groups involved in both policy areas, although respondents from different kinds of interest groups and different topics within these broad areas were included. But for these cases of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, we can assume that a sheer difference in policy area did not matter. Yet, variations in agency type and kinds of interest groups did.

All in all, we can cautiously infer that a combination of different types of rationality explains interactions between bureaucrats and interest groups. Based on the indicators that have been used in this qualitative comparative analysis, we can conclude that habitual and anticipatory rationality together explain why interactions last, rather than institutional reproduction. The indicators for both habitual rationality (consultation procedures) and anticipatory rationality (influential position of either civil servants or interest groups, and legitimacy) were found to be necessary conditions for durable interactions between interest groups and civil servants. In contrast, trust, as an indicator for institutional reproduction, was not found to be a necessary condition for durable interactions. The combination of habitual and anticipatory rationality makes sense, as both serve a purpose that has been strategically decided upon. These different types of choices were shown not to vary across the different policy areas. Significant relationships were observed only in the cases of agency type (for the influential role of interest groups) and kinds of interest groups (for the importance of civil servants in gaining access). Civil servants working at advisory agencies find interest groups more influential than their colleagues at regulatory agencies. And professional associations consider civil servants to be a more important means for getting access than NGOs do. In sum, interactions between interest groups and bureaucrats are not only a result of strategic choices to obtain the best resources, but are also dictated by habitual and anticipatory rationality.

7.4 Multiple rationalities in reality

Not only strategic choices appear to determine interactions between bureaucrats and interest groups. Habits and anticipating behaviour also matter. This section serves to describe several concrete instances in which we observe some of the mechanisms underlying the multiple rationalities shown to influence the relation between bureaucrats and interest groups.

7.4.1 The weakest link

The major peak or umbrella interest groups face a particular challenge both in representing the interests of their constituency and in keeping up with latest developments. They usually represent a wide array of membership organisations that vary in their organisational capacity and innovative potential. As a result, peak interest organisations tend to be rather conservative. They have to keep on board the weakest or most disruptive link of their constituency as well as their most innovative or successful members (Smith 2000; Truman 1951). Indeed, the chain is as strong as the weakest link and that makes them, despite their favourable position, less attractive for civil servants to cooperate with. Legitimacy is important, as we will see below. But civil servants need more than legitimacy to design policy proposals. Expertise, particularly in the form of innovative approaches and best practices, is an important tool for civil servants as well in drafting policy proposals. In the terminology of Rogers' (2003[1962]) innovation diffusion model, civil servants highly value expertise from 'early adapters;' that is, those who adopt new technologies or reforms soon after their introduction to the market. In contrast to laggards and the late majority who implement new technologies only when they have become common knowledge, the early adapters deliver the best practices civil servants look for, thereby rendering the peak organisations less attractive.

Consequently, civil servants reach out to individual member organisations or individual corporations to get a feeling for the latest developments and opportunities to incorporate them in policy proposals or to set a standard. As a respondent illustrates: "When we invite the major umbrella organisations, they always ask for money first. More often than not, we cannot provide extra money and just want to know what really works 'in the field.' To deal with this situation, we often invite individual organisations and individual experts to discuss whether new medicines or policy reforms really would work." Or, as another respondent suggests: "Those major umbrella organisations often scream blue murder, but when you ask individual general practitioners, for instance, there doesn't seem to be a problem at all." Several civil servants at the Ministry of Social affairs and Employment indicate a similar mechanism. According to one: "The national organisation representing various minorities in the Netherlands interprets its representative task as one that only involves talking about draft bills. But we have already adopted most of the laws involving minority rights and minority participation in the Netherlands. When it comes to successful implementation, however, they tend to be rather passive, and it is hard to figure out who they represent. Therefore, we do talk with them, but we are increasingly reaching out to smaller minority organisations, which design and implement many projects that

really benefit the individual citizens.” A similar reasoning applies to interactions with both the social partners and their individual member organisations. As a respondent observed: “We consult the major peak organisations for major reforms and yearly budgetary discussions. For concrete projects and implementation, we tend to consult the individual member organisations.” And, according to a civil servant at the Labour Inspectorate: “Although the social partners often want to talk, it is in real life where changes really take place.” Individual member organisations become increasingly important and may erode the position of peak organisations.

When individual member organisations are substantively big enough, it is even more attractive for civil servants to cooperate with those individual organisations separately. “When we want to get something done,” says a civil servant at the Ministry of Public Health, Welfare and Sports, “we sometimes approach the individual health insurance companies rather than their representative organisations. If several of the big players agree with our plans and their representative organisation does not, it will be quite possible that we can still implement our plans.” These strategies of reaching out to individual member organisations are, naturally, not warmly welcomed by the peak organisations themselves. By reaching out to individual organisations or individual persons, their role and position in policy making, as well as their representativeness, is questioned. So, they try to establish a secure position for themselves by insisting on consultation in cases of reforms or new developments. Usually, civil servants opt for the strategy of allowing them their say in consultation procedures, but nevertheless involve individual organisations at other stages in the policy process.

The problem of the weakest link obviously creates a challenging management dilemma for large representative organisations. Differences in positions and opinions among the individual member organisations are as much as possible addressed behind closed doors. A public awareness of different opinions immediately decreases their bargaining position and, at the same time, increases the strategic position of civil servants by providing them with the possibility of a ‘divide and rule’ tactic. However, when individual interests are at stake, it is difficult to speak with one voice, as an example of sustainable development indicates. Several CEOs of large national and international corporations sent an open, personally signed letter to the person charged with forming the new Dutch government (the formateur) in late 2006. They asked the government in this letter to formulate stricter rules on corporate social responsibility.²² That letter, according to one of the respondents, was not coordinated with the major peak employer organisation, the confederation of Dutch Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW). They “were not exactly amused, as VNO-NCW’s strategy was to lobby for realistic goals that would not harm the level playing field of Dutch corporations too much.” The letter of several of their prominent and biggest members rendered VNO-NCW’s bargaining position much more difficult than it would have been without such a public willingness to take care of the environment.

While consultation with the major peak and umbrella organisations is deeply embedded in the decision-making processes, the strategy of reaching out to individual organisations to either obtain expertise on new developments or

²² *NRC Handelsblad* (2006), 12 December.

legitimacy for policy proposals is frequent. In that sense, interactions with major interest organisations are subject to change. Although contacts with members or individuals are relatively small in scope, they undeniably take place. They seem to be a result of strategic choices to somehow cope with an institutional arrangement of interest representation and concomitant vested interests that do not always meet the demands of policy making to address current social problems. The problem of the weakest link thus creates more manoeuvrability for civil servants within a system of vested interests. That is, when individual members of associations present themselves as early adaptors, they are very attractive for civil servants to interact with. Such organisations can provide the best practices they are looking for, which are usually not provided to them by the major umbrella interest organisations. Presenting such best practices would mean that part of their constituency would not be able to keep up. Because they have to represent their entire constituency, the early adaptors usually profit less from a peak association than laggards do. The risk, if the individual members are large enough, is that they will lobby on their own. Such internal conflict is useful, in turn, for civil servants, as it creates the option for a divide and rule tactic. So, the problem of the weakest link not only poses a management and legitimacy dilemma for major umbrella interest organisations. It also tends to mitigate a potential degree of dependence for civil servants, as there are more alternatives to pick and choose from.

7.4.2 It's all about legitimacy

One resource in particular unravels the complex interplay between institutionalisation and anticipatory rationality, and that is legitimacy. Although information and expertise are important, most respondents indicate that legitimacy is a particularly important resource to obtain. As one civil servant noted: "When there is no political support for a bill or proposed plans, forget it. Of course, ultimately we can impose our plans on the sector, but that is a rare event." This point of view is shared by many respondents. A well-known mechanism is the inevitable necessity for civil servants to prepare their political superiors for and support them in parliamentary debates. To do so, civil servants seek to obtain support from the interest groups for proposed plans or drafted bills, or they informally check to what extent such interest groups would agree on certain initial ideas. And, in instances when the major interest groups oppose a Minister's plans, they check their opinions to anticipate debates in parliament, as interest groups will lobby parliamentarians to change intended plans.

This characteristic of political-administrative relations is well-known and is not a surprising finding. What it means in the context of this study is that the legitimacy issue induces anticipatory rationality, especially in the case of civil servants. As a representative of an interest group aptly comments: "The worst nightmare for a civil servant is to read our opposing opinion in the next morning's newspaper without having informed his political superior." Lobbying parliament has always been and continues to be an important strategy, even in a corporatist country like the Netherlands (Torenvlied 2005). All interest group representatives who participated in this study indicate that they "take the parliamentary road to influence." Yet, they vary in the extent to which they do so. Almost all indicate that

they prefer to come to an agreement with civil servants. If that does not work out, however, they certainly do not hesitate to lobby parliamentarians. Overall, the larger, more economically-oriented interest groups tend to shy away from the political route as much as is possible. They prefer silent diplomacy to public noise.

The image of the interest group or sector also plays an important role in deciding to lobby parliament. A respondent from one of the professional associations indicates that his organisation benefits from a relatively positive image: "We can count on sympathy from parliamentarians, as medium-sized enterprises are not only the engine of our economy but they are also relatively harmless." He added: "Besides, another important reason to lobby parliamentarians is that we don't have to discuss every excruciating detail of a policy proposal. It is more than enough to bring across a general feeling of injustice, which is important for individual parliamentarians to show to their constituency that that is what they stand for." And a civil servant aptly summarised the benefits of the parliamentary road: "Everything that has an aura of something pitiful can count on the unconditional support of any parliamentarian." Image is not only important in getting access. It helps in obtaining legitimacy as well.

The image of interest groups or the sector is indeed important for civil servants in their strategies to obtain public support for policy plans and to prepare their ministers or secretaries of state for parliamentary debates. But it is not only the players with the big financial resources and the best expertise who matter; those who can count on a broad display in the media matter as well, perhaps even more so. Civil servants working for diverse supervisory bodies or inspectorates observe that the industrial players they supervise are not necessarily the most influential ones. To an increasing extent, consumer organisations and other NGOs gain influence via the media. As a civil servant working at one of the regulatory agencies comments on this tendency: "I am not at all happy when I read in the newspapers that the Association for Consumers is dissatisfied with our procedures." Public and political support are important for regulatory agencies as well (Berry 1997; Wilson 2000[1989]), and may be helpful in balancing economic power.

The examples above show that there are two sides to the same coin when it comes to a hypothesis about how legitimacy enables interactions to endure. On the one side, we clearly observe that legitimacy reveals an institutionalised pattern, as it is crucial for civil servants to provide the necessary support for their Minister when defending draft bills in parliament. "You may call it political support", comments one of the civil servants, "but actually it is something essential to our jobs." This quote, however, may also reflect a situation that induces anticipatory rationality. Legitimacy is prerequisite, so there is no free choice to obtain it or not. It is much more a question of *what kind of legitimacy* and from which organisation to obtain it. So, on the other side, diversification of legitimacy is important and refers to anticipatory rationality rather than, or in addition to an institutionalised pattern of interactions. And in this subtle game, the big industrial players are no longer the natural winning party. This variation in sources of legitimacy reflects a well-known tendency that a wider array of interest groups than only business associations is needed for securing political support for policy proposals. This means that civil servants have some room to strategically manoeuvre among the various interest groups they inevitably have to interact with to ensure political support.

7.4.3 Fair play

‘Fair play’ refers to the collection of formal and informal rules in sports with which individual competitors have to comply in order to guarantee an honest and an even match. They include both the formal rules of the game as well as the informal rules of showing respect for one another and acting upon this respect. Fair play is an important unwritten rule guiding bureaucracy-interest group interactions in both policy areas as well. Fair play, in this case, reveals the importance of trust. When one does not obey the ‘informal rules of fair play,’ both civil servants and interest groups will consider each other as less trustworthy parties to cooperate with.

To reveal what such informal rules and trustworthiness mean for bureaucracy-interest group interactions, how interest groups use the media serves as a concrete example. Questions included the use of the media, whether interest groups inform civil servants when they are about to ‘go public,’ and whether a failure to inform in advance would harm their relations with civil servants. The table below shows the results analyses of the answers respondents gave. It reports the percentages of the fuzzy-set membership levels attributed to the answers of the interest groups. A high value means strong membership in that category; a low value indicates the opposite. For instance, 0.83 means ‘we almost always use the media,’ or ‘we almost always inform civil servants before we use the media as a lobby tactic,’ and ‘not informing civil servants almost always harms our relationships.’

Table 7.7 Indicators of going public

<i>Indicators for going public</i>	<i>Fuzzy set values (7-scale)</i>						
	0	0.17	0.33	0.5	0.67	0.83	1.0
Use the media	0.0	0.0	16.7	5.6	22.2	5.6	50.0
Inform civil servants in advance	11.1	0.0	0.0	22.2	11.1	16.7	38.9
Not informing is harmful for relationship	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	44.4	22.2	0.0

Note: The numbers represent the frequency of the individual fuzzy-set membership values (in %).

The majority of the respondents indicate that they always or at least regularly use the media for strategic purposes. That is, 50 percent (value 1) of the respondents say that they always use the media, and 27.8 percent indicate that they use the media almost always, or more often than not (value 0.83 and 0.67, respectively). A majority, 55.6 percent, indicate that they always or often inform civil servants in advance of going public to achieve what they want (values 0.83 and 1). Finally, 66.6 percent indicate that it often can be harmful when they do not inform civil servants in advance (values 0.67 and 0.83). Yet, none of the interest groups indicate that they always inform civil servants (value 1). No significant differences were found for variance in kinds of interest groups or policy areas. These mechanisms are apparently not affected by the kinds of interest groups or the substance of the policies involved in this analysis.

The logic behind this habit of informing civil servants in advance is that interest groups do not want to surprise civil servants, a mechanism closely related to their need of public support for policy plans. It is not only a simple ‘gentleman’s agreement.’ Interest groups do not want their relationships with civil servants to be harmed by untrustworthy behaviour. Some interest groups indeed report that civil servants were not amused when they informed the media about certain negotiation

processes. Their behaviour, in turn, influenced their subsequent chances of getting access. One respondent noted that: "A particular top civil servant has been grumpy for years and does not really trust us anymore, so we have more difficulties in getting access than before." The damage may be not always so severe (and sometimes does not even exist). As another respondent indicates: "Indeed, some of my colleagues fear such a consequence when we go the media. I immediately admit that this could happen. On the other hand, when a civil servant is so personally tied to a specific problem, he is not likely to be the person with the most influence. The really important civil servants are responsible for a wide variety of topics." In general, however, not informing seems an unwise option. Yet, in some cases, negatively influencing the relations with civil servants is less harmful if the civil servant in question is not the most important source of access.

The agreement to inform in advance is sometimes violated, however, either deliberately or by sheer unprofessional behaviour. As for the latter, several of the representatives of interest groups indicate that, over recent years, they have started to professionalise their public affairs functions, or that they simply do not have sufficient financial means for a professional public affairs manager. A deliberate choice to violate the agreement is somewhat more complex. Representative organisations are often caught between what Olson (1965) called the logic of membership and the logic of access. Weighing their different functions of interest representation and public visibility for their individual member organisations sometimes leads interest groups to decide to go public, even when it is not beneficial for their relations with civil servants. As one noted: "We have to show our members that we really take action. We do this by being visible in the media. Being visible is sometimes better than protecting the relationship with civil servants. We carefully weigh those different functions."

Although interest groups indicate that relations sometimes can be harmed by a careless media strategy, civil servants, on the other hand, note that going public or lobbying parliamentarians is part of the game. They accept interest groups' choices to go to parliament or to the media to arrange their affairs, as long as they are honest about their strategies. Lying can seriously erode civil servants' trust in an organisation. As one civil servant illustrates: "We accept their role and that lobbying parliament and going to the media is part of the game. However, lying can seriously undermine trust. We once had a situation in which we came to an agreement with an organisation after long negotiations. But right after the negotiations ended, they declared in the media that they wanted a totally different solution. That was not exactly beneficial to our relationship. Just say you disagree, and then go to the media or parliament." Fair play is an important strategy for both parties to remain a trustworthy partner. The qualitative comparative analysis did not reveal trust as a necessary condition for durable interactions. Yet, these examples suggest that the delicate balance of trustworthiness can be an important aspect underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

7.4.4 The influence is in the adjectives

A final and quite particular instance of bureaucracy-interest group interactions is provided by interactions between regulatory agencies and interest groups. It is for these interactions that the literature on interest group politics often claims an influential position for interest groups (see, among others, Carpenter 2004; Yackee 2005; Stigler 1971; Woll and Artigas 2007). Regulators in the Netherlands face a relatively high level of policy discretion.²³ Almost all interest group respondents indicated that regulators are relatively hard to influence, and respondents from the regulators indicate that they are to a large extent able to maintain their autonomy. Obviously, capture is relatively difficult to measure, and even more so when there is no database allowing a comparison of the initial input of interest groups on the major standards and norms and their final version (Yackee 2005). Also, due to its politically sensitive nature for both interest groups and civil servants alike, capture is a complex phenomenon to study. Respondents from the business associations were especially keen to report that they have established trustworthy relationships with civil servants. This very same keenness, combined with a strong preference for so-called ‘silent diplomacy,’ may indicate a relatively strong bargaining position. Two important mechanisms stand out, namely, civil servants prefer informal negotiation, and the strategic use of language in reporting.²⁴

Regulation in the Netherlands is guided by the principle of ‘high-trust regulation,’ combined with active participation of market parties. High-trust regulation can be interpreted as a sort of policy paradigm that guides the actions of regulatory bodies. The underlying principle is to trust the market to comply with regulations and to assume that companies regulate their own behaviour. Only when cases of non-compliance become apparent must the regulator in question interfere.²⁵ Trust is not only an important guiding principle for regulators, it is also a mechanism that regulators seem to use to avoid ‘judicialisation,’ as they call it. When faced with major corporations that violate policies and laws on competition, they are keen on solving such issues informally. That is, they try to convince these parties in informal settings that they indeed should pay a fine to compensate for their violations of the law, or otherwise adapt their behaviour.

