Political activities of interest organizations: Conflicting interests, converging strategies.

Berkhout, D.J.

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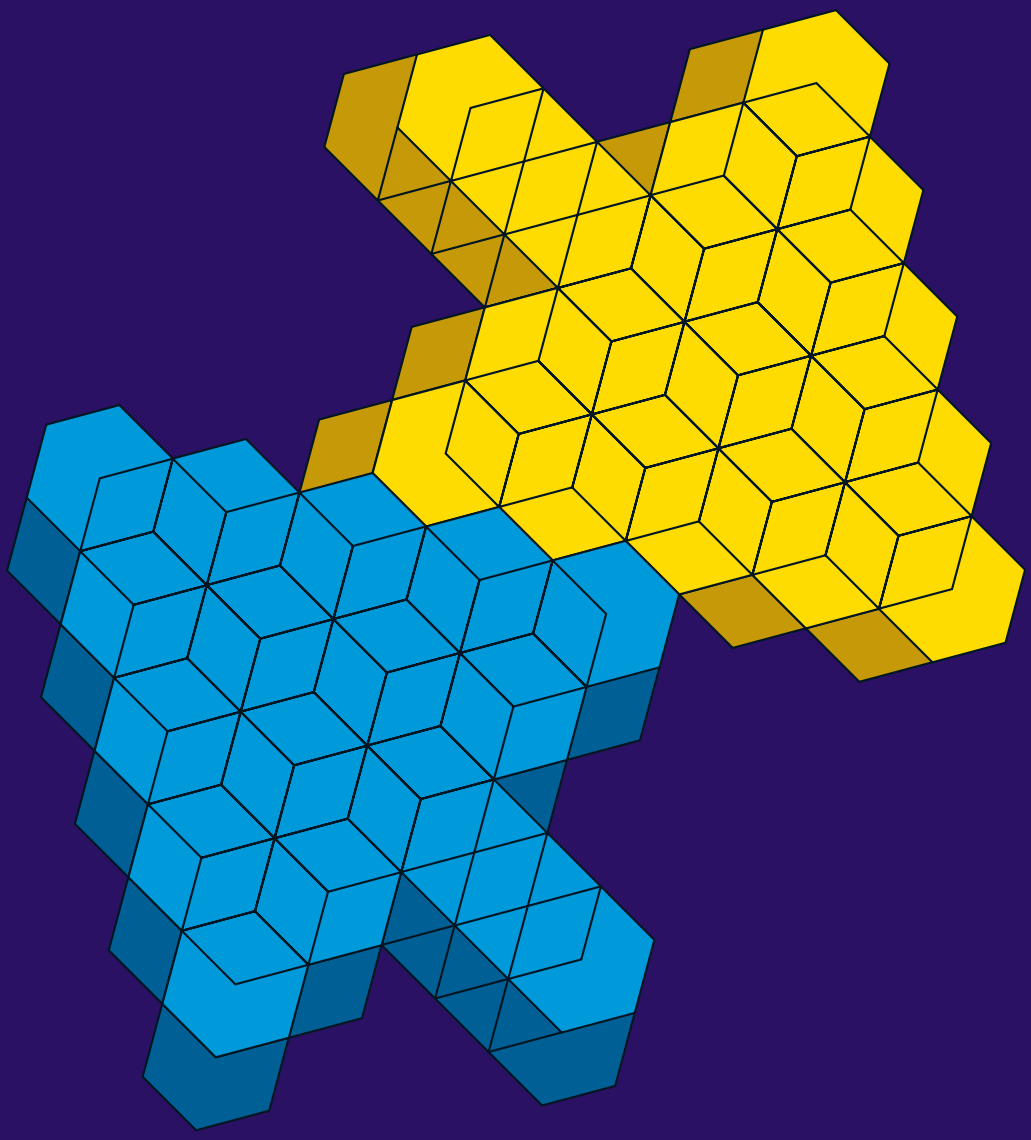
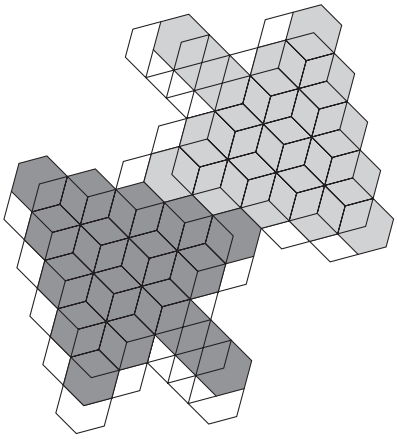


Joost Berkhout



Political activities of interest organizations: Conflicting interests, converging strategies

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Promotor:
Prof. Dr. David Lowery

Overige leden:
Prof. Dr. Frank Baumgartner (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)
Prof. Dr. Jan Beyers (Universiteit Antwerpen)
Prof. Dr. William Maloney (Newcastle University)
Prof. Dr. Bernard Steunenberg

Table of contents

List of figures

List of tables

Acknowledgement

The seeds of certain research projects can be found in specific 'eureka' moments, in earlier experiences, or in the persistent curiosity of the researcher. This section would be the ideal place to enlighten the reader on these important motivational drivers of the author. Though I do not lack the creativity for the post-hoc construction of such a key event or moments of genius, reality is different. This dissertation is largely the result of a careful nurturing of the circumstances under which it could be produced. These circumstances were good, and a number of persons and groups have especially contributed to this.

The data presented in chapter three and four result from various projects coordinated by David Lowery. I would like to thank the following students for their meticulous data collection and coding: Anne Messer, Marianna Ananyeva, Veerle van Doeveren, Willem Masman, Sevgi Günay, Bart Koot, Sebastiaan Sweers, Rogier Schulte-Nordholt, and Roos Belder. The data in Chapter 5 are part of the Europub project in which I assisted at the University of Amsterdam in 2003. I thank Jos de Beus and Jeannette Mak for allowing me to use these data and for encouraging me to pursue a PhD project.

The output of the research projects of David Lowery has not only been included in this thesis, but it has also been presented in a couple of articles by David Lowery and myself. I found it a pleasure to work with him, and to find an 'open door' in case I wanted to talk about something. Furthermore, Dave has shown an immense trust which made it possible for me to develop as an independent researcher. I thank him for that. He has also made university life very enjoyable with chats on the 'B' side of the corridor.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. SETTING THE ARGUMENT

In a narrow view of the political process, citizens give input via elections, politics is mainly about electoral competition, and state agencies produce policy output. However, politics includes more than elections, government is more than administering parliamentary preferences, and society provides a broader political input than regular voting. First, politics entails the wider struggle for political power and influence on the policies of the government. Besides party organization, elections, and parliamentary procedures, politics includes organizing interests, lobbying the bureaucracy, framing news media attention, and engaging in legal procedures. These are activities in which a broad range of actors take part. The outcomes of this part of politics are more difficult to measure than counting votes in elections or examining laws passed in parliament. Second, government institutions do more than administer the results of elections and implement the preferences of new governments. They adjust policies in response to several pressures of which elections are just one (e.g. Jones and Baumgartner 2005). That is, administration is 'not immune from the plague of politics' (Long 1949, 257). Government agencies are tied to the political balance of power that created them, and their survival consequently depends on a continuing political support of parliament, public opinion, and interested parties. Third, the political relevance of society goes beyond voters or consumers of government policies. Subsets of society, such as groups of citizens, companies and other actors, organize on the basis of shared interests. Citizens have a variety of reasons to organize themselves including ideological dedication to political causes, simple recreation, and pervasive economic interests. The collective activities of parts of society determine the types of issues that become political and give the competition in the market a political manifestation.

This thesis is about organized political activities. Because I understand politics to be about shared or conflicting interests and influence, I define organizations that engage in political activities as interest organizations. Activities are political when they deal with the organization and representation of interests before government. This includes, for instance, organizing cancer patients, seeking charity donations for children in development countries, or interacting with government representatives on behalf of farmers. To a varying extent, interest organizations attempt to influence government policies by means of such activities. This could be in a very direct manner by lobbying parliamentarians or government agencies, more indirectly by providing expertise or presenting 'events' to the news media. There is an almost unlimited number of organizations and an infinite variety of activities that potentially influence the agenda of government, the decisions of political institutions, and the implementation of policies. Nevertheless, political researchers and practitioners have a fairly consistent set of assumptions about typical political activities of typical organizations. These activities are expected to depend on the issues organizations work on, the type of members they have, or the political system organizations are part of. To further characterize these assumptions, business interest associations are assumed to be well-organized political

'insiders' lobbying on unpopular issues (e.g., Schattschneider 1960, 52), whereas citizens' groups are assumed to be engaged in public action on issues that are generally popular in public opinion, or at least 'would hardly raise an eyebrow' (Tarrow 1998, 3). Similar assumptions exist about the effect of the country or the broader political environment in which political activities take place. In pluralist countries, interest organizations are assumed to compete with each other for political access, members, and media attention, leading them to engage in 'winner-takes-all' strategies (Mahoney 2008). Whereas in corporatist countries interest organizations are assumed to be more cooperative, both regarding each other and in relation to government, and are valued by politicians for their representative nature and expertise. This thesis deals with these kinds of expected differences in the activities of interest organizations.

A probe of the variation of organized political activities is important for at least two reasons. First, the design of political systems makes certain pathways to power more accessible than others. For instance, there may be more opportunities to influence policies via insider lobbying when government agencies are held at arms-length from parliamentary control. This could favor business interest associations which, as suggested above, may be assumedto be specialized in such insider tactics. Access to and use of certain instruments of influence is thus likely to be unevenly distributed across the organized interests in a system. Via the adaptation of the design of political systems, for instance by lobby regulation, one could shape the relative influence of the interest group system in general and of sections of the interest group systems in particular. To do so in an informed manner requires knowledge about the use of various methods to attempt to influence policies by different organized interests. Second, we do not know whether different types of interest organizations behave different from each other because these types are seldom compared. This is surprising because political activities are usually seen as a prerequisite for political influence. There is, of course, a specialized body of literature dealing with various tactics used to gain influence, within the broader study of interest representation, group politics, or collective action. However, this literature is divided per type of organization. That is, there are thin strands of research on the political activities of business (Eising 2009; Bernhagen 2007; Coen and Grant 2006), on social movement organizations (Snow, Soule and Kriesi 2004), civil society organizations (Smismans 2006; Scholte 2007; Jobert and Kohler-Koch 2008), or citizen groups (Berry 1999). These separate research traditions have produced bodiesof knowledge about the variation in the activities of each of these organizational categories. Comparisons among the categories of organizations are nevertheless rare. They are, however, required to examine the assumptions about the variation in activities between these categories of organizations. Therefore, my research addresses the political activities of a variety of organizations. I will further discuss the motivation and relevance of the research below.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTION

There are a variety of reasons to re-examine several assumptions on differences in organized political activities in several countries, on various issues, and across organizations. The question central to this thesis is: why do interest organizations do what they do? This question relates to the *raison d'être* of interest organizations. In this regard there are at least three different propositions. We could start with the assumption that activities are driven by the desire for organizational survival. As Lowery (2007, 46) notes 'the most fundamental

goals of organizations must be to survive as organizations'. In that case, the most important drivers of organized political activity are the resources of organizations, usually in the form of membership dues. Second, we could assume that interest organizations exist because they seek a certain goal or wish to further a specific interest. Government recognition of this goal and associated policy changes are then critical, and organizations would exist in order to pressure the policy process, or, as Schattschneider (1960, 39) remarks, 'the flight to government is perpetual'. Third, activities of interest organizations may also be understood to propagate an idea, world view, or frame on a specific issue. In that case organized political activities only matter when they are 'perceived and projected' by other relevant political actors or by public opinion. Otherwise, these activities would be 'like a tree falling unheard in the forest' (Lipsky 1968, 1151). Organizations exist in order to change or maintain a perspective, frame or view on a sector, issue or cause.

So, there are several perspectives on the reasons underlying the existence of interest organizations, and various assumptions about typical behavior of organizations in certain countries or of those representing certain interests. In the next chapter I will develop a coherent framework in which it is possible to understand these three rationales of existence as governed by exchange relationships. I explicate several of the existing assumptions on organized political activities as factors that affect these exchange relationships. That is, organizational survival is governed by the exchange relationship with members, organizational political influence is structured by exchange relationships with policy makers, and public understanding of the issue is constructed in exchange relationships with the news media. Thus, organized activities are not a property of interest organizations, but an aspect of an exchange relationship. In such a view, for instance, the publication of press statements is part of the relationship between interest organizations and the news media; the distribution of members' magazines is part of the relationship between interest organizations and their members; and supplying policy statements to parliamentarians is part of the relationship between interest organizations and policy makers. Following the broad expectations presented in chapter 2, I will develop specific hypotheses on the variation in the political activities of interest organizations in each of the subsequent chapters.

1.3. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST ORGANIZATIONS

The activities of interest organizations matter for normative and theoretical reasons. Interest representation is a phenomenon inherent in democratic politics. However, in terms of the quality of democracy, citizens, government and scholars have several concerns about interest systems. This thesis addresses three of such concerns: a possible business bias in the interest system (chapter 3), the 'hidden' strategies of interest organizations (chapter 4), and the use of opportunities to publicly challenge government policies (chapter 5). More theoretically, I position interest organizations within the group tradition in political science, which is now in search of new theoretical foundations after the demise of corporatist and pluralist discussions (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). Such new theoretical perspectives may be conveniently organized in the stages of the 'influence production process' (Lowery and Gray 2004b; Lowery and Brasher 2003, 16-25). In such a view, research on interest representation consists of four interrelated stages, segments, or aspects: the broader field is separated into distinctive bodies of research on the mobilization of interests, the population of interest organizations, the exercise of influence or strategies, and the political outcomes or influence of interest representation.

1.3.1. NORMATIVE RELEVANCE

A frequently repeated and empirically examined aspect of interest representation is the relative large proportion of business interest organizations or organizations representing 'elite' interests (e.g. Lowery and Gray 2004a). This is the argument that Schattschneider (1960, 35) made against a positive evaluation of the American pluralist pressure system, when he noted that 'the flaw of the pluralist heaven is that is sings with a strong upper-class accent'. This argument was later theoretically supported by the work of Olson (1965) who argued that it is especially the very narrow, special interests that will be able to mobilize constituents and organize themselves.[1] A bias in the interest system is problematic because it would consequently lead subsections of society to instrumentalise government authority for their specific interests, perhaps at the cost of others in society (Olson 1982). However, in chapter 3 I will argue that the importance of such effects depends on whether the organizations present in interest systems actually do attempt to influence government policies. Interest organizations vary in this regard far more than is commonly assumed. For instance, certain US evidence suggests that most businesses do not seem to lobby and that business lobbying is often ineffective (Smith 2000), whereas in the European context researchers have pointed to various other, service or membership-related tasks of interest organizations (Schmitter and Streeck 1985). More to the point, variation in the policy interest of interest groups affects the potential bias in the political outcomes of interest representation. This could be the case when the business bias, observed in the number of relevant organizations, is further substantiated by higher or lower levels of political activities on the part of such business interest organizations. In the case of higher levels of activity Schattschneider's claim that a bias reflected in the proportion of specific organizations leads to favorable policies for specific groups in society is more likely to be true.

Furthermore, the form of interest representation probably affects the public image of politics in a more general sense. As an intermediary between the state and society, interest organizations simultaneously complement and compete for influence with the electoral ties between government and citizens. Whether interest organizations are functional competitors or add to the political system by reinforcing popular demands partly depends on their influence tactics. That is, interest organizations could provide citizens with information so as to make better electoral choices, or supply policy makers with expertise in order to more effectively provide public policies. Such activities could be seen as additions to or reinforcements of the electoral ties between government and citizens. However, other types of political action, such as those hidden from public scrutiny (lobbying) or those of a disruptive nature (demonstrations), may be perceived to interfere with the signals between the voters and the elected. The types of political activities could consequently affect the trust in the representative nature of the political system. The design of institutions may be employed to encourage or discourage certain activities. Corporatist consultation committees, for instance, provide legitimate and representative opportunities for negotiation and lobbying, but at the same time could produce relatively 'closed' institutions that force excluded challengers to seek other pathways to influence. Because specific behavior

[1] Rigorous empirical evaluation of bias in interest systems requires the comparison of interests in society with interests represented before government. This lead to various conceptual and empirical problems (Lowery and Gray 2004a).

is sometimes assumed to be related to certain types of interest, adapting the degree of openness of institutions could favor certain interests over others. Thus, the exact relations between interests and various political activities are important when evaluating or adapting the design of political institutions.

Democratic political systems allow minority interests to be heard and allow for the presentation of political alternatives in the public debate. Interest organizations could potentially contribute to such important functions through activities such as producing press statements, organizing minorities, and seeking media attention. Whether they actually do so depends on a variety of factors. For instance, media systems vary in their openness to organized interests and consequently make it more or less difficult for interest organizations to challenge government policies via the news media. When the news media are relatively closed to organized interests, the interest system is confined to very narrow expertise functions and a variety of relevant arguments and political voices may not become part of the public political discourse. This may result in minority interests and potential political issues remaining unrecognized by government.

1.3.2. THEORETICAL RELEVANCE

The group approach in political science seems to be on the rise again after the slow decline of its pluralist and corporatist heritage. Some attribute this recent research interest to political changes such as the decline of the popular basis of 'traditional' parties (Mair 2006), the rise of European governance mechanisms (Kohler-Koch 2005), or the increasing relevance of transnational and issue-centred political interests, such as those of businesses, migrants, or the environment. The increasing interest may also have academic origins, with a self-strengthening dynamic caused by the recent productive results of large-n studies on the activities of policy advocates (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Beyers 2004; Broscheid and Coen 2007; Gray and Lowery 1996; Kriesi, Adam and Jochum 2006). However, in the politics of interest representation we continue to find several important unresolved political science debates (Berkhout 2009). These are the perennials of the group literature and cover such topics as bias and scope of conflict (Schattschneider 1960), bureaucratic capture (Lowi 1969), social stability (Lijphart 1968), collective action (Olson 1965), political organization (Wilson 1973), and the broader group basis of government (Truman 1951).

Addressing these long-standing issues in a new way, however, raises several challenges. As noted above, the most pressing of these is the theoretical differentiation along lines of policy fields or sectors, national systems, and types of social bases or organizations. This segmentation of the field is especially pronounced in the subfields that examine specific types of interest organizations. There are, for example, mutually isolated literatures that examine the activities of social movement organizations (e.g. Snow, Soule, and Kriesi 2004) and business interest organizations (Eising 2009; Streeck et al. 2005; Coen and Grant 2006; Hillman et al. 2004). Indeed, the term 'interest organization' is sometimes used, as I do, to include a wide variety of these organizations, but is often narrowed to refer to 'economic' interest organizations only (Jordan, Halpin, and Maloney 2004). While these organizational categories are certainly relevant variables, these may not be the best candidates to be used to differentiate a field of study, and neither are country or sector typologies. First, the actor-, country- or sector-specific theories of interest representation that such narrow studies could produce are difficult to falsify or evaluate in other contexts. Second, it is difficult to theoretically relate, for instance, the specific political behaviour in different sectors.

It is, for instance, difficult to create theoretical links between research on business interest associations and research on social movement organizations, because we do not know how the separate conceptual frameworks used to study them should relate to each other. In chapter 2, I will further discuss this problem of field definition and below I suggest that we should perceive of the various approaches in interest representation as being part of a common 'influence production process'.

The construction of theories of interest representation requires some sort of differentiation of the field in order to prevent theories from being overly abstract, vague, and complex. As suggested above, such a broad differentiation should allow for the construction of connections between subfields. This is works best when we understand interest representation as a process that starts with mobilisation of interests and ends with certain political outcomes. This thesis focuses on the steps between these two subfields. This perspective requires me to have some theoretical notion about variations in the mobilisation and population of organized interests, in order to relate these to variations in the activities of interest organizations: who engages in these activities, and who does not? In this thesis a further differentiation of the stages of influence production is based on examining the distinctive types of political activities that interest organizations engage in. The question then would be: how are different types of inside- and outside-oriented activities related to each other? I demarcate the object of study in terms of political behaviour, that is, I define organised interests by the policy-oriented activities of organizations, irrespective of whether these are business associations, social movement organizations, individual companies, or think tanks, and irrespective of the sector they lobby in or the issue they lobby on. To repeat, interest representation is treated as a process in itself, with interrelated stages such as mobilisation and strategies.

The key theoretical challenge is to theoretically differentiate the stages of influence production while at the same time integrating other dimensions of differentiation (country, sector, organization-types). This is both a theoretical and research design challenge faced in this thesis and of the research community more broadly. The potential pay-off could be substantial, however. First, it could create flourishing cumulative research programs within the several behavioural stages. This is what we currently observe in studies of populations of interest organizations (e.g. Messer, Berkhout and Lowery 2010), where a consistent theoretical framework allows for the examination of the various contexts in which interest organizations operate. Second, it offers opportunities for the systematic linking of various stages of influence production. For example, researchers could examine the variation in the types of activities in relation to the success of interest organizations in securing favourable policies. This, in turn, is likely to increase the explanatory power of each aspect of interest representation under study, as it allows for more fully specified models. This theoretical linking is a major asset of this type of theoretical segmentation compared to other types of segmentation used in the field. Third, and most importantly, the linking of the various stages of influence production is required to evaluate the contribution made, or challenge posed by interest representation for the quality of democracy. Such linkages are too frequently taken for granted. As implied by Olson (1965), this is the case when mobilisation dynamics are assumed to 'directly' affect political outcomes. Similarly, Schattschneider (1960) seems to assume that a bias in the population of organizations in society will automatically affect the special interests' influence on public policy. A more precise examination of the linkages between several stages of influence production should allow us to focus on these

potential systemic normative concerns of interest representation. The evaluation of the activities of interest organizations in this thesis, as the third stage of influence production between mobilisation and population dynamics on the one hand and policy outcomes on the other, is directly related to such normative concerns and to the theoretical assumptions about the linkages with mobilisation and population phenomena.

1.4. AIMS OF THIS STUDY

This thesis contributes to the research of activities of interest organizations via an innovative theoretical perspective, the use of a variety of research designs, and the data-gathering methods used (sampling, comparable classifications, online observations). The study consists of three distinct modules presented in chapters 3 to 5.

1.4.1. THEORETICAL INNOVATION

As said above, a key challenge for the field of interest representation is to theoretically differentiate the stages of influence production while at the same time integrating other dimensions of differentiation already existing in the field. This thesis is an attempt to do this while keeping in mind the practical and theoretical reasons to narrow down the focus of research per country, policy sector, or organizational type. In this section I discuss the ways in which I seek to theoretically integrate and differentiate the field of study. The differentiation relates to the focus on the specific strategic stage of influence production. The integration refers to the inclusion in a single scheme of three exchange-theoretical perspectives that have similar theoretical origins but over time have developed as parts of distinct fields (in social movement studies, pluralism, corporatism).

First, in terms of differentiation, this thesis investigates the activities of interest organizations in relation to public policy, their constituents, and public opinion. This is the strategic stage of influence production and is set apart from the likely outcomes or 'successes' of these activities. Therefore, I will not make any claim about the ultimate influence on public policy that interest organizations seem to have. Such a study requires quite different types of data and research questions. In that type of research, for instance, the political positions of interest organizations on specific issues and the related public policies or legislative outcomes are of critical importance. The activities undertaken by interest organizations are here also distinguished from questions about the mobilisation of interests in society or the population of organizations in which interest groups work. However, because these earlier stages presumably affect the activities of interest organizations, their characteristics are included as independent variables in several of the research designs in the empirical chapters. In chapter 3, for instance, the density of the community of interest organizations is expected to affect the extent to which interest organizations are politically active.

Despite my focus on one specific stage of influence production, i.e., the influence activity stage, there is still a wide variety of research questions about the political activities of interest organizations that need to be answered. Therefore, I have further segmented these activities into three components or stages. Such a subdivision allows for a more precise understanding of their interrelations with adjacent stages of the influence production process (population/outcomes). These segments appear in each of the three empirical chapters. The first stage deals with the general political interest of organizations (chapter 3). The population of interest organizations consists of a wide variety of organizations that attempt to influence policies in different ways and to a different extent. Patient groups, for

instance, tend to focus on self-help and member services, and are in touch with the policy process only infrequently. The variation in the extent to which organizations are politically active, as noted above, should critically affect the behavioural implications researchers have assumed to be associated with our observations of the population of interest organizations. At the second stage, the object of research is the specific profile of political activities of interest organization (chapter 4). Activities include developing expertise, setting up campaigns, offering training services, monitoring policy changes, and maintaining political contacts. The combination of these activities forms a profile or repertoire which has various focal points: oriented on members, on policy makers (in various venues), or on the broader public. Interest organizations are characterised by specialisation in certain types of strategies. Why do they adopt the profiles that they do? At the third strategic stage, the activities of interest organizations are tentatively linked to potential political outcomes (a last stage in the influence production process). Such outcomes could take various forms. In general terms, successful recruiting leads to increasing membership numbers, successful lobbying leads to favourable policies, and successful communication generates media attention. Directly relating specific activities to political outcomes is very difficult because of the variety of factors that affects this relation. At aggregate levels, however, it may be possible to examine, for instance, the level of media attention for interest organizations in general. Why do some organizations get more attention than others? This is what I examine in chapter 5.

Second, in terms of integration, the exchange-theoretical approach of this thesis represents a theoretical combination of several distinctive bodies of research on the political strategies of interest organizations. It integrates approaches that respectively prioritise relations of interest organizations with members, policy makers, or the broader public. Each of these relations functions according to a specific logic in which different activities matter. I label these the logic of support, the logic of influence, and the logic of reputation. They are related to different research traditions: the logic of influence is compatible with neo-corporatist thinking (e.g. Schmitter and Streeck 1999), the logic of reputation relates to social-movement literature (e.g. Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993; Rucht 2004), and the logic of support draws on (neo) pluralist literature (Gais and Walker 1991; Olson 1965; Salisbury 1969). This integration is conceptually plausible for two reasons. The behavioral definition of interest organization used here allows for inclusion of a wide variety of organizations in the analysis. This necessitates and facilitates the incorporation of literatures that have tended to focus on specific types of interest organizations (social movement organizations, 'economic' interests (i.e. unions and employers). Furthermore, parts of the above-mentioned traditions have a similar conceptual origin in exchange theory. As will be discussed in chapter 2, this sociological research program was pioneered by Blau (1964) and Emerson (1962; 1976). Thus, these separate literatures can be integrated by taking into account their shared focus on logics of exchange.

1.5. Research design and methodological innovation

In relation to the theoretical differentiation discussed above, research designs of previous studies of political activities have frequently focussed on single-country, single-sector and/or single type of organization case studies (e.g. Duyvendak et al. 1992; Greenwood, Grote and Ronit 1992). As argued above, I seek to compare the influence activities of interest organizations on exactly these dimensions and thus require a different research design.