Such a strategy fits not only the current policy paradigm of high trust, it also seems to be in the interest of the regulators themselves. If the parties were to bring their cases before a court, the legal burden of proof would be on the side of the regulator, in turn requiring professionally trained and highly experienced lawyers. Such attempts to avoid judicialisation, reveals the Achilles heel of many regulators. They usually lack the financial resources to hire the best lawyers. “You know,” says a civil servant at a regulatory agency, “the best and brightest do not work here. They go to the private sector as that is simply better value for money. The average age

²³ Parliamentary Papers 2003-2004, 29279, no. 9.

²⁴ Respondents from regulators were careful in answering questions about the position of those they were supposed to regulate. Some respondents, however, elaborated on examples of individual corporations or interest organisations, revealing potentially strong influence. These examples, unfortunately, were always provided ‘off the record.’ Therefore, I can only address the two mechanisms in abstract terms.

²⁵ Parliamentary Papers, 2007-2008, 31200 XXI, no. 2, p. 23.

here is around 30. When we go to court, young, recently graduated lawyers face the most experienced and most expensive lawyers of the country, as the individual corporations have plenty of money to hire the best.” More generally, regulators in the fields of both public health and macro-economics indicate a lack of capacity to properly regulate and enforce norms and standards. As another respondent indicates: “We have the capacity to visit each company once every thirty years. Sometimes we visit a company twice a year, but the majority of the organisations we never check.” Such a capacity problem potentially renders regulatory agencies more vulnerable to being captured and causes them to rely much more on informal mechanisms of trust and authority.

A second mechanism that shows a subtle influence of interest groups and individual corporations is when regulatory agencies publish results of so-called ‘sector-wide investigations.’ As such investigations do not involve a procedure to formally correct the behaviour of a single corporation; they have to avoid addressing the blameworthy organisations by name. Instead, regulators have to publish their results in general terms. When a regulator is about to publish such a report, they provide organisations in question with the opportunity to comment on the facts and figures in the report. Only naturally, those organisations try to influence the conclusions as well. And that is where the subtle use of adjectives becomes visible. It is in the interest of the regulator to publish the results as objectively as possible so that self-regulation within the sector will solve the problem. Vice versa, it is in the interest of the sector to minimise the damage to their reputation. Consensus is often sought via adding adjectives that provide a more nuanced and positive image of the ‘remainder’ of the sector. As a representative of an interest group recalls:

Several years ago, the inspectorate published a report that the quality of care in our sector was really poor. I was not happy with this publication and called the Inspector-General immediately. I told him that the report suggested that the entire sector was performing badly, whereas the conclusion only applied to a few institutions. We made careful agreements that this would not happen again.

In the words of a civil servant working at one of the regulatory agencies: “Yes, they undeniably have some influence, but it is alright to give them something by modifying our findings, as long as the essence of our message remains the same.” The subtle nuances of adding adjectives thus help both interest groups in exerting influence and regulatory agencies in getting their main message across.

So, a formal policy paradigm of high-trust regulation ensures that trust is an important mechanism in interactions between regulators and the regulated. Yet, investing in trustworthy relations is also necessary for regulatory agencies to avoid judicialisation and too much emphasis on enforcement and monitoring. They simply have too few resources to cope with the consequences of judicialisation and extensive regulatory demand. Informal negotiations and subtle adaptations of conclusions of sector-wide reports ensure that regulatory agencies are still able to maintain their autonomous position and get their most important messages across. Yet, the very same informal trajectories that seem necessary to build trust and authority as a solid regulator simultaneously render them more open to the influence of interest groups.

7.4.5 Multiple rationalities and degree of dependence

These four mechanisms illustrate the complex interplay between different types of rationalities that determine relations between bureaucrats and interest groups. First, the problem of *the weakest link* shows that the organisational structure of representative organisations provides civil servants with more room to manoeuvre. As representative organisations tend to be rather conservative and have difficulties in speaking with one voice, civil servants deliberately reach out to individual organisations - and have the opportunity to do so by this very phenomenon. This mechanism may mitigate relatively high resource concentration in cases of limited access, as there are more alternatives for civil servants to choose from.

Second, *it's all about legitimacy* shows that the importance of this resource could contribute to situations of capture, although civil servants have room to manoeuvre within the boundaries that legitimacy sets. Legitimacy is a vital resource for civil servants to obtain. They have little choice whether or not to obtain it, which severely increases their dependence on interest groups. There is, however, some room to manoeuvre offered by different sources of legitimacy various types of interest groups have to offer. Public endorsement thus may outrun economic power play. Increasing variation in types of legitimacy thus broadens the set of organisations to choose from. This, in turn, results in a smaller degree of dependence.

Third, *fair play* shows that bureaucracy-interest group interactions may be a delicate balance of trust and distrust. Carelessly dealing with such interactions may well result in a negative reputation and decrease the trustworthiness of interest groups (see also Bernhagen and Brauniger 2005; Bernhagen 2007). Civil servants seem to benefit from this balance, as interest groups are keen on maintaining a good relationship. In this sense, trust may reveal institutionalised but suboptimal situations. Put differently, ensuring trust at a particular moment in time may be more important than the exchange of certain types of resources.

Finally, *the influence is in the adjectives* reveals that, although the current practice of high-trust regulation and the lack of sufficient resources may render regulatory agencies relatively vulnerable, there are some subtle ways of ensuring that they maintain their autonomy and are able to get their main message across. Yet, it also shows that the resources regulatory agencies control cannot always match those that interest groups control. Informal regulation and a subtle use of language could be seen as a means of regulators for manoeuvring in interactions with those whom they regulate. A high-trust paradigm seems to facilitate informal negotiation. This emphasises individual administrative leadership in regulation more than the actual practice of monitoring.

These four concrete mechanisms illustrate that both habitual and anticipatory rationality are also important in explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions. These types of choices seem to intermingle with – rather than cancel out – the strategic choices that are inherent in a resource dependence reconceptualisation of bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

7.5 Multiple rationalities at work

Bureaucracy-interest group interactions are not only a matter of resource exchanges based on strategic rationality. Other types of behavioural logics, such as habitual and anticipatory rationality, also seem to explain these interactions. This chapter has revealed that, generally speaking, civil servants tend to interact with a familiar set of interest groups, a finding that points in the direction of habitual or anticipatory rationality. Indeed, diversifying the set of interest groups reveals a conscious strategic choice, whereas interacting with a set of familiar groups may well be the result of habitual or anticipatory rationality. Formal requirements to interact and the fact that bureaucrats usually interact with interest groups are two important reasons shown to explain these interactions.

Comparing habitual rationality along different political-administrative dimensions revealed variation across interest representation regimes and policy areas. Formal requirements to interact are more important in the Netherlands, whereas 'usual interactions' with interest groups prevail in the UK. Such reasons also vary across policy areas, again indicating the relevance of meso-level analyses.

Next to habitual rationality, anticipatory rationality may also determine resource exchanges. The existence of anticipatory rationality has been examined by counterfactual analysis. This analysis revealed that half of the civil servants find that it is not often possible to sidestep interest groups, even if they want to do so. This possibility to circumvent varies only to a very small extent between different interest representation regimes and different types of agencies. In the Netherlands, it is somewhat easier to circumvent interest groups than in the UK. And for executive agencies, it is more difficult to circumvent than for other types of agencies. Civil servants report that difficulties in circumvention are mainly because of the position of interest groups as important spokespersons, their role in the national economy, their usefulness, and formal requirements to consult them. These reasons again reveal a mixture of different types of rationality. The survey analysis more generally suggested that multiple rationalities are at stake in bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

The findings of multiple types of choices are confirmed by a qualitative comparative analysis. Seen from the perspective of civil servants, consultation procedures, legitimacy and a powerful position of interest groups were necessary conditions for durable bureaucracy-interest group interactions. From an interest group perspective, both the importance of civil servants to obtain access and consultation procedures appeared to be necessary conditions. Tests of joint necessity of these conditions suggested that different types of rationalities together explain long-term interactions. Comparison across the two policy areas did not reveal significant variation. The difference between advisory agency and regulatory agency revealed a significant difference in the influential position of interest groups. Interest groups appeared to be regarded as less powerful by civil servants working at regulatory agencies than by those working at advisory agencies. And civil servants turned out to be more important for professional associations than for NGOs. In sum, QCA showed that resource exchanges between bureaucrats and interest groups are based on a set of multiple rationalities

An in-depth examination of concrete instances in which these mechanisms related to the various types of rationality are at work reveals an important interplay between strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality. The need to secure political support for their Minister or the policy proposals they draft, for instance, ensures that civil servants to a large extent depend on interest groups to obtain these resources. This induces anticipatory rationality. On the other hand, the need for various types of legitimacy allows civil servants to pick and choose among alternatives, revealing the possibility for strategic choices as well. A management dilemma for major umbrella organisations to represent every member of their constituencies also induces the possibility for civil servants to strategically pick and choose individual organisations in addition to routine interactions with peak organisations. The emphasis on informal negotiation and subtle use of language reveals both strong dependence on interest groups and a subtle room to manoeuvre within a framework of dependence relations.

In conclusion, the resource dependence model applied to bureaucracy-interest group interactions revealed a mixture of various types of choices or behavioural logics. Resource exchange not only results from strategic choices based on the resources one needs. These resource exchanges also result from habitual and anticipatory rationality. When we consider the discussion of the literature in chapter 2 again, each of the strands of literature is shown to reveal one particular aspect of government-interest group interactions, or bureaucracy-interest group interactions in particular. Bureaucratic politics suggest that civil servants can act as entrepreneurs in their interactions with interest groups. This implies a strategic choice for civil servants. The literature on interest group politics suggests a similar strategic choice for interest groups. Both strands of literature implicitly assume that the behaviour of the opposite set of actors, interest groups in the case of bureaucratic politics and civil servants in the case of interest group politics is governed by anticipatory rationality. A resource dependence approach to bureaucracy-interest group interactions incorporates both points of view. By measuring the degree of dependence, we can infer which set of actors is able to choose purely strategically and which set of actors faces strategic decision making that is mainly constrained by future consequences. By incorporating relevant contextual factors in the model, we can explain how and why such a possibility varies across different circumstances.

Yet, resource dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]) and its applications to explain interest groups' access (Bouwen 2000; 2004) usually focus on the possibility of strategic choice. The kind of resources that are needed determines the choice among organisations to interact with. This implicitly assumes that once such a resource is no longer valuable to the organisation, the relation between the two (or more) organisations ends, since the interactions no longer serve the strategically decided-upon purpose. Yet, when we take into account the availability of resources in the environment (resource concentration) more explicitly, as well as the environment itself (by incorporating relevant contextual variables), we see that quitting such relationships may be far from optional. The underlying factors that cause such relationships to last are revealed in this study by explicitly addressing bureaucracy-interest group interactions over time. A long-term perspective reveals mechanisms related to institutionalisation and to evolutionary

perspectives on rational choice. Both types of mechanisms restrict a civil servant's or interest group's room to manoeuvre. The room for strategic choices in interacting with interest groups or civil servants, respectively, is thus very much determined by the context in which those interactions take place. Demarcating and understanding context is therefore necessary to understand the extent to which these actors may strategically decide upon their interactions, or how actors adapt to their environment to optimise their choices.

Examining bureaucracy-interest group interactions over time, albeit in an indirect manner, allowed us to observe aspects of habitual rationality, institutionalisation, and anticipatory rationality. Whereas the literature on historical institutionalism explains the consequences of choices or occurrences in the past (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003; Thelen 2003), evolutionary perspectives on rational decision making explain today's options given future or anticipated consequences (Axelrod 1984; Hardin 2002; Ostrom and Walker 2003). They may, however, both result in similar locked-in effects today. That is, when bureaucrats anticipate that they will need certain interest groups in the foreseeable future, they will consciously choose to continue to interact in the present. Reducing uncertainty or avoiding the unintended consequences of ending relationships becomes more important reasons to maintain a relationship than the actual exchange of resources. The same is true for a heritage of the past. When interactions persist due to unconscious or routine behaviour, they result in interactions in the present as well, which cannot be escaped from. Past choices and anticipated (dis)advantages may thus result in similar mechanisms underlying interactions today. These analyses point to current interaction effects between the consequences of previous choices and anticipated future consequences. Historical institutionalism and rational choice may be more related than has been shown until today. Disentangling the precise nature of each of the individual types of choices underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions may also help in unravelling the interaction effects between the shadow of the future and the heritage of the past regarding institutional arrangements.

The resource dependence model developed in this study integrates the various logics that implicitly underlie the three strands of literature discussed in chapter 2. The strategic element of resource exchange has been revealed to be a significant explanatory component. But anticipatory and habitual rationality are two likely determinants of a resource dependence relationship as well. As such, the model is a first step to a comprehensive assessment of bureaucracy-interest group interactions, incorporating elements over and across time. And, it may be helpful in addressing the complex interplay of strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality that may jointly determine the nature of these interactions. Most importantly, the model developed in this study draws attention to a theoretical challenge: how to disentangle interaction effects of mechanisms that are tied to different theories of institutional stability or behavioural continuity.

Bureaucracy-Interest Group Interactions Unravelled

8.1 Building bridges, dependent on support, or just a habit?

The bureaucrats in New York City and Rotterdam chose to cooperate for similar reasons with immigrant organisations, as we saw in the introduction. A capacity to intermediate between the local government and diverse citizen groups turned out to be a vital resource, both in maintaining contact over time and getting in touch quickly in times of contingencies. This capacity to intermediate appeared to travel the oceans well. In two entirely different interest representation systems, a similar resource proved to be vital for solid policy making as well as effective crisis management. The differences in the political-administrative systems of each city were apparently not the most important explanatory factor determining these civil servants' similar needs and reactions. Other contextual factors apparently matter for bureaucrats' interactions with interest groups.

A case study into such relations (Poppelaars 2007) highlighted this similarity and pointed to a more general question about this political-administrative phenomenon. Why is it that bureaucrats interact with certain interest groups but not, or to a lesser extent, with others? And why do we see variation in the extent of their interaction, as well as in their motives? Some of these motives could be remarkably similar across different political-administrative dimensions, but others would perhaps vary to a considerable degree along the very same dimensions. In a nutshell, and at a relatively abstract level, the answer to these questions is that bureaucrats' motives to interact with interest groups are grounded in a mix of strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality. This mixture of choices varies under different political-administrative circumstances and explains why interactions between bureaucrats and interest groups can vary. In what follows, I will discuss the overall conclusion in more detail. I first briefly summarise the explanatory model developed in this study and the empirical findings generated by testing the model. I then briefly reflect on the research project and the explanatory potential of the model. Finally, I address how the model relates to other strands of literature and sketch possible avenues for further research.

8.2 The explanatory value of the resource dependence model

The added value of the resource dependence model to explain bureaucracy-interest group interactions is that it integrates several existing explanations for this phenomenon. And, by doing so, it allows systematic comparison of these interactions across cases and over time. The underlying logic of the model is to focus on a central underlying commonality found in the different sets of literature explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions. That is, in all three sets of literature examined here, we see different types of resource exchanges. The literature on bureaucratic politics reveals that, for bureaucrats to establish autonomy or to push through their policy plans, they need political support. They are able to obtain this political support from networks of interest groups. According to the interest group literature, interest groups try to exert influence by offering certain expertise and information to ensure their access to the decision-making process. In some cases, interest groups may have to offer resources that bureaucrats fully rely on, rendering them very influential. According to policy network studies, bureaucracy-interest group interactions serve a mutual benefit. That is, in such interactions, 'give' and 'take' are perfectly in balance. Requiring political support, providing expertise, and a mutual benefit: these three explanations all suggest an exchange. This is why classic resource dependence theory, in which resource exchanges are the key explanatory variable for interactions between organisations, is ideally suited as a starting point to develop an explanatory model of bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

Classic resource dependence theory, developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (2003[1978]), assumes that organisations are not self-sufficient. As a result, they must interact with other organisations to obtain the resources they need to survive. The nature of such resource exchanges is, first, determined by the necessity of these resources for survival (the relative importance of resources), and, second, by the availability of these resources (the concentration of resources in the environment). Resource dependence theory additionally assumes that organisations try to minimise their dependence on other organisations by strategically picking and choosing the organisations with which to interact, based on what they perceive to be important resources. This option of strategic decision making distinguishes resource dependence theory from its fellow contextual approaches, such as neo-institutionalism and evolutionary organisational population theory, which are more deterministic in nature. Resource dependence theory emphasises strategic choice rather than adaptation to environment in an almost mechanical way (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]; Scott 2001).

Applying the basic assumptions of classic resource dependence theory to bureaucracy-interest group interactions generated my explanatory model. Under resource dependence theory, bureaucrats need to interact with interest groups to obtain the resources they need. Bureaucracy-interest group interactions are then determined by the elements that govern resource exchange relationships. That is, bureaucracy-interest group interactions can be explained by the importance of the resources to either the bureaucracy or interest groups (the relative importance of

the resources) and by the extent to which these resources are available in the environment (resource concentration). By measuring both elements – resource importance and resource concentration – it should be possible to determine the nature of bureaucracy-interest group interactions (see chapter 3 for a detailed discussion and the full model). That is, when the resulting degree of dependence is more severe for bureaucrats, the traditional interpretation of the interest group literature is likely to hold. Vice versa, when the degree of dependence is less severe for bureaucrats, the interpretation of bureaucratic politics is likely to hold.

I further hypothesised that the individual elements that constitute the degree of dependence, resource importance and resource concentration, are likely to vary across different political-administrative dimensions. National interest representation regimes characterising a country; differences in political-administrative relations; functional and cultural differences among public agencies; the salience, complexity and political sensitivity of different policy areas; the influence of framing; and finally, Europeanisation, were hypothesised to either influence resource concentration or resource importance, or both (see also chapter 3). Incorporating these contextual dimensions in the model allowed for cross-sectional comparisons to determine under which circumstances the degree of dependence would be more severe for either bureaucrats or interest groups.

This comparative model, however, did not incorporate a rival explanation to the assumption of strategic choice. Classic resource dependence theory argues that organisations strategically pick and choose to minimise their dependence. It assumes, implicitly, the possibility of ending interactions at any given time. Such an exit option, however, may not always be evident, which implies that resource exchanges may not solely be determined by strategic rationality. The possibilities for strategic decision making will be most likely absent or severely limited when the degree of dependence is severe. The organisation in question is forced to interact, as it were, but may still be doing so based on a conscious choice. In other words, an organisation may anticipate benefits of future interactions or disadvantages from future non-interactions and, therefore, continues to interact today. This is a situation characterised by, what I term, anticipatory rationality. A third option, however, arises when these interactions do not result from a conscious rational choice. That is, a given resource exchange could be a purely routine activity, which was originally based on a rational choice but has unconsciously continued over time. Such a situation reflects what Simon has called habitual rationality (1997[1947]) or, put differently, institutional reproduction. This routine behaviour could reflect an optimal or a suboptimal situation.

In short, the resource dependence model states that bureaucracy-interest group interactions can be conceptualised as a resource exchange characterised by a degree of dependence. The degree of dependence is determined by the importance of a resource to the organisation in question and the extent to which this particular resource is available in the environment (resource concentration). As both elements will vary under different political-administrative circumstances, so will the degree of dependence that is constituted by these two elements. Such resource exchanges are, however, not only a result of strategic rationality, as is implicit in classic resource dependence theory, but they are also likely to result from anticipatory and habitual rationality.

So, by measuring both resource importance and resource concentration, we can measure bureaucracy-interest group interactions over time and across cases. A reconceptualisation of bureaucracy-interest group interactions at a more abstract level allows for systematic comparison of these interactions. And, in addition, it allows us to incorporate the different types choices that are apparent in the three strands of literature explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions discussed here. As such, the resource dependence model is an attempt to integrate various theoretical explanations of bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

8.3 Variations in bureaucracy-interest group interactions

The findings on bureaucracy-interest group interactions generated by this study can be summarised by three subheadings. First, bureaucracy-interest groups can be explained by a resource dependence conceptualisation and have been shown to vary systematically across different circumstances (chapter 5). Second, interest group population dynamics, such as cooperation and competition, appear to influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions and need to be incorporated in a full model of resource dependence (chapter 6). Third, apart from the strategic choices implicit in a resource dependence reconceptualisation, bureaucracy-interest group interactions can sometimes be explained by anticipatory and habitual rationality as well (chapter 7). In this sense, the three empirical chapters provide complementary findings on bureaucracy-interest group interactions, which will be discussed below.

8.3.1 Why bureaucrats interact with interest groups

The first part of the empirical analysis (chapter 5) was primarily aimed at testing the explanatory model. With an overall R^2 of roughly 0.48, the model offers a satisfying explanation for observed variations in bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Bureaucracy-interest group interactions can thus be unpacked by measuring resource importance and resource concentration and by taking into account the influence of contextual dimensions on each of these elements. This finding justifies further development of the explanatory model.

In general, the contextual variables have a larger impact on the importance of the individual resources than that they have on the concentration of resources. Apparently, context influences the value civil servants attach to resources more than it influences the extent to which resources are available in their environment. Of these contextual variables, *interest representation regime* is an important explanatory variable. In corporatist regimes, the number of other types of organisations with which civil servants interact is somewhat smaller and the number of familiar interest groups is somewhat higher. Civil servants in pluralist interest representation regimes, like the UK, consider expertise, implementation capacity, and intermediation capacity to be more important than their colleagues in corporatist regimes. Although the importance of legitimacy significantly differs between the two types of interest representation regimes, the analyses could not reveal a direction in which the variance occurs.

A second contextual variable, *political-strategic insight*, is particularly significant in explaining the importance of different resources. When political-strategic insight

becomes more important, civil servants will consider implementation capacity, expertise, and intermediation capacity to be more important. Variation in *agency type* also influences the importance civil servants attribute to the different resources interest groups have to offer. Civil servants working at advisory agencies consider expertise to be less important than their colleagues in executive agencies. Civil servants working at these two different types of agencies also differ in the importance they attach to legitimacy. Yet, it is hard to tell from the analyses whether the UK or the Dutch civil servants consider it to be more important. The capacity to intermediate is less important for those working at advisory as opposed to those working for executive agencies.

The number of other types of organisations that civil servants cooperate with, as well as the number of interest groups that civil servants are familiar with, varies according to *policy area*. Variation in policy area is also related to the perceived importance of implementation capacity and legitimacy. Civil servants responsible for different policy areas value the importance of particular resources in different ways. They work together with varying numbers of other types of organisations such as advisory councils or research institutes and are familiar with varying numbers of interest groups. Variation in policy area is thus related to both resource concentration and resource importance.

Finally, *EU involvement* does not seem to be related to either the importance or the concentration of resources in the environment. Only in the case of legitimacy and intermediation capacity does EU involvement seem to be related to the value civil servants attach to this resource, but only to a very small extent.

An analysis of the interaction effects between the resource elements and contextual variables confirms the small yet significant impact of context in explaining variation in degree of dependence. What we can conclude is that the degree of dependence varies across these political dimensions and that some of the political-administrative dimensions matter more in determining this variation than others. What these analyses have shown is that bureaucracy-interest group interactions can be conceptualised as resource exchanges and that, via a systematic variation of contextual variables, the different nature - the degree of dependence - of bureaucracy-interest group interactions can be explained.

8.3.2 Interest group population dynamics matter

The empirical findings described above show that resource concentration is less influenced by the contextual dimensions specified in the analyses of chapter 5 than resource importance. It could very well be the case that resource concentration is influenced by contextual dimensions other than those included in the model. To provide insights into such potential effects, chapter 6 examined population dynamics that could influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions. This chapter examined several kinds of interaction patterns among interest groups, the resources they consider to be important, and how they value bureaucratic access as a means for exerting influence. In summary, the findings show that *cooperation* between interest groups involves either a relatively small or a relatively large set of interest groups. Interest groups in the UK tend to interact with a larger number of fellow interest groups than their Dutch colleagues. Interest groups also tend to

interact with a small number of other types of organisations, such as advisory councils, research institutes, or consultancy firms. In addition, interest groups experience relatively low levels of *competition* from each other. Such a perception of competition seems to vary according to the kinds of interest groups involved. Overall, however, perceptions of competition are not influenced by the independent variables included in the model, such as interest representation regime, receiving government grants, and variation in kinds of interest groups.

Interest groups argue that expertise and information are *important resources* they can bring to the negotiation table. Implementation capacity, on the other hand, is considered to be a less important resource. This is an interesting finding, given that civil servants tend to consider implementation capacity a relatively important reason to cooperate with interest groups. Interest groups naturally seek to obtain something in return for the resources they bring. What is particularly important to them, first of all, is to get access to public policy making. When we compare the *number of various political officials* with which interest groups interacted, we find relatively small differences. UK interest groups seem to interact with more senior civil servants and (under-)Ministers than their Dutch counterparts. The latter tend to interact with more middle-level civil servants. In terms of *frequency* and *perception*, interest groups tend to find civil servants more important and interact more often with them in trying to exert influence. The frequency of interactions with civil servants also varies across the different kinds of interest groups. And, on the whole, interest groups in the Netherlands consider civil servants to be more important in exerting influence and interact more often with them than their UK colleagues do. Generally, interest groups consider civil servants to be important in assuring access to public policy making and, thereby, in being able to actually provide input for policy proposals. In addition, bureaucratic access is important to gain a sense that their input is actually used to adapt policy proposals. Exerting influence is a two-stage process of getting access and actually delivering input for policy proposals that is taken seriously. And, civil servants are apparently more important to interest groups in this process than politicians are.

Finally, a major change in the environment of interest groups in the Netherlands and the UK, namely *Europeanisation*, does not seem to have had a big impact on national bureaucracy-interest group interactions to date. Civil servants report that they only to a limited extent include interest groups in their EU-related activities. Interest groups correspondingly indicate that they only to a limited extent experience either advantages or disadvantages from European regulations. Strategically using European regulations and directives at the national level is still a rare activity. Apparently, interest groups are not entirely aware of the strategic potential or impact of European regulations, directives and best practices. More generally, they seem to have difficulties adapting to the EU environment.

How do these findings relate to the resource dependence model developed in this study? The cooperation and competition patterns among interest groups are assumed to influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions by influencing resource concentration. This will eventually influence the degree of dependence that characterises bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Cooperation patterns reveal that civil servants may have alternative sources to reach out to when they seek resources, and they thus imply that resource concentration may be less severe

when interest groups cooperate. Competition, on the other hand, may result in fewer organisations having access to civil servants, and thus fewer organisations may be known by civil servants. This results in higher resource concentration.

A different interpretation of the importance of individual resources may also have consequences for the eventual degree of dependence. When interest groups are unaware of the importance of a particular resource, this may result in a higher degree of dependence, as the resource in question is not readily available to civil servants. It could thus enhance the bargaining position of interest groups when they are aware of the value of the resources they have to offer to civil servants. They could, as it were, try to 'sell their resources at a higher price,' and thereby heighten the degree of dependence. The apparent importance of bureaucratic access as a resource for interest groups, however, may mitigate the degree of dependence for civil servants. When civil servants are considered to be important, their bargaining position is stronger vis-à-vis interest groups. These findings thus reveal important contextual dimensions that are related to bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Particularly, this analysis draws attention to several population dynamics within the interest group environment that are important to consider in a full model of resource dependence explaining bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

8.3.3 Multiple rationalities at work

The foregoing findings are based on the assumption that interactions between civil servants and interest groups are based on strategic rationality to interact with an interest group capable of providing the resources the civil servant in question needs. Implicitly, this assumes an exit option. When an interest group cannot offer the resources a civil servant needs, why then continue to interact? Contemplating resource dependence over time, however, reveals that ending such relationships is not always a realistic option. The final set of analyses (chapter 7) therefore examined the possibility that resource dependence could be the result of *anticipatory* and *habitual rationality*. Anticipatory rationality indicates that civil servants, or interest groups, may not really want to interact. But, given the relevance of a particular organisation in the foreseeable future, or the willingness to reduce uncertainty, they are more or less 'forced' to interact. This is a strategic choice to interact despite a current unwillingness to do so. Second, bureaucracy-interest group interactions could also be a result of a choice made in the past that has turned into a routine, indicating habitual rationality. These interactions could still meet a previous, rationally decided-upon purpose, yet could also reflect a situation that is suboptimal.

The following findings indicate the existence of a mixture of different types of rationalities. First, civil servants tend to interact with a relatively familiar set of organisations. And, when asked why they interact, the reasons of 'we usually have interactions, so today as well' and 'consultation procedures' are important, in addition to the resources highlighted in the main resource dependence model. Contextual variables seem to affect these reasons as well. Consultation procedures prove to be more important in corporatist regimes than in more pluralist regimes, whereas 'usual interactions with interest groups' are more important to senior civil

servants in more pluralist regimes. In addition, civil servants involved in different policy areas value these reasons differently.

These reasons to interact, and the interaction patterns with familiar organisations, point in the direction of habitual rationality. Civil servants, however, also indicate that, should they want to circumvent certain interest groups, they would face difficulties in doing so. Interest groups may hold an important position in the nation's economy or may be too important as a spokesperson to ignore; there may be (in)formal requirements to interact, or there may always have been close cooperation. These reasons suggest a mixture of both habitual and anticipatory rationality. The (in)formal requirements and the existence of close cooperation suggest habitual rationality, whereas an interest group's role as spokesperson and in a nation's economy suggest anticipatory rationality. By conducting a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) with interview data, we observe that several indicators of habitual and anticipatory rationality are necessary conditions for durable interactions. Further analysis reveals that, for interest groups, some of these are jointly necessary, such as consultation procedures and the importance of civil servants as an entrance point to policy-making processes. In the case of civil servants, there is reason to suggest that consultation procedures, the need for legitimacy, and the influential position of interest groups may jointly explain their interactions with interest groups. In addition, an in-depth analysis illustrates the underlying mechanisms of the different types of rationality in concrete instances.

These three sets of analyses (testing the model, exploring interest group population dynamics and examining different types of rationalities) suggest that the combination of strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality determines the dependence relation between civil servants and interest groups. It is likely, then, that bureaucracy-interest group interactions result from a mixture of choices rather than a single type of rationality.

8.4 Going forward by looking back

The model developed in this study unravels how variation in the determining elements of an exchange relation – resource importance and resource concentration – explains variation in the degree of dependence that characterises bureaucracy-interest group interactions. The model and its analyses thus follow Mill's method of concomitant variation (Mill 1970[1843], see also chapter 4). The empirical analyses, however, do not yet enable us to predict the degree of dependence in a given situation, because they do not fully capture the impact of context and the interaction between the resource elements. In addition, the precise causal direction of the resource variables and the contextual variables needs to be developed further. And, we also require a more detailed analysis of the different types of rationality as it is yet unclear whether strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality are mutually exclusive or mutually reinforcing mechanisms to explain resource dependence.

So, the empirical analyses in this study offer promising findings but also suggest several ways to go forward, both in theoretical and methodological terms. A twofold theoretical issue that stands out after the analyses is how we could refine

the individual resource elements to better capture their meaning. And second, we need to better theorise and analyse the impact of context and interaction effects, both between context and resources and between the individual contextual variables. In methodological terms, the research design needs a better match with the model's explanatory potential. Below, I will briefly discuss these two issues.

8.4.1 Refining the model

What becomes clear when casting resource dependence theory in a rudimentary formula is that there are several gaps and missing links to properly develop a dependence model of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. Consider the formula that summarised the argument in chapter 3 once again:

$$D = \sum_{r=1}^N (I_r + C_i r + C_o r)$$

where,

D = degree of dependence of a given bureaucracy-interest group resource exchange relation

I = the importance of a particular resource (the value attributed to a particular resource)

C_i = inside concentration of a particular resource (the number of interest groups that control a particular resource)

C_o = outside concentration of a particular resource (the number of other organisations that control a particular resource)

A first obvious refinement is explicitly incorporating a ranking of the importance of resources (I_r) in the model. What is now included in the model is a dichotomous concept of importance (0 = unimportant; 1 = important), which incorporates a ranking at a more aggregate level. Usually, reference is made to the critical dependency of resources by ranking them in order of importance (Jacobs 1974; Bouwen 2004). What is thus necessary to capture the importance of resources better is either adding weights to the individual resources or measuring them by using a scale or index. In addition, we need to incorporate the variation of importance as a consequence of the impact of particular contextual factors.

Second, measuring the number of organisations, be they interest groups or other types of organisations, is not enough to capture the idea of concentration of resources. Concentration of, in this case, resources implies a relative measurement. That is, we cannot properly determine concentration when we do not know the boundaries of a total population. What should be included in the model is a ratio measurement rather than an absolute number of organisations. This means that the number of interest groups that are familiar to civil servants and capable of providing a particular resource should be divided by the total number of interest groups *capable* of delivering such a resource. This also applies to the number of other organisations with which civil servants may interact.

A possible complicating factor of incorporating such ratio terms is that usually there is no satisfying census of the interest group population. Furthermore, by simply adding up inside and outside concentration, we cannot properly isolate the concentration of resources within the interest group environment from the concentration in the total environment including other types of organisations. To

do this, a ratio of the concentration of resources within the interest group environment as opposed to the total environment (other organisations and interest groups) should be included in the model as well.

How these different ratio measurements (inside resource concentration as the proportion of familiar interest groups of the total population, and the proportion of the interest groups of the total environment) precisely relate to each other to constitute an overall measurement of resource concentration remains a subject for further study. In addition, the number of familiar interest groups will be influenced by the contextual factors specified in the model. But, as we have seen, they will also be influenced by competition and cooperation among interest groups. So, refining resource concentration by ratio terms is only a first step.

Third, according to the original resource dependence theory, a given dependence relation is characterised by resource importance and resource concentration. The theory, however, does not properly specify the linking term of 'and' between the individual resource elements. In the model developed in chapter 3, this linking term has been interpreted by an additive term. So, importance plus concentration are said to determine degree of dependence. Arguably, however, addition does not fully capture how the two elements relate to each other. An important aspect that is missing by interpreting the missing link in additive terms is a proper recognition of the interdependence, or interaction effects, between resource importance and resource concentration. To illustrate, when the importance of a resource is high, but concentration is low, the degree of dependence will be mitigated. Vice versa, when importance is low, yet concentration is high, the degree of dependence will be more severe. Or, when importance is low, concentration may not matter that much any more. A straightforward way of capturing this effect in the model is to include with the additive term a multiplicative term. A multiplicative term better reflects the interaction effects just mentioned and offers a starting point to capture the interaction effects between resource importance and resource concentration.

Finally, and I only touched upon this briefly so far, the interaction effects between context and the resource elements need to be included in the core dependence model. The interaction model in chapter 5 and the individual analyses of how importance and concentration vary under different circumstances suggest the importance of contextual factors to explain bureaucracy-interest group dependence relations. Further work needs to be done, however, to precisely unravel under what specific values of the contextual variables importance and concentration of resources vary and in which direction. The empirical analyses, in addition, suggest the importance of both macro- and meso-level contextual variables. The theoretical challenge here is to better distil the systemic effects of the contextual variables on the individual resource elements, the interaction among contextual variables, and their joint effect on the resource elements.

8.4.2 Matching analysis techniques with the model's needs

Essentially, a large part of the model is about explaining motives and how they vary across different circumstances. Using questionnaires and interviews is an appropriate way of revealing the individual considerations and reasons behind

bureaucracy-interest group interactions. The contextual variables, however, were measured by questionnaire items as well. For instance, functional differences between agency types were measured by asking respondents what type of agency they work for. Their answers were coded based on the classification derived from the literature. This way of measuring agency type draws heavily upon the perception of respondents, rather than being a careful coding based on the classification used in the literature of the agency types that were included in the sample. For the purpose and within the time frame set for this study, measurements like these can be justified. But they may be not as detailed as one would wish. The same applies to the most of the contextual variables. In general, we could conclude that context was measured in a somewhat simplified manner. An improvement would include measures based on careful classifications of institutional variables and content analysis to capture the impact of variation across policy areas better. Measuring the political salience of a policy area would require, for instance, extensive coding based on a wide array of documents (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Breeman et al 2008).