The three designs used in this thesis guarantee variation on several of these dimensions, which makes this study fundamentally different from sector-specific, country-specific or single organization-type research designs. First, each of the designs includes a variety of interest organizations. However, as I point out in each of the empirical chapters, several practical limitations make it difficult to establish a consistent, exclusive behavioural definition of interest organizations that would be appropriate for all of the studies presented here. For example, while certain large corporations are registered as lobbyists, and should thus be included as interest organizations, studying them may require quite different research methods and techniques than those needed to study other organizations, and have consequently been excluded from several aspects of the empirical research presented in this thesis. Still, all of the studies examine more than a single type of organization. Second, each part of my empirical research was designed to address substantial cross-sector variation. I use several classifications to differentiate policy sectors: economic sectors, interest communities, and policy agenda topics. In the last empirical chapter I focus on seven policy topics. While not as all-inclusive as the other chapters, this still produces substantial cross-topic differences. Third, research designs comparing multiple political systems are necessarily complex, considering the indeterminacy of the contextual systemic factors that could affect the strategies of interest organizations (Lowery, Poppelaars and Berkhout 2008). I have tried to reduce the severity of this problem by focussing on a very narrow aspect of interest representation in each country. Two of the three research designs include a cross-country comparison. In chapter 3 I compare two dissimilar systems: the (semi) pluralist EU with the (neo) corporatist system in the Netherlands. In chapter 5 a broader range of Western European countries is compared: Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, France and the United Kingdom. These two comparative research designs allow for conclusions about differences between (Western) political systems. This is a major benefit compared to single country studies because it allows for a tentative evaluation of the effect of certain system-specific characteristics (e.g. the 'unique lobbying culture in the EU' or the 'consensus oriented consultation in the Netherlands') (Coen and Richardson 2009). At the same time, however, any conclusions will only partially travel beyond Western Europe. In the specific chapter I will further motivate the selection of countries.

In this investigation I have employed research methods that are not (yet) common in the field of interest representation. The research methodology and the type of data employed in chapter 3 and 4 is different from that used in chapter 5. Indeed, in each of these empirical chapters I use different data to address different, albeit related, questions. A key methodological challenge in the field is the selection of interest organizations to include. Besides problems of data availability this also relates to conceptual problems in defining interest organizations (Jordan, Halpin and Maloney 2004), and the specific aspect of influence production being examined (activities, influence, collective action). Unlike, for instance, research on political parties, interest group research can only partly rely on 'formal' or institutional criteria but instead has to depend on 'informal' sources of information such a directories or specific registers. The definition of the population of interest organizations is, however, a prerequisite for any research on activities of interest organizations. In chapter 3 and 4 I present two samples of the EU-level interest population and suggest procedures to go about constructing such samples for other systems. Depending on the research question and the availability of data, populations of interest organizations can be defined in a 'bottom-up' or 'top-down' manner. Bottom-up procedures rely on registers of

various types of organizations in society. From such broad registers organizations are selected on the basis of keywords, legal status, or some other criterion that narrows the full population of organizations down to 'political' or 'collective' organizations only. In a top-down procedure a register related to political institutions is used. For this project, for instance, the register of lobbyists accredited to the European Parliament was employed. A specific type of policy interest or activity necessitates registration, and a broad variety of organizations could be included in such registers. The systematic thinking about and examination of such different sources of interest organizations is a distinctive and independent contribution of this study towards supporting other researchers requiring such data (Berkhout and Lowery 2008; 2010).

Besides this sampling method, I developed a variety of ways to evaluate the information that interest organizations provide on their websites. As will be further discussed in the relevant chapters, I differentiate between information on the organization itself (members, interests) and behavioural data on the activities it undertakes (newsletters, press statements, policy briefs etcetera). Regarding the former, I present various classification systems that allow for more elaborate linkages to other research than 'inductively' constructed categories. On the latter, the clustering of information on specific types of activities observed online constitutesa novel approach to measuring the political and policy activities of organized interests, unexplored by researchers that rely on survey data.

In chapter 5 I use information on the political claims made by various actors in newspapers in seven countries derived from the Europub project (Koopmans 2002). These data are unique in research on interest organizations. Research on the media-related activities of interest organizations or social movements is generally conducted in either of two ways. First, researchers use surveys of interest organizations to examine under which circumstances organizations consider an 'outside strategy' (e.g. Kriesi, Tresch and Jochum 2007; Beyers 2004; Thrall 2008). Contrary to my research in chapter 5, these researchers do not rely on observations of the actual behavioural outcomes but instead have to trust interview statements. Furthermore, such research does not address the effect or success of such strategies; i.e the actual presence of organizations in the news media. Second, social movement researchers in particular have used observations of mostly protests in the news media as indicators for political activities of certain groups (Koopmans and Statham 1999; Earl et al. 2004). Such research treats the news media as a source for information on political activities of specific groups, but does not include the public activities of other political actors. Consequently, we do not know whether it is only the interest group that 'goes public' or whether this is an aspect or characteristic of the larger political debate on a specific issue. My contribution is to contextualise the newspaper presence of interest organizations relative to the presence of other political actors. I thus do not treat the activities of interest organizations in isolation from other actors.

1.6. STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This study consists of a theoretical chapter, three empirical chapters and a conclusion. Each empirical chapter stands on its own in terms of the argument and research design. They describe separate research projects with separate literature reviews, normative justifications, and original data. The chapters are connected through the three steps, described above, between research on the population of interest organizations and on the political influence of interest groups. More conceptually, these chapters examine the

exchange relationships introduced in the theoretical chapter, chapter 2. In chapter 3 I examine why interest organizations are politically active on the basis of organizational data derived from the websites of samples of Dutch and EU interest organizations. A more precise analysis of online activities of a different sample of EU organizations is presented in chapter 4. For these organizations I evaluate the typical profile or pattern of activities. In chapter 5, the focus moves away from the interest organization to the actual public effects of their activities. In this chapter I examine why under certain circumstances (countries, sectors) the news media seem more open to interest organizations than in other situations. The combination of these research questions then allows me to evaluate why interest organizations do what they do. This is the subject of the concluding chapter 6.

CHAPTER 2

An exchange theory of interest group activity

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In most journalistic and some academic accounts of lobbying and political action, activities of interest organizations are assumed to be purposeful, successful, and strategically calculated (e.g., Jasper 2004; CEO 2005). This is especially the case for policy studies that focus on only those cases in which interest groups substantially affect policy outcomes or the public debate. Interest organizations are assumed to have a broad choice of the issues they work on, the tactics they use and resources they employ. In such a view the success or failure of the organization to influence policies or increase public support largely depends on its strategic decisions. Political leaders of interest groups are assumed to be well-informed and relatively independent to act (e.g., Kollman 1998, 21).[2] The structure and properties of the political organization 'naturally' follow from the decisions of organization leaders and is relatively independent from 'external' pressures.

Recent scholarship, in contrast, has given more attention to the contextual forces that constrain opportunities for political action (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Lowery 2007). This attention is consistent with earlier work by researchers of social movements (e.g., Kriesi 2004b; McAdam 1996) and scholars working in the neo-corporatist tradition (e.g., Crouch and Streeck 2006; Grote, Lang and Schneider 2008). For example, the organizational environment of the population of interest organizations matters. As Lowery and Gray (1996; 2001) point out, the presence of many similar groups in a particular field makes the foundation of new groups in that field unlikely. In other words, founding rates are density-dependent: the density of a group population restricts the space for action. A second example of such a recent study is the work by Baumgartner et al. (2009). They show that organizations that are supportive of status quo policies face quite different strategic options than those challenging existing policies. This is a conclusion that supports classic arguments in the field, such as those offered by Schattschneider (1960, 40), who argued that 'it is the weak who want to socialize conflict, i.e., involve more and more people in the conflict until the balance of forces is changed'. This socialization or expansion of conflict that is aimed at challenging the status quo requires different activities than the containment or privatization of social disputes favored by powerful political actors.

If structures impede the scope for agency for political actors, we need a theory that accounts for such contextual structures. Such a theory would indicate which aspect of the political context matters, under which circumstances, and to whom. In this chapter I will develop such a theoretical framework focused on political action. On the basis of existing research, I will construct a model that evaluates group activities as exchanges between different parts of their environment. This leads me to propose a triangular scheme of exchanges by the interest organization and three fields of actors: (1) political institutions, (2) media and public

[2] For a discussion of this in the context of social movements: see Jasper (2006), and Morris and Staggenborg (2004).

opinion, and (3) supporters or the social-economic base of the organization. These exchanges are governed by what I would label the logic of influence, the logic of reputation, and the logic of support, respectively.

This framework adds to the existing literature in three ways. First, each of these logics of exchange is loosely embedded in varying research traditions. That is, the logic of influence is compatible with neo-corporatist thinking (e.g., Schmitter and Streeck 1999), the logic of reputation relates to social movement literature (e.g., Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993; Rucht 2004) and the logic of support draws on (neo) pluralist literature (Gais and Walker 1991; Olson 1965; Salisbury 1969). The combination of these varying insights may lead to a more complete understanding of the opportunities and constraints available to various types of interest organizations. Second, while each of these traditions points to exchanges as focal points of research, multiple exchanges have rarely been considered in an interrelated manner. The exchange-theoretical framework allows me to focus on the interrelated nature of most of the activities of political actors. Third, I will formulate expectations regarding the circumstances under which each of these exchanges matter and are more likely to occur. For example, in the different types of media systems in different countries I expect journalists to demand different types of goods (events, 'news') in exchange for publicity. Also, as a second example, it could be that lower levels of democratic control of political institutional venues may make certain goods (expertise) more 'valuable' than others. These could thus be more favorable to certain activities (publishing reports) on the part of organized interests. I hope thus to contribute to the theoretical development of each of the logics of exchange by evaluating the explanatory power of contextual forces affecting potential exchanges.

Apart from these potential contributions to a theory on political strategies, the framework proposed here may contribute to the construction of group theory more broadly by explicitly incorporating aspects of the population of interest organizations as potential explanations for the behavior of interest groups. In that way I can link these two aspects in the study of groups. More specifically, I will be able to relate two stages of the influence production process. That is, I treat the 'logic of support' and its context in such a way that it addresses population level variation, which I then evaluate in relation to variation in group activities. By doing this, I should be better able to evaluate the importance of the variation in population level phenomena (the diversity, density, clustering of interest organizations) for organizational behavior and group politics more broadly.

In this chapter I will take several conceptual steps that lead to this triangular scheme of exchanges. I will first discuss and define the level of theory construction: the interest organization, and contrast this with theories that use other levels of analysis. Such as those that construct theories on the basis of individual or micro level assumptions about human behavior, focus on specific policy sectors or issues, or employ typologies of political systems. Second, I will demarcate the scope of this preliminary theory in relation to what it aims to explain: the political activities of interest organizations, presenting a relatively broad notion of both the behavior included and the types of organizations involved in this. I will then explain the conceptual focus on exchange as opposed to other types of interaction between interest organizations and other actors, such as competition, cooperation, partitioning and neglect, that are only partly included in the framework. My emphasis is on observable activities associated with exchange. Third, I will discuss the core scheme and the three logics of exchange, and finally relate this scheme to the design of the empirical research presented in the following chapters.

TABLE 1 Typical characteristics of research on different stages of the influence production process, adapted from Lowery and Gray (2004)

	1. The Mobilization and Maintenance Stage	2. The Interest Community Stage	3. The Exercise of Influence Stage	4. The Political and Policy Outcome Stage
Typical question	**Why** do people or organizations act collectively?	Why is the population of organizations as it is? (**Who?**)	Why and **how** do organized interests seek influence?	Why do some interests secure favorable policies and others do not? (**What?**)
Typical focus of theory construction	Individual	Organization	Issues	Political system / Issues
Dependent variable	Collective action	Density, diversity and change of populations	Activities of organizations	Policies, government recognition of problem

2.2. CONSTRUCTING THEORIES: ASSUMPTIONS ON INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, ISSUES AND SYSTEMS

In the construction of a theory researchers have to choose a conceptual level of analysis. In this section I will evaluate the relation between various aspects of interest representation and the theoretical unit of analysis, discussing several possible theoretical units in light of the varying stages of the influence production process: individuals (mobilisation), issues (strategies) and political systems (outcomes). Next, I will clarify my choice of theoretical focus on interest organizations, and how this relates to the choices made by other group researchers regarding a unit of analysis upon which to build assumptions about reality. This theoretical focus follows from my research interest in the political activities of interest organizations. Table 1 summarizes the discussion in this section. Every column represents a stage in the influence production process. The table should consequently be read from left to right: the outcomes of one column serve as input for the next.[3]

As summarized in the first column, there is a sizeable literature on collective action that is firmly embedded in *individual-level* assumptions about human behavior.[4] This type of research is perhaps best represented by Olson's logic of collective action and several economic studies that followed his study (Olson 1965). Individual-level incentives, in the absence of a creative use of side payments, lead to organized activities of only very specific, concentrated interests. More diffusely spread interests are not expected to be organized.

[3] This discussion provides a framework on the field of interest representation. It is not exhaustive in terms of units of theory construction. For example, certain researchers take certain types of behavior as perspective such as political claims in the news media (Koopmans and Statham 1999).

[4] Please note that earlier researchers didn't find this an important field of research exactly because of their different assumptions about individual motivations. As Truman (1951, 14) cites Dewey (1927, 151): 'Associated activity needs no explanation; things are made that way'.

Thus, via varying mobilization patterns, individual behavior is assumed to affect the distribution of represented interests at the level of the political system. Further, we also find sociological studies that ultimately embed their theories of groups in individual, motivational assumptions. These take a broader view of the types of incentives that lead individuals to join organizations. Apart from material benefits offered to members, these may include symbolic and social benefits (Salisbury 1969; Ware 1992). This theoretical focus on individuals fits research questions on mobilization and organizational maintenance that are not central in this thesis: why do people or organizations act collectively?

I do not make any motivational assumptions about individuals, or build a theory from the (micro) level of the individual. First, this is because I am not specifically interested in questions of mobilization, which would clearly require such a perspective. However, as suggested, mobilization and organizational maintenance affect the types of activity organizations subsequently engage in. For instance, interest organizations that find it more difficult to motivate their members to act collectively, seem to rely more strongly on outside-oriented influence strategies (Gais and Walker 1991). And, consequently, a theory of group activity would require at least some assumptions about individual motivations for mobilization. This is, however, only an *indirect* requirement because the likely variation in collective action problems is a property of interest organizations that only in part follows from individual-level motivational assumptions. Furthermore, it may be that rather different individual-level motivations lead to the same organization-level phenomena. For example, individuals could join organizations as a result of rational calculation or because of a broader range of 'more social' incentives. In both cases, organizations need to retain members in order to survive. Second, more importantly as well as consistent with earlier remarks on the relevance of contextual factors shaping the room for action, there is no immediate need to develop micro-level behavioral foundations for organizational strategies. That is, I assume that certain social forces have effects regardless of the immediate motivation or perception of the actors involved. For example, organizational entrepreneurs could strategically calculate their political activities, work on a trial-and-error basis, or copy colleagues. Each of these micro level behavioral mechanisms have, for example under competitive pressures, similar system-level effects on the failures of organizations or organizational adaptation. This argument is also presented by Gray and Lowery (1998, 29) when they follow Alchian (1950) and 'remain agnostic about the role of rational calculation'.[5] Third, and more related to research design, individual-level theories easily lead to seeking answers in motivations.

[5] The absence of an individual-level conceptual foundation does not imply that we cannot construct explanatory theories at other levels. Alchian (1950, 221) writes, for example: 'Like the biologist, the economist predicts the effect of environmental changes on the surviving class of organisms; the economist need not assume that each participant is aware of, or acts according to, his cost and demand situation. These are concepts for the economist's use and not necessarily for the individual participant's, who may have other analytic or customary devices (...)'. Considering the higher level of uncertainty about the effect of political activities and more fragmented nature of political information as compared to economic information, it seems that, like Alchian (1950, 221), it is reasonable to 'start with complete uncertainty and nonmotivation and then add elements of foresight and motivation in the process of building an analytic model'.

In terms of philosophy of science, even if motivations could be seen as causes, knowledge about the ways in which certain motivations cause certain actions is too easily 'constructed' afterwards. In Hempel and Oppenheim's words, 'a potential danger of explanation by motives lies in the fact that the method lends itself to the facile construction of *ex post facto* accounts without predictive force' (1948, 143).

In relation to the third column, theories about policy and political behavior, such as those by Kingdon (1984) or Schattschneider (1960), take the policy sector or the *political issue* as the main building block of theory (more recently: Baumgartner et al. 2009). Such classic policy studies largely relate to the third stage of the influence production process, in which the actual exercise of influence is the object of research: why and how do organized interests seek influence? Issues refer to political conflict among political actors. Policy sectors or fields refer to more substantive and institutionally defined domains of politics. The perspective of the political issue is especially suitable for a theory of interest representation because it allows for varying types of activities – both in relation to political institutions and to conflict more broadly. Further, it allows for an evaluation of important contextual factors that typically vary at the level of political issues. These include factors such as cooperation among actors, public salience, and the institutional or public locus of the issue. An additional point in favor of issue-level theories, in contrast to the individual focus, is that issue-level theories do not require strong assumptions about the nature of human motivation. The interactive nature of issue-specific political competition or the structural aspects of the policy domain reduce the theoretical relevancy of such assumptions. In such environments, individuals are relatively restricted in their space of action.[6] However, issue-level theory construction does not exactly fit my research interest: in such theories, political actors matter because their presence and activities explain the structure of the political conflict or the outcome in terms of policies. Thus, political behavior is largely understood to be an independent variable that explains the dependent variable (certain policies). This means that this approach/issue-level theory deals with the third and fourth columns in table 1. In this thesis I understand political activities as a dependent rather than an independent variable as is typical in issue-level theories. In terms of the influence production process my research is 'earlier' in the process of influence production (third column in table 1). This makes issue-level theory construction less attractive for explaining variation in political strategies.

In relation to the last column in table 1, if we assume that agency is very much restricted by all kinds of structures, we could try to develop theories at the highest level of aggregation, i.e., at the level of the *political system*. Comparative studies taking a system-level perspective usually contrast pluralist and corporatist interest representation (e.g., Siaroff 1999; Kenworthy 2003). For example, (corporatist) system-level theories have been used to examine the effectiveness of conflict-solving structures between employers and employees and their relation to differences in economic growth across countries (e.g., Wessels 1996; Visser and Hemerijck 1997). Students of structures of political opportunities also take a system-level perspective in order to explain the likelihood of various forms of collective

[6] Jones and Baumgartner (2005) embed their study of policy fields firmly in individual-level assumptions and mechanisms. On the basis of assumptions on the information processing capacity of individuals they suggest certain institutional-level patterns.

action (Kriesi 2004; McAdam 1996). Further, relatively broad theoretical frameworks are suitable to evaluate more normative claims about the 'proper' democratic role of interest representation, both in terms of 'upper class' bias and in relation to parliamentary representation. Thus, such studies deal with the *outcome* of various aspects of interest representation. Why do some interest groups secure favorable policies, get government recognition for their problems, or produce economically favorable intergroup bargains?

A system-level theoretical perspective raises two conceptual challenges. First, in terms of testing system-level theories, one risks historical or cultural determinism. Phenomena are then explained in reference to very general and country-specific causes. Researchers may then too easy be tempted to overlook the underlying factors determining why history sometimes matters and sometimes not. Also, such designs easily miss important sector-level variation within specific systems. These challenges can be partially addressed by carefully designed cross system comparisons that simultaneously account for cross sector differences. However, it seems unlikely that such designs can be evaluated via macro-quantitative research designs, because of the limited number of comparable countries (e.g., Kittel 2006). Second, and more importantly, there are the challenges of theory construction at system level. Theory construction at the level of social structures requires that the object of the theory be narrowed down in order to be not overly abstract and ineffective. As Dogan and Pelassy (1990, 113) state, there is 'need to segment before comparing'. At the same time we need to define what level of abstraction we will allow our theory to have. Following King, Keohane and Verba (1994, 20), we want it to be 'as concrete as possible' so that it has observable, falsifiable implications.[7] As to my research interest in political activities, it requires quite some conceptual steps from system-level theory to specific political behavior within these systems. Each of these steps requires segmenting the system. As there are various ways to segment (e.g., by category of organization, by policy field, by venue, by political activity), system-level theories require a broader range of concepts than seems readily manageable. This makes it more difficult to organize the concepts in an empirically meaningful manner. Surely, these problems are not unique to system-level theories, but the conceptual challenge is somewhat alleviated by less encompassing units of theory construction.

2.2.1. TAKING THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE INTEREST ORGANIZATION

I will start the construction of a theory on political activities of interest groups with the organizations themselves. With the focus on organizations, I follow Lowery (2007, 46), who, when evaluating theory-construction in the field, recommends that 'such a theory should be constructed from the perspective of the organization'. The choice for this organizational-level perspective of theory construction matters for three reasons. First, and most importantly, my research project is aimed at evaluating activities of organizations. Thus, taking the perspective of the interest organization fits the aim and explanandum of my research. As discussed above, this implies that researchers with slightly different interests, such as mobilisation or legislative outcomes, tend to take a different perspective on theory construction. Consequently, the exchange framework presented below is probably of

[7] At the same time, we do need to climb the Sartorian level of abstraction in order to allow cross-country comparisons (Sartori 1970, 1040).

only indirect relevance to them. Second, it affects the research design. I argue that some of the observable implications of the scheme can best be evaluated in research designs that do not have the interest organization as their main unit of analysis. This is so because organization-level expectations can be aggregated 'upwards', whereas system-level expectations are more difficult to disaggregate 'downwards'. In the following empirical chapters I evaluate the theoretical scheme using research designs that have political issues and political systems as units of analysis. This indirect evaluation is only possible because the theoretical scheme is relatively abstract at organizational level but capable of aggregation to sector or system-level. Third, choosing organizations as unit of analysis potentially contributes to theories outside the immediate field of interest representation. More specifically it allows me to address or use parts of organizational theory that explain the form and activities of organizations by their relation to their environment (e.g., Aldrich and Ruef 2006; Hannan and Freeman 1989; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978).

Taking the perspective of the interest organization brings three benefits. First, theories of organizations are well-developed in comparison to the other perspectives. For example, while we may dispute assumptions about the nature of political systems, we can relatively safely assume that organizations seek to continue their existence. On the basis of the assumption that organizations primarily seek survival it is possible to develop additional notions (and hypotheses) about political activities (Lowery 2007, 47-48). Given the political and interactive nature of my research interest, organizational theories that discuss notions of power and explain organizations by reference to their environment are especially suited to this research project. Second, organizations take lobbying decisions, engage members, and have policy preferences. They are at the centre of the action. While the relation between organizational properties and variation in political strategy is indirect, organized political activity logically requires organizations.[8] Third, we can relate theoretical expectations about organizations to issues and political systems, whereas it is more difficult to work the other way around. That is, on the basis of organizational-level assumptions we could develop hypotheses on system-level phenomena. Considering the higher levels of abstraction required at the level of the political system, it is more difficult to derive precise expectations from such abstractions for organization and issue-level processes.

So, the interest organization is the central perspective of this research and the key conceptual building block of the exchange theory of political activities. This concept seems an 'easy', immediately observable object, requiring only a brief definition. However, interest group scholars only partially agree on the definition of 'interest organization' as central concept of the field, or its relation to allied concepts such as 'social movement organizations'. Before I present the exchange theoretical framework central in this thesis I will discuss several defining factors of interest organizations, and demarcate this research object or research focus in two ways. In the next section I will specify the types of organizations that I think the framework can be applied to, and next I will specify the types of activities that I include in the framework.

[8] This is one of the reasons why certain researchers attempt other theoretical perspectives. For instance, considering the indirect nature of this relation, why not take (a specific form of) political action as a theoretical perspective, such as a 'political claim' or a 'revolution'? (e.g., Koopmans and Statham 1999; Stocpol 1979) This would, for example, allow for theorizing on the interactive nature of activities and the historical context.

2.3. A BEHAVIORAL DEFINITION OF INTEREST ORGANIZATIONS

In this section I define the types of organized activities that I am interested in. Unlike other researchers I only partly differentiate the field of research according to the type of organization. Throughout the policy process a broad variety of organizations take up political roles. In order to understand the differences between them one needs to include a broad variety of these. I employ a three-dimensional definition of 'interest organization'. These dimensions deal with attempts to influence public policies, the broader socio-economic base on which the group relies for survival, and way the group is organized. Hence, this is a situation-specific definition whose aspects may reflect differences of degree instead of categorical differences. An example of such an aspect is the extent to which organizations attempt to influence policies. Some organizations have lobbying as their core business more strongly than others. They lobby on more issues and do that more frequently than others; the difference is one of degree. Thus, the chosen definition requires further specification depending on the research design and method, but is nevertheless more appropriate than narrower definitions in which large proportions of politically relevant actors are excluded from consideration.

I will first discuss some of the common differentiations of research into several categories of organizations, arguing that these are unproductive in relation to my research on activities. I then evaluate the different foci of social movement research and interest group research. This is important because of their different perspectives on organizations, and on political action that is not immediately aimed at political institutions. That is, social movements are not defined by their organizations, and attempts to influence policies are understood not to include contacts with government (as social movements do not have 'standing'). After this discussion I will continue with a conceptually broad behavioral definition of interest organizations and, in the section following this one, I discuss the 'exchange' concept in relation to political activities. In this way I present a framework that, while abstract, has the potential to explain political activities of a broad range of organizations, as opposed to frameworks focused on specific categories of organizations or political activities.

As discussed, commonly, academic research on interest organizations is compartmentalized into the types of organization that aim to influence policy or develop some sort of collective action. That is, we have separate fields that examine the activities of social movement organizations (Snow, Soule, and Kriesi 2004), business interest organizations (Eising 2009; Streeck, Grote, Schneider, and Visser 2005), civil society organizations (Finke 2008; Jobert and Kohler-Koch 2008; Maloney and Rossteutscher 2007), labour unions (Visser 2006; Streeck and Hassel 2003), the firm as political actor (Coen and Grant 2006; Hillman, Keim and Schuler 2004), or the politics of bureaucratic agencies. The term interest organization is sometimes used to include a wide variety of these organizations, but can also be narrowed to refer to economic interest organizations (Jordan, Halpin, and Maloney 2004).

These are important distinctions, especially because of the related variety of research aims. For example, if one is interested in notions of citizenship in relation to participation in civil society organizations, a different research approach is needed than if one is interested in the ways in which organizations try to influence public policy. But even when researchers are interested in similar political activities a good case could be made for the organization-specific construction of theoretical models. For example, the potentially similar policy-related strategies of social movements and business associations may be explained by fundamentally different causal mechanisms. In that case, the usual theoretical

differentiation between these two types of actors allows for the construction of a theoretical framework that separately aggregates knowledge about these actors.

However, there are important downsides to this differentiation in research. First, the policy effects of certain activities can hardly be understood if we examine only one type of actor. Even when we take a broad view of interest groups, we will need to take into account the positions and strategies of other actors when explaining certain political outcomes. Policy or agenda-setting studies therefore usually include a broad range of actors (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Burstein 1998; 1999; 2002). Second, regardless of the effects on public policy, there are questions relevant to political science about the differences among the manifestations of interests in society and economy in terms of mobilization, population construction and strategies. Organizational form, for example, is only one of the variables that may explain why certain interests find a voice in the media or are represented in consultation committees. Third, researchers specializing in a certain variant of political organization typically assume that this organization only engages in certain types of political activities in relation to certain policies. For example, business interest associations are assumed to engage in institutional lobbying and to be unlikely to seek broader public attention. One of the reasons for this may be that, as argued by Schattschneider (1960, 41), 'the political influence of business depends on the kind of solidarity that (...) keeps internal business disputes out of the public arena'. However, in order to seriously examine such arguments, researchers require comparisons of business interest representation and other interests. Such comparisons do not arise from research that specializes in only a single category of organizations.