Although interaction effects have been included in the model, a more precise analysis of how contextual variables relate to each other and to the resource elements would be an improvement. Multi-level modelling or nested analysis, for instance, could be potentially useful in doing so. For example, civil servants all work within a ministry, executive agency or other type of organisation that is in turn nested within a particular interest representation regime. Such techniques would allow us to better capture the effects of the contextual variables on the degree of dependence.

In sum, empirical analysis of the contextual variables could thus be improved by other types of data collection and measurement techniques. In addition, resource concentration would also require supplementary analysis techniques as what is measured in this study is a perception of resource concentration rather than actual resource concentration. Network analyses should be helpful in doing this.

Second, unravelling a set of different types of choices underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions requires a research design that measures such interactions over time. The mix of survey analysis, counterfactual analysis, and QCA was designed to capture the different types of behavioural logics that underpin bureaucracy-interest group interactions. But this mix of analysis techniques serves only as an approximation of a long-term pattern of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. An important issue to note is that these analyses, particularly QCA, are likely to reveal only a subset of the entire set of mechanisms underlying bureaucracy-interest group behaviour. For a full analysis of such mechanisms, the selection of cases should also include those that reveal no or only a few interactions. Without such 'negative' cases, analysis of sufficiency is not possible, and thus cannot provide a complete analysis of the different types of choices underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions.

Although the QCA indeed points to the existence of different types of choices and the possibility that they jointly determine bureaucracy-interest group interactions, for a true measurement of such behavioural logics, a long-term research design is needed. When relying on QCA, one way to incorporate the element of time is to include in the analysis a potential sequence of indicators as

separate variables (Caren and Panofsky 2005). For instance, and purely hypothetically, one could assume that consultation procedures result in trust. According to Caren and Panofsky (2005), this option should be included as a separate condition in the analysis: if there are consultation procedures, trust will follow. Interestingly, this sounds similar to incorporating interaction terms in multiple regression language, provided that the interaction term only includes one-way effects. But rather than including the effect of time by assuming certain sequences in events, it is better to adopt a true longitudinal design, measuring these interactions over a certain period in time. The crucial challenge, then, is how to capture the differences between the mechanisms underlying the triad of strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality. Whereas fluctuation in degree of dependence at face value indicates strategic rationality, stability could conceal all three types of rationality. Further in-depth investigation of how resource concentration and resource importance evolve over time would reveal which of the individual rationalities, or a combination of, is involved in the resource exchange.

Finally, the use of counterfactual analysis points to the usefulness of a quasi-experimental design. Bureaucracy-interest group interactions based on anticipatory rationality (or capture) are difficult to measure due to their politically sensitive nature. Capture basically implies that certain interest groups have a disproportional amount of influence over civil servants. What is more, this disproportional amount of influence is usually undemocratically obtained; neither set of actors, i.e. bureaucrats and interest groups, is democratically elected. So, respondents are most likely to be somewhat reluctant to provide information on the occurrence of such a phenomenon. In this research, questions posed according to the logic of counterfactuals have been used to probe the existence of anticipatory rationality. Such counterfactual analysis points in the direction of quasi-experimental designs. These designs use scenarios or hypothetical examples to ask respondents what they usually would do when they encounter such situations. The interactive mode of many online surveys, as well as the possibility to control the order of the questions, allows more easy use of survey experiments. While such designs have their own problems (Gaines and Kuklinski 2006; Sniderman et al. 1996), they can be, with careful attention those problems, used to better distinguish the different types of choices underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions and to generate reliable findings on sensitive issues such as capture.

Although surveys and interviews are well suited to explore and examine individual motives and considerations to interact, they are less well suited to measure contextual variables. When used in comparative perspective, the model requires additional data collection and analysis techniques so as to provide a better explanation of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. In addition, to better measure how the resource elements vary along different political-administrative dimensions, techniques should be used that specifically address the interaction between variables measured at different levels of analysis and that can include multiple dependent variables. Finally, research designs focused on the individual types of choices underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions, in particular longitudinal designs and quasi-experimental designs, will be a valuable supplement to those that were applied in this study.

8.4.3 The model and its theoretical roots

The conceptual model based on resource dependence used here to explain bureaucracy-interest group interactions, as well as the empirical findings, results in interesting observations for the classic resource dependence model as well as for the literatures on interest group politics, bureaucratic politics, and longitudinal perspectives on decision-making.

The dependence model and classic resource dependence theory

The reconceptualisation of bureaucracy-interest group interactions in terms of resource exchange draws attention to several types of choices potentially underlying these interactions. They can individually explain the resource exchanges upon which bureaucracy-interest group interactions are based, or they could operate jointly. One interesting observation from this application of resource dependence theory is that it draws more attention to the deterministic element of context than the original version does. Pfeffer and Salancik (2003[1978]) emphasise the possibility of strategic choice and argue that this feature distinguishes their theory from fellow contextual theories. Recent applications of resource exchange to explain access of interest groups to government institutions, in particular those related to EU interest representation, also emphasise this strategic decision-making aspect. By identifying what civil servants need most, the access of the interest groups capable of delivering these resources is explained. In other words, “the organisations involved in the exchange [of resources, CP] make an implicit or explicit cost-benefit analysis on the basis of which they decide with whom to interact” (Bouwen 2002, 368). But too much attention to strategic choice denies the impact of context, the other determinant of resource exchange relations. Beyers and Kerremans (2007) show, for instance, that dependence on resources in their immediate environment creates difficulties for interest groups when they try to lobby EU institutions.

While the focus is still on resources, context seems to be a decisive element in explaining the available options of how to strategically exploit such resources. The resource dependence model developed in this study points precisely to the importance of context. This is true not only in determining strategic rationality, but also for the two rival types of behavioural logics: anticipatory and habitual rationality. Context may set the boundaries for strategic choice as well as induce habitual or anticipatory rational choices. The scope to strategically choose to interact with interest groups or civil servants (depending on the perspective taken) seems to be very much determined by the context in which these interactions occur. Demarcating and understanding context is thus required to understand the extent to which these actors may strategically decide upon their interactions. In the end, resource dependence theory may be more deterministic than it is argued to be by its founders (Aldrich and Pfeffer 1976; Pfeffer and Salancik 2003[1978]).

So, resource dependence theory could be defined as the inter-organisational version of Herbert Simon’s (1997[1947]) intra-organisational concept of bounded rationality. Just as an organisation enhances or restricts an individual’s rationality, so may the political-administrative environment restrict or alter the strategic choices of bureaucrats or interest groups to obtain the resources they need.

The dependence model and bureaucratic politics

Designed to integrate various explanations to systematically compare bureaucracy-interest group interactions, the model also raises interesting questions about each of its theoretical foundations. Consider the literature on bureaucratic politics. An important implication of these analyses is that bureaucracy-interest group interactions are a key aspect of bureaucratic politics. Often, bureaucratic politics has studied political-administrative relations or inter-agency strife. They have studied how individual motives of bureaucrats relate to growing budgets or growing agencies (Downs 1967; Mueller 2003, 359-384; Niskanen 1971; Tullock 1995), or incorporated inter-agency strife as a factor to explain decision making (Allison and Zelikow 1999; Huntington 1961). Only very few studies (Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman 1981; Carpenter 2001; Suleiman 1974, for instance) have included relations between interest groups and bureaucrats in models of bureaucratic behaviour. These relations, which I have termed the external part of bureaucratic politics, are important in understanding the internal part and vice versa. Interactions with interest groups could serve agency autonomy and are thus important in understanding inter-agency competition. In addition, such interactions could very well enhance a bureaucracy's position towards a political superior (Carpenter 2001). On the other hand, the kind of political leadership which civil servants experience, and the resulting political-administrative relationship, is likely to influence bureaucracy-interest group interactions as well, since they determine, among other things, a civil servant's room to manoeuvre. But not many studies explicitly incorporate interactions with interest groups in understanding the phenomenon of bureaucratic politics. The findings generated by this study suggest the relevance of various political-administrative dimensions in explaining variation in bureaucracy-interest group interactions. And, these contextual factors are equally important in explaining the larger phenomenon of bureaucratic politics. The resource dependence model thus draws attention to the importance of interactions with interest groups in studies of bureaucratic politics, as well as the necessity for systematic comparative analyses of bureaucratic politics as a broader research area.

The dependence model and interest group politics

The analyses of the interest group environment have important implications for the literature on interest group politics. First, interest representation in Europe is not only an issue of lobbying Brussels. It is also an issue of how national interest groups are coping with Brussels back home. In other words, we need to better understand what the consequences are for interest group behaviour at the national level arising from the multi-level governance system of the EU. Currently, most attention in the literature on interest representation in the EU is concerned with the EU governance level (see, for instance, Broscheid and Coen 2007; Bouwen and McCown 2007; Eising 2007). Europe, at least in an objective sense, is becoming more important; therefore, it is not surprising that most attention is paid to EU interest representation. However, national member states will remain important in the EU in the near future, if not indefinitely. The national governance level thus remains important for exerting influence, and the focus of interest groups will accordingly remain to a great extent on the national level. From that perspective, we

need to better understand how national interest groups and national bureaucracy-interest group interactions are influenced by the process of Europeanisation. Are interest groups really too tied to their immediate environment to turn their gaze to Brussels (Beyers and Kerremans 2007). Or, more generally, what difficulties do interest groups face when incorporating the additional level of governance into their strategies in the national capitals? In other words, why do interest groups cope with the multi-level governance systems as they do today? For a true understanding of interest representation in a multi-level context, the influence of the EU on national interest representation is a vital additional element in studying EU interest representation.

This brings me to another implication of the analyses on interest group population dynamics. These analyses reveal a gap in the literature on interest representation regimes in corporatist countries. The literature on corporatism mostly concerns the bargaining mechanisms which should result in effective macro- and social-economic policy making (Molina and Rhodes 2002; Siaroff 1999; Schmitter 1989; Visser and Hemerijck 1997) rather than a systematic analysis of interest representation in a broader sense (but see, for instance, the social movement literature). Yet, very often, issues relevant to social-economic policy or macro-economic policy touch on more than only classic labour and public-finance issues. Corporate responsibility, environmental issues, ethnically diverse societies, to name a few, also very much relate to the economic life of a national economy. The major parties currently involved in social-economic policy making are not always fully equipped to address such issues, as they lack the knowledge about and access to specific issues or groups within society. Understanding why such systems remain relatively closed to other types of interest groups, or why the role of such interest groups is different from the traditional social partners, requires a broader focus than decision making in the institutions of tripartite bargaining. Studying influence in decision making or evaluating policy outcomes to explain interest group involvement in corporatist regimes is not enough to understand all aspects of interest representation.

Studying interest representation from a group perspective may help to provide additional insights about who gets access and who does not (Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Lowery and Gray 2004; Aldrich et al 1994). Government-induced restrictions for access may not only determine which interest groups gather around the negotiation table, but will have consequences for interest group communities and mobilisation as well (Lowery, Poppelaars, and Berkhout 2008). In addition, such a broader view on interest representation may help to explain from whom traditional interest groups experience competition, and, if so, in what way. Studies on decision making in corporatist regimes would clearly benefit from such a broader perspective to explain the involvement of interest groups. In other words, changing one's perspective in explaining a similar phenomenon may reveal additional insights about how interest representation in corporatist regimes works.

The dependence model and decision making over time

The conclusion from the final analyses in chapter 7 – resource exchanges determining bureaucracy-interest group interactions are based on multiple rationalities - reveals an interesting finding related to the literature on longitudinal

perspectives on decision making. Resource exchanges based on anticipatory rationality could result from anticipated consequences in the near future. Resource exchanges based on habitual choices may be a consequence of decisions in the past. Both past choices and anticipated (dis)advantages, however, result in similar interactions today. That is, both the heritage of the past and the shadow of the future have similar locked-in effects on contemporary interactions. This observation points to the difficulty in defining the theoretical heritage of the underlying mechanisms of locked-in effects. The main problem in doing so seems to lie in the focus of each strand of literature. Whereas historical institutionalism tends to focus much more on how context and past choices may restrict or stimulate institutional development in a certain direction, evolutionary rational choice perspectives focus on individual motives. So, we need a better understanding of how motives and context relate to each other to unravel the multiple rationalities determining individual's motives. What the model and the empirical findings of this study suggest is the need for better incorporating the delicate balance between motives and context in studying decision making.

8.5 A joint venture of motives and context

In order to truly understand bureaucracy-interest group interactions, the resource dependence model highlights the importance of both individual motives and context to explain individual's motives. In particular, the delicate balance between the two, or put differently, their interaction, is crucially important. Such interaction effects are not only relevant for a better understanding of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. The dual importance of motives and context also results in several avenues for further research, which are related to the implications for the broader strands of literature discussed in the previous section. When one argues, however, that the interaction between individual motives and context is important, the question that immediately comes to mind is why actor-centred institutionalism is not a sufficient theoretical framework to advance research in these areas, compared to the model developed in this study. I will address the relationship between actor-centred institutionalism and the resource dependence model in more detail, and then I will elaborate on future research questions in the fields of interest groups politics, bureaucratic politics and institutionalism.

Actor-centred institutionalism (Mayntz and Scharpf 1995) proceeds from the assumption that interactions between purposeful actors are shaped by the institutional settings in which they occur. Such an interaction-oriented focus helps to explain past policy choices and contributes to formulating recommendations to design institutions so as to develop effective and efficient policies in the future (Scharpf 1997, 36-43). Or, in Scharpf's words, actor-centred institutionalism is "about the capacity of different types of institutional structures to deal effectively with different types of policy problems" (Scharpf 1997, 49). Thus, in actor-centred institutionalism, the focus is on explaining institutions' existence and effect by reference to the initial strategic choices of actors. For instance, corporatist arrangements in newly-created policy areas might be the result of conscious choice. Politicians could create these corporatist patterns, for instance, to protect their

newly-created policy programs from radical changes that their successors may make once in office (Blom-Hansen 2001). Here, a corporatist arrangement results from conscious choice rather than from an embedded organising principle, reflecting a functionalist perspective (Pierson 2000; Thelen 2003). In this sense, actor-centred institutionalism parallels the discussion on a long-term perspective of resource exchange. All exchanges are assumed to be the result of a deliberate cost-benefit analysis of which resources to obtain. This may even be the case in routines that started their life as a rational choice of the individuals who developed them.

The resource dependence model developed in this study resembles actor-centred institutionalism in its point of departure. The underlying assumption of the model is that interactions between bureaucrats and interest groups will vary under different circumstances. Thus, context determines the importance of resources as well as the concentration of resources, which together determine the degree of dependence. In this respect, the resource dependence model shares the assumption with actor-centred institutionalism that interactions between purposive actors are shaped by the context in which they take place (see also Scott 2001, 176). A major difference between the two, however, is their focus. Whereas actor-centred institutionalism focuses on explaining past policy choices so as to design better institutions, the resource dependence model focuses on how interactions between actors vary under different circumstances. Implicitly, the assumption is that by understanding context, we can adapt our behaviour. The focus is not on institutions, as it is in actor-centred institutionalism, but is rather on the interactions between organisations, which may be either ad hoc or long-term.¹

8.5.1 Multiple avenues for future research

The main purpose of the resource dependence model is to explain individual or repetitive interactions between bureaucracies and interest groups systematically but not yet to link them to policy outcomes. In addition, it reveals how individual's choices are either restricted or enhanced by contextual dimensions. In that sense, although not explicitly relying on game-theoretic principles, we could define bureaucracy-interest group interactions in terms of a specific game, as the interests of the purposive actors are determined by the resources he/she needs and to what extent they are available in the environment. Yet, context may not solely influence these interactions; actors may strategically adapt to the context as well. In other words, the dependence model steers a middle course between (historical) institutionalism and actor-centred institutionalism. It does not explain the effectiveness of certain institutional arrangements by reference to either individual choices or restrictions resulting from the past. It explains how individual motives will be influenced by the context in which they occur, by either restricting options or providing opportunities for strategic decision making. It is precisely this delicate balance between context and motives that generates interesting new research questions. I will briefly discuss several of them below.

¹ One could argue, however, about whether or not such interactions should be interpreted as institutions. I do not define them as institutions, as these interactions reflect individual decision making. But in the case of formalised interactions, such as consultation procedures, I concur that defining these interactions as institutions could be appropriate.

Capture: an imbalance between resources

Let me first consider the phenomenon of capture lying on the fine line between bureaucratic politics and interest group politics. So far, scholars have argued that there is indeed reason to conclude that some interest groups are so powerful that bureaucrats may become too dependent on them in formulating regulations and monitoring behaviour. Interestingly, as we have already seen, scholars also point to the difficulty in distinguishing capture from routine behaviour (Carpenter 2001; Yackee 2005). As Wilson (2000[1989]) pointed out, a large proportion of approvals for pricing in the shipping industry could simply constitute a routine designed by bureaucrats to cope with enormous workload, rather than being a true case of capture. What may seem to be regulation solely in favour of a particular industry may turn out to be an effective routine to cope with the daily overload of work or a learning strategy. Regulations or decisions that mostly reflect the position of the monopolist or semi-monopolists in the industry may thus also represent a strategic choice that is limited by future consequences (anticipatory rationality), when seen from a bureaucratic perspective. Or, as we have seen in chapter 7, civil servants may quite deliberately allow organisations a certain extent of influence so as to better design future regulations.

The main difficulty lies both in distinguishing and theorising the differences in motives. As Wilson suggested, capture may result from a situation in which bureaucrats at regulatory agencies do not have enough resources at their disposal to effectively resist the influence of certain interest groups (Wilson 2000[1989]). One could also describe this situation as a severe degree of dependence. Carefully studying the resources and their availability in the agency's environment and subsequently determining the nature of the interaction may help to address the interplay between context and motives. Adopting such an approach should result in a more precise assessment of interactions between regulatory agencies and interest groups and how the political context may influence these interactions across cases and over time. Once we understand the nature of these interactions more precisely, we can address a potential asymmetry in dependence better as well.

Interest group populations in corporatist regimes

The model also suggests that meso-level contextual factors in both the bureaucrats' and interest groups' environments are important in explaining variance of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. For the interest group environment, this means that population level variables are important. This study has explored the impact of patterns of cooperation and competition on the nature of bureaucracy-interest group interactions. More generally, patterns of competition and characteristics of interest group communities have been shown not only to affect the sheer existence or survival chances of organisations but also how they try to exert influence (Hojnacki 1998, Gray and Lowery 1996). Not much research has been done into such population dynamics in the Netherlands (but see van Waarden 1992; Wilts 2001). Yet, such mechanisms may help to explain limited access or the characteristics of the interest group population, alongside the traditional focus on institutional arrangements and on interest group strategies. Such an approach to studying interest representation in the Netherlands requires, however, a dataset which at minimum provides a satisfactory overview of the interest group

population. There are several databases that include interest groups (such as the Pietersen Almanak or the Chamber of Commerce database used in this study), but they do not provide a valid overview of the population as a whole. They tend to be incomplete and outdated. And, as they are not designed to serve research on interest groups, they do not include relevant information other than contact details. Such a comprehensive database is necessary to conduct population-related research and to be able to compare different national interest group populations. To genuinely compare, we indeed need databases of interest group populations that are equivalent. And this deficit is the major obstacle to comparative research in interest group politics in most European countries. A first attempt has been made to construct such a database in this study, yet much more work needs to be done to construct a sustainable database that is accessible for scientists, policy makers and the public. Such databases would allow for studying interest representation in corporatist countries from a different and novel perspective. For instance, by studying the process of 'influence production', we could be able to determine which contextual factors are important and how, for instance, community dynamics may influence the exercise of influence (Lowery and Gray 2004), or how policy outcomes or policy plans influence interest groups' strategies (Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Leech et al 2001). In addition, such a perspective may enable comparative research, as equivalent mechanisms in the individual stages of interest representation can be better compared (Lowery, Poppelaars and Berkhout 2008).

In sum, the model developed here points to the relevance of the development of databases of interest group populations in corporatist regimes, which allow better comparative research. This, in turn, would enable the study of context and population dynamics to supplement the decision-making studies that prevail in the corporatist literature on interest representation.

Past choices versus anticipated consequences

The set of different types of choices that the model reveals, and in particular, anticipatory and habitual rationality, poses challenging research questions both in theoretical and methodological terms. To be precise, the challenge concerns the extent to which we can, both theoretically and methodologically, really distinguish between these different types of choices. It goes beyond the scope of this study to elaborately discuss these issues. Yet, a first exploration will suffice to point in the direction of new research questions. Habitual behaviour, strictly speaking, reflects an unconscious set of actions designed to meet a rationally decided-upon goal (Simon 1997[1947]). But it may reflect a suboptimal situation as well. Path dependency usually refers to a suboptimal situation where current constellations of institutional arrangements are too costly to change. So, there will be no incentives for either of the actors involved to change, as this will negatively influence their interests (Pierson 2004). This reasoning results from an efficiency perspective. Yet, there are more situations in which such high costs create locked-in effects. That is, when the parties involved in an institutional arrangement are too useful, too powerful or too legitimate, there are also no incentives to change (Mahoney 2000). Seen in retrospect, we can indeed argue that a particular institutional arrangement reflects a suboptimal situation in which the interests of a few stakeholders are decisive in maintaining the status quo, rather than a broader set of stakeholders, as

economic equilibria usually suggest. But what happens when we examine such an arrangement only at a single point in time? How can we distinguish an optimal situation from a suboptimal one? The literature on historical institutionalism suggests that such suboptimal situations are rather irreversible and only open to change by major outside forces (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Pierson 2004; Kuipers 2004). But a suboptimal situation may be open to change by a series of smaller incremental changes. Capture, for instance, may be a suboptimal situation for bureaucrats, but does not necessarily have to be heavily institutionalised. It could well reflect a pattern of cooperative behaviour in which a consciously calculated asymmetry is allowed by those who are most dependent. The calculated risk involves a situation that may not be entirely efficient, fair or democratic, but given the circumstances is still the most strategic option. This does not mean, however, that such a suboptimal pattern of cooperation cannot be changed without major external pressure. In the example mentioned in this study, when regulatory agencies lack certain resources to face large corporations before court, hiring one or two top quality lawyers would make a difference. Thus, suboptimality may not be as resistant as the path dependence literature suggests.

This example reveals the difficulty in precisely assessing the nature of a given institutional arrangement. A suboptimal equilibrium could result from a variety of equilibria at a given point in time in the past. Contingency is thus an important factor in explaining how and why a suboptimal equilibrium may arise. Once set, similar negative feedback mechanisms, as in the case of optimal equilibria, result in inertia. One option in distinguishing the difference between optimal and suboptimal equilibria could be to determine the nature of the behavioural logics underlying the institutional arrangement. A suboptimal equilibrium is likely to meet the interests of a relatively small set of influential stakeholders, whereas an optimal equilibrium meets the interests of a broader set of stakeholders. Depending on the constellation of stakeholders, a suboptimal situation may be sensitive to small changes or only respond to major external disturbances.

The focus thus should be on the set of stakeholders and the nature of their interactions to explain the nature of a given institutional arrangement. Understanding the nature of such situations, in this case bureaucracy-interest group interactions, may help in explaining the possibility of change. That is, an understanding of whether strategic, anticipatory, habitual rationality, or a combination of these three types of choices, is operating could help in determining the nature of such interactions. Negative feedback to retain a current situation may result from sunk costs, stimuli generated by the activity or the institution itself, or too high costs in changing routines (Simon 1997[1947], Pierson 2004). But they also may be grounded in *anticipated* costs as well. This involves asking, what kind of behaviour will my decision invoke from the organisations with which I interact today and need in the foreseeable future? That is, when a civil servant anticipates that he/she needs a particular organisation in the near future, he/she is likely to decide to cooperate today, although he/she would not have done so had there only been a one-off interaction. So, anticipated choices may result in suboptimal situations today, which may be the result of a perfectly rational decision rather than an institutionalised choice from the past, as historical institutionalism would argue. Although anticipated costs and consequences from the past may result in similar

locked-in effects, understanding their different natures is important to understand how to bring about changes and improvements to a given situation. The balance of context (the domain of historical institutionalism) and motives (the domain of (evolutionary) rational choice) could help in determining the differences between strategic, anticipatory, and habitual rationality underlying bureaucracy-interest group interactions, or institutions more generally. Such an assessment could help to understand how a legacy of the past interacts with the shadow of the future to explain the nature of today's interactions and the potential for institutional change.

8.6 Steering a course between friends and foes

This research systematically unravelled the motives of bureaucrats and interests groups to interact with each other and showed that these motives are grounded in multiple rationalities by examining resource exchanges between these two sets of actors. These resource exchanges have been shown to vary systematically along different political-administrative dimensions. This study has brought a new model and empirical findings to bear on a phenomenon that has often been part of broader areas of research, but has been rarely systematically studied on its own. Understanding why bureaucrats interact with certain types of interest groups and, eventually, how these interactions contribute to policy outcomes, is important. This is the case not only in fully developed western democracies, but even more so in regimes that are shifting towards democracy. Systematic knowledge of this phenomenon thus adds transparency to interactions between two unelected yet influential sets of actors in public policy making and public governance.

So, in the end, why do bureaucrats interact with certain interest groups, but do not or only do so to a lesser extent with others? Their choices to interact are determined by what they need from particular interest groups to fulfil their role in public policy or, to paint a bleaker picture, to meet their own interests. The importance of these needs and the availability of resources in the interest groups' environment will determine the set of interest groups with which civil servants interact and the nature of their interactions. Steering a course between friends and foes is thus a matter of deliberately picking and choosing what one needs, strategically anticipating what future consequences of interactions will entail, or (un)consciously following a path carved out by past experiences and choices. All of this may be either restricted or enhanced by the political-administrative dimensions along which the course will be or has been set.

Appendix I Questionnaires

International Public Governance Survey 2007 - UK

1. First, we would like to know which **type of public sector organisation** you work for. Which of the following labels does fit your organisation best?
- ☐ Ministerial department
 - ☐ Executive agency
 - ☐ Regulatory body
 - ☐ Non-permanent project organisation
 - ☐ Other (please specify)

2. In which **issue area** are you involved (choose answer which applies best)?



1

The next set of questions are about interactions between civil servants working for the national government and national interest organisations. By national interest organisations we mean organisations that operate at the national level and represent their own or other peoples' interests. Any kind of organisation could in principle be an interest organisation, such as labour unions, private firms, public institutions, single issue groups or stakeholders in general.

3. With how many of such national interest organisations did you interact last year (interactions can include anything from informal email or telephone contacts to formal consultation meetings related to the field you work in)?
- ☐ None
 - ☐ 1-5 organisations
 - ☐ 6-10 organisations
 - ☐ 11-15 organisations
 - ☐ over 15 organisations
4. What were the most important reasons you did **not** interact with national interest organisations last year (check all that apply)?
- ☐ There are no relevant interest organisations to the field I work in
 - ☐ Interactions with interest organisations are not relevant for my activities in the organisation
 - ☐ My colleagues usually interact with interest organisations
 - ☐ It is uncommon to interact with interest organisations
 - ☐ Interest organisations are not a legitimate partner to interact with in my field
 - ☐ My organisation disagrees too strongly with the relevant interest organisations
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
5. What are the **main** reasons you interacted with these national interest organisations last year (check all that apply)?
- ☐ They have expertise we need
 - ☐ They can help to implement our policies
 - ☐ They can provide political support for our policies
 - ☐ They are intermediaries of difficult to reach target populations
 - ☐ It is common practice to work with interest organisations
 - ☐ My predecessor did it and therefore do I
 - ☐ We are required by regulation to consult with them
 - ☐ Other (please specify)

1 Drop down menu includes the following answer options: foreign affairs (excluding EU affairs); EU affairs; Development aid; Defence; Foreign trade; Domestic commerce; Macroeconomics; Taxes; Labour market; Social welfare; Wales, Scotland, N. Ireland affairs; Sub-national public administration; Urban development; Public housing; Minority affairs; Immigration; Civil rights; Public safety; Crime; Law, judiciary; Public Health; General Welfare; Sports; Education; Science and Technology; Culture; Transport; Water management; Spatial planning; Public works; Environment; Agriculture; Fishery.

6. Did you or the interest organisations usually take the initiative to interact last year?
- ☐ I always
 - ☐ I mostly did
 - ☐ Both parties did equally often
 - ☐ They mostly did
 - ☐ They always did
7. How many of the national interest organisations with which you interacted last year **were already familiar** to you before last year?
- ☐ None
 - ☐ 1-5 organisations
 - ☐ 6-10 organisations
 - ☐ 11-15 organisations
 - ☐ Over 15 organisations
8. If you think of the previous year, would it have been possible **to circumvent familiar interest organisations** case your organisation did not want to interact with them?
- This would have been...
- ☐ Always possible
 - ☐ Very often possible
 - ☐ Often possible
 - ☐ Not very often possible
 - ☐ Never possible
9. Please indicate the **main** reason it could have been **difficult to circumvent** familiar interest organisations.
- ☐ They have a too important role in the nation's economy
 - ☐ There has always been a close cooperation
 - ☐ They are too important a spokesperson to neglect
 - ☐ Other interest organisations cannot provide us with what we want
 - ☐ Our cooperation is a routine that is hard to change
 - ☐ We are required by regulation to consult them
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
10. To the best of your knowledge, do you know of any other national interest organisations relevant to the issue area you are involved in **other than those you interacted with** ?
- ☐ There are no others
 - ☐ There are 1-5 others
 - ☐ There are 6-10 others
 - ☐ There are 11-15 others
 - ☐ There are over 15 others
 - ☐ I don't know
11. What are the main reasons you did **not** interact with these other national interest organisations (check all that apply)?
- ☐ They do not have expertise we need
 - ☐ They cannot help to implement our policies
 - ☐ They cannot provide political support for our policies
 - ☐ They are not intermediaries of difficult to reach target populations
 - ☐ It is uncommon to work with interest organisations
 - ☐ My predecessor did not do so and therefore I don't either
 - ☐ Other (please specify)

12. With how many of the following organisations did you interact last year?

	none	1-5	6-10	11-15	more than 15
Advisory councils	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Consultancy firms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
University research institutes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other research institutes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ideologically oriented think tanks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technically oriented think tanks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Executive public agencies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. With which type of organisation did you usually interact last year with respect to the following purposes?

	I usually interacted with:
To obtain expertise	2
For the ability to implement policies	
To get support for our policies	
To function as intermediary of target populations	

The next questions are on the **external actors** with whom senior civil servants may interact. Below you find 14 of such actors.

14. Which external actors are **increasingly relevant** to the practicing of the senior civil service profession? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ National parliament
- ☐ Ministers / deputy ministers
- ☐ Personal advisers to ministers / deputy ministers
- ☐ Commercial (management) consultancy firms
- ☐ Subnational authorities
- ☐ The media
- ☐ The Courts - national level
- ☐ The Courts - European level (ECJ, ECHR)
- ☒ Interest organisations - national level
- ☒ Interest organisations - European level
- ☐ The European Parliament
- ☐ The European Commission
- ☐ Other international organisations
- ☐ Citizens
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2

Drop down menu includes the following answer options: Advisory councils; Consultancy firms; University Research institutes; Other Research institutes; Ideologically oriented think tanks; Technically oriented think tanks; Executive public agencies; None of these.
Note: answer options in grey do not belong to this study.

15. Which external actors are **decreasingly important** to the practicing of the senior civil service profession?
(Check all that apply)

- ☐ National parliament
- ☐ Ministers / deputy ministers
- ☐ Personal advisers to ministers / deputy ministers
- ☐ Commerical (management) consultancy firms
- ☐ Subnational authorities
- ☐ The media
- ☐ The Courts - national level
- ☐ The Courts - European level (ECJ, ECHR)
- ☐ Interest organisations - national level
- ☒ **Interest organisations - European level**
- ☒ **The European Parliament**
- ☐ The European Commission
- ☐ Other international organisations
- ☐ Citizens
- ☐ Other (please specify)

16. How would you characterise the **interaction** with the following **actors**?

	Very constructive	Somewhat constructive	Neutral	Somewhat conflictuous	Very conflictuous	I don't know
National parliament	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ministers / deputy ministers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal advisers to ministers / deputy ministers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Commerical (management) consultancy firms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Subnational authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Courts - national level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Courts - European level (ECJ, ECHR)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interest organisations - national level	☒	☒	☒	☐	☒	☐
Interest organisations - European level	☒	☒	☒	☐	☒	☐
The European Parliament	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The European Commission	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other international organisations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Citizens	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Note: answer options in grey do not belong to this study.

The next questions are on the impact of the EU on the work of senior civil servants and on their cooperation with interest organisations.

19. To what degree is your work affected by the EU?

- ☐ To a very high degree
- ☐ To a high degree
- ☐ To a reasonable degree
- ☐ To a limited degree
- ☐ Not at all

20. How relevant is each of the following **EU-related activities** to your job?

	Very relevant	Reasonably relevant	Neutral	Not so relevant	Not relevant at all
Preparation of national input for EU-level meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participation in working groups for the Council of Ministers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participation in meetings organised by the European Commission (e.g. expert meetings)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Informal consultations by/with colleagues from other member states	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transposition of European policies into national legislation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Involving subnational authorities in EU-decision making and policy making	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Involving national interest organisations in EU-level decision making and policy making	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. What **percentage of your working time** per week do you spend on average on the abovementioned EU-related activities in total?

27. When I interacted with national interest organisations last year, I had to **take into account EU regulations** to a...

- ☐ very significant extent
- ☐ somewhat significant extent
- ☐ not significant, not insignificant extent
- ☐ somewhat insignificant extent
- ☐ very insignificant extent
- ☐ not applicable

28. How often did national interest organisations **refer to EU policy** while you interacted with them last year?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ 1-25% of the time
- ☐ 26-50% of the time
- ☐ 51-75% of the time
- ☐ 76-100% of the time
- ☐ Not applicable

Note: questions 17, 18, 22-26 were omitted, because they do not belong to this study nor do the answer options in grey.

29. EU interest organisations are organisations that operate at the EU level and are usually not affiliated with a particular EU member state, such as *The European round table of industrialists* or *The platform of European social NGOs*. With how many of such **EU interest organisations** did you interact last year?
- ☐ None
 - ☐ 1-5 EU interest organisations
 - ☐ 6-10 EU interest organisations
 - ☐ 11-15 EU interest organisations
 - ☐ more than 15 EU interest organisations

30. What were the main reasons you interacted with these EU level interest organisations (check all that apply)?
- ☐ They have expertise we need
 - ☐ They can help to implement our policies
 - ☐ They can provide political support for our policies
 - ☐ They are intermediaries of difficult to reach target populations
 - ☐ It is common practice to work with EU interest organisations
 - ☐ My predecessor did it and therefore do I
 - ☐ We are required by regulation to consult with EU interest organisations
 - ☐ Other (please specify)

We are now approaching the completion of the questionnaire. A few questions follow regarding your previous and current position.

31. Do you have working experience of more than one year with an organisation other than the one you presently work for?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
32. In what type(s) of organisation(s) was this working experience?
- ☐ A ministerial department
 - ☐ An executive agency
 - ☐ A regulatory body
 - ☐ A non-permanent project organisation
 - ☐ A private sector organisation - not for profit
 - ☐ A private sector organisation - for profit
 - ☐ An EU-institution
 - ☐ A non-EU international organisation (e.g. the UN, NATO, World Bank, IMF, OECD)
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
33. Is one or more of the organisations you previously worked for a **stakeholder** in the policy area you are currently working in?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know

35. What **grade** does your current position correspond to?



3

3 Drop down menu includes the following answer options:

Grade 0 (Cabinet Secretary); Grade 1 (Permanent Secretary); Grade 1A (Second Permanent Secretary); Grade 2 (Director-General, Deputy Secretary, or equivalent); Grade 3 (Director, Under Secretary or equivalent); Grade 4; Grade 5 (Assistant Secretary, Divisional Manager, Deputy Director or equivalent) Grade 6; Grade 7.