Rather than distinguishing a certain variant of political organization, I prefer to use a general term.[9] Interest organizations are, first, organizations that are interested in influencing public policies. This may entail changing existing policy, keeping the status quo policy, reducing government action, or seeking government recognition of a problem. Organizations may seek influence via direct interaction with officials or by other means. These other means, however, should not include directly seeking public office and participation in elections.[10] I exclude political action in relation to authority outside the state, such as churches and companies, except when such action is (also) aimed at changing state policies. Second, organizations have some sort of social or economic base (external to the immediate

[9] This definition is consistent with the definition by Beyers. Eising and Maloney (2008, 1106), who define interest groups by three key features: interests need to be organized, groups need to aim to influence public policy, and they act informally or at least outside the electoral process. These features could be understood as three dimensions or scales (organization, policy involvement, informality) and may be ranked according to differentiate types of organizations. Such an integrated, behavioral approach is, for instance, exemplified in the 'influence production process' as proposed by Lowery and Gray (2004b) and a similar scheme by Balme and Chabanet (2002, 41; 2008, 36). Lowery studies a diverse range of organizations in which 'the lobbying task is perhaps the only concrete function even potentially common to all organizations' (2007, 31).

[10] The exclusion of political parties seems straightforward. It is, however, not fully consistent with a functional, behavioral definition of interest organizations. Political parties also engage in lobbying, demonstrations, or public consultations: we find quite some representatives of national parties in the EP lobby register, for example. Further, interest organizations may be deeply involved in elections as well, especially in referenda where an interest group acts like a party, seeking votes for one specific side of an issue.

policy environment, i.e. subsidies). However, unlike other researchers, I include activities of organizations regardless as to whether this base consists of individual members, contributors, or other organizations, and I do not exclude certain types of interests or causes that organizations represent. Third, interests need to be organized. I therefore exclude from consideration broad waves of public opinion, individual action, or 'loose networks of actors'. However, being organized need not have the form of 'collective action' as traditionally conceived; I include 'individual action' by organizations such as companies or schools. I will discuss my considerations for this definition in more detail below, and will also further specify the types of behavior related to indirect and direct interaction with government.

As suggested above, I am giving priority to the orientation on public policies of organized interests, and use the organizational and tactical dimensions as variables. Such a choice is common in US- based policy-oriented studies (e.g., Heinz et al. 1993; Gray and Lowery 1996). It has, however, been criticized by Jordan, Halpin and Maloney (2004, 202), who state that this 'functional' definition inhibits communication among researchers, reduces comparability, and obscures membership-related or 'internal' dimensions of policy activity. Following Salisbury (1992, 43), their most important criticism is on the lack of differentiation between organizations such as companies or municipalities lobbying on their own behalf, and interest associations representing their members. As they quote him, 'institutions are managed organizations ... membership groups must look far more carefully to the desires of their members, both to assure political legitimacy and to keep their supporters happy'. Thus, organizations with members have different organizational mechanisms that tie the leadership to constituents and hence are potentially 'more legitimate'.

This is fair criticism, but it mixes conceptual and research designs questions. That is, *conceptually* we could account for varying internal pressures in institutions and membership groups; we know that institutions also have to deal with important internal politics that may be similar to those faced by membership organizations. Heinz et al. (1993, 384) note that 'the government affairs officers of corporations, the executives of trade associations, and the heads of citizen-government groups must justify the cost of their operations to their respective organizational constituencies – whether the constituency is the CEO, industry members, or contributors.'[11] The organizational ties are of a different type and of a different degree.[12] However, *empirically* we need different research methods to study the internal dynamics of institutions or membership groups. The internal organizational pressures take different forms; a membership meeting on an association's annual budget is different from a board meeting on the future of the Public Affairs department. Thus, while perhaps conceptually similar, in the empirical work presented in the following chapters I will suggest that we need dissimilar research methods to evaluate these similar pressures

[11] See Wilts (2006) for an exchange-related approach to these 'internal' processes.

[12] As will become clear throughout this chapter, such ties are understood as exchange relationships under the logic of support. Please note that in cases where organizations fully specialize in a single exchange relationship (e.g. only lobby) they continue to be interest organizations but are assumed to be severely restricted in their space of action. Organizations lobbying on their own behalf (with a very limited 'logic of support') have relatively little on offer under the logic of influence. This addresses the varying representative nature of organizations.

coming from different 'organizational constituencies'. This implies that I will only partially examine organizations that lobby on their own behalf (see section 3.4.1.3 and section 4.5.1). This is, however, a research design choice that does not follow from the conceptual applicability of the exchange theory presented here.

To repeat, I define interest organizations as (1) organizations that (2) attempt to influence public policy without participating directly in elections, and (3) rely on supporters in society. In order to examine public political activities usually studied in the context of social movement research, I compare this definition with definitions of social movement organizations. As discussed in the next section, researchers of social movements have a different focus on all three dimensions: social movements need not be 'organized', focus on certain types of political activities, and specialize in political action that originates from citizens. In the next section I will argue that, despite these differences, insights on public, media-oriented political action derived from social movement research can be very well integrated into the exchange-theoretical perspective on political activities that I develop in this chapter.

2.3.1. INTEREST ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

I seek to integrate aspects of social movement literature into a broader framework of political strategies. The conceptualizations of interest organizations, on the one hand, and social movement organizations on the other are important for my research project. This is because I use theoretical notions developed in the context of social movement research on media-related action. This includes, for example, the concept of validation, which suggests that media coverage is a necessary condition for recognition of a political claim on the part of government (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993, 116). Of the categories of organizations mentioned above, it is especially the relation between my definition of interest organizations and definitions of social movements that is important. Snow, Soule and Kriesi (2004, 11) present a comprehensive and multi-dimensional definition of social movements as 'collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organization, society, culture or world order of which they are a part'. Thus, they specifically point to the non-institutional character of activities on the part of social movements. I use this aspect of social movement research in order to theoretically develop the expected nature of the exchange relations between interest organizations and the news media. This will be specified in later sections in this chapter. Below, I evaluate several additional definitional dimensions.

Table 2 summarizes the different dimensions in the definitions of social movements and interest groups. Please note that most of these aspects can be understood as differences of degree. In this comparison I differentiate three broad dimensions. In addition to the organizational and policy interest dimensions that we found in the interest group literature, social movements are understood to specialize in certain political activities and have specific types of goals.

The first rows of table 2 deal with aspects of political institutions and authority. Students of social movements and interest groups agree that they study phenomena (organizations, persons) that are not directly involved in elections, but social movements are different

TABLE 2 Comparison of defenitions of social movements and interest groups

Conceptual differentiating dimensions	**Social movement**: e.g., Snow et al. (2004)	**Interest group**: e.g., Beyers et al. (2008)
1. Relation to political institutions and political authority		
Elections	Does not seek public office	Does not seek public office
Policy process: (in)direct interaction, (in)formality, policy change	Not of immediate relevance	Attempts at policy influence. Political advocacy.
	'noninstitutionalized means of action' aimed to change status quo	'frequent informal interactions with politicians and bureaucrats', variety of aims
2. Relation to society and the economy		
Types of supporters	Individuals	Individuals and organizations
Field of action: other types of authority	Important to political struggle: social change	Only relevant in relation to policy
Aim: material vs. values	(mainly) Values: 'goals that would hardly raise an eyebrow'	Variety of interests
3. Means of existence: Organization		
Organization: collective action	Matter of degree: 'networks of actors'	'excludes broad movements or waves of public opinion'
Organization: centrality of political activities	At least one of key tasks	'non-political organizations' such as companies or schools could take the role of interest organization

from interest groups in that 'they seldom have the same standing or degree of access to or recognition among political authorities' (Snow, Soule and Kriesi 2004, 7). Social movements do not seek such recognition or access either.

The second set of rows deals with social, cultural, or economic aspects of the political organization under study. Social movement scholars explicitly include public challenges to varying types of authorities such as 'cultural' or 'economic' authority outside the direct policy process. Examples of such social political interactions are challenges by the gay and lesbian movement of religious organizations, or consumer campaign groups that targeting company policies (e.g., Walker, Martin and McCarty 2008). In contrast, interest groups scholars tend to see the state as the sole target of influence (which, of course, may be targeted indirectly). In the end, interest group scholars tend to see political institutions and public policy as the only instruments for social changes. In the context of this thesis this matters when I evaluate attempts to gain access to the news media. I assume that organizations do this because they either seek to indirectly influence policies or indirectly recruit members. I do not develop expectations about attempts of organizations to influence other 'authorities', such as companies or churches.

The last set of rows deals with the aim and complexity of the organization. Both interest group students and social movement students have shown some flexibility in this regard. As discussed earlier, in my research project interest organizations are defined by their engagement in policies, i.e., regardless of their organizational form. That is, a variety of

organizations could take up political roles; interest organizations include public authorities, companies, think tanks, and associations alike. Also, certain students of social movements have stretched the concept, but in a different way: 'movements (...) are not organizations, not even of a peculiar kind (...) but networks of interaction between different actors which may either include formal organizations or not, depending on shifting circumstances' (Della Porta and Diani 1999, 25). In developing my exchange theory I disregard the aspects of social movement research that deal with 'unorganized' activity. In part this is an empirical choice and not a conceptual one that is similar to the choices made earlier about advocates that have a very limited representative role (i.e. public affairs departments that are tied to companies). The main conceptual reason is that I am interested in the relationships between various logics of exchange. As will become clear below, 'unorganized' activities tend to have a very restricted exchange relationship with constituents and thus very few interrelations between the logic of support and other logics. The empirical reason is that one needs different research methods to study 'unorganized' activity than to study organizations.

As I said earlier, these definitions largely overlap and reflect differences in degree. Burstein (1999), therefore, argues that we can understand social movement organizations in a similar vein as interest groups (see also: Lowi 1971). He proposes to use the more general term 'interest organization'. Gamson (2004, 260) addresses this discussion and proposes to use 'advocacy groups' as a general term to denote 'the full range of members and challengers who are attempting to influence the policy process'.[13]

Thus, social movement research and theory differs from interest group research because of a somewhat different focus on the relation with political institutions and public policy, the social basis of political activities, and the organizational forms of political action.[14] In this thesis I address these differences in two ways: first, I seek to integrate social movement theory on media relations into interest group thinking on relations with members and policy makers relations. As I will explain below, I do this by viewing all three relations as organizational exchanges. This conceptual integration potentially contributes to a further improvement of existing theories in both fields. Second, we do not know which of the differentiating dimensions is more important than the other. Is it the contact with policy makers that requires a different perspective on political activities? Or is it the organizational

[13] He considers this term 'preferable to 'interest organizations' since many such organization are more concerned about values than interest in any material sense and some are more like networks than formal organizations.' Andrews and Edwards (2004, 481) more strongly argue in favor of a conceptual synthesis and use 'advocacy organizations' as an integrative term that covers interest groups, social movement organizations, and nonprofits: 'advocacy organizations make public interest claims either promoting or resisting social change that if implemented, would conflict with the social, cultural, political, or economic interests or values of other constituencies and groups'.

[14] In addition to these conceptual differences in the discussion of social movement organizations, Beyers, Eising and Maloney (2008) point to normative discussions that seem to underpin the differentiation between interest organizations and other types of policy advocates. They suggest that social movement research tends to take a more favorable view on the political aims and tactics fostered by social movements relative to interest groups. Obviously, the two types of organizations are studied in separate disciplines, that is, the disciplinary boundaries between political science and sociology produce 'parallel literatures' of social movements and interest groups (see also: Andrews and Edwards, 2004).

form that necessitates choosing a particular theory about those activities? Researchers do not know precisely which aspects matter under which circumstances. This makes it difficult to draw the line between the respective fields of research, or to integrate aspects of this research. The lack of clarity seems to be largely caused by researchers' implicit assumptions about associations between the defining dimensions, such as the association between citizens' mobilization and outside political action. This makes it impossible to evaluate the relative importance of a specific dimension (and its theoretical rationale) or to examine whether the assumption in question is correct. Thus, because of the differentiation in research fields, we cannot fully evaluate the assumptions made by both social movement scholars and interest group researchers. To do that, we would need research designs that include varieties of organizations, so as to provide sufficient variation in the dimensions discussed.

I will give two examples of such assumptions, which will be further addressed in the rest of this thesis. First, if we start from the assumption that business interests only pursue inside lobbying strategies and social interests only engage in activities that mobilize public opinion, we are likely to construct research designs that focus only on certain types interests and activities. A valid evaluation of this assumption requires including both business interests and other interests in a single research design, as I have done in this research. My second example is an assumption present in both fields, which, in contrast to the previous example, points to similarities between social movements and interest groups. We have theoretical reasons (and empirical support) to assume that underlying organizational mechanisms, such as resource dependency or population-level effects, are similar across various types of organizations. That is, it seems that in crowded, dense communities of business interests as well as dense communities of organizations representing other interests, the birth rate of new organizations is lower than in less crowded communities. This means that there is no theoretical reason to differentiate between various types of organizations because for certain phenomena their difference does not matter.

It is the aim of the theoretical scheme that is presented in this chapter to clarify these types of associations. Therefore, I use an encompassing definition of an interest organization that allows me to compare different categories of organizations that are usually examined separately. This research, however, is not about organizations, but about activities of organizations. I understand these activities as exchange relationships with the environment. In the next section I will argue why this view matters and why this is distinctive from seeing activities as a result of, for example, competition or regulation. These relationships matter because they could plausibly single out organizations that may have more powerful or influential positions in the policy process than other interest organizations.

2.4. Power, organizational environment, and 'flows of valued behavior'

Interest organizations develop a range of activities. In the perspective developed here most of these activities are understood as exchanges between the organization and different parts of its environment. These activities are reflected in the shape and properties of the organization. However, not all activities and not all properties of the organization are directly explained by organizational exchanges. First, such properties may be explained by factors 'internal' to the organization, such as organizational cultures or histories. Second, and more importantly, organizations interact with their environment in varying ways. So as to capture this variation, I redefine the concept of exchange; more specifically, I only include

(1) interactions with actors in other domains, such as parties, government and media, and (2) interactions that require some sort of activity on the part of the interest organization. The former implies that I exclude interactions with other interest organizations; the latter that I do not seek to evaluate interactions that do not require specific action. This is more of a theoretical point. That is, it could be that certain organizations do not engage in certain political activities, and that this passivity could be understood as part of an exchange relationship. For instance, interest organizations may sometimes not voice support for certain policy alternatives. This may be a 'non-activity' that could be in exchange for the continuation of favorable status quo policies offered by policy makers. The framework that I develop only partly includes such effects. This decision relates to the discussion about the structural or behavioral nature of power further referred to below. I will proceed in three steps: first, I follow Blau (1964) and differentiate types of interaction as relations of power. Second, based on later organizational theoretical and social-psychological work, I provide a definition of exchange. And third, I further specify this definition in the context of this research project.

Emerson (1962, 1976) and Blau (1964) were interested in exchanges between actors in order to evaluate the power relations between these actors.[15] Blau (1964) was interested in asymmetric situations in which one actor is more powerful than another.[16] Power is defined as 'the ability of persons or groups to impose their will on others despite resistance through deterrence either in the form of withholding regularly supplied rewards or in the form of punishment' (Blau 1964, 117).[17] Thus, power is here seen as an aspect of a relationship rather than of an actor.[18] Similarly, resources are understood to be 'not possessions or attributes of

[15] While there is important literature on political, social, and economic exchange either dating further back (Ekeh, 1974) or of later date (e.g., Coleman, 1994, Williamson 1985), I will start with the coherently developed (modern) concept of social exchange because of its explicit interest in power. An early political sociological example is Ostrogorski (1903, as in Coleman, 1994 38), who 'describes the functioning of the political machine in American politics in the 1890s to bring about a three-way exchange among legislators (who got constituents' votes), business firms (who got legislators votes) and constituents (who got money and services that the machine could purchase with money'.

[16] With his attention to asymmetry and his contention that 'interdependence and mutual influence of equal strength indicate lack of power' (118, see also note 7), he distinguishes himself from Emerson (1962), whose 'focus on balancing operations is unfortunate and somewhat confusing as it diverts attention from the analysis of power imbalance'.

[17] In this he follows earlier definitions by Weber and Dahl. Korpi (1985, 35) criticizes Blau (1964) for doing so. He argues that Blau (and other scholars) evaluates power too restrictively as relevant only in the context of political conflict, and thus insufficiently examines power relations in the context of exchange. Korpi (1985, 35) suggests using two concepts of power: power as a result of pressure (conflict), and power as a result of reward (exchange). This may be fair criticism to quite a number of scholars, but Blau is nuanced here and, with his attention to coercion, does not narrow down the concept of power to apply only to (potentially) coercive interactions, as becomes clear from the discussion.

[18] Although he realizes this difference (between actor and actor relation) is sometimes a conceptual discussion because 'the possession of generalized rewards, such as money, is evidently of major significance in this connection' (Blau 1964, 117). Such generalized rewards as properties of persons or groups are then, in practice, not unique for certain exchanges but for all connections, and no longer a property of the individual relation.

individual actors, but rather they are attributes of the relationship between actors' (Emerson 1976, 348). That is, a 'resource is an ability, possession, or other attribute of an actor giving him the capacity to reward (or punish) another specified actor' (Ibid. 347). Exchange relations involve the reciprocal flow of valued behavior, or, formulated differently, the exchange of resources between two actors.[19] I will use the terms 'resource', 'valued behavior or activities' and 'exchange goods' interchangeably. Also note that at this point I do not theoretically differentiate between individuals and organizations, as I specifically focus on those aspects of exchange theory that are applicable to both individuals and organizations (Blau 1964, 24-25).[20]

2.4.1. FORMS OF RELATIONSHIPS: EXCHANGE, COMPETE, REGULATE, DEBATE, AND COMPLY

The exchange of resources, Blau (1964) explains, is only one specific way to attain power and to secure someone's compliance with your wishes.[21] Besides exchange, there are several ways that together govern the interaction of interest organizations with other actors and their environment. Thus, assuming that organizations seek survival, independence, and influence in their environment, interest organizations have five options that I rank as follows: (1) exchange of resources, (2) competition with other actors, (3) becoming subjected to force/using force, (4) debates that affect the value of the resources or (5) compliance with the wishes of other actors. These options are summarized in table 3.

First, as I will elaborate further below, organizations exchange valued behavior with other types of organizations.[22] Such valued behavior, understood as a strategic resource, is supplied to an actor who reciprocates by supplying a needed service. In Blau's words: 'Social exchange is limited to actions that are contingent on rewarding reactions from others and that cease when these expected reactions are not forthcoming' (1964, 6). This bilateral exchange is usually favored over any other type of interaction because it largely maintains the independence of the actors involved. This is especially so if both actors have a monopoly in their respective sectors.[23]

[19] It cannot be emphasized enough that resources (or power, or influence) are relational notions. For example, the information on political support that an interest organization could supply to a certain policy organization is only of a certain value in the context of a lobbying interaction. It does not have an intrinsic value.

[20] Though Blau seems mainly interested in individuals, the level of abstraction he uses allows for a relatively easy application in the context of organizations. This has been further developed by, among others, Cook (1977; 1984; 2006), Jacobs (1974), and Levine and White (1967).

[21] Thus, as also argued by Cook (1977, 64), exchange between persons or organizations does not cover 'all interesting interorganizational phenomena'.

[22] For Blau (1964, 124) exchange does not need to be (directly) reciprocal because the giving party gains power via the dependence of the receiving party ('providing needed benefits (...) is undoubtly the most prevalent way of attaining power' (Idem, 118)), whereas Emerson (1976, 347) argues 'that empirical instances of purely unilateral reward will be extremely rare and transitory in nature'.

[23] This so-called bilateral monopoly is formalized in Emerson and Cook (1997, 721-723). See also: Coddington (1968)

TABLE 3 Ranking order of social interaction, adapted from Blau (1964, 124)[24]

	Blau's terminology: assuming an asymmetric dependency relation between two actors			
required action, my terms	**action**	**conditions for independence of 'subordinate'**	**requirements for power of 'superior'**	**structural implications**
exchange 'reciprocal flow of valued behavior'[25]	supply inducements	Strategic resources	Indifference to what others offer	exchange and distribution
compete or cooperate with other actors	obtain elsewhere	available alternatives	monopoly over what others need	competition and exchange rates
regulate	take by force	coercive force	law and order	organization and differentiation
debate and engage in media action	do without	Ideals lessening needs	materialistic and other relevant values	ideology formation
comply (without legislation)	compliance	none of above	any of above	control and inequality

Second, organizations may seek other actors that supply the same resources. For example, interest organizations may try to lobby in different governmental venues, employees may choose to become members of a different union, or a journalist may choose to cover statements of different political actors. Thus, the social interaction is characterized as competition. The possibility of competition depends on the availability of alternative actors offering resources of similar value than the behavior of the interest organization. Powerful actors have a monopoly over what others need.

Third, coercive force matters. Contrary to other scholars, according to Blau and some others working in his tradition (Jacobs 1974; Molm 1997), legitimate use of coercive force and political conflict are not fundamentally different forms of social interaction.[26] 'The prototype is the conflict over the use of the legitimate coercive power of the state to regulate exchangetransactions and restrict power that rests on economic strength' (1964, 123). Only state authorities can legitimately derive independence from this form of power.

[24] Emerson (1976, 346) points to the 'character of contingency' of exchange relations. He suggests two extremes, ranging from a 'seemingly noncontingent' gift to negotiated concrete transactions.

[25] See for a similar adaptation: Jacobs (1974, 49).

[26] The inclusion of coercive power in theories of social exchange relations is uncommon, as exchange is frequently restricted to voluntary, mutually, rewarding interactions. Molm (1997, 2) follows Heath (1976) in his argument 'that voluntary exchanges and coerced exchanges are fundamentally the same and that both could be explained by exchange principles' and that 'the two bases of power [rewards or (the removal of) punishments] are mirror images of each other'. Note a similar differentiation by Korpi (1985) in an earlier footnote.

Fourth, the value or need of the resources that organizations bring to the exchange depends on the ideas of the counter-party as to its value. Political organizations argue and debate in such a way that the value of their activities is increased, and the need for what the other party offers diminishes. Please note that exchange relationships also require bargaining, persuasion and deliberation. This is however of a different kind than referred to here. Political actors construct ideologies that lessen or increase certain needs for resources. This is of a more fundamental nature than the communication in the context of exchange. For example, companies will argue that they can easily do without the regulatory framework and workforce of a specific country, and may easily relocate elsewhere, consequently withholding potential tax benefits. In their interaction with government, they thus propose to supply inducements (employment, tax) and are indifferent to what the government offers (education, regulation). The arguments that suggest the companies' independence and the acceptance of them, make the companies actually independent. As a second example, an 'expert' in a television-show makes a policy related statement about a government agency, for instance about the importance of knowledge in the field, and such statements could affect the value of certain resources that are part of an exchange relation between interest organizations and government agencies.

Lastly, individuals or organizations may choose to comply with the wishes of the organization that supplies the needed services. Compliance is thus a special category of exchange, in which compliance is exchanged for valued behavior (e.g. policies). Blau understands the power derived from compliance as a generalized currency used to equilibrate exchange imbalances (see also Jacobs 1974, 48). Relatively weaker parties behave in a way that is favorable to more powerful actors, even if there is no immediate interaction. This is what Blau calls compliance. Organizations will comply if the alternative forms of interaction described above are not available. Obviously, compliance generates power for the party that supplies the services, but note that the compliant party is not powerless, as it can choose not to comply. Nevertheless, compliance is the least favored option for the 'subordinate' party. So, organizations will usually try one of the alternatives. Car drivers, for example, choose to comply with tax regulation; at the same time, however, they supply inducements to state authorities, for instance via supportive public statements by the car drivers association of which they may be a member, in the expectation that these may be reciprocated by lower car taxes.

By distinguishing various types of interaction one reduces the 'great temptation to explore the fruitfulness of the concept [of exchange] by extending its scope and applying it to all social conduct' (Blau 1964, 6). However, it seems naïve to evaluate exchanges of interest organizations separately from the other forms of power relations discussed. The exchange relation between leaders and members of interest organizations, for example, is different in a competitive environment than when the organization is the only one in the sector. Therefore we need to organize these concepts in a consistent manner. This is the topic of the next section.

2.4.2 THE CONCEPTUAL OVERLAP OF INTERACTION RELATIONSHIPS

The interaction-relationships of exchange, competition, compliance, and partition are related in a variety of ways. First, as implied in the above discussion, I suggest that these forms of interaction are hierarchical. That is, organizations, whether in relatively strong or weak relational positions, will always prefer exchange above competition, and competition

above regulation, and regulation above debate, and so on. The mutually rewarding character makes exchange the most cost-effective way to generate power.[27]

Second, I understand exchange to occur across domains or political arenas. In terms of their function within a political system not all organizations are the same. Interest organizations are different from political parties, government agencies, journalists, companies, citizens, and so on. Further, while these organizations take up roles in different spheres, it is in a single sphere or political arena that they dominantly operate: journalists, for instance, write newspaper articles and only sometimes work as parliamentarians. While seemingly trivial, this assumption on the association between organizations and spheres is critical in terms of the mutual benefits of the interaction. For example, newspapers compete among themselves for readers, not with government agencies. As a second example, parliamentarians may cooperate and run a joint legal information service, but they do not cooperate with citizens in developing such a service. These are examples of interactions between similar types of actors (e.g., parliamentarians), with similar resources (capacity to find legal information), gaining similar benefits from the exchange (easier access to legal information). The examples show that these types of interaction are restricted to a specific domain, and make no sense if considered as part of an exchange with different types of actors (e.g. citizens cooperating with parliamentarians).

In Emerson's terms, the outcomes of these exchanges fall within a single exchange domain and a single class of outcomes (in Molm 1997, 18-19). This makes the benefits of the exchange more likely to show the principle of satiation (in social psychological terms) or diminishing marginal utility (in economic terms). While there is variation in the value of benefits of these exchanges within a single domain (e.g., money as opposed to food), interaction that spans multiple domains seems generally more valuable or less vulnerable to diminishing marginal utility.[28] Such exchanges are likely to produce 'valued behavior' that organizations cannot produce themselves. Thus, more important interaction occurs between dissimilar types of political actors, because in that case dissimilar resources can be put into exchange.[29]

Therefore, in the theoretical framework presented in this chapter, exchange is restricted to actors in dissimilar domains. Following this, I assume such exchanges to be of dissimilar resources provided by dissimilar actors. Interest organizations have exchange relations with members, politicians or the media, but exchange between interest organizations is excluded

[27] Considering that exchange interactions require communication one could suggest that persuasion, arguing or deliberation precedes exchange, and that this is thus the preferred mode of interaction (Naurin 2007; Beyers 2008, 1192). However, following Blau, I differentiate between the communication that is part of an exchange relationship and ideological debate as a mode of interaction. The latter being a less preferred option. In empirical terms, scholars that focus on arguing or persuasion as mode of interaction (Naurin 2007; Beyers 2008) mainly examine the communication that I would consider to be part of an exchange relationship (and thus the 'preferred option'), and not 'debate' as implied by Blau (1964).

[28] 'The primacy of an exchange relation refers to the number of exchange domains that the relation mediates. Relations that mediate many domains (e.g., family relations) have high primacy; relation in a single domain (e.g., economic transactions) have low primacy.' (Molm 1997, 19)

[29] However, as Molm (1997, 19) observes 'nearly all [social psychological] research on social exchange, at least in laboratory experiments, has been restricted to exchange relations in a single domain.'

from this framework, unless it becomes part of an exchange in other domains. This merits two remarks. First, it does not imply that phenomena such as coalition formation, niche behavior, or partitioning are not important; rather, I consider these part of interactions within interest populations. I exclude them from the underlying framework so as to differentiate between population-level and strategic aspects of interest representation more directly related to influencing the policy process. Second, organizations could take up varying roles in varying spheres. An interest organization could be assigned a serious public policy role and act as state authority. It could also act as a member of a different interest organization. For now, I evaluate organizations by the activities (or roles) they take relative to other types of organizations. This should largely correspond to organizational type or political function.

Third, as discussed earlier, the notion of exchange as presented by Blau and Emerson is strongly related to notions of power. This has some obvious advantages as it allows for an evaluation of who actually matters in politics. However, this also brings some conceptual problems inherent in studies of power. Some of the criticism of 'pluralist' notions of power directly applies to exchange-theoretical approaches as well (or, for that matter, resource-dependency or transaction-cost approaches) (Korpi 1985). Lukes (1974) and earlier Bachrach and Baratz (1962; 1963), among others, have suggested that power cannot only be understood as reflected in the behavior of political actors. Bachrach and Baratz pointed to non-decisions and agenda control as second faces of power. Lukes was moreover concerned about a third dimension of power, that is, the structural or socially constructed aspects of power relations. Although important, these aspects of power are not fully integrated into the exchange models discussed up to now.[30]

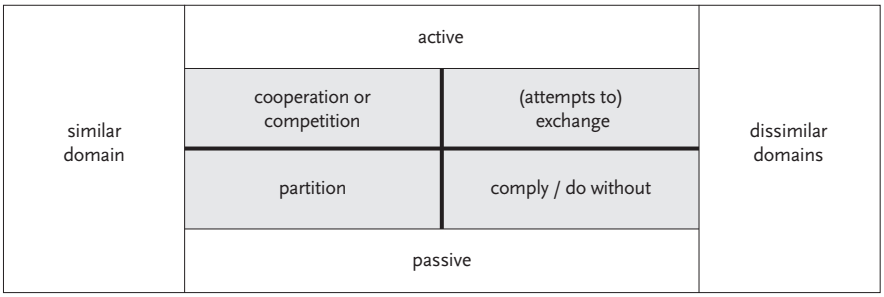
I take a similar line and conceptualize 'exchange' in such a way as to largely reflect only a single dimension of power (and only indirectly affect other dimensions). While they probably do not quite cover the conceptual nuances in this discussion, I understand these dimensions to differentiate between active challenges or interferences on the part of political actors, such as demonstrating or legislative decision-making, and the passive acceptance of a political situation or structure, such as not acting collectively or not deciding on a particular issue. I understand 'exchange' to involve some *activity* on the part of the political actors. The exchange framework cannot explain the full range of dimensions of power, but is aimed at explaining political activities.

These three arguments lead to a further specification of the exchange relations that interest organizations take part in. First, exchange is to be considered the preferred mode of interaction over other power relations such as the use of force or debate. Second, in the framework developed here, exchange deals with interaction that crosses domains of political activity. Third, exchange presumes activity on the part of the parties involved. The last two points may be understood as dimensions, and are represented in the quadrant of figure 1.

The upper and lower cells on the left of the quadrant, competition and partitioning, deal with interaction within the domain of interest group politics. Such interaction among interest organizations has been fruitfully studied in, for instance, the context of population ecology studies (Gray and Lowery 1998). Remember that I take a rather restricted view on

[30] But note, for example, the notion of secondary exchange (Blau 1964, 157-58), the structuring aspects of exchange relationships, and the indirect efforts to 'invest power resources' (Korpi 1985, 38).

FIGURE 1 Typology of organizational interaction



competition within a domain. That is, organizations compete (or not) for similar resources in order to engage in exchanges with other domains. So, interest organizations competitively develop similar activities that are used in exchange with other domains: in order to attract members, gain policy access, or get media attention. Partitioning is the (passive) choice of organizations not to seek certain valued behavior, in order to prevent competition with other interest organizations and to secure independent niches or spheres of authority.

The lower right cell deals with compliance or disinterest. That is, in relation to large parts of their organizational environment interest organizations just accept the situation as it is. While organization may seek to control their environment they also know that large parts of it cannot be controlled. Further, as will become clear in the discussion of the exchange scheme, remember that compliance can be seen as a special type of exchange. That is, compliance, understood broadly as implying the decision not to seek certain exchanges, may be a resource in other exchange relations. For example, not seeking media attention or not broadening membership may help in securing favorable policies from policy makers seeking to avoid overt conflict. Alternatively, taking an anti-elite or anti-institutional stand may be a resource in public discussions.

Lastly, the upper right cell deals with exchange. As will be clear by now I draw on the macro-level, political, and behavioral parts of social exchange theory (Blau 1964, Emerson 1976). That is, exchange theory is 'a frame of reference that takes the movement of things (resources) through social processes as its focus' (Emerson, 1976, 359). Exchanges are voluntary, unspecified, direct or indirect, and more or less enduring (Blau, 1964, 91). Each of these dimensions may vary slightly per case. First, they are voluntary because they are assumed to benefit both parties. Second, they are unspecified because, in contrast to economic exchanges, 'social exchange involves favors that create diffuse future obligations, not precisely specified ones, and the nature of the return cannot be bargained about but must be left to the discretion of the one who makes it' (Ibid. 93, also Molm, 1997, 27). Third, unlike more personal, micro-level exchanges, social exchanges within organizations tend to be indirect, structured by social norms, and consequently institutionalized (1997, 259). Fourth, in relation to this and unlike economic exchange, social exchanges develop over time within structures of mutual dependence (Molm 1997, p13). Finally, as said earlier, exchange is different from competition in that it takes place between different social units, whereas competition takes place between similar social units (1997, 331).

In the context of this research project there are a number of reasons to think in terms of exchanges. First, this recognizes that certain activities of interest organizations are inconsequential because they depend on the counter-party (members, policy makers). The newsletters of interest organizations, for instance, are only understood as an activity that connects leaders and members of organizations. Second, and related to the first point, it points to the asymmetric character of most exchanges on the part of interest groups. That is, group leaders are usually on the dependent side of the exchange (e.g., Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993). Interest organizations depend on others for their influence. This allows for an evaluation of the relative influence of various subsections of the population of interest organizations. Further, this view is in line with the results of group research of the past decade in which the importance of contextual forces has been highlighted (e.g., Lowery 2007). Third, thinking in terms of exchange relations clarifies the interdependencies of the exchanges related to different types of group activities. For example, successful membership recruitment may be a resource in the context of policy involvement. As will be discussed in more detail in the next section, such interdependencies could lead to contradictory pressures within organizations. This is, for instance, the case with membership exchanges that would benefit from a narrow, specialized interest organization, whereas policy-oriented exchange relations are more likely to flourish in cases of broad, general interest organization. Fourth, it allows for a theoretical link with population ecology studies. I partly base the logic of support on expectations derived from such studies. That is, the density, diversity, and change of populations of organizations affect the types of strategies or exchanges that organizations engage in (Soule and King 2008, Gray and Lowery 1997; 1998; Gray, Lowery and Godwin 2007). The dependent variables of such studies form independent variables in explaining exchange relationships that are central in my thesis. While these things are related, we do not know in what way characteristics of the population affect the behavior of interest organizations. For example, we do not know under which circumstances organizations within communities specialize, and in what way they do so. They may specialize in different ways: they may define niches in terms of tactics (inside vs. outside), in terms of political position (moderate vs radical) or in terms of political venues (EU vs national, parliament vs bureaucracy). In the next section I will specify my expectations in this regard, especially when it comes to relations with supporters. Fifth, the focus on political activities that comes with exchange-theoretical approaches, also contributes to organizational theory that traditionally focuses on organizational structures, allowing for more political behavioral evaluation of organizational characteristics. The relation between the form of political organizations in terms of specialization, member engagement and modes of control, and types of activities is an underdeveloped part of organizational theory. Finally, exchange theory addresses various existing approaches in the study of interest groups, social movement organizations and political parties that take resource dependency and exchange as its core concepts (Interest groups: Beyers and Kerremans 2007; Bouwen 2004; Dahan 2005; 2009; Poppelaars 2009; Woll 2007. Social movement organizations: Edwards and McCarty 2004; McCarty and Zald 1977; 1987. Political Parties: Allern et al. 2007; Quinn 2002; Ware 1992).

In this section I hope to have conceptually clarified the types of organizations and activities that I am interested in. In the next section 2.5 I will further develop these ideas on the basis of the existing literature on interest organizations. I point to several tensions between the three logics of exchange, and present an organizational typology that will be examined in the

next chapter. In the section 2.6, I will present the main scheme that specifies the varying activities that are central to my research project.

2.5. How exchange relations shape interest organizations

In my exchange theory of group activities I assume that interest organizations exchange valued behavior with actors in three environments: the influence environment consisting of political institutions, the reputation environment with news media and public opinion forces, and a supporters environment consisting of constituents subject to social-economic forces. The conceptual rationale that underlies these relations I label the logic of influence, the logic of reputation, and the logic of support, respectively. The first and last of these organizational logics find their origins in neo-corporatist thinking in the nineteen-seventies and -eighties (Streeck and Schmitter 1999, 1985). Kriesi (1996) has adapted them for use in the context of social movement research. The logic of reputation is indirectly inspired by social movement theory on public action (Lipsky, 1968; Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993) and is notably absent in neo-corporatist thinking.

In the following I will evaluate neo-corporatist thinking about these logics, present the related functional organizational typology, and propose several adaptations. I will also present a new scheme of exchange relationships, based on recent scholarly work, which I will apply in the underlying research project. For each of the three types of logic of exchange I present my exchange framework on the basis of a figure that posits the interest organization as intermediary between several domains in society. In this discussion I point to several contextual domain-related forces that affect the importance of these three logics.[31] Please note that this context may be understood at the level of the policy issue, the political system, or the interest organization. These varying levels of evaluation of the exchange scheme will be further addressed in the research design sections of the empirical chapters.

2.5.1. Neo-corporatism: the organizational trade-offs and logics of exchange

Citizens, companies or local associations can choose to pressure the state on specific issues individually, and consequently engage in a direct exchange with government actors. In this regard interest organizations offer activities that aim to do two things: first, express interests before government and, second, to do so collectively. They are successful when they offer a better or cheaper collective interest expression than actors (citizens, companies) could do individually. The combination of interest articulation and aggregation functions put them in an intermediate position between the state on the one hand, and society or the economy on the other. This intermediate position leads to the key organizational tension identified by neo-corporatists: 'the organizational dynamics of intermediary organizations derives from their simultaneous involvement in two environments, the social group from which they draw their members (*membership environment*) and the collective actors in relation

[31] This is consistent with the remark by Molina and Rhodes (2002) referring to Regini (1984, 141), who advised that 'Further research should focus on the variability of the conditions for political exchange (...) rather than on the supposed organizational or institutional prerequisites, which, for all their importance in some situations, may be shown to be neither necessary nor sufficient in others.'

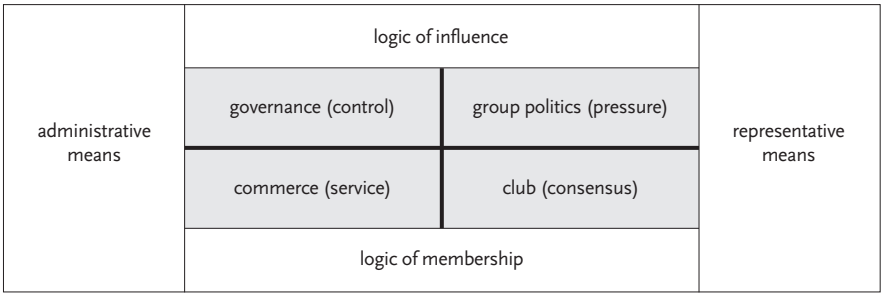
to which they represent these (*influence environment*)' (Streeck and Kenworthy 2005, 451). These two environments operate under two logics of exchange (Schmitter and Streeck, 1999 19-30). On the one hand, interest organizations offer their members incentives, such as favorable government policies or information services to persuade them to stay or become members, in exchange for political support and membership control over the organization (logic of membership). On the other hand, leaders of organizations offer compliance or support of their constituents to government actors in exchange for favorable regulation and access.[32] Thus, the leadership of interest organizations has to walk a thin line between 'easy' but narrow interest aggregation, and challenging but more encompassing aggregation. At the same time, it has to balance members' demands and political influence: 'Intermediary organizations that become too distant from their members and too closely involved in the logic of influence may turn into extended arms of government (i.e quasi governmental agencies) or become representatives of interests opposed to those of their constituents ('yellow unions')' (idem, 452).

The implied trade-off is of critical importance in neocorporatist explanations of the structural properties of interest organizations and the structure of interest systems in different countries.[33] First, the choice in the trade-off between encompassing or narrow interest aggregation affects the political function of interest associations. It affects, for example, the character and size of the (potential) conflicts of interest that could be resolved within interest organizations and the corresponding extent to which these conflicts may

[32] Scholars vary a bit in the extent to which they see the state as a critical party in the exchange, or in whether or not they (also) focus on exchanges among organized interests and/or political parties. Molina (2006, 645-46) argues that by focusing on the political exchange between union and employers, the neo-corporatist logics also apply in contexts that are usually not considered corporatist, such as Italy and Spain (Also: Baccaro and Simoni 2008). In this respect, in a recent review of the corporatist discussion, Molina and Rhodes (2002, 321) suggest to 'refocus our inquiry on the process of political exchange'. They aim to broaden the corporatist discussion from industrial relations to policy making in general. However, they use a definition of exchange that is firmly embedded in industrial relations. They (2002, 322) follow Marin's (1990a, 40) definition of 'political exchange as forms of mutually contingent, macropolitical and noneconomic transaction between autonomous, organized, collective actors with divergent/competitive/antagonistic but functionally interdependent interests, the binding character of which cannot be based on law and contract'. In contrast to my definition Marin's use of political exchange is very much aimed at understanding agreements between employers and unions or social democrat parties and unions (thus relatively unrelated to state action or public opinion/media).

[33] While there has been a sizable corporatist discussion from the seventies onwards, these organizational dimensions have been applied and have not been challenged (e.g., van Waarden 1995; Bennett 1999; Grande 2003). Instead, scholars have evaluated different 'levels' or categories of corporatist policy making structures (Siaroff 1999; Kenworthy 2003) or have examined the policy and economic outcomes of corporatist, tripartite political-economic structures (e.g., Wessels 1996; Kenworthy 2006; Visser and Hemerijck 1997; Unger and van Waarden 1999). Further, recent studies have evaluated the balance between the logics in light of Europeanisation and globalization (Streeck et al.. 2005; Grote and Lang 2003; 2008). For example, Kriesi (2005, 54) notes that globalization leads to a 'reinforcement of the logic of membership at the expense of the logic of influence' (Also: Streeck and Visser 2005, 246-252). All these studies focus on actors involved in industrial relations.

FIGURE 2 Typology of functions of interest organizations: Adaptation of Kriesi (1996, 153) and Schmitter and Streeck (1999, 21)[34]



become part of other conflict resolution arenas, such as parliament, the legal system, or the interest group system itself. When (encompassing) interest organizations have a large conflict-resolving function on specific policies, we have reasons to evaluate their internal procedures according to democratic norms. Second, the trade-off also relates to country or system differences where organizations in pluralist systems are assumed to give priority to exchanges in the membership environment, and where interest organizations in corporatist systems are expected to be more likely to favor exchange relations in the influence environment: 'Striking a balance between members-responsive but weakly organized, fragmented, and competitive pluralism on the one hand and corporatist institutionalization in their target environment on the other is the central political and organizational problem of neocorporatist interest intermediation.' (idem, 452).

In their earlier work Streeck and Schmitter introduce a second organizational trade-off.[35] They label this the tension between the 'logic of effective implementation' and the 'logic of

[34] Schmitter and Streeck (1999, 21) present a scheme that is at the same time more elaborate and more narrow. First, it is narrower in the sense that they predominantly emphasize the vertical axis, as do later authors (Schneider and Grote 2005; Streeck and Kenworthy 2004). They take only two pages to evaluate the horizontal axis and refer to Child et al. (1974) for an elaboration, in contrast to the roughly 60 pages they devote to the vertical axis. Second, their scheme is more elaborate in that it specifies some other terms. This is presented in the next figure. Furthermore, I use slightly different terms here: Instead of 'logic of effective implementation' I use 'administrative', considering that the original article by Child, Loveridge and Warner (1974) used 'administrative rationality'. Similarly, instead of 'logic of goal formation' I use 'representative means', as it refers back to 'representative rationality' (Schmitter and Streeck 1999, 19). I do not use 'rationality' or 'logic' for this axis because it does not refer to exchanges or to an organizational rationale. 'Means' refers to the production of resources that could be used in exchange relationships in varying environments. Further, Schmitter and Streeck (1999) use rather strong terms to point to the roles (firm, government, movement, club) that associations take when engaging in certain exchange activities or logics; for that reason I use slightly broader, more nuanced terms here. This is especially appropriate because the authors expect associations to develop activities in all four realms or quadrants.

[35] This dimension is in their 1981 working paper but not in the 1985 edited volume or in the 2004 contribution to the Handbook.

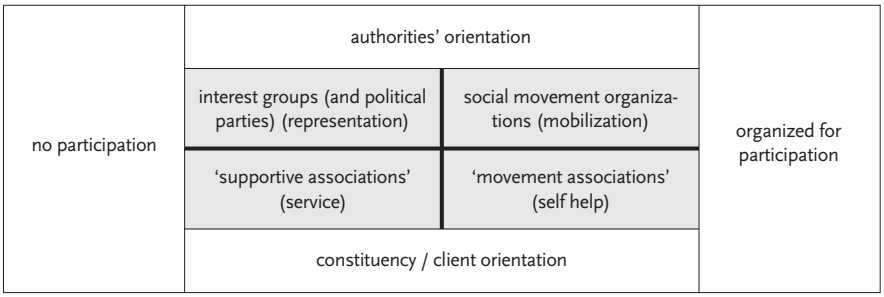
goal formation'. In contrast to the first dimension these logics do not immediately involve an exchange relationship, but address the varying ways exchanges could be organized or the ways in which resources could be produced. Therefore, I will not use their terminology here; instead, I will speak of administrative and representative means and so slightly adapt the meaning they ascribe to this dimension.[36] 'Administrative means' are associated with the efficient operation of the internal affairs of an interest organization, such as relying on professional management (as opposed to volunteers), using task specialization, and relying on donations (instead of membership dues). 'Representative means' refer to 'widespread membership involvement', via participation and volunteering, intended to aggregate varying interests. Any combination of administrative and representative means may lead to the production of activities of interest to (potential) members, policy makers or the news media, but not necessarily the same sets of activities. The extent to which organizations choose any of these sometimes contradictory alternatives depends on environmental constraints and determines the functions the organization provide, or, as they say: 'the mix of participation, representation, provision of services and control over members (...) is limited by the often competing logics of membership and influence' (1999, 22). The tensions or trade-offs implied in these dimensions are summarized in the first two rows of table 4, which is further discussed below.

Figure 2 represents the political functions associated with the dimensions described. As implied, Streeck and Schmitter argue that these various functions cannot be fully provided within single organizations, but can be found in specialized sections within systems or populations of organizations. The upper left cell points to governance or control functions of interest organizations. This is usually associated with policy implementation and the informative or regulatory roles organizations could perform in this. The lower left cell has to do with the commercial functions of interest organizations that are largely aimed at gaining political autonomy and organizational survival. The lower right cell evaluates the social functions that interest organizations may have. The upper right cell addresses the functions more directly associated with interest representation, when organizations offer political input based on a representative claim.

Without emphasizing the exchange aspect of the argument, the two dimensions described have been conceptualized in different ways for varying research purposes. Kriesi (1996, 153) fruitfully proposes a similar typology in the context of comparative research on social movement organizations. First, he distinguishes political organizations oriented towards authorities from those oriented towards clients. This is similar to the tension between the logic of influence and the logic of membership. Second, he distinguishes the extent to which organizations seek to mobilize their constituents to participate in collective action. This is similar to the second dimension, which I label the administrative and representative organizational means. While less focused on political functions but similar to Streeck and Schmitter's typology, the two dimensions yield four types of political organizations: social movement organizations (++), 'supportive organizations' (--), movement associations (+-) and interest groups (-+). The pluses and minuses indicate the respective scores on the two dimensions. This typology of political organizations is represented in figure 3 (Kriesi 1996, 152-154).

[36] This is in line with the original terminology that Schmitter and Streeck (1999, 19-20) derive from Child et al. (1973). Child et al. use 'administrative rationality' and 'representative rationality'.

FIGURE 3 Typology of political organizations: functions between brackets, taken from Kriesi (1996, 153)



For example, in this scheme labor unions and business associations are understood to orient their activities towards influencing policies but not to allow for direct participation of constituents. Thus, they can be found in the upper left cell of the quadrant. Each type of organization engages in different types of activities and has a different political function, as indicated in brackets in figure 3.[37]

2.5.2 BROADENING THE NEO-CORPORATIST EXCHANGE MODEL

I propose several adaptations of and additions to these neo-corporatist models regarding the exchange-related tension between the logic of influence and the logic of membership.[38] This requires increasing the level of abstraction and reflects my research interest in political activities in addition to organizational properties. I will first broaden the model to includevarious types of organizations. Second, I change the model to include organization activities outside, but nevertheless still connected to, the various aspects of the organizational structure. Last and most importantly, I add what I label the logic of reputation to account for exchange relations with the news media. These may be especially important in 'audience' or protest regimes (Balme and Chabanet 2008; Kriesi 2004) and definitely require the exchange of different types of goods. These changes lead me to propose an adapted typology of political organizations and a more elaborate exchange scheme.

As a first difference, Schmitter and Streeck (1985; 1999) designed their model specifically for and applied it to business interest associations and, to a lesser extent, labor unions. They argued that collective action by business is fundamentally different from other forms of interest representation, because businesses need not engage in politics collectively as part of their core activities. 'Why should the owners of capital, possessing as they are the

[37] More recent research has challenged some aspects of this categorization (Morales 2009, 28). Most importantly, it is less and less possible to differentiate political organizations by the ways in which they organize members' participation. Social movement organizations professionalize to such an extent that they 'become rather like interest groups' (Kriesi 2008, 157). This leaves us with only one dimension to differentiate groups: the extent to which they aim to influence public policies, or in Kriesi's terms, their 'orientation' (1996, 153).

[38] In part this is also an adaptation of the scheme of the organizational infrastructure of social movements used by Kriesi (1996).

discretionary power to invest, develop a need for collective action' (1999, 10, see also: Offe and Wiesenthal 1980, 85-86; Lindblom 1977, 170-188; Scharpf 1999, 84-120; 2000)?[39] I use their exchange-based model to evaluate the political strategies of a broad variety of organizations. Considering that I focus on strategies instead of the mobilization of interests, their arguments on collective action, valid or not, matters only indirectly. Consequently, the model could be used for other interests as well.[40] In addition, as will become clear, the level of abstraction of the conceptual scheme allows for the inclusion of a diversity of organizations, including, at least at a conceptual level, organizations with various types of constituents or PA departments of companies. In order to reflect my broader understanding of the scheme, I will speak of a logic of support instead of a logic of membership.

A second difference between my study and neo-corporatist studies is that, as said earlier, they aim to explain organizational properties such as a broad or narrow domain of activity of organizations, the complexity of the organizational structure, or the types of available resources. I seek to explain the activities of interest groups. Thus, the explanandum or dependent variable of this research is different. I nevertheless use the neocorporatist exchange framework, firstly because the level of abstraction of the framework allows for the formulation of plausible implications for groups activities. This means that for the purpose of the research described here, there is no need to first explain organizational properties in order to examine organizational behavior. Second, even if this use of the framework stretches its concepts, most organizational properties are plausibly related to group activities. For example, if organizations enjoy a representational monopoly, they may be less likely to be interested in developing activities to recruit new members.

Third, Schmitter and Streeck differentiate two logics: the logic of influence related to exchanges between interest groups and state agencies, and, the logic of membership regarding the exchanges between the organization's leadership and its membership. I add a third exchange relationship, that between the news media and the interest organization. This exchange relation involves fundamentally different types of activities than those that

[39] Besides less need for collective action and interest representation of business interests, they argue that there is 'a markedly lower level of tension, discord and conflict among BIA's than among the associations of any other class or status group' (Streeck and Schmitter 1999, 21), furthermore, 'business interest seem to have a higher capacity than other social categories to coordinate their collective activities, to accommodate internal differences through organizational and inter-organizational arrangement, and to establish complementarily between association representing different aspects of one collective interest' (Ibid. 56). Classic authors such as Marx and Smith address similar aspects, as Smith (1776, 70) writes: 'We rarely hear, it has been said, of combinations of masters; though frequently of those of workmen. But whoever images, upon this account, that masters rarely combine, is as ignorant of the world as of the subject. Masters are always and everywhere in some sort of tacit, but constant and uniform combination, not to raise the wages of labour above their actual rate.' Schattschneider (1960, 41) points to a similar solidarity specific to business interests and adds that 'for these purposes [of a united front] pressure politics is not a wholly satisfactory device'. More recent research points to countermobilisation and public attention in reaction to 'united business' (Smith 2000) and conflicting interests among business interests (Wilson 1974, 57-58, 153).

[40] Remember the encompassing, behavioral definition of interest groups that I introduced earlier: those organizations that act to influence policies but do not participate in elections.

are part of the exchanges with other environments. These are activities that transform policy information to newsworthy events, voice constituents' concerns in public debate, and organize members' participation in political action. Consequently, interest organizations perform an additional political intermediary function distinct from the functions envisaged by neocorporatist thinking.