Note: question 34 is omitted, because it does not belong to this study.

We finish with a number of short standard questions.

39. What is your **age**?
40. What is your **gender**?
☐ Female
☐ Male
41. Do you consider yourself belonging to an **ethnic minority**?
☐ No
☐ Yes
44. What is your gross monthly **salary** (GBP)?
☐ Less than 2,730 GBP
☐ 2,370 – 3,070 GBP
☐ 3,070 – 3,410 GBP
☐ 3,410 – 3,750 GBP
☐ 3,750 – 4,100 GBP
☐ 4,100 – 4,440 GBP
☐ 4,400 – 4,780 GBP
☐ 4,780 – 5,120 GBP
☐ 5,120 – 5,460 GBP
☐ More than 5,460 GBP
☐ No answer
45. Are you a member of a **political party**?
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ No answer
46. What is the main reason you do not wish to answer this question?
47. Do you have further substantive comments?
48. Do you have comments on the questionnaire?
49. We are considering organising a symposium to present the findings of this survey to our respondents and to discuss the outcome. Would you in principle be interested in attending such a symposium?
☐ Yes
☐ No
50. Would you be available for an interview on the topics of this survey at a later point?
☐ Yes
☐ No

If you wish so, we can e-mail you a research report containing the findings of this survey.

51. Would you be interested in receiving such a research report?
☐ Yes
☐ No

Note: questions 42 and 43 were omitted, because they do not belong to this study.

Interest Representation and Public Governance

This questionnaire is part of an academic research project concerning the role of private and (semi-)public organisations in public policy making and implementation.

1. What is the name of your organisation?

2. How would you label your organisation?

3. Is your organisation a member of an umbrella organisation?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Our organisation is the umbrella organisation
☐ Not applicable

4. Please give the name of this umbrella organisation below.

5. Does your organisation receive government subsidies?

- ☐ No, we don't
☐ yes, 1-25% of our budget consists of government subsidies
☐ yes, 26-50% of our budget consists of government subsidies
☐ yes, 51-75% of our budget consists of government subsidies
☐ yes, 76-100% of our budget consists of government subsidies
☐ I don't know

6. How much time do you spend at interest representation? By interest representation we mean directly interacting with policy makers, but also exerting influence via the media or mobilising members or the general public.

- ☐ not at all
☐ 1-25% of the time
☐ 26-50% of the time
☐ 51-75% of the time
☐ 76-100% of the time

7. What is the **most important** reason you do **not** engage in interest representation?

- ☐ Our umbrella organisation represents our interests
☐ We do not have enough time to do so
☐ We do not think this is useful
☐ We are not an interest organisation
☐ Other (please specify)

1

Drop down menu includes the following answer options: Private firm; Employers' sectoral organisation; Employers' peak organisation; Professional association; Labour union; Public Institution; Association of Public Institution; Research Institute; Think tank; Advisory body; Non governmental organisation; Voluntary organisation; Other.

Part of this research concerns national interest organisations. By national interest organisations we mean organisations that pursue their interests or the interests of other people or issues they represent and operate at the national level. Various organisations may in principle be defined as interest organisations, such as labour unions, private firms and ad hoc single issue groups as well as public institutions and stakeholders more generally.

The next set of questions concerns interactions with other national interest organisations involved in similar topics as your organisation is. Interactions can include anything from informal telephone or email contacts to formal consultation meetings or actual cooperation.

8. With how many of such national interest organisations did you interact last year?
- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-5 other interest organisations
- ☐ 6-10 other interest organisations
- ☐ 11-15 other interest organisations
- ☐ Over 15 other interest organisations
9. What were the main reasons you did **not** interact with other national interest organisations last year (check all that apply)?
- ☐ To achieve our goals it was better to work alone
- ☐ We usually hardly interact with other interest organisations
- ☐ For our organisation cooperation is not applicable
- ☐ We disagreed too strongly to have any viable cooperation
- ☐ There are no other interest organisations involved in similar issues
- ☐ Other (please specify)

10. Please list the most important interest organisations you interacted with last year.

[illegible]

11. How much **competition** did you experience from these interest organisations you interacted with last year concerning...

	very much	somewhat	not so much	not at all	don't know/not applicable
access to politicians	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
access to civil servants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
getting involved in policy formulation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
getting involved in policy implementation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
receiving subsidies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. With how many of the following organisations did you interact last year?

	none	1-5	6-10	11-15	more than 15
Advisory committees	○	○	○	○	○
Consultancy firms	○	○	○	○	○
University research institutes	○	○	○	○	○
Other research institutes	○	○	○	○	○
Think tanks	○	○	○	○	○
Executive public agencies	○	○	○	○	○

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13. Did you interact with **national** policy makers, including Members of Parliament, civil servants or (under) ministers last year?

☐ Yes
☐ No

14. Please indicate why you did **not** interact with national policy makers (check all that apply)?

- ☐ We interact with local policy makers
☐ We interact with regional policy makers
☐ We don't receive government grants
☐ It is hard to get in touch with national policy makers
☐ Our umbrella organisation interacts with national policy makers
☐ National policymakers are not familiar with our organisation
☐ There are no interactions because we have divergent opinions
☐ We don't want to interact with national policy makers
☐ Other (please specify)

15. With how **many** of the following **national** policymakers did you interact last year?

	none	1-5	6-10	11-15	over 15
senior civil servants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
other policy civil servants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
civil servants working at executive agencies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(under)ministers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
members of parliament	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. How **often** would you say you interacted with national civil servants compared to members of parliament last year?

With civil servants, I interacted...

- ☐ much more often
☐ more often
☐ equally often
☐ less often
☐ much less often
☐ never

17. What were the **most important** reasons for you to interact with national civil servants last year (check all that apply):

- ☐ To provide them useful information
☐ To provide them our expertise
☐ To obtain government grants
☐ To implement projects
☐ Our interactions were part of a formal consultation procedure
☐ We routinely interact, so we did also in this case
☐ My predecessor passed his/her contacts with civil servants on to me
☐ Other (please specify)

18. Did you or the civil servants usually take the initiative to interact last year?

- ☐ I always did
- ☐ I mostly did
- ☐ We equally did
- ☐ They mostly did
- ☐ They always did

19. The following statements concern your interactions with civil servants. To what extent do you agree with these statements?

	I agree strongly	I agree somewhat	I disagree somewhat	I disagree strongly	don't know/ not applicable
Civil servants ask us to give input in policy making	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Civil servants mostly see us as an implementation agent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Civil servants use our input to revise policy proposals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Civil servants consider establishing legitimacy for public policy very important	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. Without interactions with civil servants:

	I agree strongly	I agree somewhat	I disagree somewhat	I disagree strongly	don't know/ not applicable
We would miss important access to the decision-making process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We would not be included in the pool of organisations their political superiors regularly consult	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We would not as easily receive grants as we do now	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We would not be involved in the implementation of public policies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. In general, how important are interactions with national civil servants for your organisation to exert influence?

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not very important
- ☐ Not at all important
- ☐ I don't know

22. Do you notice new organisations in collective consultation meetings with civil servants?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Very often
- ☐ Not so often
- ☐ not at all
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ There are no collective consultation meetings

23. Would you say that it is difficult for new organisations to get in touch with civil servants?

- ☐ This is impossible
- ☐ This is very difficult
- ☐ This is not so difficult
- ☐ This is not at all difficult
- ☐ I don't know

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24. Could you indicate why it could be difficult for new organisations to get in touch with civil servants?

25. Could you indicate why it does not seem difficult for new organisations to get in touch with civil servants?

The following questions more specifically concern your interactions with international organisations and the EU.

26. With how many similar interest organisations in other countries did you interact last year?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-5 other interest organisations
- ☐ 6-10 other interest organisations
- ☐ 11-15 other interest organisations
- ☐ Over 15 other interest organisations

27. Is your organisation part of an EU umbrella organisation?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes
☐ Not applicable

28. Please give the name of the EU umbrella organisation below:

29. Did you interact last year with the European Commission, the European Parliament or European civil servants?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

30. What are the reasons you did **not** interact with these EU policy makers last year? (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Our EU umbrella organisation does this for us
- ☐ There is no added value in interacting with EU institutions
- ☐ We do not want any EU interference in our issue area
- ☐ We do not have enough time to do so
- ☐ We do not have enough money to do so
- ☐ We never had any interactions with EU institutions
- ☐ Other (please specify)

31. Wit **how many** of the following **EU officials** did you interact last year?

none 1-5 6-10 11-15 over 15

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| European civil servants | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| EU Commission members | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Members of EU parliament | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

32. What were the **most important** reasons for you to interact with EU policy makers last year (check all that apply):
- ☐ To provide them useful information
 - ☐ To provide them our expertise
 - ☐ To obtain government grants
 - ☐ To implement projects
 - ☐ Our interactions were part of a formal consultation procedure
 - ☐ We routinely interact, so we did also in this case
 - ☐ My predecessor passed his/her contacts with EU policy makers on to me
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
33. Did your interactions with EU institutions decrease the time you spent at interacting with the national government last year?
- ☐ Very much
 - ☐ Somewhat
 - ☐ Not so much
 - ☐ Not at all
 - ☐ I don't know
34. How often do you **refer** to EU regulations when you interact with **the national government**?
- ☐ Never
 - ☐ 1-25% of the time
 - ☐ 26-50% of the time
 - ☐ 51-75% of the time
 - ☐ 76-100% of the time
35. How often do EU regulations **reduce** the opportunities you have to exert influence at the national level?
- ☐ never
 - ☐ 1-25% of the time
 - ☐ 26-50% of the time
 - ☐ 51-75% of the time
 - ☐ 76-100% of the time
 - ☐ I don't know
36. How often do EU regulations **increase** your opportunities to exert influence at the national level?
- ☐ never
 - ☐ 1-25% of the time
 - ☐ 26-50% of the time
 - ☐ 51-75% of the time
 - ☐ 76-100% of the time
 - ☐ I don't know
37. How important would you say is the European level for your organisation compared to the national level to
- ☐ much more important
 - ☐ somewhat more important
 - ☐ somewhat less important
 - ☐ much less important
 - ☐ no change
 - ☐ I don't know

We finish with a number of short standard questions.

38. What is your age?
39. Are you male or female?
- ☐ Female
 - ☐ Male
40. What is the level of your highest completed form of education?
- ☐ Bachelor
 - ☐ Master
 - ☐ Ph.D.
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
41. In what field was your highest completed form of education (check all that apply)?
- ☐ Arts
 - ☐ Law
 - ☐ Economics
 - ☐ Political science / Public administration
 - ☐ Other social sciences
 - ☐ Natural sciences
 - ☐ Other
42. Are you a member of a political party?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
43. If yes, from which party are you a member?
-
44. Do you have working experience of more than one year with an organisation other than the organisation you presently work for or participate in?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
45. In what type(s) of organisation(s) was this (check all that apply)?
- ☐ A ministerial department
 - ☐ An executive agency
 - ☐ A regulatory body
 - ☐ A non-permanent project organisation
 - ☐ A private sector organisation - not for profit
 - ☐ A private sector organisation - for profit
 - ☐ An international governmental organisation (e.g. the EU, UN, NATO, World Bank, IMF, OECD)
 - ☐ Other (please specify)

46. Do you have further substantive comments?

A vertical form for question 46, consisting of a small square icon at the top, followed by a series of dots, and another small square icon at the bottom.

47. Do you have comments on the questionnaire?

A vertical form for question 47, consisting of a small square icon at the top, followed by a series of dots, and another small square icon at the bottom.

If you wish so, we can e-mail you a research report containing the findings of this survey.

48. Would you be interested in receiving such a research report?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Appendix II Coding Schemes, Diagnostics, and Respondents

Appendix II.1 NCC codes and recoding for NLD interest group database

Table A.1 contains:

- the list of codes used from the National Chamber of Commerce Coding system (De Kamer van Koophandel, BIK-boekje 2005; available at www.kvk.nl/handelsregister);
- total N of organisations selected from the NCC database (second column);
- the recoding used for the construction of the survey database and data analysis (final column).

Table A.1 Coding Scheme database Dutch national interest groups

NCC Coding	total N (NCC database)	Recoding
Public administration	74	Private firm
Semi-public organisations	7	Employers' organisation
Umbrella organisations health	472	Labour union
Various social service organisations	549	(association of) Public institutions
Umbrella organisations social welfare	10466	NGO voluntary
Employers' associations	1598	NGO education
Farmers' interest groups	394	NGO consumer
Professional organisations	1966	NGO development
Labour unions	274	NGO environment
Religious organisations	5643	NGO health
Other 'philosophy of life' organisations	1158	NGO minorities
Umbrella organisations culture	986	NGO religious/ idealistic
Umbrella organisations religion	231	NGO science
Umbrella organisations education	1257	NGO culture/sports/recreation
Other umbrella organisations	702	Other
Animal protection organisations	2618	
Environmental organisations	2034	
Idealistic organisations	3006	
Parents primary school organisations	1937	
Parents secondary school organisations	230	
Parents specific groups of children organisations	141	
Tenant organisations	4439	
Appartment / house owners organisations	2703	
Other housing organisations	62	
Interest groups of other specific groups	8991	
Other interest groups	4746	
Sport organisations	415	
Umbrella organisations sport	958	
Umbrella organisations tourism	163	
Total	58220	

Appendix II.2 Diagnostics multiple imputation (Amelia)

Tables A.2 and A.3 show the diagnostics that the program Amelia offers to assess the fit of the multiple imputation process. In the case of the SCS survey, the mean imputations usually fall within the range of observed values, and when they are outside that range they seem to be fairly reasonable. Although, for instance, an imputed value of -20 for the EU variable may be not easy to interpret intuitively, the imputed data nevertheless reflect the tendency that time spent at EU activities tends to concentrate around small percentages. In case of over-imputation, most of the x-y line representing a perfect agreement between predictions of the imputation model and the observed value cross the 95% confidence intervals. Over-imputation is a process of sequentially treating each of the observed values as if they actually had been missing. The confidence intervals the program produces allow for a visual inspection of how often the imputation model can predict the true value (Honaker, King and Blackwell 2007, 16). In some cases, not all confidence intervals cover the x-y line, yet only a small proportion for each variable fail to do so. A final diagnostic offered by Amelia enables the inspection of whether the imputations are dependent on starting values as a result of poorly-behaved likelihoods of the original data (see for a discussion, Honaker, King and Blackwell 2007, 18-19). This diagnostic provides positive results for the SCS database.

In the case of the interest group survey, the diagnostics offer a promising picture of the imputed data. Only in the case of government grants, the means of the imputed data fall somewhat outside the range of the observed data, but this is no reason for concern (see Honaker, King and Blackwell 2007). In general, for both datasets, the diagnostics show a good fit for the imputed data.

Table A.2 Diagnostics of the Senior Civil Service dataset (see Honaker, King, and Blackwell 2007)

Variables	<i>Amelia Diagnostics</i>		
	Compare	Overimpute	Overdisperse
Interest representation regime	No missing values	No missing values	-
Political-strategic insight	A bit outside range original observation, at numbers higher than 3 (= very relevant); ranging to somewhat over 3.5	95% CI of category 1 is above x-y line of perfect match	Convergence
Agency type	Within range, flat line	Not overimputed (nominal variable)	Convergence
Policy area	Within range, flat line	Not overimputed (nominal variable)	Convergence
EU involvement	Somewhat outside range concerning low values; below 0 (ranging to -20).	95% CI of above values 60 do not cross x-y line of perfect match	Convergence
Number of interest groups with which civil servants interact	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Number of interest groups with which civil servants are familiar	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Number of other organisations with which civil servants interact	Within range	95% CI of values above 70 do not cross x-y line	Convergence
Expertise	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Implementation capacity	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Legitimacy	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Intermediation capacity	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence

Table A.3 Diagnostics of the interest group dataset (see also Honaker, King, and Blackwell 2007)

Variables	Amelia Diagnostics		
	Compare	Overimpute	Overdisperse
Interest representation regime	No missing values	No missing values	-
Type of interest group	Within range	Not overimputed (nominal level)	Convergence
Government grants	Somewhat outside range: ranges to -1; whereas observed values range to 0	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Information	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Expertise	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Government grants	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Implementation capacity	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Time interest representation takes	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Cooperation with fellow interest groups	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Competition access politicians	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Competition access civil servants	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Competition policy making	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Competition implementation	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Competition grants	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Cooperation with advisory councils	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Cooperation with consultancy firms	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Cooperation with scientific institutions	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Cooperation with research institutes	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Cooperation with executive agencies	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Interactions with EU institutions	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Time EU lobby takes	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Refer to EU regulations	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
EU restrictions	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
EU opportunities	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Importance EU vs national level	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Importance civil servants vs politicians	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Civil servants ask input	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Civil servants see us as partner implementation	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Civil servants use our input in policymaking	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Civil servants consider legitimacy to be important	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Without civil servants not as much influence	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Without civil servants not easy access	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Without civil servants not included in familiar org	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Without civil servants not as easy grants	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Without civil servants not part of implementation	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence
Importance civil servants in general	Within range	95% CI cross x-y line	Convergence

Appendix II.3 Policy issue coding

Table A.4 lists several issue codings used in this study. The original issue coding, in the first and second columns, is derived from the code book used by the agenda setting team in the Netherlands (Breeman et al. 2008; Breeman and Timmermans 2007). In the case of the UK, the topic ‘Wales, Scotland and N. Ireland affairs’ has been added to the list to account for particular regional affairs. The recoding (third column), which resulted in the summary coding (final column), includes several subtopics under a single heading. The main reason for the recoding was to ensure enough observations to enable solid analysis. The final summary coding has therefore been used in the analyses to obtain a first indication whether variation in policy issues would influence variation in degree of dependence.