I am adding this logic of reputation for two reasons.[41] First, it broadens the application of the model to include groups other than business associations. These other groups, such as social movement organizations, are traditionally expected to rely more strongly than business interest associations on outside or public strategies. Such activities matter for both their influence and membership exchanges. Protest, and news coverage of it, for example, attracts members and may also influence policy makers. We thus need expectations about the constraints and opportunities that bear on the news coverage of interest groups. As with the other logics, it is possible to conceive the relation between interest groups and news media as a dynamic exchange relationship (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993; Koopmans 2004; Kepplinger 2007). Second, for several reasons, including technological developments, the decline of political parties, and regulatory changes, news media have become an increasingly important arena for politics (Graber 2006; Manin 1997). Consequently, like other political actors such as the executive (Helms 2008; Kernell 1993) all types of interest groups, albeit in various ways, are likely to have strategically adapted to these changes (Kriesi 2004b; Kriesi, Tresch, and Jochum 2007). In addition, while traditional theories of the news media assumed a 'cascade' or indirect effect of political news (via public opinion to policy makers), in recent theories of the news media we find an increasing understanding of a more direct effect of political coverage on the policy process (Kepplinger 2007; van Aelst et al. 2008). Scholars are inconclusive about the exact nature of such 'direct' effects. My exchange framework contributes to the theoretical specification of such effects in which interest organizations may intermediate.

The inclusion of exchange relations in the news-media environment leads to two further thoughts about Streeck and Schmitter's model. First, as I said earlier, Streeck and Schmitter (1999, 54) assume that organizations in corporatist systems have relatively strong exchange relationships in the influence environment, and at the same time they consider the logic of membership to have more explanatory power in pluralist group systems.[42] Following this line of argument, could we theoretically develop a distinctive type of interest system if we find

[41] In spite of these two arguments there are valid reasons to keep the model as it is and evaluate these mediarelated phenomena as 'contextual factors' affecting other relationships, such as Kollman (1998) did. However, this would complicate the other logics and neglect the interactive nature of media-group relationships. Others may argue that there is too little empirical ground for such a relationship, as recent research is inconclusive on this (e.g., Thrall 2006).

[42] Recent research has further specified which systemic aspects and sector level variation underlies this relation. For example, Mahoney, in her comparison of the EU and the US, points to the effects of parliamentary, democratic control of parts of the bureaucracy. This affects the opportunities for varying types of interest groups to directly interact with agencies, ministries, and local governments. At the same time, more recent research does not suggest that the typical goods that groups and political institutions exchange, such as information, compliance, and favorable policies are likely to have substantially changed in the past two decades.

FIGURE 5 Typology of activities by logic of exchange, organizational means, and domain

	arena	logic of influence		
administrative means	public	produce policy reports, political advertisements	protest, 'voice in media' (latent support)	representative means
	institutional	lobbying (expertise, legal procedures)	exchange (political support)	
	public	charity advertisements, magazine	awareness, attention	
	institutional	selective incentives (e.g insurance)	self-help (e.g., local meetings)	
		logic of membership		

FIGURE 6 Examples of typical political organizations according to typology of activities

	arena	logic of influence		
administrative means	public	think tanks, political parties	campaign groups	representative means
	institutional	business associations	labour unions	
	public	charity fund raising	social movement organisations	
	institutional	car drivers / consumers	clubs, voluntary associations	
		logic of membership		

similar exchange relationships between interest systems and the news-media environment? This is exactly what Balme and Chabanet (2008) describe as a protest regime of interest representation. In contrast to pluralist and corporatist collective action regimes, in which either lobbying or consultation is strategically dominant, in a protest regime it is acquiring increased publicity that is the main strategy of interest representation: 'unfavorable policy and institutional opportunities may be partially compensated for by the opening of windows of opportunity for the mobilization of interests using media activity' (2008, 34). Second, the logic of membership and the logic of influence are expected sometimes to have contrary effects on the choices of the interest organizations, as summarized in table 4 and discussed

TABLE 4 Dimensions in organizational activities and expected trade-offs

dimension of organizational activity	potential trade-off
logic of influence vs logic of membership	a more diverse constituency or broader membership base leads to more compromised policy demands but a stronger negotiation position
administrative vs representative means	means of exchange with supporters (exit or voice / service or solidarity) must relate to institutional or public means of exchange
public vs institutional domain	public domain offers issue validation but requires latent support and 'newsworthy' 'packed' message

in the previous section. For example, interest organizations often face a dilemma between 'stubbornly' voicing preferences of their constituents and strategically moderating their position in relation to state agencies.[43] More important for now, the dilemma becomes a trilemma with the addition of the logic of reputation. For example, 'going public' may be beneficial in terms of the reputation of the interest group among a broader public, but at the same time have mixed effects on supporters and negative effects in terms of the logic of influence. As Lipsky (1967, 1054) argues, 'people in power do not like to sit down with rogues' and 'few [advocates] can be convincing as advocate and arbiter at the same time'.

Following these adaptations the functional schemes in figure 2 and figure 3 require further specification. That is, I propose an additional trade-off regarding the public or institutional (i.e. internal or selective) nature of activities. As said, in the spotlight of media attention leaders could capitalize on latent support and find greater recognition for their political issue. However, attention may come at the cost of uncertainty, and unfavorable and one-sided coverage (Oliver and Maney 2000; McCarty et al. 1996; Earl et al. 2004). Similar trade-offs exist at the constituents' side of this dimension – offering selective benefits or organizing 'closed' activities that do not increase broader public awareness of certain issues. Consequently, organizations have to prioritize activities along this dimension of 'publicness'. In order to theoretically evaluate such prioritization in relation to the exchange theoretical model, I introduce several additional types of organizations. Figure 5, figure 6 and table 4 represent the elaborate version of the functional typology discussed earlier.

Thus, Schmitter and Streeck offer a comparative model to evaluate organizational properties of business associations, a model which I expand and adapt. Most importantly, I add a 'logic of reputation' in order to reflect the 'new' context of more publicized politics. This also results in a more precise organizational typology that differentiates between organizations that specialize in either public or institutional activities, and allows for a specification of these activities within organizations that combine several functions or tasks. At the same time,

[43] In this context, Beyers (2008, 1201-1202) identifies two dimensions. He suggests that the autonomy of the leadership of the organizations and the level of specialization of the interest matter. These dimensions demarcate the room to maneuver in the two logics.

I repeat that I assume that the exchange relationships are fundamentally related and that even highly specialized organizations have activities that (perhaps indirectly) cross domain boundaries. For example, I understand the exchanges with constituents to matter only insofar as they (potentially) affect exchanges in other domains.

Throughout this chapter I have been reducing the level of abstraction of the concepts from very abstract to empirical observable implications in the form of hypotheses. In this section I have related contextual forces to a typology of interest organizations, and brought together existing neo-corporatist and social movement concepts of exchange. I have suggested several adaptations so as to create a loose but consistent framework of analysis. Such a framework allows me to formulate expectations about the types of activities that organizations are likely to engage in under certain circumstances. This is what I turn to below. The research presented in the next chapters addresses these expectations and the plausibility of the theory that I derive them from.

2.6. SPECIFYING EXCHANGES AND ENVIRONMENTS: SUPPORT, INFLUENCE AND REPUTATION

In this section I will further introduce the various exchanges per type of logic, together with the related activities or 'resources'. This discussion is summarized in table 5 and visualized in figure 7.

Each logic of exchange consists of four types of resources, and several environmental factors affecting the value of these resources. Interest organizations offer two types of resources that they have produced in exchanges with actors in other environments, and may gain resources that they could use in exchange relations in each of the other fields. This related nature of exchanges is visualized by connecting the arrows in figure 7 (which in other approaches would be separated arrows instead of connected arrows).

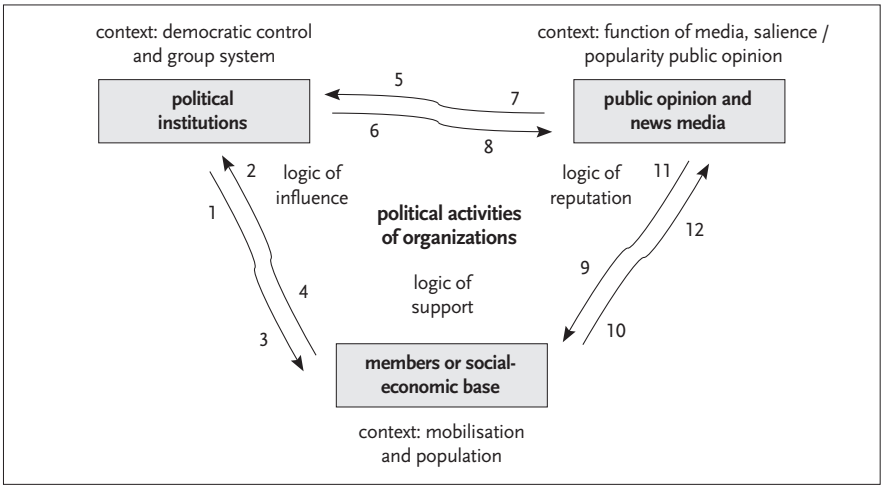
Further, as discussed earlier, each of these logics has a different conceptual rationale. First, the logic of support assumes that activities are driven by the need for organizational survival. As Lowery (2007, 46) notes 'the most fundamental goals of organizations must be to survive as organizations'. Second, the logic of influence assumes that interest organizations exist in order to pressure the policy process, or, as Schattschneider (1960, 39) remarks, 'the flight to government is perpetual' (see also: Truman 1951, 104-106). Third, under the logic of reputation it is assumed that activities of interest organizations only matter when 'perceived and projected' by other relevant political actors or in public opinion. Otherwise, these activities are 'like a tree falling unheard in the forest' (Lipsky 1967, 1151). For each logic, I first discuss the types of resources offered, and then the relevant contextual factors.

2.6.1. THE LOGIC OF SUPPORT

A critical and substantial part of the activities of interest groups is related to organizational survival and maintenance.[44] Primarily this includes recruitment of members or the mobilization of an existing supporters base. Salisbury (1969, 2) classically argued that

[44] Only part of the activities of many interest organizations has directly to do with politics. Obviously, this depends on the type of organization. For example, for companies or bureaucratic agencies lobby tasks or public affairs activities represent only a marginal share of their total activities. For others, such as employers' associations or environmental campaign groups, political action takes a more central role.

FIGURE 7 Exchange model of the activities of interest organizations. Numbers refer to table 5



'interest group origins, growth, death, and associated lobbying activity may all be better explained if we regard them as exchange relationships (...)' between group leaders and their members. As discussed earlier, it is not only citizen groups that are engaged in such exchanges, but organizations such as think tanks or companies that also need to justify their lobby priorities and strategies 'internally' (Heinz et al. 1993; Wilts 2006). For example, as said before, a Public Affairs department in a corporation needs to defend its interests vis-à-vis the rest of the organization. All types of organizations need to evaluate their political position in relation to their ties to society – sometimes balancing preferences of clients, employees, and peers. The activities that ensure continued collective action or the survival of Public Affairs functions are understood to be guided by the logic of support.

The supporters' environment creates opportunities for the exchange of institution- and reputation-related resources provided by and for supporters. These are: (1) constituents' compliance, (2) leadership control, (3) members' public action and (4) the public visibility of a political issue.[45] Two important contextual forces affect this exchange. First, the exchange depends on the type of supporters and the nature of their interest. This produces variation between organizations in the effort required in mobilizing constituents. Second, the composition of the interest community itself affects the opportunities for lasting supporters exchanges. In this section I will discuss these resources and the context that affects their exchange.

[45] Salisbury (1969) and other scholars distinguish even more types of membership contributions in this regard. For two reasons I focus on the mentioned types. First, unlike Salisbury, I focus on goods that could be used by leaders in the context of exchanges in other domains. Money is then only relevant in specific political systems (US) where financial contributions to politicians/parties could be understood as an exchange relation. Second, I am interested in activities, so what matters is what organizations do with the financial and political support of their members.

2.6.1.1. THE EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIP WITH SUPPORTERS

In a first flow of valued behavior members or supporters provide the leadership with resources that may be used in exchanges within the influence environment. These are: compliance with policies and political support for governing parties, or, framed negatively, non-compliance or political opposition. This exchange relationship manifests itself in, among other things, in strategic adaptations on the part of members' organizations or, in other cases, the socialization of individual members (Beyers 2008, 1202-1204). For example, in the context of CO_2 reduction policies, the European Automobile Manufacturers Association may choose to organize expert meetings on new technologies in this area. This could facilitate a strategic adaptation on the part of car manufacturers along the lines envisaged in EU policy documents (thus providing political support). As a different example, LTO-Nederland, the Dutch farmers' association, may choose to include a favorable interview with the Agriculture minister in its members magazine, thus supporting the political position of the governing party.

Second, in return for their compliance or political support, members are supplied with mechanisms to control their representatives. This control, which helps to aggregate individual interests of supporters, could take various forms, most broadly understood as varying between active 'voice' mechanisms to more passive 'exit' mechanisms (see the horizontal dimension in figure 5). The first entails associational features such as referendums, annual meetings, and leadership elections. Among other things, such organizational structures allow self-regulation for business sector associations on issues such as market entry, product quality, and standards. This is what Streeck and Schmitter label 'private governance' (1985). Second, even without such 'traditional' active organizational mechanisms, supporters control the scope of action of their leaders. This means that, as elaborated by Jordan and Maloney (2007) on the basis of Hirschmann (1970), leaders have to act according to the preferences of their constituents so as to prevent them from leaving. According to Jordan and Maloney, this threat of 'exit' is an even stronger control mechanism than the organizational 'voice' mechanisms mentioned first.[46]

Third, supporters participate in the (public) activities of interest organizations such as conferences, campaign events, and demonstrations. This contributes to the articulation of interests, provides cheap labor in the case of voluntary work, and fosters loyalty among members (solidary benefits).[47] Such activities are often crucial for the survival of the organization and could contribute to positively evaluated notions of citizenship, social capital, and political engagement more in general. Membership participation forms the basis of exchange relationships in the institutional (loyalty fosters compliance) and the news-media environment (participation could create 'events'). At the same time, however, there are two organizational mechanisms that undermine the long-term survival of the organization.

[46] Selective benefits such as insurance services or specific information are thus usually supplied in order to keep members. While important for organizational survival, I assume that these types of goods are of less relevance in exchange relations in institutional or public domains.

[47] While for example voluntary work seems restricted to citizen groups, business interest associations also make widespread use of forms of payments in kind. For example, employees of companies are part of expert committees of associations or lobby on behalf of the sector.

First, members' participation could lead to radicalization of the political position of interest organizations, thus undermining the broad membership base that is needed for survival. This is so because the more radical or activist supporters or members are more likely to participate in activities (Ware 1992). This leads to 'biased signals' to organizational leaders (Lohmann 1993), who consequently choose strategies that are against the preferences of the majority of constituents. Furthermore, this effect is strengthened because leaders often have to compensate more active members by giving them additional influence in the organization. Also, even in the absence of such compensation, in contrast to bureaucratic organizations with traditional authority structures interest organizations relying on voluntary work have only weak control over followers and supporters, who, on their own, may claim to voice the position of the organization (e.g., Gamson 2004, 253).

Second, research has shown that supporters now seem decreasingly interested in participating in group activities (Jordan and Maloney 2007), which strengthens the previous point. This decrease leads to only a small pool of constituents willing to participate, who are likely to be increasingly less representative of all constituents. Consequently it is not surprising that leaders sometimes consider (active) members to be a 'nonlucrative distraction' (Skocpol 2003, 134). Organizations thus have to find additional ways to get information on the preference of their supporters and find other activities in order to engage and socialize members.

Fourth, organizational entrepreneurs develop activities aimed at members so as to highlight the leaders' success in news media and other public venues. The public visibility of the organization is, for instance, often emphasized via internal media. Interest organizations often use web page links to press coverage or summarize media performances in their other publications, so that members see that their concerns and interests receive recognition in the public debate. Depending on the preferences of supporters, mass media access could be more important than political institutional access. News media coverage affects the exchange relation between constituents and leaders. However, interest organizations could find the mass media too risky an arena in which to pursue influence, but still want a good public reputation. The leadership could then provide for other types of public activities that promote the public image of the sector or cause, such as funding for academics in the field, sponsoring, and professional PR.

2.6.1.2. THE ENVIRONMENT OF EXCHANGE RELATIONS WITH SUPPORTERS

The supporters-leaders exchange assures the survival of the organization and provides the means of exchange in other environments. This is, of course, a precondition for any policy influence or public relevance. These exchanges are shaped by several contextual forces which in the membership environment largely derive from earlier stages of the influence production process. That is, mobilization and population factors plausibly affect the activities of interest organizations. More specifically, these are the types of members or supporters (individuals, companies, public institutions) and the types of interests, such as an economic sector, a profession, or a certain 'non-material' issue, in relation to which to observe varying types of political activities. I discuss these mobilization and population factors below.

First, depending on the nature of the interest, interest organizations have varying problems in mobilizing constituents. In 'The Logic of Collective Action' (1965) Olson argues that it is

more difficult for diffusely spread interests to organize spontaneously.[48] Thus, the magnitude of collective action problems varies between diffuse interests on the one hand and specialized interests on the other hand. There are at least two mechanisms that are consequently assumed to affect the political activities of the organizations representing interests. First, we can assume that the (potential) constituents of diffuse or specialized interests tend to be different, with citizens organized on diffuse interests, and companies (or other organizations) seeking collective action on specialized interests. This difference in membership, together with the nature of the aggregated interest, consequently leads to a fundamentally different evaluation of exchange relations in the news-media environment. Gais and Walker (1991, 106) suggest that citizen groups continually need to reinforce the loyalty of their members and consequently need to show their activism. They seek exchanges with the news media and prioritize 'an outside strategy of public persuasion and political mobilization'.[49] This contrasts with the insider activities of, for example, more specific interests of a small number of companies or institutions. Second, scholars sometimes assume that the nature of the interest of the constituents (diffuse, specialized) correlates with their distribution across policy sectors and vice versa. As Beyers (2008, 1201) notes, 'the larger the scope of an organisation, the more policy sectors and issues it needs to cover, the larger and more heterogeneous its constituency.' As we know that political activities vary by policy sector, we can consequently assume that organizations which are active in a variety of sectors are also likely to require a broad range of influence tactics and membership-related activities. Organizations that represent diffuse interests thus, necessarily, engage in a broader range of activities, including exchanges in several environments than organizations that represent narrower interests.

Second, interest organization population density affects the value that actors in the institutional and news media domain attach to the supporters-related goods offered by interest organizations. This argument is brought forward, with varying levels of complexity, in three research traditions. First, as discussed earlier, in neo-corporatist thinking competitive pressures from similar organizations (density) have a straightforward detrimental effect on the capacity of interest organizations to simultaneously engage members and strike policy deals. As Streeck and Kenworty (2004, 451) note 'the logic of influence tends to place a premium on interest organizations being broadly based and

[48] While theoretically convincing, Olson's arguments have not found strong empirical support. This is, for instance, the case when used to examine the relative presence of voluntary groups vis-à-vis representatives of companies in interest systems (eg Lowery et al.2004; Berry, 1999 154-55). However, apart from the relative presence, 'group' scholars have seldom directly compared the activities of organizations with different types of supporters.

[49] An argument similar to Gais and Walker's (1991) has been developed for organizational maintenance. As said earlier, Jordan and Maloney (2007) argue that organizations increasingly tailor their activities to be in line with their supporters or members preferences. This is the result of an increase in competition between interest organizations and a corresponding easier 'exit' of supporters. Again, organizations that have to maintain individual supporters, such as Greenpeace or an automobile club, as opposed to a few companies, face strong incentives to develop activities that offer selective benefits or that are publicly visible. Their empirical work is theoretically supported by Hirschman's model described in 'Exit, Voice and Loyalty' (1970).

representing more general instead of highly special interests'. Policy makers are not interested in a variety of exchanges with specialized actors in a fragmented interest community, but seek to exchange a representational monopoly with a single interest organization that aggregates various interests within a sector. This is impossible in dense communities. Thus, in such supporters' environments, interest organizations will have more difficulties producing exchanges in the influence environment. Second, a more nuanced argument is presented in population ecology studies. Gray and Lowery (1997, 1998) show that, in the US, population density affects group strategies. More specifically, community density affects the support for political action committees and the formation of coalitions. In other words, organizations in dense interest communities are more likely to specialize by tactic when they have similar political positions.[50] In terms of exchange relationships this suggests that in the face of competition, organizations specialize in a single logic of exchange. To avoid conflict with fellow organizations they are thus expected to divide the interest community along lines of institutional interaction, news media contacts, and supporters base. Third, studies of social movement industries similarly find that tactical and positional specialization is related to interest community density and resource partitioning within sectors (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Downey and Rohlinger 2007). This effect, however, is to be understood as operating alongside the simultaneous effect found by Soule and King (2008, 1598) of the 'influence of a broader environmental resource base' within society that favors unspecialized, more general organizations. Competitive pressures, they suggest, lead to a community that is typical of concentrated markets: a couple of (older) generalists on the one hand, and various specialists emerging and flowering in the fringes of the sector.[51] Taken together, the structure of interest communities conditions the capacity of organizations to combine exchanges in multiple domains. As said earlier, in the exchange scheme I evaluate exactly these types of exchanges, and I am only indirectly interested in exchanges within a single domain (such as leadership-supporters exchanges).

To conclude, under the logic of support supporters provide compliance and public action or support, and in return have several mechanisms to control organizational leaders (especially on internal governance matters) and receive information on attempts to get news media coverage of a political issue. Interest organizations are unlikely to be able to facilitate all these exchanges simultaneously. Environmental factors related to the mobilization of interests and population of interest organizations lead organizations to specialize in certain aspects of these exchanges. That is, if interests are diffusely spread across constituents, organizations are expected to value news media exchanges more highly than more 'private' exchanges. Further, due to the diffuse nature of their interests it is more likely that they face a more fragmented influence environment, as they will want to influence multiple policy sectors simultaneously. At the same time, the density of the interest community additionally conditions the space for action of diffuse or specialized interests. Neo-corporatist thinking leads us to expect that organizations in dense communities are

[50] Please note that specialization by tactic or logic of exchange is conceptually different from specialization in terms of interest (encompassing vis-à-vis specialized, see Beyers (2008, 1201).

[51] The age distribution seems similar to what Berkhout and Lowery (2010b) found in the context of the EU interest community.

less likely to produce exchanges with state-related actors. Population theory suggests that organizations will specialize in a certain influence tactic, probably either media-related action or institutional activities. Social movement studies also expect specialization, but expect that this is conditioned by, among other things, the age of the organization, with new entrants being specialists in any of the goods discussed and older organizations generalists able to intermediate between several domains. The research I present in chapter three further develops and examines more specific expectations based on this discussion.

2.6.2. THE LOGIC OF INFLUENCE

The interaction of interest organizations with constituents or the news media has only sporadically been understood as exchange relationships. This is not so for the interaction of interest organizations with political institutions. Throughout the history of the study of interest organizations, this interaction has frequently been conceptualized as an exchange relationship. This is the case in pluralist, economic, resource-dependency, and corporatist approaches to interest representation. In the fifties pluralists took a 'benign' view of the 'exchange of information' (Bauer, Pool and Dexter 1963, 154-178). They did not consider the unbalanced nature of the information being exchanged or the variation across different interests in accessing policy makers. In 'economic approaches' to interest representation it is assumed that 'legislation and regulation are sold to the highest bidder in political markets, just as other goods and services are sold in more familiar commercial markets' (McChesney in Lowery and Brasher 2004, 22). These transactions, contrary to the pluralist view, are expected to have negative side effects, consisting in distorting competition and weakening citizens´ control over politics. The resource-dependency approach is very similar to my exchange approach, but differs in that it sees resources as a property of an organization instead of part of a relationship. Such studies take a more formal approach to resources than I suggest in this thesis (Poppelaars 2009; Beyers and Kerremans 2007). Lastly, as became clear in the earlier sections, the logic of influence is also the most developed exchange relation in neo-corporatist thinking and practice.

A recent example of the use of the group-institution exchange perspective in the EU context is provided by Bouwen (2004, 338). In this perspective he appreciates 'the pluralist emphasis on the plurality of groups and the importance of information, and the corporatist attention to resource exchange'. He suggests that different institutional venues need different types of information, i.e. 'resources'. This explains different access patterns to the European Commission and the European Parliament by different types of business interest organizations.

2.6.2.1. THE EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIP WITH POLICY MAKERS

The political institutional environment creates opportunities for the exchange of supporters- and reputation-related resources, provided by and for policy makers. In relation to supporters these are (1) organizational privileges and favorable policies in exchange for (2) supporters' discipline and political/technical support, and in relation to the logic of reputation the resources are (3) political information in return for (4) acceptable policy frames in the news media. Several contextual factors affect these exchanges: they depend on the type of political control potentially exerted upon the actor or venue (parliament, minister, bureaucratic venue) and on the system of structured interest group access in general.

First, state officials can give interest organizations access to the policy process. This access is beneficial for the interest organizations because it has indirect effects on the membership environment and may lead to favorable policies. In terms of indirect effects, political actors, from parliamentarians to ministers to bureaucrats, can offer a representational monopoly or privileged access to interest organizations (Streeck and Kenworthy 2004, 452). This could indirectly have structuring effects on the membership environment, for instance through a reduction of the population density in an interest sector. Obviously, there is variation in the type of access that is granted. This could range from a formal constitutional role, including legally binding decision powers, to informal irregular contact with a parliamentarian. As a more direct effect, besides providing help in their organizational problems in relation to supporters (via representational monopolies), access is also the first step for policy makers towards making substantive policy concessions favorable to the constituents of the interest organization.[52] These could be market regulations that put companies or sectors in a favorable position relative to competitors, subsidies for the organization, or specific policies that groups have been campaigning for.

Second, organizational leaders offer policy makers the compliance of their constituents. As discussed earlier, depending on the logic of support leaders have varying modes and levels of control over their supporters. Leaders may have some formal powers but also have means such as informal persuasion via internal media, appeals to supporters' loyalty, and socialization via membership participation. In situations of limited control they can still offer political actors information on political support. Such information on political support or possible non-compliance or resistance, could help to increase the effectiveness of policies (Poppelaars 2009, 4-6) and, under a pluralist notion of democracy, may enhance the democratic quality of decision making through the weighting of various interests (e.g., Lindblom 1959). Considering the 'de facto' compulsory nature of membership and the related leadership control over members in corporatist systems, Streeck and Schmitter suggest that the exchange of compliance is also restricted to such systems. This contrasts with the 'softer' interpretation of control suggested above, and also contradicts Lipsky's (1968, 1149) findings in a very non-corporatist environment. He found that leaders of protest movements use their control over their members, or what he calls group cohesion, in policy bargains. He writes, 'leaders' ability to control protest constituents and guarantee their behavior represents a bargaining strength'.[53]

Third, interest organizations monitor policies and assess upcoming legislation not only to inform their constituents, but also to transform this information for the news media. They rely on policy makers to supply them with policy-relevant information or information on political strategies. In large part interest organizations react to government activities (Baumgartner and Leech 2001), and I assume that their news media activities reflect that. Although commonly understood as agenda setters, interest organizations also continuously monitor and seek information on policy plans or policy evaluations. As discussed below, I expect this to form the basis of the 'information subsidies' offered for exchange in the

[52] See Bouwen (2007) for a discussion on the relation between access and influence.

[53] Lipsky, however, suggests that Schelling (1960, 28) would not agree, because 'binding oneself' does not work in international relations: that is, 'public opinion' restricts the room to maneuver for democratic states in international negotiations.

news media environment (Gandy 1982; Hamilton 2004). For example, in February 2009, the Dutch *Stichting 'Natuur en Milieu'* presented a report on the progress of the climate change policy targets set by the government. Such 'accountability politics' (Keck and Sikkink 1999, 97-98) requires thorough policy research, and assumes simultaneous attention in policy circles and probably in the broader news media.

Fourth, following from the previous point, even when interest organizations themselves are not in the news they can attempt to transform public claims of others into policy-relevant material such as policy statements and reports. These are valuable for policy makers in order to respond to public challengers. Whereas organizations provide input for the news media (see below), the point here is about the ways in which news media attention is translated into policies (or not). Interest organizations contribute to the transformation of the 'popular rhetoric' of the news media into the policy speak of political institutions, or strategically use news media frames to internally challenge policy frames in the policy sector.[54] Thus, interest organizations offer to or withhold from politicians the instruments they need to respond to news media signals.

2.6.2.2. THE ENVIRONMENT OF EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIPS WITH POLICY MAKERS

In terms of contextual forces in the influence environment the value of the resources in exchanges depend on (1) the constitutional position of the counter-party or the institutional position of specific policy venues, and (2) the broader institutional context. First, the influence environment consists of a variety of organizations and political arenas. For now I differentiate two dimensions that affect the evaluation of interest group interaction with the policy process: the level of democratic control of political actors, and the opportunities for venue shopping. To begin with I assume that political actors who are under relatively direct electoral control, such as parliamentarians, are likely to favor news media resources, whereas venues or actors that are at arm's length of public scrutiny are likely to be interested in the exchange of constituency-related resources. This proposition is consistent with the results of the comparison between the EC and the EP by Bouwen (2004) discussed earlier: he found that the European Parliament was more interested in broader political support and the European Commission more interested in specific (technical) information about the sector and members of interest organizations. The way in which democratic electoral accountability affects interest representation is, however, probably not as straightforward as the results of Bouwen's (2004) research suggests. Mahoney (2008, 204), for example, concludes in her comparison of the EU and the US that 'ironically, the less democratically accountable system (EU) may be more responsive to a broader range of interests. The more democratically accountable system (US) appears biased in its response and that bias is pro-business.'[55] As compared to the US

[54] For example, the recent economic crisis can be understood as partially caused by a lack of demand, and low consumer demand could then be 'solved' via scrap subsidies for old cars (a frame or perspective on the economic crisis likely to be favored by car manufacturers).

[55] Apart from these empirical results, scholars are inconclusive on the question to what extent isolation from popular electoral control will increase or decrease the dependency of bureaucratic or political actors on interest group exchanges. In the context of the EU, Moravcsik (2002, 616) argues that isolation could

the EU seems to include a broader range of organizations that represent broader, more encompassing interests. It could be that EU interest organizations adapt to this 'demand' by developing a broader range of exchanges in the supporters environment. In any case, the type of control that could be exerted over a certain institutional venue affects the demands that policy makers may have in relation to interest organizations.

Further, the authority to make decisions could be concentrated in a specific institution, a policy venue, or, as seems to be increasingly the case, be spread across a system of actors (e.g., Hooghe and Marks 2003). In a situation in which there are multiple policy venues that could be engaged in exchanges with interest groups, interest organizations could 'shop' and find the best offer for their resources. This is the case in federal or multi-level governance systems (Baumgartner and Jones 1991, 1993; Mazey and Richardson 2001). Baumgartner and Jones (1991, 1050) define venue shopping as a strategy that 'relies less on mass mobilisation and more on the dual strategy of the presentation of an image and the search for a more receptive political venue'. This 'shopping' for receptive venues is likely to be more common in cases where authority is dispersed across levels and sectors, such as in the EU (Mazey and Richardson, 2001). Then, exchanges between interest groups and political institutions are likely to be more frequent, but will also produce less influence, since only a small part of an institution is affected. In more general terms, both the activities (Baumgartner and Leech 2001) and the structure (McCarthy 2005) of interest organizations tend to follow the activity and structure of the government. Thus, when organizations 'shop' between venues at multiple government levels, they will find that not only there are different resources on offer, but that also that their supporters and reputation environments will change. In other words they cannot easily transfer exchange relations across the influence environment. For example, interest organizations may be able to organize public action at the local or regional level, and thus push their governments, but are not able to stage European or national-level protests (e.g., Imig 2002; Koopmans 2007; McCarthy 2005).

The broader national political context, secondly, structures the influence environment. This context guarantees (or not) the reciprocity of exchange relations. It is assumed that in corporatist influence environments the credibility of the commitments of the exchange partners is strengthened via such things as social norms, political culture, or aspects of the party system. It is in such environments thus more likely that interest organizations build lasting and important exchange relations with government actors than in countries with a pluralist tradition. A likelihood strengthened by the pressures of supporters, who in pluralist systems are mobilized in more homogenous but smaller organizations that consequently

protect the interests of majorities: 'Some delegated or non-majoritarian institutions help redress biases in national democratic representation, particularly where government policy can be captured by narrow but powerful interest groups who oppose the interests of majorities with diffuse, longer-term, less self-conscious concerns'. However, Follesdal and Hix (2006) disagree and suggest that Moravcsik should provide reasons 'for believing that regulators will indeed reliably use their discretion in such ways rather than for less legitimate objectives (...). Independent regulators are highly prone to capture, primarily because they are heavily lobbied by the producers who are the subjects of the regulation. Furthermore, constitutions with multiple checks-and-balances (or veto-points), as opposed to more majoritarian decision-making rules, allow concentrated (single-issue) interests to block policy outcomes that are in the interests of the majority.'

undermine the value of the exchanges under the logic of influence (Streeck and Kenworthy 2004, 451). These broader contexts have been quantified in numerous pluralist-corporatist country score schemes (Siaroff 1999; Kenworthy 2003). In general terms, exchange relations in corporatist systems need not be more frequent but tend to be more encompassing, and are likely to include membership support or compliance in exchange for government policies. In pluralist systems interest organizations articulate demands of members, but their offers of membership compliance in exchange for policy concessions are less credible as supporters are insufficiently under the control of the leadership.

To conclude: the influence environment allows for exchange relations between interest organizations and actors who can make public policy decisions. Because of their relation with their constituents, interest organizations can offer policy makers the political support and policy compliance of their members. Political institutional actors deliver favorable policies and may indirectly shape the competitive membership environment of the interest organization favorably by granting representational monopolies. Exchange relations in the influence environment also affect the public-reputation oriented activities of the interest organization. More to the point, interest organizations transform public action, statements, and claims into policy alternatives and issue frames. They are able to do so because they have been provided with information in the influence environment. The existence of these exchange relations depends on the nature of the policy venue and on the policy making structure in general.

2.6.3. THE LOGIC OF REPUTATION

Political activities are only consequential when there is an audience. In the supporters and influence environment this audience is addressed via relatively private channels. This is in contrast to the logic of reputation, under which it is assumed that the rationale for the existence of interest organizations depends on plausibly presented arguments, support in public opinion, and recognition in the news media.

The news media or public environment creates opportunities for the exchange of supporters- and influence-related resources provided by and for journalists and other relevant news intermediaries (blogs, conferences, public debates). In relation to supporters these are (1) newsworthy 'events and drama' in exchange for (2) latent public opinion support, and in relation to influence environment the resources are (3) policy-relevant newsworthy information in return for (4) validation and issue expansion. These exchanges are conditioned by the media system or platform function of the news media, and by the public opinion or public mood on that specific policy issue.

2.6.3.1. THE EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIP WITH JOURNALISTS

First, an important product of the exchange relations between leaders and members could be attention-grabbing media events. When it comes to social movement organizations, Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, 116-117) point out: 'social movements often make good copy for the media. They provide drama, conflict, and action; colorful copy; and photo opportunities.' Such coverage is necessarily selective and does not automatically favor the political position of those engaged in action (Earl et al. 2004; McCarty et al. 1996; Oliver and Maney 2000). Further, as said earlier, with many organizations members or supporters seem increasingly reluctant to participate or contribute to public action (Maloney and Jordan 2007). At the same time, as I pointed out above, members value media attention.

Therefore, organizational entrepreneurs will use members' financial support to construct news stories. They will develop 'drama and action' that do not require mass member participation, such as press statements, opinion polls, petitions, and online action. These tensions are probably expressed somewhat differently for corporate public political action. In contrast to citizen groups, the ways in which businesses (as members) supply media-related input to the leaders of interest organizations is not immediately obvious. Traditionally we would expect this to occur in (implicit) coalitions between sectoral employers and labor organizations (Balme and Chabanet 2008, 106-108). More recent studies suggest a more direct public engagement on the part of corporate public affairs departments. They provide the media directly with stories and make statements related to public policy, especially when challenged (Wilts and Skippari 2007, 132; Dahan 2009; de Bakker and den Hond 2008).

Second, news media coverage provides latent public support for the goals of the organization. News media activate and mobilize audiences and increase public support for interest organizations and social movements. Besides influencing voting intentions, this affects the political institutional 'inside' lobbying, to which I will return below, and, an aspect less examined, strengthens membership recruitment. As Rucht (2004, 211) writes: 'Positive [public] reactions range from increased sympathy to occasional acts of support to continuous and full commitment'. In their survey of campaign organizations Jordan and Maloney (2007 96) found that 96 per cent of the organizations report that new members are attracted because individuals directly contact the groups at their own initiative. Public reputation largely determines whether individuals consider contacting an organization. For the recruitment of new members organizations depend in large part on the 'free publicity' of news media coverage. This reliance, however, as said earlier, is likely to vary across organizations with different types of constituents, with social movements or citizen groups being especially dependent. As Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, 116) note, 'movements must reach their constituents through some form of public discourse'.

Third, interest organizations have expertise on public policy and on relevant developments related to their constituents (sectors or issues). Such knowledge about and statements on the political game could be valuable news input. This is especially so when it is produced in a format that news media can easily process. Organizations thus provide 'subsidies' to reporters to collect certain information. Gandy (1982, 14) suggests that Public Affairs activities undermine the autonomy of the news media: 'often the value of an information subsidy for any source is increased to the extent that the source can disguise the promotional, partisan and self-interested quality of the information'. Due to their position, interest organizations tend to produce types of information or political arguments that are different from 'official' sources. This could work in their favor, for example when journalists seek 'institutional' information on policy-specific alternatives, or when journalists want 'dramatic' staging of politics. However, when journalists have access to actors with 'real' institutional authority, interest organizations could lose out in the competition for attention.[56] For now, there is no theory readily available about the journalist perspective on the relative value of these varying types of information resources. A useful starting point

[56] Interest organization could bypass this by preparing information for 'official' political actors to use in the news media. They could do that via argumentation in inside lobbying or via a broader range of 'information subsidies' (Negrine 1996, 11, 27; Gandy 1982; Curtin, 1999).

is Bennett's (1990) 'idea that news is 'indexed' implicitly to the range and dynamics of government debate'. Other factors, such as public opinion or arguments of 'unofficial' political actors, hardly affect coverage. He suggests that 'official sources' are always prioritized relative to other sources of political information. Research on journalists' practices suggests that the mainstream press is unable to build 'counter stories' against government actors on their own (Bennett et al. 2007, 36). They require challengers within government elites for their coverage. This suggests that interest organizations are probably 'low' on the index of sources of journalists, with official, government sources being 'high' on their index.

Finally regarding the policy process news media coverage potentially provides three valued resources to organizations: validation of the interest organization, agenda setting of issues, and conflict expansion beyond narrow policy circles. First, Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) note that 'the media spotlight validates the fact that the movement is an important player'. For organizations that have no policy access at all it does not matter how their activities make it to the news media as long as they get there. As Gamson (2004 252) writes: 'No news is bad news' or Lipsky (1967, 1151) is even more prosaic: 'like a tree falling unheard in a forest, there is no protest unless protest is perceived and projected'. However, validation also matters for more established political actors; considering their 'informal' character, interest organizations require validation per political issue and need to continuously reaffirm their validity as relevant actors, more than for example political parties. Second, besides the validation of the organization the media spotlight also serves to recognize a situation as a public problem and potential political issue. This is the agenda-setting function of the news media (e.g., Walgrave and van Aelst 2006). Third, Schattschneider (1960, 3) pointed to the importance of public opinion and support when he wrote that, 'if a fight starts, watch the crowd, because the crowd plays the decisive role'. The involvement of more or different political actors will change the power balance among the actors already involved. So, actors that are weak in the current situation will especially benefit from expanding the scope of conflict. These are the challengers of current or, in the case of upcoming changes, expected status quo policies.

2.6.3.2. The environment of the exchange relationship with journalists

The character of exchange relations between interest organizations and news media is assumed to depend on the media system and the public opinion regarding an issue. First, the media system varies per country. Most importantly for studies of political behavior, systems vary in the extent to which the media system parallels the conflict lines of the political system. This is what Hallin and Mancini (2004) label 'political parallelism'. In systems with a high level of parallelism we find that newspapers and the news media in general are organized along political lines. This could for instance be via direct ownership of newspapers by political parties or via party political ties to the public broadcasting system. From the perspective of interest organizations this matters because it affects the available pathways to influence. In systems with a high political parallelism it is less likely that the news media provide an alternative venue to political institutions. The structures of opportunities and access are very similar. In cases of low political parallelism the media system could provide a fruitful arena in which to address conflict dimensions that have not (yet) been institutionalized in the political system.

I use the categories of countries derived from the cross-country study by Hallin and Mancini (2004): democratic corporatist, polarized pluralist, and pluralist systems (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Tresch 2009).[57] In each system the value of the resources that interest organizations or the news media could provide varies. In the first, democratic corporatist model, media are understood to facilitate input in the policy process, and function as intermediaries between the state and society. In terms of the exchange relation model, they will equally value the activities of interest organizations in relation to the influence or the supporters environments. The news media and interest organizations are allies as they are both political intermediaries. In the second, polarized pluralist view, the news media tend to be instruments of powerful state-related actors. The news originates from governmental leaders. Activities of interest organizations have a low value, and make the news only in extreme cases of political exchange in the influence or supporters environments. This is the case, for example, when government executives explicitly endorse interest organizations or when constituents engage in extreme tactics, such as road blockages or riots. Lastly, under the pluralist perspective, the news media are assumed to be an arena for a strategic struggle between competing political actors. Like to the parliament, the news media allow for an exchange of ideas. The resources (events, expertise) of society-related actors are more highly valued by news media than the resources of state actors (personality, exclusive information).

A second aspect of the environment that affects exchange relations between the news media and interest organization deals with to public opinion. Kollman (1998, 155-164) argues that the selective application and timing of outside-oriented strategies by organized interests depends on two aspects of public opinion: the popularity and the salience of the policy positions of the interest organization.[58] Popularity is in this case understood to be the

[57] Hallin and Mancini (2004) distinguish three categories of countries according to the similar relationships between state actors, other political actors, and the news media. These historically developed systematic relations are: the Mediterranean or polarized pluralist model, the North European or democratic corporatist model, and the North Atlantic or liberal model. The North European model, for instance, gives certain interest groups access to certain media. The media tend to be organized along party lines which gives interest groups easy access to 'favorable' media. As some parts of the system are closed, interest groups will use 'their' media to communicate with their supporters but must find other means to convince a broader audience of their arguments. This is in contrast with the North Atlantic model, where groups may find broader access: the media tend to be neutral and commercial. Journalists want to 'catch' a broad audience and tend to balance their reporting. This provides groups with opportunities but also brings the risk of 'unfavorable' news coverage, i.e., balanced with counterarguments.

[58] He derives the popularity from polling data, e.g., supportive answers to survey questions on certain policy issues (1998, 82-85). These data are assumed to be known and acted upon by those involved in policy decisions. Salience is understood to be indicated by the 'intensity' of ideas and interests of the portion of the population that agrees with the interest group. Kollman measures the salience of issue positions of certain groups by comparing their position with the amount of public support measured by surveys (1998, 87-88). This 'intensity' or 'issue' salience is assumed to be known by organizations. This information on intentional behavior of groups of the population – voting of parts of the electorate, protesting, attracting news coverage – is valuable for policy makers: 'While constituents may be fairly evenly split on an issue as measured by popularity, the group on one side of the

FIGURE 4 Typology of interest organization strategies by public opinion, based on Kollman (1998)

		popularity	
		low	**high**
salience	**low**	elitist politics	latent support politics
	high	classical interest group politics	comforting politics

proportion of the electorate that agrees with the position of an interest organization. Of the subgroup that agrees with the organization, Kollman additionally measures the intensity of that public agreement. This is the salience. Figure 4 shows the related typology of politics: elitist politics, latent support politics, classical interest group politics, and comforting politics.

In each situation, leaders of organizations attach varying relative values to exchanges in the news media environment and in the influence environment. In a situation of 'elitist politics', first, when policies are not supported by a broad public and considered unimportant by the supportive part of the public, groups will not seek exchanges in the news media environment. In that case, the likely involvement of additional political actors related to media attention will change the existing balance of power in a way that is unfavorable to the organization. In the influence environment, however, organizations will want to suggest to policy makers that the issue is salient, when in reality it is not ('astroturf'). Second, when policies favorable to certain groups are not supported by a broad public and when supportive publics (constituents) consider the policy important, groups will not signal their position under the logic of reputation. The organization nurtures its exchanges in the supporters environment, but 'will take care to avoid expanding the conflict too much to spark the opposition' (Kollman 1998, 160). This is 'classical interest group politics'. Third, broad public support but low salience leads to 'latent support politics'. Interest organizations will want to exploit the favorable public opinion by increasing the salience of the issue. They need the news media to convince the potential intensely supportive public that the issue is worth acting upon. Finally, there are 'comforting politics', situations in which groups perceive broad public support on policies their members care about. Under such favorable circumstances organizations are likely to engage in exchange relations in both the influence environment and in the news media environment.[59]

issue may show a willingness to participate in the debate in some way, by writing Congress, by showing up at rallies, and, most importantly by voting for or against a politician or party based on the issue' (Kollman 1998, 87).

[59] Please note that public opinion could also affect the contextual forces in other environments. For example, the public opinion situation related to 'comforting politics' could lead to the mobilization of interests and changes in the group community. This happens, for instance, through splits in organizations or competition of new/other organizations.

TABLE 5 Summary of logics of exchange: Context factors and exchange resources

	Exchange conditioned by:	Types of exchanged resources	Demanded by organization	Supplied by organization	Typical activities by organized interests or exchange partners	
					demand side	supply side
Logic of support	Density of interest group community, types of supporters	Influence resources	Compliance (4)	Private governance (3)	Regulatory instructions, strategic change by members	Quality controls, annual meetings / elections, members-panels, committees
		Media resources	New members and donations (10)	Visible activities (9)	Recruitment, loyalty, contribution / donations	Newspaper clippings, website linkages, newsletters
Logic of influence	Electoral control of policy venue, group system	Supporters resources	Organizational privileges (1)	Members discipline (2)	Favorable legislation, representational monopoly, subsidies	Codes of conduct, self-regulatory agreements
		Media resources	Policy information (6)	Acceptable policy frames (5)	Briefs on policy developments, assessments legislative processes	Policy reports, position statements
Logic of reputation	Media system, salience / popularity in public opinion	Influence resources	Attention and validation, issue expansion (7)	News input (8)	Coverage, issues recognized as 'news'	Press statements, letters to editor, interviews, opinion polls
		Supporters resources	Latent support (11)	Events, 'drama and action' (12)	Participation in events, favorable media frame	Demonstrations, public campaigns, political advertisements

To conclude: activities in relation to the news media environment provide important resources for exchange in the supporters and influence environments of interest organizations. In supporters' exchanges organizations produce newsworthy events or specialized expertise that serve as input in the news media. News media attention, consequently, brings latent public support that is helpful in recruiting new members. Through exchanges in the influence environment interest organizations produce newsworthy policy information and 'subsidise' the editorial newsgathering process. In return, interest organizations could gain validation as actors, set their issue on the government agenda, and expand the conflict beyond a narrow policy circle. These exchange processes depend on the broader systemic relation between the news media and the political system. The most important aspect of this relation is the level of political parallelism. The systems Hallin and Mancini (2004) differentiate on the basis of this parallelism are, from low to high: pluralist, democratic corporatist, and polarized pluralist systems. Further, the exchange relations under the logic of reputation depend on public opinion on specific issues. While organizations may be able to affect public opinion, they are also bound by it. In situations when their positions on policy lack public popularity, interest organizations are expected to try to refrain from exchanges in the news media environment. In chapter 5 I will further develop and examine expectations based on this logic of exchange.

2.7. CONCLUSION

I started this chapter by outlining the need for a contextual theory on the activities of interest organizations and took several steps to develop such a theory, which I base on the exchange relations of interest organizations in several environments. In the first half of the chapter I presented a conceptual discussion about the level of theory construction and matters of definition. In the second part of the chapter I explicitly addressed existing theories of interest representation and political action such as neo-corporatism and social movement research.

First, in section 2.2, I discussed the level of theory construction, arguing that both individual-level assumptions and system-level assumptions would be unproductive for such a theory, and instead opting for the level of the interest organization as a unit of analysis. In section 2.3 I evaluated several definitions of such organizations, giving priority to the types of activities that organizations engage in. A broad variety of organizations could thus be evaluated in terms of their exchange relations. Following that definition, in section 2.4, I examined the conceptual nature of the interactions of organizations. This is needed in order to differentiate exchange relations from other types of interaction. Such exchange relations are interesting forms of interaction because they intermediate between different spheres in society.

In the second part of the chapter, I first (section 2.5) tried to relate neo-corporatist thinking on exchanges in the policy and constituent environment to the literature on social movements regarding exchanges in the news media environment. I did this by broadening the neo-corporatist model so as to include a broader range of organizations as well as media-oriented exchanges. The actual framework and the ways in which it is embedded in existing literature were presented in section 2.6. I discussed the most important types of 'valued behavior' that is under exchange, and the aspects of the environment that are likely to affect the value, frequency, and likelihood of the exchange relationships of interest organizations. This section forms the basis for the formulation of expectations in the following empirical

chapters, which follow the differentiation of the research tasks along the lines of the influence production process.

2.7.1. FROM THE LOGIC OF EXCHANGE TO THE INFLUENCE PRODUCTION PROCESS

The three logics of exchange allow me to formulate a very broad range of expectations regarding the activities of interest groups. There are multiple ways to segment this research task. In this section I will discuss three theoretical and practical choices for narrowing down the research: by exchange relation, by exchange side or partner, and by the stages of the influence process. I then present the specific aspects of this exchange scheme that I examine in the next three chapters. These chapters are structured as stages in the influence production process.

First, researchers can specialize in any of the logics of exchange. This is, for instance, the case when researchers evaluate lobbying practices in a specific parliament or in relation to government more in general. This allows for a very precise specification of the types of exchanges that are likely to occur. The downside of such specialization is that it becomes very difficult to precisely evaluate the interrelations between the various environments in which organizations operate. That is, researchers will point to aspects of the institutional environment as explanations for the activities of interest organizations because they studied them in isolation from factors related to, among other things, membership or public opinion. I have developed the exchange framework so as to highlight the interrelated nature of the activities of interest organizations. In each chapter of this thesis I will try to relate the activities of interest organizations to exchanges in different environments. This produces problems in the design of the research, therefore I will study media-related exchanges partially in isolation from the other environments (see chapter 5).

Second, exchange relationships naturally have two sides. A proper evaluation of the exchange framework would simultaneously include interest organizations and exchange partners such as members, journalists, and policy makers, and in that case the unit of analysis would be the exchange relationship. In practical terms it is very difficult to simultaneously observe activities of organizations and exchange partners. This would, for instance, require being present at lobby meetings. Further, there is no conceptual requirement for exchange interactions to take place simultaneously. A newsletter, for instance, part of the logic of support, is produced at an earlier moment than that it is read by members. Thus, a natural way to narrow down the research task is to limit oneself to only one side of the exchange. In chapters 3 and 4 I consistently focus on the activities on the side of the interest organizations. However, while keeping the perspective of the interest organization I could also study activities of members, journalists, or policy makers, and relate them to possible exchange relationships with interest organizations. This, for instance, is the case when researchers interview policy makers about their contacts with organized interests, but it is far more difficult to define which activities in the environment matter as opposed to the activities of the interest organizations themselves. Of all the activities of policy makers, for instance, which activities matter for their interaction with interest organizations? Only the specific meetings they may have had? Or also their preparation of new policies? Or also the implementation of existing policies? Or even more systemic aspects that are unnoticed until compared with other systems? I will indicate several aspects in the three environments

that may prove significant, but these are still rather broad, 'system'-related aspects when compared with the specified activities of organizations.[60]

Third, in terms of its position within the literature on interest groups, the exchange framework is embedded between questions regarding the interest community and the research questions related to the exercise of influence. As discussed earlier, these are the second and third stages of the influence production process. Mahoney (2008) divides research tasks into even smaller parts of the process of influence production: for instance, she also distinguishes an argumentation and a framing stage. This is also perfectly possible while still adhering to the exchange framework. Each exchange relationship has multiple aspectsor stages. The relations between exchanges also differ with the stages of influence production. For instance, the interest community stage is more important in relation to the logic of support. This is in contrast to the analyses of later stages of the influence production process, which also requires examining the exchanges in the influence and reputation environments. Similar to Mahoney (2008) I subdivide the steps of the influence production process and deal with each of them in each empirical chapter.

The structure of the following empirical chapters and the research task mainly follows the parts of the influence production process, which will be explained in more detail below. As further discussed in the specific chapters, however, in terms of research design I also focus on exchanges in certain environments or the activities of exchange partners. I will now discuss the dependent variables used in the following three chapters.

The first empirical chapter examines the differences in the extent to which sections of the interest community are politically active and thus more likely to attempt to influence policies. Research at the interest community stage usually aims to explain the straightforward presence of interest organizations in a certain community or population. Researchers interested in the exercise of influence use this information to select relevant cases. However, the linking of these two stages could be improved when controlled for the differences in the political interest and activities of organizations. In that way a link could be constructed between the explanations we have about the composition of the interest population and the likely activities of this population. In chapter 3 I therefore ask why interest organizations are politically active. I use expectations that are largely based on the logic of support and, through a comparison of the EU and the Netherlands, the logic of influence.

[60] When research focuses exclusively on activities and structures related to exchanges, and so reducing the focus on interest organizations, several of the problems arise that I discussed as part of system-level theory construction. That is, such an approach would understand the exchange framework too strongly as assigning explanatory power to structures. There is a broad range of research interests for which this is probably not appropriate. For instance, a highly structured framework may be too strict for examining the dynamics of political conflict in which preferences, strategies, and contingencies matter. This is not my main concern, however. It seems that such structures are too easily defined as national structures (of political institutions, media system, or civic culture) and do not allow for structures on other dimensions, such as the policy sector or economic dimensions. It is already very difficult to examine which aspects of the national system matter, but this also complicates any simultaneous theorizing about these other dimensions.

TABLE 6 Structure of this thesis according to the different stages of the influence production process

	2. the interest community stage	3. the exercise of influence stage	4. the political outcome stage
chapter	chapter 3	chapter 4	chapter 5
independent variables	density, diversity and interests of communities and organizations	types of members and interests of organizations	countries, policy sectors and level of attention
dependent variable	extent to which organizations seem politically active	type of political activities: members, policy or public oriented	media attention relative to other actors

In chapter 4, moving a step further along the influence production process to the stage dealing with group strategies, I assume that organizations are politically active, and consequently ask why they are active in the way they are. In this chapter I aim to evaluate the relative importance of the logic of support. By selecting only EU organizations I designed the investigation in such a way that this logic is singled out as explanatory factor. I examine differences in three categories of activities: those related to members, those aimed at the policy process, and those addressing the news media or public opinion.