Table A.4 Issue coding

Issue coding questionnaires in Dutch and English	Original coding	Recoding	Summary recoding
Buitenlandse zaken (exclusief Europese zaken) / Foreign Affairs	1	1	1 = International Affairs
Europese zaken / European Affairs	2	1	2 = Macro-economic Affairs
Ontwikkelingssamenwerking / Development Aid	3	1	3 = Employment, social affairs
Internationale handel / International trade	4	1	4 = Internal Affairs
Defensie / Defence	32	1	5 = Immigration, integration, civil rights
Binnenlandse handel / Domestic trade	5	2	6 = Public Safety
Openbare financiën / Macro economics	6	2	7 = Public Health
Belastingen / Taxes	7	2	8 = Education, Science, Culture
Arbeidsmarktbeleid / Labour market	8	3	9 = Transport and Water management
Sociale zaken / Social affairs	9	3	10 = Public Housing and spatial planning
Binnenlands bestuur / Subnational public administration	10	4	11 = Environment, Agriculture and Fishery
Grote stedenbeleid / Urban development	11	4	
Wales, Scotland, N. Ireland affairs	34	4	
Integratiebeleid / Minority affairs	13	5	
Immigratiebeleid / Immigration	14	5	
Burgerrechten / Civil rights	15	5	
Openbare orde en veiligheid / Public safety	16	6	
Criminaliteit / Crime	17	6	
Rechtspraak / Judiciary, Law	18	6	
Volksgezondheid / Public Health	19	7	
Welzijn / General Welfare	20	7	
Sport / Sports	21	7	
Onderwijs / Education	22	8	
Wetenschap / Science and Technology	23	8	
Cultuur / Culture	24	8	
Openbaar vervoer	25	9	
Verkeer / Transport	26	9	
Waterstaat / Watermanagement	27	9	
Huisvestingsbeleid / Public housing	12	10	
Ruimtelijke ordening / Spatial planning	28	10	
Public works	33	10	
Milieu / Environment	29	11	
Landbouw / Agriculture	30	11	
Visserij / Fishery	31	11	

Appendix II.4 Fuzzy-set coding interview dataset

Table A.5 Fuzzy-set coding civil servant dataset

Cases	QCA/Fuzzy-set indicators							
	macro economics	public health	ministry	inspectorate	trust	legitimacy	powerful position interest groups	consultation
1	0	1	1	0	0.67	0.83	1	1
2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0.67	1
3	0	1	1	0	0.5	0.17	0.33	0.17
4	0	1	1	0	0.33	1	1	1
5	0	1	1	0	0.67	0.83	1	1
6	0	1	1	0	0.33	1	1	1
7	0	1	0	1	0.5	1	0.67	1
8	0	1	1	0	0.5	0.83	1	1
9	1	0	1	0	1	1	0.83	1
10	1	0	1	0	1	0.83	0.67	1
11	1	0	0	1	0.5	0.83	0.67	0.17
12	1	0	1	0	0.67	0.83	0.67	1
13	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
14	1	0	1	0	0.67	1	0.83	1
15	1	0	1	0	0.5	0.83	0.67	1
16	1	0	1	0	0.5	1	0.83	1
17	1	0	0	1	0.67	1	1	1
18	1	0	0	1	1	1	0.83	1
19	1	0	0	1	0.67	0.67	0.67	1
20	1	0	1	0	0.67	1	0.67	1
21	1	0	1	0	0.5	0	1	1
22	1	0	1	0	0.67	0.83	0.83	1
23	1	0	0	1	1	1	0.67	1
24	1	0	1	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.17
25	1	0	0	1	0.5	0.67	0.67	1
26	1	0	1	0	0.67	0.83	0.83	1
27	1	0	0	1	1	1	0.67	1
28	1	0	1	0	0.5	1	1	1
29	1	0	1	0	0.5	1	0.83	1
30	0	1	1	0	0.67	1	0.67	1
31	1	0	1	0	0.5	0.83	0.83	1
32	1	0	1	0	1	1	0.83	1
33	0	1	0	1	1	0.67	0.5	1
34	1	0	0	1	0.83	0.67	0.67	1
35	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
36	1	0	0	1	0.67	0.67	0.83	1
37	0	1	0	1	0.5	1	0.67	1
38	0	1	0	1	0.83	1	0.5	1
39	1	0	0	1	0.5	1	0.67	1

Table A.6 Fuzzy-set coding interest group dataset

Cases	QCA/Fuzzy-set indicators						
	macro economics	public health	trust	legitimacy	importance civil servants	consultation	long existing relationship
1	1	0	0.5	1	0.83	1	0.83
2	1	0	0.83	1	0.83	1	0.83
3	1	0	0.83	1	0.83	1	0.83
4	1	0	0.83	1	0.83	1	0.83
5	0	1	1	1	0.67	1	0.83
6	1	0	1	1	0.83	1	0.83
7	0	1	1	1	0.83	1	0.83
8	1	0	0.5	0.67	0.83	1	0.83
9	0	1	0.5	1	0.83	1	0.67
10	1	0	0.83	1	0.67	1	0.83
11	1	0	1	1	0.83	1	0.83
12	1	0	0.5	0.5	0.67	1	0.83
13	0	1	0.67	0.67	0.83	1	0.83
14	0	1	0.83	1	0.83	1	0.83
15	0	1	0.83	1	0.83	1	0.83
16	1	0	0.67	0.83	0.83	1	0.83
17	1	0	0.83	0.5	0.83	1	0.83
18	0	1	0.83	1	0.33	0	0.67

Appendix II.5 Interview respondents

Table A.7 List of interview respondents (interest groups)

Interest groups	
1	representative professional association accountancy (VLP)
2	representative labour union (CNV)
3	representative professional association agriculture (LTO)
4	representative professional association (VNO-NCW)
5	representative patient organisation (de gehandicaptenraad)
6	representative professional association agriculture (LTO)
7	representative professional association hospitals (NVZ)
8	representative banking association (VVB)
9	representative patient organisation (NPCF)
10	representative association small and medium sized cooperations (MKB)
11	representative association of insurances (Verbond van Verzekeraars)
12	representative labour union (MLP)
13	representative patient organisation (MO groep)
14	representative professional organisation health care (actiz)
15	representative consumer organisation (CSO)
16	representative association construction sector (Bouwend Nederland)
17	representative professional association accountancy (Novaa)
18	representative patient organisation (astmafonds)

Table A.8 List of respondents (civil servants)

Civil servants	
1	civil servant 1 Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sports
2	civil servant 2 Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sports
3	civil servant 3 Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sports
4	civil servant 4 Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sports
5	civil servant 5 Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sports
6	civil servant 6 Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sports
7	civil servant 7 Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sports
8	civil servant 8 Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sports
9	civil servant 9 Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sports
10	civil servant 10 Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sports
11	civil servant 1 Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
12	civil servant 2 Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
13	civil servant 3 Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
14	civil servant 4 Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
15	civil servant 5 Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
16	civil servant 6 Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
17	civil servant 1 Ministry of Economic Affairs
18	civil servant 2 Ministry of Economic Affairs
19	civil servant 3 Ministry of Economic Affairs
20	civil servant 4 Ministry of Economic Affairs
21	civil servant 5 Ministry of Economic Affairs
22	civil servant 6 Ministry of Economic Affairs
23	civil servant 1 Ministry of Finance
24	civil servant 2 Ministry of Finance
25	civil servant 1 The Netherlands Health Care Inspectorate
26	civil servant 2 The Netherlands Health Care Inspectorate
27	civil servant 1 The Dutch Inspectorate for Youth Care
28	civil servant 1 Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority
29	civil servant 1 Labour Inspectorate
30	civil servant 2 Labour Inspectorate
31	civil servant 3 Labour Inspectorate
32	civil servant 1 The Netherlands Competition Authority
33	civil servant 2 The Netherlands Competition Authority
34	civil servant 1 The Independent Post and Telecommunications Authority
35	civil servant 2 The Independent Post and Telecommunications Authority
36	civil servant 1 The Netherlands Authority Financial Markets
37	civil servant 2 The Netherlands Authority Financial Markets
38	civil servant 1 Office of Energy Regulation
39	civil servant 1 Consumer Authority

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Dutch Summary

Navigeren tussen vriend en vijand Waarom ambtenaren samenwerken met belangenorganisaties

Inleiding

In 2004 presenteert de Tijdelijke Commissie Integratie Beleid (TCOI, Commissie-Blok) haar bevindingen aan de Tweede Kamer. De titel van het rapport, *Bruggen Bouwen*, is een onbedoelde maar treffende samenvatting van het nut van immigrantenorganisaties voor de (lokale) overheid. Deze organisaties vervullen namelijk een belangrijke functie als aanspreekpunt voor de overheid namens hun achterban en vormen hiermee een brug naar diverse, moeilijk bereikbare doelgroepen in de samenleving. Deze functie blijkt noodzakelijk in het besturen van een cultureel diverse samenleving en onmisbaar om in tijden van crises en calamiteiten snel contact te kunnen opnemen met de betreffende doelgroepen. Niet alleen in Nederland blijkt deze functie van groot belang te zijn. In New York blijven *communication channels*, oftewel organisaties die contacten hebben met verschillende doelgroepen, ook een noodzakelijk middel om grootschalige rassenspanningen eerder en zonder geweld te beëindigen.

Deze casus laat zien dat de capaciteit om als intermediair te fungeren een nuttig en noodzakelijk middel is voor ambtenaren en bestuurders om een samenleving te besturen. Dit gegeven roept een aantal interessante vragen op. Geldt deze capaciteit om als intermediair te fungeren voor meerdere beleidsterreinen? Wat zijn andere belangrijke redenen voor ambtenaren om met maatschappelijke organisaties samen te werken? En, zijn bepaalde redenen onder specifieke omstandigheden belangrijker dan andere en wat zegt dit over de toegang van belangenorganisaties tot publieke besluitvorming? Om deze en andere vragen te kunnen beantwoorden staat de volgende onderzoeksvraag centraal in deze studie: Waarom werken ambtenaren samen met bepaalde belangenorganisaties en niet, of in veel mindere mate, met andere?

Deze vraag wordt in een aantal stappen beantwoord. Ten eerste worden bestaande verklaringen voor samenwerking tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties in de literatuur vergeleken en besproken. Deze verklaringen overlappen en zijn soms zelfs tegenstrijdig. Een belangrijke conclusie is dan ook dat mede daardoor geen systematisch antwoord op de vraag kan worden gegeven hoe samenwerking tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties varieert onder verschillende omstandigheden. Met andere woorden, we kunnen niet systematisch afleiden welke omstandigheden leiden tot een beslissende rol voor ambtenaren of voor belangenorganisaties in hun samenwerking. Daarom is in deze studie een afhankelijkheidsmodel geformuleerd, waarmee de verschillende verklaringen geïntegreerd kunnen worden. Vervolgens zijn met behulp van dit model verschillende empirische analyses gemaakt van samenwerking tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties. Onderstaand worden deze stappen beschreven.

1. Drie verklaringen voor samenwerking

Drie stromingen binnen de literatuur geven antwoord op de vraag waarom ambtenaren met bepaalde belangenorganisaties samenwerken en niet, of in mindere mate, met andere. De literatuur over beleidsnetwerken gaat ervan uit dat de overheid in toenemende mate moet samenwerken met private en/of (semi-) publieke partners uit de samenleving. Deze noodzaak is het resultaat van een afnemende overheids capaciteit, zowel vanuit objectief als normatief oogpunt. Vanuit deze gedachte zijn vervullen samenwerkingsrelaties tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties een evenwichtig wederzijds belang. Een impliciet kernmerk van dit wederzijds belang zijn duurzame, langdurige relaties, waarbij routine de overhand kan krijgen. Volgens de literatuur over belangenvertegenwoordiging kunnen belangenorganisaties zo invloedrijk zijn dat ambtenaren voor een groot deel, of zelfs volledig, afhankelijk zijn van de inbreng van deze organisaties bij het formuleren en uitvoeren van beleid. De literatuur over bureaupolitiek beargumenteert precies het tegenovergestelde. Volgens deze literatuur gedraagt de ambtenaar zich als entrepreneur die handelt uit eigen belang of vanuit het belang van het organisatie-onderdeel waar hij/zij werkzaam is. Relaties of netwerken met belangenorganisaties worden daarmee strategisch ingezet ten behoeve van dit eigen belang of dat van de organisatie. Deze notie veronderstelt een ambtenaar die in staat is significante invloed uit te oefenen op het netwerk van belangenorganisaties waar hij/zij mee samenwerkt. Samengevat leveren deze drie stromingen de volgende hypothesen op over samenwerkingsrelaties tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties:

1. Samenwerkingsrelaties tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties zijn duurzaam en dienen een evenwichtig wederzijds belang;
2. Belangenorganisaties domineren samenwerking met ambtenaren vanwege hun grote invloed;
3. Ambtenaren domineren de samenwerking met ambtenaren omdat zij deze relaties en netwerken inzetten voor eigen belang of dat van de organisatie.

Het belangrijkste probleem dat in de bestaande literatuur schuilt is niet zozeer dat er geen voldoende verklaringen of inzichten zijn. Het probleem is veel eerder dat het haast onmogelijk is om te bepalen wanneer welke verklaring geldig is. We weten dus niet onder welke omstandigheden de ambtenaar een entrepreneur van of gevangen is in een netwerk van belangenorganisaties, of wanneer deze relaties een evenwichtig wederzijds belang dienen. Om antwoord op deze vraag te kunnen geven is een theoretisch model nodig waarmee deze verklaringen geïntegreerd kunnen worden en relaties tussen belangenorganisaties en ambtenaren systematisch kunnen worden vergeleken.

2. Afhankelijkheid tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties

Wat de bovenstaande theoretische verklaringen gemeen hebben is een impliciet idee over een uitruil van goederen. De literatuur over bureaupolitiek stelt dat ambtenaren politieke steun ruilen voor toegang tot het besluitvormingsproces. De literatuur over belangenvertegenwoordiging stelt dat belangenorganisaties over belangrijke goederen beschikken en dat ambtenaren grotendeels of volledig afhankelijk zijn van deze organisaties. De literatuur over beleidsnetwerken stelt dat belangenorganisaties en ambtenaren beiden over goederen beschikken die nuttig

voor elkaar zijn en dat daarom een evenwichtige uitruil van goederen ontstaat. Dit uitwisselingsconcept kan daarom als uitgangspunt gebruikt worden voor een verklarend model voor samenwerking tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisatie.

In de klassieke *resource dependence theory*, geformuleerd door Pfeffer en Salancik (2003[1978]), is deze uitwisseling van goederen de belangrijkste verklarende variabele voor samenwerking tussen organisaties. Volgens deze *resource dependence theory* werken organisaties samen omdat ze goederen die ze niet zelf kunnen produceren van andere organisaties moeten betrekken. Deze uitwisseling van goederen, ook wel afhankelijkheidsrelatie genoemd (*degree of dependence*), wordt door twee factoren bepaald: 1) de aanwezigheid van deze goederen in de omgeving van de organisatie en 2) de waarde van deze goederen voor de organisatie in kwestie. De aanwezigheid van deze goederen in de omgeving wordt bepaald door het aantal organisaties die over deze goederen kunnen beschikken. Dit laatste wordt door Pfeffer en Salancik (2003[1978]) de concentratie van goederen genoemd. De waarde van de goederen wordt bepaald door het belang van een goed voor de organisatie om te overleven. Wanneer beide componenten bekend zijn, kan de afhankelijkheidsgraad tussen organisaties bepaald worden.

Aan deze theorie liggen een aantal assumpties ten grondslag. Ten eerste veronderstellen de auteurs dat uitwisseling van goederen niet deterministisch bepaald is. Dat wil zeggen dat organisaties de ruimte hebben om strategische keuzes te maken met wie ze samenwerken om bepaalde goederen te verkrijgen. Daarnaast ligt aan de waarde die aan bepaalde goederen gehecht wordt een subjectief oordeel ten grondslag. Datgene wat van belang geacht wordt is subjectief bepaald en niet een objectief gegeven (dit is wat Weick (1969) *enactment* noemt). Een derde assumptie die ten grondslag ligt aan deze *resource dependence theory* is dat deze strategische keuzes betrekking hebben op manipulatie van de omgeving en van de afhankelijkheidsrelaties die zijn ontstaan. Dit betekent dat organisaties altijd naar volledige autonomie streven en hun samenwerkingsrelaties zodanig inrichten of de omgeving zodanig proberen te beïnvloeden dat ze in minimale mate afhankelijk zijn van andere organisaties. Kortom, organisatie *x* werkt samen met organisatie *y* omdat organisatie *y* de meest strategische keuze is die voortvloeit uit een kosten-baten analyse met wie samen te werken om de benodigde goederen te bemachtigen. De afhankelijkheidsrelatie, die als gevolg hiervan ontstaat, wordt bepaald door de aanwezigheid van deze goederen in de omgeving van de organisatie *x* en de waarde van deze goederen voor organisatie *x*.

Als we dit toepassen op samenwerking tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties, kunnen we het volgende afleiden. Ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties werken met elkaar samen omdat ze van elkaar afhankelijk zijn voor het verkrijgen van goederen die ze nodig hebben om hun taak goed te vervullen. Deze uitwisselingsrelaties worden bepaald door de waarde van deze goederen en de aanwezigheid van deze goederen in de omgeving.

Om de vergelijkende component aan het model toe te voegen, zijn in deze studie omgevingsfactoren gedefinieerd die van invloed zijn op deze relaties, in het bijzonder op óf de aanwezigheid van goederen in de omgeving óf de waarde van deze goederen of op beide elementen. De volgende omgevingsfactoren zijn in deze studie gedefinieerd: het regime van belangenvertegenwoordiging, politiek-ambtelijke verhoudingen, de specifieke functies van een overheidsorganisatie, de

cultuur van overheidsorganisaties, de complexiteit van, politieke gevoeligheid van en publieke aandacht voor beleidsonderwerpen, *framing* en Europeanisering. Een systematische vergelijking van de invloed van deze omgevingsfactoren op elk van de samenstellende elementen van een afhankelijkheidsrelatie, kan de aard van relaties tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties bepalen. Met behulp van dit model kan dus worden bepaald wanneer een ambtenaar een makelaar van of gevangen is in een netwerk van belangenorganisaties.