In the third empirical chapter, chapter 5, I assume that activities have outcomes and that activities are constrained by the expected outcomes. In this case I examine the outcomes in terms of media attention and understand the constraints to be reflected in the variations in the media attention for interest organizations relative to other political actors. In contrast to the perspective taken in the other chapters I here do not examine the interest organization side of the exchange, but instead observe the results of the exchanges between the news media and interest organizations. This chapter solely deals with the logic of reputation.

In each chapter I present separate research designs, expectations, and results, addressing separate sections of the literature and tied together via the exchange framework and the stages in the influence production process. This is summarized in table 6.

CHAPTER 3

Organizing for constituents or for the policy process?

3.1. INTRODUCTION: WHY MAPPING THE INTEREST COMMUNITIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE NETHERLANDS?

Why are some interest organizations more politically active than others? Scholars have several different ways of answering this question. Neo-pluralists point to characteristics of organizations and their members. That is, interests that are 'easier' to organize, such as those of businesses, are expected to be more politically active. Corporatist scholars are more likely to focus on aspects of the institutional environment. Policy makers either provide access to organized interests or close their shop to them. Organization theorists focus on organizational survival in relation to aspects of the interest community or policy sector. For instance, they argue that organizations adapt their activities depending on their competitors, which means that only subsections of interest communities are politically active. The aim of this chapter is to examine the variation in the levels of political activity of organizations in the Dutch and EU populations of organized interests.

In this chapter I evaluate the relative importance of these perspectives and their relative focus on aspects of the organization, the organizational environment, and political institutions. At the same time, I take the perspective of the interest organization and treat these broad focus points predominantly as part of the environment. Remember that in the exchange theory of political activities the extent to which organizations are politically active corresponds to the likelihood of exchanges in the policy environment. This likelihood depends on exchange relationships with supporters and the news media. By interacting with actors in their environment, organizations gain or lose control over policies, independence from supporters, or acceptance of ways of thinking.[61] The explicit interrelation of exchanges presents political interest as a more complex phenomenon than suggested by the 'simple' approaches that focus on only a single aspect. Various exchange relations put interest organizations in favorable positions (or not) in the policy process. Thus, some interest organizations are undestood to be in more powerful positions than others, and they are simultaneously more politically active.

In this chapter I intend to contribute to a normative evaluation of interest group politics by specifying seemingly favorably positioned and well-organized interest communities

[61] The extent to which organizations attempt to engage in politics matters because the relations of interest organizations with government, supporters, and the news media are power relations. These inter-organizational exchange relations are important because they reflect broader political structures and affect real-world decisions on who gets what, when, and how. Thus, the exchange theory of interest organizations helps to disentangle the ways in which power in society is mediated and structured through interest organizations, as part of a variety of political processes. By evaluating the circumstances that are conducive to the policy-related exchange relationships of interest organizations, I aim to shed light on such structures per organization and per interest community in both the Netherlands and the EU.

and organizations. Such a specification is important, because group politics can distort the relation between citizens and their representatives by keeping certain policy circles 'closed' or by providing biased 'signals' from society. Government policy could then become an instrument of only certain sections in society instead of reflecting the preferences of large majorities of citizens. Conversely, interest organizations could at the same time form a complementary transmission belt between government and citizens besides voting and political parties, by aggregating interests in a more continuous or precise manner than electoral politics can. This inconclusive evaluation of interest systems and the related normative challenges (and their solutions) is, in part, a result of a lack of empirical research. That is, there are at least two lacunae. First, interest systems (and their problems) are very different across political systems, issues and interests.[62] Previous researchers, for instance, have noted a pro-business bias in Brussels on the basis of the large proportions of business interest organizations observed in the interest group population. A normative evaluation requires specification of such biases per system, issue and interest. General, unspecified evaluations may overemphasize specific problems observed in certain sectors or underemphasize problems unique to specific systems. For instance, a pro-business bias may be problematic in the EU but other biases may be more important in the EU member states. Second, a more precise normative evaluation requires more than attention to numbers of organizations. Organizations have different types of positions that could make them more or less powerful and politically important. We thus require, for a start, information about which interest communities and organizations are more politically active than others, so as to better evaluate their contribution or threat to policy making and democratic representation of the interest system more in general.[63]

I examine two samples of the interest populations: one from the EU (n=221) and one from the Netherlands (n=396). For the organizations in these samples, a common coding scheme has been used to gather information from the websites of these organizations on such things as membership, substantive interests, policy interests and government interaction.[64] The samples have been constructed very carefully so as to allow for comparison

[62] For example, certain policy sectors could benefit from subsidies as a way to get balanced policy input whereas in other sectors this may lead to inappropriate 'manufacturing of consent'.

[63] Besides this information on the distribution of power within interest populations that is needed for a normative evaluation of interest systems, there are several other reasons to study why interest organizations are politically active: first, as discussed in the previous chapter, we could think of policy interest as part of a typology of organizations that additionally differentiates between administrative and representative organizational means. This typology functions as a general scheme by which to characterize interest communities. It helps to contextualize the more detailed analysis of political activities in the next chapter. Second, at an aggregate level of the total population, the relations with both supporters and policy makers determine the (potential) political functions of interest group systems. That is, both corporatist and pluralist thinking make certain assumptions about the nature of interest organizations (in terms of representation, collective action, and policy input), and the ways in which the interest system simultaneously relates to government and society.

[64] Because of the different nature of interest organizations in the EU and the Netherlands, slightly varying coding schemes have been used. For the EU, for example, a classification of membership that includes national associations and the nationality of the members has been used.

between the two systems. Many of the expectations we have regarding variation in policy interest are at the level of the policy community (e.g. density) or relate to the nature of the represented interest (e.g. business or citizens). A cross-system comparison is not necessary for the evaluation of these expectations. However, a comparative research design including the EU and the Netherlands is needed because of the different types of policies these 'governments' work on, and the difference in interests they attract (Baumgartner and Leech 2001). This is an important potential explanation for the differences in political activities. At the same time, as political systems, they are two very different cases in terms of, among other aspects, corporatist versus pluralist interest system, federal (multilevel) versus centralized (unilevel) governance structures, and international versus national governments. It is especially the nature of the interest system that is obviously expected to affect the scale of policy interest on the part of organizations. It will be difficult to isolate the difference in policy competence from other differences. The selection of different cases would not have alleviated this problem. A comparison of the EU and the Netherlands is of substantive interest because in both we find an ongoing discussion about restructuring the relations between interest organizations and policy makers, for instance via registration systems, broadening (or restricting) formal access, and government subsidies.[65]

The chapter is structured as follows. I will start by presenting theoretical considerations and expectations, followed by a description of the samples and the data gathering techniques. These are innovative and unique because of the combination of 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' sampling methods, the use of various classifications of interests, and the web-based nature of the data sources. Next, I construct a single dimension (the dependent variable) on which to measure the policy interest and organizational capacity of interest communities and evaluate the Netherlands and the EU separately. The results generally support the hypotheses. Among other things they indicate that dense interest communities are less politically active than other communities, and suggest that business interests are generally more involved in policies than other types of interests.

3.2. THEORETICAL RATIONALE

There are at least three perspectives on the variation in the political activities of interest organizations. First, in a (neo)-pluralist view interest groups are largely seen in their relation to government. That is, interest groups are understood to be relatively powerful in relation to the bureaucracy, political parties, the executive, and other political actors. Such pluralist or policy studies focus on interest groups because of their attempts to influence policies (Baumgartner and Jones 1993, Baumgartner and Leech 1998, Gray and Lowery 2004). In this view the answer to why interest organizations are interested in influencing public policy is obvious: it is assumed that the rationale for the existence of interest organizations is to influence policies. The power of interest organizations could be understood as the extent to which they are successful in doing so. Indeed, from this point of view, the main aim of studying lobbying is because of its likely effect on government policies. Whether organizations seek political action is only of indirect interest, as this is assumed always to be the primary purpose of interest organizations. Because pluralists expect only limited variation in the extent to which organizations within the interest system are politically active, researchers have focused on the variation between those interests that

[65] E.g. Financial Times, 4 June 2009, Tweede Kamer, 2008, 70, De Telegraaf, 20 July 2009.

are organized and those that are not. The difference in mobilization is then theorized according to Olson's logic of collective action, according to which concentrated interests are expected to be more easily organized than more diffused interests. This is then a source of likely bias towards the representation of business interests (Scholzman 1984).

Second, in corporatist thinking, as in pluralist policy approaches, interest organizations are viewed in relation to state policies. However, interest organizations are assumed to be driven by a partially different rationale. Whereas they may want favorable state policies, they would even prefer to make policies themselves (Schmitter and Streeck 1985, Streeck and Kenworthy 2005). That is, they also seek governance functions, such as regulating an economic sector, managing retirement schemes, or providing 'public' services (from wage bargaining to traffic assistance to development aid to education). Interest organizations require state regulation or money to back them, for instance with monopoly control of certain resources or the authority to regulate entry and exit to the sector. The power of interest organizations is understood to be related to the capacity to organize 'policies' without direct state action. Researchers tend to be interested in the ways in which state policies and interest organization governance can be organized in a non-conflicting, constructive manner. Unlike the pluralist views, corporatist thinking requires a more elaborate examination of organizational structures and aims. It cannot be assumed that interest organizations seek to influence government policies; instead, they are supposed to perform certain social, economic or political functions which state actors seek to support or constrain. This affects both the internal structure of interest organizations and the composition of interest communities. Thus, the political orientation of interest organizations is expected to be differently (than assumed under pluralism) and complexly related to the 'success' of organizations, as such success could take the form of either self-regulatory or subsidized governance-related functions, or of favorable state policies. For example, development campaign groups could be successful in both these ways when they receive funds to provide humanitarian aid and also change state policies regarding debt relief for 'failed states'. However, these different forms of 'success' probably require different modes of engaging in the policy process.

Third, students of organizations will find both these perspectives narrow. In their view, organizations seek survival. This is addressed in neither the pluralist focus on policy influence, nor in the corporatist focus on the functions of organizations. Some organization scholars examine the internal, micro-level mechanisms that facilitate continued and 'successful' existence. Others view organizational survival as depending on the capacity to shape environments and adapt to new circumstances (Aldrich and Pfeffer 1976, Aldrich 1979, Aldrich and Ruef 2006). This 'macro', aggregate perspective includes the evaluation of population-level factors such as competition, selection, and partitioning. Thus, researchers in this tradition are interested in relations among organizations (Hannan and Freeman 1989, Pfeffer and Salancik 1978, Scott 1981). Organizations depend on their context for resources and are powerful if they can survive independently. Such a resource-dependency approach assumes that organizations seek autonomy; in this view, political interest is 'only' a tool to gain such organizational independence – relative to other interest organizations, supporters, or political actors more in general.

So, we find partially competing views about why some interest organizations are more politically active than others. From my exchange theory on activities of interest organizations follows a fourth evaluation that takes on board some aspects of the perspectives mentioned above.

First, I agree with pluralists that policy influence is important. However, as said, I assume that this is a matter of degree and that, as in corporatist views, this focus on policies need to be understood in relation to the rest of the organizations environment (supporters, news media). Second, I agree with corporatists that we cannot ignore the ways in which relations with society, members or supporters are organized – regardless of whether administrative or representative means are used. Such relations are an additional source of potential power for organizations which could manifest itself in political action or in autonomous policy making. However, and in this I agree with the last perspective, the focus on particular functions of organizations is probably not as strong as the drive for organizational survival. That is, interest organizations adapt to circumstances and, at aggregate levels, are under pressure from other groups. This creates strategic choices for organizations. If, for instance, the lobby function (interest articulation) ceases to attract supporters, organizations could develop more member- or service-oriented tasks. Taken together, these assumptions form the starting point for the formulation of hypotheses about the political orientation and organizational means of interest organizations.

3.3. THEORETICAL EXPECTATIONS

In the exchange theory of interest group activities introduced in the previous chapter, it is assumed that contextual forces affect the likelihood of exchange. The contextual forces that are central to this chapter come from the environment of the interest community, the supporter's base and state institutions. This chapter is about exchange relations with supporters and with the government. Several indicators are used to evaluate the relative effect of these factors on the organization and activities of organized interests to influence public policies. The most important indicators for this are the density of the interest community, the competences of government, and whether organizations represent business interests or other types of interests. I examine the effect of these factors on the apparent priorities or opportunities for exchange. These apparent priorities are measured by assigning scores to organizations on the basis of online information. The dependent variable is thus a score of the political interest (likely attempts to influence policies) combined with a score of political organization (structures to involve members) of interest groups. Such a general perspective seems appropriate considering the large number of organizations under scrutiny. As said earlier, in the next chapter I will focus on more specific activities of organizations related to exchanges. Because media relations require more detailed analysis, I focus here on the power derived from the relation with government and supporters, and will turn to media relations in the next chapters.

I will first examine the organizational typology that is assumed to form the basis for the exchange relationships that are the focus of this thesis. The organizational typology reflects the variation among organizations in their relations with different parts of their environment. As discussed in the previous chapter, I distinguish four categories of organized interests: those organized to provide services, to form a club, to provide governance, and to represent interests before government. These categories are assumed to vary along two dimensions: policy versus supporters' orientation (interest articulation) and administrative versus representative means (interest aggregation). As a logical consequence of the way in which these categories have been formulated is that they are assumed to be at least partially mutually exclusive. For instance, on the first dimension organizations either narrowly keep close to their members' interests, or compromise in

the policy sphere, representing more encompassing interests. Or, on the second scale, organizations either rely on membership contributions or donations, either of which implies a fundamentally different mechanism of relating to supporters.

I will formulate hypotheses on the difference between the EU and the Netherlands, on variation across communities of interest organizations, and on the differences between organizations. These hypotheses relate to the level of policy interest of organizations. Via the organizational typology I also examine the ways in which supporters are mobilized and how this relates to the level of policy interest. This complicates the evaluation of policy interest, but this broader, interrelated analysis is needed in order to contrast pluralist, corporatist, and organization-theoretical assumptions about organizational behavior. In other words, depending on aspects of the organization and the community of organizations, I have different expectations about whether organizations that are successful in policy exchange also tend to organize their supporters better. On the one hand, as corporatists are likely to argue, it could be that ´successes´ on these two types of relationships correlate and that these associations therefore require a joint evaluation. On the other hand, as organizational theorists (and pluralists) would argue, it could be that organizations specialize in specific exchange relationships, and that certain organizations are especially powerful in relation to policy makers, whereas others are important because of the organization of their constituents. This has a bearing on the function and normative evaluation of interest group politics. The two dimensions, organizational capacity and policy interest, jointly reflect the (potential) political and social power of interest organizations and interest communities. Certain environments are more conducive to policy or supporters exchanges and thus produce potential power for (certain) interest organizations. I will discuss the expectations on this per political system, interest group community, and organization.

3.3.1. SYSTEM-LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

Considering the low number of cases and large contextual differences, we can only speculate about the factors underlying variation between the EU and the Netherlands. Therefore I here only formulate a single, very general expectation, i.e., that interest organizations in the EU are more interested in influencing legislation and policies than organizations in the Netherlands (H1). This expectation is substantiated by a number of arguments that could be read as sub-hypotheses. More generally, differences between the EU and the Netherlands arise from the kind of institutional differences that tend to be the focus of corporatist inspired research. In such views the policy-orientation of EU associations is explained by characteristics of the EU institutions, such as the weak bureaucratic capacity (Greenwood 2007), the value of 'technical' information (Bouwen 2004), or the specific role of the parliament (Mahoney 2008). Although these things of course do matter, I would like to point to three under-researched aspects of the EU system: the nature of the constituencies, the legal competencies and the way organizations maintain ties with their supporters.

First, on the nature of the constituencies, supporters of EU associations tend to be national associations. They are keen to protect their service, information, and regulatory functions at the national level. This protection has an organizational-political and practical component because the development of services by such groups is, in part, restricted by the multi-national and multi-lingual character of potential supporters. For example,

organizations that work on international issues, such as Amnesty International, Medicines sans Frontiers, and UNICEF, develop supporters' ties nationally.

Second, the EU has a peculiar mix of legal competences. This will affect the policy interest of organizations indirectly: the mix of competences at the EU level is expected to disproportionately attract business interest representation, which is already expected to be higher in the EU than in national systems (Eising 2009). Business interests are expected to be more inclined to attempt to influence public policies than other types of interests. Baumgartner and Leech (2001, 1195-97) find that on a broad variety of indicators in the US business interests are more politically active than other (citizen) interests. As a result, the interest population in the EU is expected to be more policy-oriented.[66]

Third, the different ways in which Dutch interest organizations maintain ties to their members as compared to EU interest organizations also contributes to their lower political interest. That is, in the Netherlands, interest organizations can rely on administrative means such as donations and professional management in their relation to supporters. In the EU, in contrast, members will expect their organizational leaders to organize more direct, participatory procedures such as committees and annual elections. I assume that this is because of the different nature of organizing in a multi-national environment with various public spheres (EU), as compared to the national public sphere in the Netherlands. Whereas Dutch supporters can rely on reputational, public mechanisms (for instance the mass media or members' magazines) to get information and to control the strategy of the organization, members of EU organizations will, I expect, want more formal influence. In short, in order to relate to their organization leaders Dutch members rely more on 'exit' mechanisms and EU members more on 'voice' mechanisms. Paradoxically, the 'looser' ties with supporters in the Netherlands make organization leaders more dependent on the continuation of that ('checkbook') support, and less likely to engage in policy activities that lead only to very long term success (Maloney and Grant 2007; Hirschman 1970). The more formal mandate that organization leaders could have in EU organizations increases their attempts to influence public policies.

3.3.2. SECTOR-LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

In terms of institutional context I expect organizations to be more politically active in sectors where the government is more active as well (Baumgartner and Leech 2001). This leads to two more detailed expectations related to level of competence and to business interests. Furthermore, in terms of organizational environment, interest organizations interact with varying numbers of other interest organizations and consequently are expected to be more (or less) politically active. My sector level hypotheses are the following.

First, I expect organizations in policy sectors of EU competence to be more policy-oriented (Ha). The economic and regulatory nature of the European integration process has led to Europeanisation of policy sectors that tend to have low levels of democratic or parliamentary control domestically, such as competition policies or foreign trade issues (Moravcsik 2002; Majone 1998). Policies and institutions outside direct parliamentary scrutiny tend to attract interest organizations as alternative sources of representation as a

[66] This less institutional line of argumentation matters because it suggests that, if we wanted to change the interest system, institutional reform is likely to provide only partial solutions.

compensation for parliamentary support (Mahoney 2008, 37-38; Lowi 1969). The interest organizations 'attracted' by such policy circles consequently find themselves in a much stronger position than in sectors with stronger parliamentary control. The 'easy' policy access makes it more likely that such organizations become politically active.

Second, the substantive nature of the interest matters. However, there is no immediate theory on which to base expectations about the variations in group activity in relation to aspects of the policy issue or topic.[67] Still, some simple expectations can be noted. I expect that 'social, charity and recreational' interests are less politically active than 'business' interests (Hb). I expect this to be the case because states have a bigger role in regulating the economy than in organizing recreation. We are also more likely to find conflicting interests in regulating business than in the kind of more one-sided, valence issues related to, for instance, sports and charity. Thus, organizations that represent business interests have a greater need to attempt to influence policy.

Third, I expect organizations in dense interest communities, policy agendas, or economic sectors to be less policy oriented (Hc) (Gray and Lowery 1996; 2001). There are various ways to segment the population of interest organizations. In the most general terms, we could identify categories related to the supporters' environment (economic sector), the interest system environment (communities) and the influence environment (policy agendas). In each of these environments organizations encounter similar organizations, and potentially operate in environments of different density. However, regardless of the environment, I expect that density always reduces the policy interest of the sector, albeit for slightly different reasons. First, in dense *economic sectors*, such as those with large numbers of subsector associations, interest organizations are likely to find it difficult to reach agreement on policies affecting the sector in general. To put it simply, more organizations implies more distinctive interests, which should make interest aggregation more difficult. In such circumstances organized interests are not likely to make a convincing case in the influence environment.[68] Interest organizations foreseeing such lack of success, and considering the high threshold for interorganizational agreement, will be less likely to attempt to influence public policy. Second, we know that in *interest communities*, a classification that combines economic sectors and social categories, the growth of the number of organizations will decline over time (Nownes 2004; Nownes and Lipinski 2005). This suggests that the level of policy interest also has some sort of optimum between early growth and declining marginal growth (Lowery, Gray and Monogan 2008) Third, in crowded or dense *policy sectors*, I expect organizations to get a 'free ride' on the policy activities of others. Competition in policy access will lead to adaptation, and a search for other means to sustain the existence of the organization and secure policy influence. In addition to the weaker policy interest on the part of organizations in dense sectors, I expect these organizations to rely more on administrative means in relating to supporters. An argument that applies to all these organizational environments is that in more competitive environments (i.e., dense sectors) supporters have a choice of organizations,

[67] Except perhaps for Lowi's (1964, 713) three-fold differentiation of regulatory, distributive and redistributive policies, and recent work on policy agendas (Jones and Baumgartner, 2005).

[68] Although the dynamics of political conflict could work in favor of a fragmentation of business interests relative to other interest, this is what Smith (2000) labels the paradox of unity.

and thus control leaders via exit mechanisms. In low-density sectors, 'voice' mechanisms, associated with what I call representative means, are required to give members control over leadership. As said earlier, I expect that in such contexts organizations will be more interested in influencing policies.

3.3.3. ORGANIZATION-LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

The expectations at the level of the organization mainly follow from the theoretically expected variation in the mobilization of interests. This means that, first, following Olson (1960), more diffuse interests are expected to be more difficult to organize, and second, more varied interests are expected to be more difficult to organize in a single organization. Greater problems in mobilizing interests are assumed to lead to lower interest in policies. Apart from the membership-oriented expectations that are related to mobilization, I also present two other, more limited expectations relating to the age of organizations and the effects of government subsidies.

First, I expect organizations with companies or public institutions as members (as opposed to individuals) to be more policy oriented (HI). This is the case because of the assumed concentrated character of their interests, and the subsequent lower need to use non-policy related incentives, such as 'solidarity benefits' or selective services, to solve problems of collective action. In spite of the different logic of this argument it is difficult to differentiate between this expectation and the similar expectations based on the nature of the interest (Hb) and policy competences (H1).

Second, organizations with a broad variety of members in terms of nationality or type are expected to be less policy-oriented, whereas organizations with uniform membership or without members are expected to be more interested in policies (HII). I expect this to be so because having a broad variety of members complicates the aggregation of interests and makes it more difficult to establish a common policy position. Further, organizations with several types of members, or in the EU a wide variety of nationalities, require more elaborate structures of committees, meetings, and procedures in order to collect membership input and provide for representation. At the other end of the spectrum I expect that organizations without members find it easier to agree on policies and will thus more readily attempt to influence public policy. This is suggested by Jordan and Maloney's (2007) survey results and has also been found in the US. As Skocpol (2003, 134) writes, 'Organizational leaders have little time to discuss things [policies] with groups of members. Members are a nonlucrative distraction'. However, as a counter-argument to this line of thinking I may point out that in situations in which 'diverse' interest organizations find agreement among supporters, their policy input is likely to be valuable to policy makers as it represents a broader, more encompassing interest that is less likely to be politically opposed than the pressures of more narrow, special interests. This suggests that having a broad variety of members could also have the opposite effect of increasing the likelihood of the organization attempting to influence policy.

Corporatist and organization scholars would here identify two additional phenomena that might affect the political character of interest organizations. Following them, I evaluate, third, the consultative and financial ties of organizations to government actors. These are likely to be positively related to policy interest (HIII). Organizations that receive subsidies must have exerted themselves politically in order to get funding, and are thus expected to be interested in public policies. Fourth, organizational age is expected to be positively related

TABLE 7 Summary of expectations

level	hypothesis
system	**H1** Interest organizations in the EU are more interested in influencing policies than organizations in the Netherlands (H1)
sector	**Ha** Organizations in policy sectors of EU competence tend to be more policy oriented
	Hb 'Social, charity and recreational' interests on the one hand and 'business' interests on the other, show little or strong policy interest, respectively
organization	**Hc** Organizations in dense interest communities, policy agendas or economic sectors tend to be less policy oriented
	HI Organizations with companies or public institutions as members as opposed to individuals tend to be more policy oriented
	HII Organizations with (financial) ties to government actors are more interested in public policy
	HIII Organizations with (financial) ties to government actors are more interested in public policy
	HIV Older organizations are more policy oriented

to institutionalized attempts to influence policies (HIV). Bureaucrats value experience, contacts, and reputation when they consider allowing organizations access to policy processes (e.g. Downs 1967). This effect is expected to be stronger in the Netherlands, where younger organizations may have difficulties to access the closed, corporatist 'Iron Ring' of interest representation (Oldersma, ea 1999). These expectations are summarized in table 7.

3.4. SAMPLES, DATA, AND METHOD

I evaluated the expectations on the political interest of organizations via their websites. I used only the 'basic' information on the websites and, in contrast to the research project presented in the next chapter, did not examine aspects related to political communicative action, such as rhetoric, target audience, or various aspects of media use. Some of the potential biases associated with website information (rhetoric, selective presentation of activities) are thus not likely to affect the data in this chapter. In the next chapter I will discuss some of these things (section 4.1 and 4.3). The organizations were selected from the register of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce and several EU-level directories. The sampling method and website coding scheme are described below.[69]

[69] I thank Sebastiaan Sweers, Rogier Schulte-Nordholt, and Bart Koot for their participation in the Dutch Capstone project (coordinated together with Caelesta Poppelaars) and the related coding activities. Special thanks go to Rosalie Belder for her research assistance on the EU data. So, in these sections for 'I' please read 'we'. This research has been presented at several conferences (Berkhout and Poppelaars, 2009; Poppelaars, Berkhout and Hanegraaff, 2009)

3.4.1. BOTTOM-UP VERSUS TOP-DOWN SAMPLING

Samples of organized interests are typically constructed in one of two ways. On the one hand, studies starting with a focus on population density and diversity usually employ a bottom-up approach in which organizations are selected because they seek to engage in some form of collective action with constituent members or supporters. Such action may be directly aimed at influencing public policy, but may also be largely unrelated to policies, for instance in the case of sports or voluntary clubs. In this set-up, very general and encompassing lists that allow for selection of certain organizational forms (e.g. legal form) are used. Thus, these studies seek to describe the universe of interests, unweighted by the specific strategies or tactics they employ. In a top-down case selection strategy, on the other hand, the activities organizations use to influence policies take priority. Organizations are selected on the basis of specific information on involvement in the policy process. These are strategies that typically are directly aimed at political institutions such as the formal involvement in, for example, consultative procedures, or informal activities such as lobbying. Comparing the outcomes of the two sampling methods within a single system could thus tell us something about the selective factors related to specific activities, such as government consultations. However, in this chapter I am relying on samples that were constructed differently in the Netherlands and the EU because there were not the right kinds of data available to use the same method (bottom up or top down) in both systems. This reduces comparability, especially because the different sampling methods directly affect the dependent variable. Several steps were taken to increase the similarity of the samples and thus reduce sampling bias.