Alleen het langetermijn perspectief ontbreekt nu nog in het model. Eerder zagen we dat een lange termijn perspectief aan het licht brengt dat dergelijke uitwisselingsrelaties een hoge mate van stabiliteit kennen. Om deze stabiliteit verder te bestuderen kunnen we inzichten vanuit het historisch institutionalisme en evolutionaire rationele keuze theorie gebruiken. De laatste theorie stelt dat wanneer een verzameling van actoren gedurende langere tijd met elkaar samenwerkt, deze actoren zich meestal rekenschap geven van deze lange termijn. Dit betekent dat actoren niet alleen hun eigen belang of nut maximaliseren bij samenwerking, zoals in een eenmalige relatie vaak wel het geval is, maar zich eerder cooperatief opstellen. Bij lange termijn relaties worden zaken als het reduceren van onzekerheid of het vertrouwen dat men heeft in de samenwerkingspartner belangrijker dan het maximaliseren van het eigen nut. Mogelijke gevolgen in de nabije toekomst, die aan het afbreken van de relatie vastzitten, worden dus belangrijker dan de nutsmaximalisatie. Vanuit deze theorie redenerend kan een relatie worden voortgezet op basis van een *anticiperende rationele keuze*. Het is een strategische keuze om de relatie voort te zetten, maar niet per sé omdat deze relatie in het huidige tijdsgewricht de meest optimale keuze is. In de nabije toekomst kan de samenwerkingspartner te belangrijk kan zijn om de samenwerking te beëindigen, of het verminderen van onzekerheid wordt van groter belang geacht dan nutsmaximalisatie op dit moment.

Vanuit het historisch institutionalisme wordt stabiliteit verklaard door te wijzen op routinematig gedrag of padafhankelijkheid. Padafhankelijkheid wordt vaak gebruikt om de weerbarstigheid van niet-optimale situaties te verklaren. Een verandering van de situatie benadeelt snel de belangen van diegenen die het meeste baat hebben bij een dergelijk suboptimale situatie. Op basis van de wet van actie-reactie, veroorzaakt een voorgestelde verandering een reactie van de belangrijkste stakeholders die er belang bij hebben om de status quo te handhaven. Hierdoor kunnen suboptimale situaties lange tijd voortduren. Alhoewel het historisch institutionalisme vaak gericht is op het verklaren van suboptimale situaties, hoeft suboptimaliteit niet de norm te zijn van stabiele instituties. Stabiele instituties kunnen nog volledig beantwoorden aan de eisen die destijds gesteld zijn vanuit rationeel oogpunt. Dit wordt ook wel rationaliteit uit gewoonte genoemd (Simon 1997[1947]). Deze *rationaliteit uit gewoonte* kan de instandhouding verklaren van optimale situaties, maar ook van suboptimale situaties, die in de literatuur vaak worden aangeduid als padafhankelijk.

Deze beide fenomenen geven een andere verklaring voor de uitwisselingsrelaties tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties. Aan de klassieke *resource dependence theory* ligt een strategische keuze ten grondslag. Impliciet is de volgende assumptie aan de orde: als de organisatie waarmee wordt samengewerkt niet meer beschikt over de goederen die de organisatie in kwestie nodig heeft, dan wordt de

relatie beëindigd. De samenwerking voldoet immers niet meer aan de eerder gemaakte kosten-baten analyse over de benodigde goederen. Vanuit het historisch institutionalisme en de evolutionaire rationele keuze theorie wordt duidelijk dat het beëindigen van relaties vaak niet mogelijk is. Dergelijke afhankelijkheidsrelaties zijn dan niet gebaseerd op een onbeperkte, strategische keuze zoals *resource dependence theory* stelt. Deze afhankelijkheidsrelaties kunnen dan dus ook gebaseerd zijn op een anticiperend rationeel gedrag of rationaliteit uit gewoonte.

Met het hierboven beschreven model is het mogelijk om de aard van samenwerkingsrelaties tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties te definiëren onder verschillende omstandigheden en gedurende een langere tijdsperiode. Hiermee biedt dit model een systematische vergelijking van deze samenwerkingsrelaties en integreert ze de verschillende verklaringen uit de drie theoretische stromingen die beschreven zijn in deze studie. Met de systematische vergelijking onder verschillende omstandigheden kan onderscheid gemaakt worden tussen de verklaringen van de literatuur over bureaupolitiek en belangenvertegenwoordiging. Het lange termijn perspectief kan de verschillende soorten rationeel gedrag die ten grondslag kunnen liggen aan afhankelijkheidsrelaties verklaren.

3. Samenwerking in de praktijk

Met het bovenstaande model is het dus mogelijk om op conceptueel niveau samenwerking tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties systematisch te vergelijken. Om de verklarende kracht van dit model in de praktijk te toetsen, is in dit onderzoek data verzameld over deze samenwerkingsrelaties. De benodigde data heb ik verzameld met behulp van surveys onder topambtenaren en landelijke belangenorganisaties. Voor de topambtenaren heb ik aselecte steekproeven genomen op basis van database van de Algemene Bestuursdienst en diens internationale equivalenten. Voor de belangenorganisaties heb ik dit gedaan op bestaande databases van de populatie van landelijke belangenorganisaties. Het ontbreken van een dergelijke database in Nederland vormde een probleem voor de dataverzameling en vergelijkbaarheid van deze data met andere landelijke data. Daarom heb ik voor de Nederlandse casus een database ontwikkeld van de landelijke populatie van belangenorganisaties. Op basis van het register van verenigingen en stichtingen van de Kamer van Koophandel heb ik een database van landelijke belangenorganisaties geconstrueerd.

Naast de verzamelde surveydata, die met name geschikt is voor cross-sectionele vergelijkingen, zijn semi-gestructureerde interviews gehouden. Deze interviews betroffen zowel ambtenaren als vertegenwoordigers van belangenorganisaties werkzaam binnen twee beleidsterreinen in Nederland: (sociaal)economisch beleid en de gezondheidszorg. Met deze interview-data werd het mogelijk om een lange termijn perspectief te benaderen door respondenten te laten reflecteren op hun relaties met ofwel belangenorganisaties ofwel ambtenaren over een langere periode. Deze data zijn gebruikt om de verklaringskracht van het model te toetsen, aanvullende omgevingsfactoren te onderzoeken en het bestaan van alternatieve keuzeloga die aan afhankelijkheidsrelaties ten grondslag kunnen liggen te onderzoeken. Onderstaand worden de resultaten van ieder van deze empirische analyses kort samengevat.

3.1 Het afhankelijkheidsmodel heeft verklaringskracht

Op basis van verschillende analyses is aangetoond dat het afhankelijkheidsmodel voldoende verklaring biedt voor samenwerking tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties. Zowel de aanwezigheid van goederen in de omgeving van belangenorganisaties als de aanwezigheid van deze goederen bij andere organisaties zijn gerelateerd aan de afhankelijkheidsgraad. Ook de waarde van expertise, implementatiecapaciteit en de capaciteit om als intermediair te fungeren zijn hieraan gerelateerd.

De eerder genoemde omgevingsfactoren blijken beide elementen te beïnvloeden. Het regime van belangenvertegenwoordiging en verschil in beleidsterreinen hebben invloed op de beschikbaarheid van goederen in de omgeving van ambtenaren. De waarde van expertise, implementatiecapaciteit en de capaciteit om als intermediair te fungeren is belangrijker in pluralistische regimes, dan in corporatistische regimes. De waarde van expertise en implementatiecapaciteit neemt toe wanneer politiek-strategisch inzicht belangrijker wordt. Dit geldt ook voor de capaciteit om als intermediair te fungeren. Expertise neemt af in belang voor uitvoerende organisaties, maar de capaciteit om als intermediair te voldoen neemt af voor adviserende organisaties. De waarde van legitimiteit varieert langs bovengenoemde drie dimensies. Daarnaast varieert de waarde van implementatie capaciteit en legitimiteit tussen verschillende beleidsterreinen. Wanneer de mate van Europeanisering toeneemt, tot slot, wordt de capaciteit om als intermediair te fungeren belangrijker geacht en varieert de waarde van legitimiteit voor de ambtenaren in kwestie.

In het algemeen blijkt dat de beschikbaarheid van goederen in de omgeving minder door de omgevingsfactoren zoals opgenomen in het model beïnvloed wordt dan de waarde die door ambtenaren aan deze specifieke goederen wordt gehecht.

3.2 Populatiekenmerken bepalen mede de afhankelijkheidsgraad

De beschikbaarheid van goederen lijken dus minder contextafhankelijk te zijn dan de waarde van individuele goederen. Dit kan het gevolg zijn van andere omgevingsfactoren dan die in het model zijn opgenomen. Aanvullende factoren die onderzocht zijn, omvatten samenwerking en concurrentie tussen belangenorganisaties, het belang dat zij hechten aan ambtelijke toegang en het effect van Europeanisering. Belangenorganisaties blijken gemiddeld met een klein aantal of juist een groot aantal andere belangenorganisaties samen te werken. Daarnaast ervaren ze gemiddeld genomen weinig concurrentie van elkaar. Belangenorganisaties hechten waarde aan informatie en expertise als goederen om aan te bieden, maar veel minder aan de rol die ze kunnen spelen in de implementatie van beleid. De ambtelijke organisatie is van belang voor belangenorganisaties. Alhoewel ze met nagenoeg *evenveel* politici als bestuurders samenwerken, werken ze wel *vaker* samen met ambtenaren en worden ambtenaren *belangrijker* geacht voor beleidsbeïnvloeding. Het belang van ambtenaren voor belangenorganisaties blijkt tweeledig. Ten eerste zijn ambtenaren van belang om zichzelf van toegang te verzekeren tot het beleidsproces. Ten tweede zijn ambtenaren van belang om daadwerkelijk invloed uit te oefenen.

Een grote verandering in de omgeving van belangenorganisaties en ambtenaren, Europeanisering, lijkt tot op heden nog relatief weinig invloed te

hebben op ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties op landelijk niveau. Ambtenaren geven aan dat omzetting van EU richtlijnen of aan de EU gerelateerde beleidsaspecten weinig tot niet van belang zijn voor hun taakuitoefening. Ze geven aan dat landelijke belangenorganisaties nauwelijks verwijzen naar EU beleid of regelgeving. Belangenorganisaties geven aan dat EU beleid en richtlijnen niet of nauwelijks hun kansen op het nationaal niveau beïnvloeden. En alhoewel Europa over het algemeen wel wordt gezien als een factor van betekenis, lijken belangenorganisaties niet goed in staat daar tijdig en effectief op in te spelen.

Samenwerking en concurrentie tussen belangenorganisaties hebben invloed op de afhankelijkheidsgraad die de relaties tussen hen en ambtenaren kenmerkt. Samenwerking geeft aan dat er wellicht meer organisaties zijn voor ambtenaren om mee samen te werken. Gematigde concurrentie doet dit ook. Sterke concurrentie, zeker voor relatief onbekende organisaties, resulteert in een lagere beschikbaarheid van goederen omdat minder organisaties toegang hebben tot ambtenaren. De waarde die belangenorganisaties toekennen aan goederen kan ook invloed hebben op de afhankelijkheidsgraad. Als ambtenaren bepaalde goederen erg belangrijk vinden, maar belangenorganisaties vinden dit veel minder, of zijn zich hier niet van bewust, kan dit de afhankelijkheidsgraad beïnvloeden. Het belang dat belangenorganisaties hebben bij toegang tot de ambtelijke organisaties vermindert de afhankelijkheid van ambtenaren. Europeanisering lijkt nauwelijks een effect te hebben. In het algemeen suggereren deze bevindingen het belang van contextuele factoren gerelateerd aan de omgeving van belangen-organisaties voor het verklaren van de afhankelijkheidsrelaties tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties.

3.3 Afhankelijkheid is gebaseerd op verschillende soorten rationeel gedrag

Naar alle waarschijnlijkheid bepalen niet alleen onbeperkte strategisch keuzes, maar ook anticiperend rationeel gedrag en rationaliteit uit gewoonte de afhankelijkheid tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties. Uit de survey blijkt dat ambtenaren over het algemeen met bekende organisaties samenwerken. Dit is een aanwijzing voor rationaliteit uit gewoonte of anticiperend rationeel gedrag. Een bewuste diversificatie is, op het eerste gezicht, een aanwijzing voor onbeperkte strategische keuze, terwijl samenwerking met bekende organisaties alle drie de keuzeloga's kan behelzen. Uit de redenen die ambtenaren noemen om met belangenorganisaties samen te werken, blijkt dat zowel consultatieprocedures als het feit dat samenwerking gebruikelijk is, ook goede verklaringen zijn voor deze relaties. Daarnaast blijkt dat ambtenaren vaak samenwerken omdat belangenorganisaties een te belangrijk aanspreekpunt zijn om ze te negeren of een grote rol spelen in de nationale economie. Deze verschillende redenen verwijzen zowel naar rationaliteit uit gewoonte (het is gebruikelijk om samen te werken, consultatieprocedures) en anticiperend rationeel gedrag (belangrijke rol als aanspreekpunt of in de economie). Wanneer we indicatoren voor deze verschillende logica's toetsen, blijken de indicatoren voor zowel rationaliteit uit gewoonte als anticiperend rationeel gedrag beide noodzakelijke voorwaarden te zijn voor langdurige relaties. Ze zijn daarnaast gecombineerd noodzakelijk. Een analyse van concrete cases van samenwerkingsrelaties geeft blijk van een complexe mix van keuzeloga's die ten grondslag ligt aan de afhankelijkheidsgraad die samenwerking tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties kenmerkt.

3.4 Het afhankelijkheidsmodel biedt perspectief

Het model en de empirische resultaten laten zien dat de balans tussen context en individuele motieven van belang zijn om samenwerking tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties in het bijzonder en institutionele arrangementen in het algemeen te verklaren. Het model in deze studie richt de aandacht op het deterministische karakter van de klassieke *resource dependence theory*, door te wijzen op de invloed van context op zowel de waarde van goederen en de beschikbaarheid in de omgeving hiervan. Voor de literatuur over bureaupolitiek wijst het model op de noodzaak om de verbinding te leggen tussen politiek-ambtelijke verhoudingen en organisatorische kwesties met de netwerken van belangenorganisaties waarmee ambtenaren in contact zijn. Daarnaast kan een gedegen analyse van de aard van de relaties tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties met behulp van het afhankelijkheidsmodel meer inzicht bieden in de aard van wat door economen en politicologen als *capture* wordt aangeduid. Het systematisch in kaart brengen van de aard van de afhankelijkheidsrelatie op basis van de waarde en beschikbaarheid van noodzakelijke goederen in de omgeving kan de mate van asymmetrie in een relatie goed blootleggen. Het afhankelijkheidsmodel wijst daarnaast op het belang van een bredere kijk op belangenvertegenwoordiging in corporatistische landen. Vaak gaat daar de aandacht uit naar de tripartite onderhandeling tussen werkgevers, werknemers en de overheid om zo het succes van (sociaal-) economisch beleid te verklaren. Een bredere kijk op belangenvertegenwoordiging vanuit een ander perspectief kan meer licht werpen op de beperkte toegang van belangenorganisaties en of, en zo ja van wie, de traditionele overlegpartners concurrentie ondervinden. Als laatste wijst het model op andere dan alleen strategische overwegingen die aan besluitvorming ten grondslag kunnen liggen en die zowel vanuit het historische institutionalisme als evolutionaire perspectieven op rationele keuze verklaard worden. Op het oog lijken beide theorieën dezelfde mechanismen te verklaren. Zicht op de exacte balans tussen context en motieven kan de aard van duurzame instituties dus beter ontrafelen.

Tot slot

Deze studie heeft aangetoond dat samenwerking tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties systematisch onderzocht kan worden met behulp van het afhankelijkheidsmodel. De afhankelijkheidsgraad, die de relatie tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties typeert, kan worden verklaard door de waarde van de goederen en de beschikbaarheid van deze goederen in de omgeving te bepalen. Beide determinanten variëren langs verschillende politiek-bestuurlijke dimensies. Daarnaast toont het model aan dat de afhankelijkheidsrelatie tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties niet alleen gebaseerd is op een onbeperkte strategische keuze. Samenwerking tussen ambtenaren en belangenorganisaties wordt evenzeer bepaald door anticiperend rationeel gedrag en rationaliteit uit gewoonte. Navigeren tussen vriend en vijand is dus een kwestie van strategisch kiezen welke goederen nodig zijn en met wie samen te werken om deze goederen te verkrijgen, anticiperen op de toekomst, en/of het al dan niet onbewust volgen van een pad dat in het verleden is ingeslagen.

Curriculum Vitae

Caelesta Poppelaars was born on 7 April 1979 in Etten-Leur. She finished secondary school (Katholieke Scholengemeenschap Etten-Leur) in 1997 and studied public administration at Leiden University from 1997 to 2003. Next to her studies, she was a research assistant at the Crisis Research Centre (COT) and a part-time personal assistant to a member of the Dutch Parliament. She wrote her master thesis on the role of immigrant interest groups in local policy making. After her graduation, she worked as a researcher for the parliamentary committee on Dutch immigrant integration policy (Committee-Blok). She was a PhD student at the department of Public Administration of Leiden University from February 2004 until February 2008, where she also taught several classes on policy making and participated in the Dutch agenda-setting project team. Next to this PhD position, she was a board member of the PhD network of the Netherlands (PNN), a national interest group representing the interests of PhD students. Her responsibilities included maintaining and building relationships with the minister and parliamentarians responsible for science and education. Her research has been published in several scientific journals, including *Urban Affairs Review*, *Administration and Society* and *West European Politics*. From November 2008, she is a postdoctoral researcher at the department of Political Science of the University of Antwerp, where she is involved in a FWO financed project on interest representation in multi-level political systems.