3.4.1.1. THE DUTCH SAMPLE

The research presented in this chapter, especially the Dutch part of it, is part of a joint research project with Caelesta Poppelaars. The way of sampling in the Dutch sample can be termed 'bottom-up', meaning that I used a census of *all* organizational activity in the Netherlands and from this selected the type of organizations that could be classified as interest groups. The important organizations 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 organizations in the Netherlands have also restricted themselves to the largest groups (de Hart 2005; 2008), concern sector-specific studies (Akkerman 2005; Huitema 2005), or study a particular type of organization, such as professional associations (Visser and Wilts 2006). Such studies provide only partial views of the interest group population as a whole and, from the perspective of my research interest, produce samples with either too little variation or with a bias on the dependent variable (policy interest).

I used the database of the National Chamber of Commerce in the Netherlands (NCC) as a starting point for generating a database of the Dutch interest group population.[70]

[70] 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 associations and foundations register (Register Act 1997). Essentially, every citizen in the

Their trade, associations and foundations registers are available online and can be searched by keywords and a NCC classification. Organizations were selected on the basis of their NCC-assigned codes for associations and activities related to interest groups. I used the database of 7565 organizations that was produced by Poppelaars in this way (Poppelaars 2009a; Poppelaars 2009b). From these 7565 I randomly sampled 1239 organizations (see for an earlier use of this set Berkhout and Poppelaars 2009; Poppelaars, Berkhout and Hanegraaff 2009). Of these, 380 turned out to be nationally active interest groups with online presence.[71] I analyze these organizations in this chapter. For 319 other organizations in the sample we found some online reference, but no organizational website; thus, the effective 'response rate' was 54 per cent. For another 346 organizations we did not find any information at all – they do not seem to exist (any more). It is not clear in what way the number of 'missing' organizations biases the sample. On the basis of the names it does not seem that specific categories, such as business interest organizations, are overrepresented.

3.4.1.2. THE EU SAMPLE

The sample of EU organizations was drawn from a combination of data sources. They are CONECCS (August 2007, n=749), the register of lobbyists accredited to the European Parliament (April 2008, n=1534), the Public Affairs Directory by Landmarks (online version July 2007, n=2522 after deletion of duplicates), and the 'new' Register of Interest Representatives that the Commission started in June 2008 (January 2009, n=786). Each of these lists serves different aims and thus lists varying types of organizations. For example, the frequently used (Mahoney 2008, Eising 2007, Wessels 2004, Greer, da Fonseca, and Adolph 2008) but discontinued voluntary register kept by the European Commission, CONECCS only registers Euro-groups that are 'considered representative by the Commission'. Because these lists only partly overlap, a more or less encompassing sample requires a combination of sources (Berkhout and Lowery 2008). These four data sources were merged and duplicates removed from them by Arndt Wonka (2009).[72] A random sample of 400

Netherlands either planning to establish a company or start any type of foundation or association needs to register with the NCC.

[71] Of the 1239 organizations in the sample, 346 (28%) do not seem to exist (this is a weakness of the Chamber of Commerce register), 319 (26%) seem to exist but do not have a website, 21 (2%) are local organizations, 76 (6%) are international organizations, and the remainder (6%) were been discarded for other reasons (subsections, individuals, companies). We selected those organizations that could be counted as an active interest groups on the basis of on the information they provided on their website. This excludes organizations which may be interest groups but have no online presence. The data set, and accordingly the sample, excludes individual firms and advisory councils.

[72] We are grateful to Arndt Wonka for allowing us to use this database (see also Wonka, Baumgartner, Mahoney and Berkhout, 2009). This mixed database provides the most diverse snapshot of interest organizations active at the EU level. However, it has some downsides: it is not a fully up-to-date list and will not continue to be available in its current form because its constituent sources are undergoing substantial changes. First, CONECCS is no longer available. Second, ownership of the Public Affairs Directory has recently moved to the UK company Dods which may lead to editorial changes. Third, the EP register is frequently updated and the most straightforward: every lobbyist that enters the EP building needs a door pass and consequently

organizations was drawn from this merged list.[73] In order to further reduce the likelihood of source-related sampling bias I have added a random sample of 100 organizations from the new register of Interest Representatives kept by the European Commission.[74] This also provides more up-to-date data and allows for a comparison of this source with the other sources, so that the usefulness of this data source for future interest group research could be examined (not reported in this chapter, see Berkhout and Poppelaars 2009). After removing seven duplicates we were left with a sample of 493 organizations, of which 221 interest organizations with members (40 national interest organizations and 181 European organizations). In contrast to the Dutch case, I found only a small proportion, 57 organizations, that do not have online presence.[75] This produces a 'response rate' of about 80 per cent.

3.4.1.3. COMPARING THE SAMPLES

Because of the data sources available I was forced to produce two samples based on two contrasting sampling techniques, with the Dutch sampling method being 'bottom-up' and the EU method more 'top-down'. In terms of the likely political interest of the organizations in the samples, this results in a bias in the Dutch sample towards more 'club'-like, relatively a-political organizations, and the EU sample toward larger proportions of 'real' lobby organizations. However, in order to prevent this sort of bias in the results, I adapted the samples so as to maximize the comparability of their results. First, for the Netherlands, I corrected for this bias by selecting only organizations found in the register via specific keywords that refer to some sort of political association. In addition, based on website information, I excluded organizations that do not clearly intend to bring organizations or individuals together for some common cause (of the sample of 1239 I used only 380; see footnote 71 in previous section). In this way I made the Dutch sample more 'top down'. As specified in the results section, I replicated the most important analyses using different sampling frames involving stricter selection criteria for the Dutch data. This did not significantly affect the results. Second, for the EU sample, the nature of the sources seems to make it likely that the organizations included show interest in influencing policies. That is, they have either opened an office in Brussels and consequently end up in the Public Affairs directory, or they have entered the EP building and end up in the EP lobby register.

ends up in the register for the subsequent year. However, small changes in the implementation affect the types of organizations on the list. For example, the recently introduced 'express', two-week pass system may have led to a decline in the number of national associations on this list.

[73] Together with the 100 organizations from the register of the Commission this produces the following distribution per source in the full sample (n=493) (between brackets the proportions after the second selection are given, which is thus the sample of 221 organizations effectively used): CONECCS 18% (33%), Public Affairs Directory 40% (33%), EP register 22%(13%), and Commission register 21%(20%).

[74] This new register is part of the Transparency Initiative (n=786, January 2009). Its early 'success' is disputed (European Voice, Feb 5, 2009), and transparency campaign groups challenge the quality of the data (FT, June 4 2009). The Commission positively evaluated the register (CEC, 2009, IP/09/1608).

[75] Other organizations included in the sample but not in the further analysis (due to problems of comparability with the Netherlands and across organizations, data collection and research interest): 45 (9%) national organizations not coded due to language problems, 60 (12%) companies, 47 (9%) regional or city representations, 47 (9%) lobby firms, and 11 (2%) other organizations.

Such selection mechanisms, however, have a fairly low threshold and are definitely less 'top-down' than the formal recognition mechanisms known in more corporatist systems (or, for that matter, the Council of Europe NGO system). Nevertheless, to further increase the 'bottom up' character of the EU sample, I additionally used the new EC register that allows for voluntary registration irrespective of policy activities. Further, by selecting only membership organizations in the second selection step, I have sampled only those organizations that could have ended up in the Dutch sample as well. This membership criterion 'automatically' increases the variation in policy orientation of the organizations. In sum, I have adapted, via stratification, filtering, and oversampling specific sources, the Dutch and EU samples in order to maximize their comparability. Differences between the organizations in these samples should, therefore, be largely ascribed to real-world phenomena.

3.4.2. CODING SCHEME

The data were gathered by students between October 2008 and January 2009 in the context of a so-called capstone project aimed at writing a Master-thesis, and by a research assistant. The websites of organizations were categorized according to (1) a functional typology of organizations,[76] (2) membership,[77] (3) economic sector,[78] (4) substantive interest[79] and (5) policy topic.[80] [81] Most of the detailed coding is presented here in an aggregated manner and has been adapted for the purpose of this research. The policy topic coding, for instance, has been recoded in order to relate the topic to the legal competences of the EU and national governments.[82]

[76] Based on a combination of Beyers (2004) and Mahoney (2004); see Poppelaars (2009): individual corporations, small and medium enterprises (SME), employer's peak organizations, employer's sectoral organizations, labor unions, public institution, association of public institutions, research group / think tank, advisory council, NGO environment, NGO development, NGO consumer, NGO education, NGO health, NGO minorities, NGO religious / philosophy of life, NGO idealistic, NGO cultural / sports / recreation organizations, 76 (6%) are international organizations, and the remainder (6%) were been discarded forother reasons (subsections, individuals, companies). We selected those organizations that could be counted as an active interest groups on the basis of on the information they provided on their website. This excludes organizations which may be interest groups but have no online presence. The data set, and accordingly the sample, excludes individual firms and advisory councils.

[77] NL: Local / Regional association, Public institution, Private institution, Affiliate / similar organisation / association, Supporting / sponsoring member, Other, Mixed public/private institution, Membership Group, Individuals, no members (i.e. in case of individual corporation / institution).
EU: (National) Associations with individual members / contributors, (National) Associations of public institutions, e.g. municipalities, social insurance agencies, (National) Associations of companies, (National) Associations of mixed public/private organizations, e.g. hospitals, universities, airports, Individual members / contributors, Public institutions, Companies, Mixed public / private organizations, (European) Associations, e.g. sub-sector associations, Other types.

[78] According to main NACE codes: < http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/index/nace_all.html>

[79] According to Gray and Lowery (1993, 90).

[80] According to the Policy Agendas Codebook.

[81] Please note that I have also collected data on several specific activities of interest groups, such as whether

The first two variables address aspects of the organizations, and the last three are treated as aspects of the environment of the organization. First, organizations were defined according to a 'traditional' classification (NGOs, employers etc.).[83] Second, I differentiated between types of supporters or members such as companies, individuals and, at the EU level, national associations. Third, the major topic areas of the NACE coding system were used to classify organizations according to the economic sector represented. Fourth, a similar scheme that additionally includes 'non-economic' interests has been used to differentiate interest communities. Fifth, I used the policy topic scheme to classify organizations according to the policy sectors they seek to engage with (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Jones and Baumgartner 2005; Baumgartner et al. 2009).[84]

In order to examine the dependent variable I used two 5-point scales: (1) a scale that indicates to what extent the organizations are oriented to lobby activities / policy making (logics of exchange), and (2) a scale that refers to the extent to which organizations exhibit certain organizational characteristics designed to perform tasks in an administrative or representative manner (means). Coders had to make a general evaluation of the information on the website.[85] For the policy orientation scale I assigned high scores to organizations that seemed predominantly oriented to the political institutions.[86] These included, for example,

they interact with government or parliament, whether they receive government grants, and some other aspects.

[82] The levels of competence are defined as follows: Adaptation of policy field categorization of the Policy Agendas project http://www.policyagendas.org/ (codes between brackets). According to following categories (largely similar to Articles 3-6 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union):
National (5 topics): Civil Rights, Immigration, and Integration (2), Healthcare (3), Education and Culture (6), Housing and City Planning (12), Democracy and Government (18).
Shared (10 topics): Macro-Economics and Taxes (1), Labour (5) , Energy (8), Traffic and Transport (10), Law, Court Rulings, Crime (12), Social affairs (13), Defense (16), Scientific Research, Technology, and Communication (17), Foreign Affairs and Foreign Aid (19), Spatial Planning, Public Nature and Water Conservation (21).
EU (4 topics): Agriculture and Fisheries (4), Environment (7), Enterprises, National Commerce (15), International Commerce (18).

[83] This is a more substantive or functional definition that combines the relation to government and the relation to supporters in a slightly different way than in the two-dimensional scheme I use.

[84] We allowed for coding both a main topic and several additional topics. However, we found that about 80 per cent of the organizations could be easily classified in a single policy field. Very few interest organizations actually cover different policy fields. So, we only used the first topic code.

[85] The validity and reliability of the data were increased by, first, discussion of the variables that require interpretation (such as the scales, but also the other classification); second, by weekly meetings to jointly examine 'difficult cases', and by joint coding (two or three coders) and coding of the same organizations to check intercoder reliability; third, by random checks and selective control of deviant cases by project coordinators; fourth, by validity checks of the scales (as discussed in the results section), for instance by comparing the policy scale with the government interaction variables.

[86] There are two potential methodological problems with the measurement of the policy scale: sample bias and coding bias. First, as reported below, I found a strong focus on public policies of communities at the EU level which could be a result of a biased sample. That is, the EU-level sample sources (e.g. EP register,

references to legislative processes or to activities that directly seek government recognition for certain social problems. For the organization scale I looked for organizational mechanisms to facilitate representation of members, such as annual members' meetings and members' recruitment activities. As further specified below, I used a combination of these two scales as a measure of the overall extent to which organizations seek to be politically active, by taking the sum of the standardized scale per organization.

3.5. RESULTS I: EXAMINING POLITICAL INTEREST: TYPES OR SCALE?

The results are presented here per interest community and per organization comparing the EU and the Netherlands. This allows for the evaluation of the membership-related pluralist hypotheses at the level of the organization (1), the interest community-related organizational-theoretical hypotheses at the level of the sector (2), and the institutional, system-specific corporatist expectations in the comparison of the EU and the Netherlands (3). I will first present descriptive statistics (cross tables, scatter diagrams) of the dependent and independent variables at the community and organization level. Second, I examine several OLS regression models in order to evaluate a larger number of variables simultaneously.

As discussed in chapter 2, an important assumption in my exchange theory of interest group activities is that political exchanges and supporters exchanges are interrelated. This assumption is reflected in most of the figures in this section as I combine the measurements of political interest and of capacities (administrative / representative) of these organizations.[87] At the same time, in the following section I will provide an empirical evaluation of this assumption by carefully comparing the measures of political interest with the measures of the organizational capacity for supporters exchanges.

I evaluate several independent variables or potential explanations for varying levels of policy interest and organizational capacity. Following the structure of the hypothesis formulated, I have a slightly different focus for each level of analysis. First, at the aggregate level of the interest community, I concentrate on explanations in relation to the influence environment and aspects of the population of organizations. That is, I examine the effect

Landmarks directory) are of a more 'top down' nature and tend to focus on organizations with EU offices (Berkhout and Lowery 2008). However, as described above, I sought to maximize the comparability of the samples by insuring that for the Netherlands the sample included organizations likely to be interested in policies, and for the EU I specifically sought to include organizations that are not immediately likely to be linked to the policy process (by sampling from more 'open sources'). Second, the policy interest scale relies on the interpretation of the websites of organizations. It could be that for EU level organizations websites perform a different communicative function, and that only their website is more strongly aimed at policy makers than the rest of their action repertoire, thus overstating the interest in the policy process. However, in order to check for such phenomena I examined the validity of the policy interest scale (and the organization scale) by correlating them with additional variables. I found strong correlation coefficients with indicators such as government interaction, financial relations with government, legal form and membership. Thus, these potential problems have been largely controlled for.

87 I constructed a single indicator on the organizational capacities to influence public policies (the sum of standardized scores on the respective scales in the EU and Dutch samples). Such an indicator of the political nature of organizations should simultaneously evaluate organizations exchange relations with policy makers, and its relations with supporters. This is the dependent variable of this chapter. However,

of the system (H1), the community in terms of density (numbers of organizations) (Hc) and diversity (in this case, proportion of business interest) (Hb), and the level of the legal competence of the policy topic of interest to the community (Ha). Second, at the level of the interest organization, I additionally examine the effect of different types of constituents of organizations (HI and HII) (also including legal form and age (HIII), and government interaction (HIV).

3.5.1. RELATING SUPPORTERS AND POLITICAL EXCHANGES

In this section I examine whether 'better' organized interests are also more interested in politics. I do this in order to create a precise system-specific indicator for policy interest, and to evaluate contrasting (pluralist and corporatist) expectations in this regard. In figure 8, figure 9 and table 9, I present the findings on the relations between supporters and political exchanges as measured on the 5-point scales per website. I present the data per interest community (figure 8), by the functional typology (table 9), and per organization (figure 9). Regardless of the exact type of analysis, I found that the Dutch data support the assumed correlation between organizational means and political interest, whereas the EU-level data are only weakly supportive of this assumption at the community level and do not support the assumption when measured per organization. For the examination of the expectations regarding the factors that are associated with interest organizations attempting to influence policies, I therefore used a combined scale for the Dutch data and separate scales for the EU data. As further discussed below, this suggests that, due to their ties to supporters, Dutch interest organizations find themselves in a more powerful, attractive position when engaging with policy makers than EU level organizations.

Figure 8 shows a scatter diagram of interest communities in the EU and the Netherlands. The y-axis represents the average scores of the organizations in the community on the policy scale, and the x-axis shows the averages on the organization scale. The upper dotted line represents the regression line for the EU, the lower dotted line is the regression line for the Netherlands, and the solid line in-between is the regression line when the communities from both systems are included in a single regression model. Figure 9 presents similar Dutch, EU and combined regression lines. As explained below, in this

this variable has different empirical meanings, depending on three aspects. First, for now, we cannot assume that organizations interested in the policy process (policy dimension) are also more organized so as to perform representative functions (organization dimension). If that is the case, they can be validly analyzed as a single dependent variable in the later OLS regression models, and if it is not, separate models on these two dimensions need to be evaluated. Second, it could be that, at the level of the organization, we find a tension between the dimensions and at the same time observe a correlation at the level of the interest community. This is the case, for example, when organizations within interest communities specialize along the lines of the dimensions. Therefore, I have separately evaluated the data at the respective levels, using a single dimension when applicable. Third, the relation between the dimensions could also vary between the EU and the Netherlands. In that case, models explaining a single, combined dimension need to evaluate the EU and the Netherlands separately. In terms of the function expressing the relation, this is about the slope of the line as opposed to the intercept of the line. The intercept is assumed to be different for each sample, because it is hypothesized that in the EU organizations are more interested in influencing policies that in the Netherlands.

TABLE 8 High and low scores on the sum of the scales per community in the EU (n=22) and the Netherlands (n=24)

ranked by sum scales	interest community	
	EU	**NL**
top	local government	utilities
	banking	banking
	labour unions	natural resources
bottom	social welfare	hotel / restaurant
	communications	religion
	women's interests	foreign policy

FIGURE 8 Scatter diagram of the means of the organization and policy scales for the interest communities in the Netherlands (n=24) and the European Union (n=22). Joint: n=42 (only those sectors present in both systems).

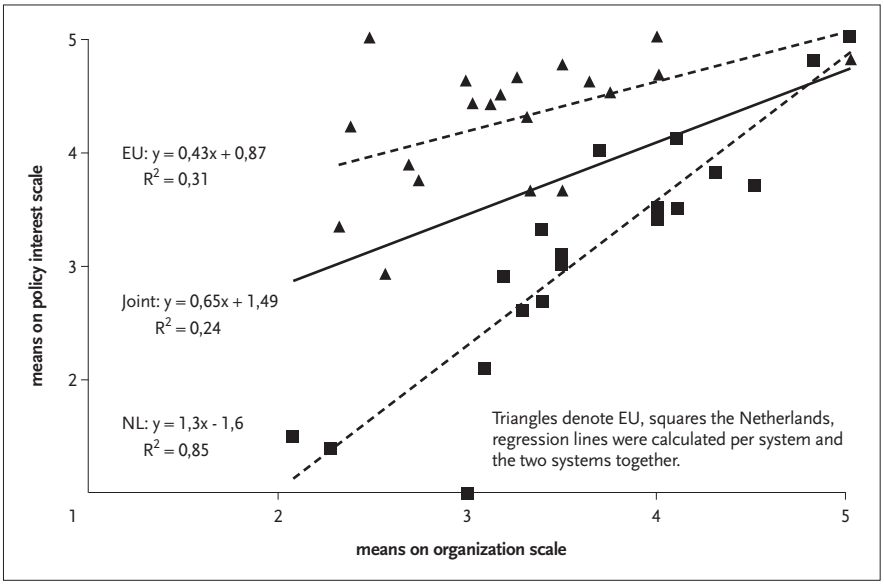


figure I have used the measures per organization instead of the aggregated measures per interest community. Table 9 presents the proportions of organizations per sample according to the typology of political functions presented in the previous chapter. I dichotomized and cross tabulated the two 5-point scales. Table 8 and table 10 list examples of interest communities and interest organizations, illustrating figure 8 and table 9, respectively.

First, as expected, the interest communities at the EU level tend to score higher in terms of policy interest than those in the Netherlands (H1).[88] This can be seen from the higher

TABLE 9 Proportions of organizations by policy scale and organization scale in the EU (n=216) and the Netherlands (n=352); 5-point scales have been dichotomized: low: 1-3, high: 4-5

proportion per category EU: n=216, NL: n=352	organization scale					
	administrative means		representative means		total	
policy scale	**EU**	**NL**	**EU**	**NL**	**EU**	**NL**
policy orientation	38	6	41	36	79	41
supporters orientation	13	28	8	30	21	59
total	51	34	49	66	100	100

Note the different non-dichotomized correlation scores for the scales: NL: 0.73, EU: 0.18.
This table relates to the discussion on figure 2 and examples of organizations per category in figure 6 in the previous chapter.

TABLE 10 Typical examples of organizations from the sample in the categories presented in table 9

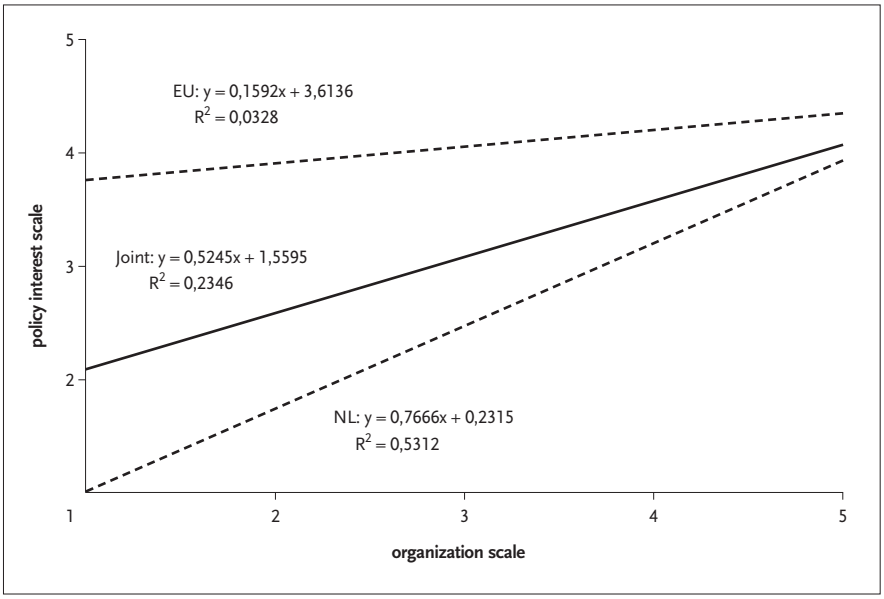
policy scale	organizational means	
	administrative means	representative means
policy orientation	**EU**: European Roundtable of Industrialists, European Federation of Journalists, **NL**: Landelijk Bureau ter Beschrijding Rassendiscriminatie, Belangenvereniging Dance	**EU**: European Social Forum, **NL**: Produktschap Vis, Algemeen Christelijke Organisatie van Militairen
supporters orientation	**EU**: Oxfam, **NL**: Reumafonds, Organisatie van Balletscholen	**EU**: Friends of the Earth, European University Sports Association, **NL**: Polsstokbond, Fietsersbond

intercepts of the EU regression formulas in figure 8 and figure 9 (EU: 2.8 and 3.6, NL: -1.6 and 0.2) and the proportion of organizations with high scores on the policy scale presented in the 'Total' column in table 9 (EU: 79%, NL: 41%). Thus, being a European wide-interest organization or being a national association active at the EU level is positively related to being interested in public policies.[89] The high EU-level scores on policy interest are also reflected in the combined EU-Dutch regression models presented below.

[88] It also seems to confirm the 'pluralist' character of the EU, in which interest organizations provide input for in the policy process, and are not so much involved in the 'corporatist' aspects of interest representation that also includes policy implementation. Further, it also indicates that if policy makers seek 'corporatist' exchanges with interest organizations, they risk making the system vulnerable to what Schmitter and Kenworthy (2005) called creating 'yellow unions', or organizations that have only limited contact with constituents and solely serve the interest of the organization leadership and the policy makers.

[89] The focus on public policies and the corresponding lack of orientation towards clients and members is uncharacteristic of pluralist systems. It is assumed (Salisbury 1968; Schmitter and Streeck 1999) and has been shown (Walker 1991) that competitive pressures for members necessitate a stronger client

FIGURE 9 Regression lines for OLS regression of policy scale on organization scale in the Netherlands, the EU, and the unweighted combination of samples[90]



In line with the higher average scores in the EU I found relatively little variation on the policy interest scale, ranging from organizations with interests in sport and recreation (mean of 2.9) to the foreign policy interest community (mean of 5). This contrasts with the Netherlands, where, apart from policy-focused communities from areas such as banking interests (mean of 5), I found a substantial number of communities of interest organizations that have hardly any interest in lobbying the government. For example, the 35 organizations from my sample that work on foreign policies in the Netherlands do not seem to be interested in influencing policies (mean of 1.5). It seems that their main focus is to seek charity contributions and distribute development aid. Table 8 provides several examples of high- and low-scoring communities. Table 10 provides examples of organizations in such communities.

A second important observation is the difference in the slope coefficients and explained variation between the EU and the Dutch regression formulas in figure 8 and figure 9. In the Netherlands, variation in the ways in which organizations relate to supporters largely explains (R^2: 0.85 and 0.53) the extent to which organizations are active in influencing

orientation than is usual in corporatist systems. On this point the EU may not be as pluralist as has been claimed (Eising 2007; Greenwood 2007; Schmidt 2006).

90 Weighting of samples moves up and slightly tilts the joint line, y= 0,43x+2,03, R^2: 0,16.
Distribution of scales: organization scale: NL: sd: 1,44, skew: -0,47, EU: sd: 1,39, skew: 0,01. policy scale: NL: sd: 1,51, skew: 0,12, EU: sd: 1,22, skew: -1,31. Adapting the functional form (polynomial) of the regression lines slightly increased the R^2 scores.

policies. This correlation is weaker in the EU (R^2: 0.31 and 0.03). In the hypothesis section I argued that on the basis of pluralist and organizational theory we would expect low correlation due to task specialization, whereas corporatist or exchange theory would lead us to expect the opposite. The findings are inconclusive because the EU supports 'pluralist' expectations, and the Netherlands corporatist expectations (which in itself supports these theories, as they have been constructed for these respective contexts). The data in table 9 complicate a straightforward interpretation in this regard. That is, the upper left and lower right cells of table 9 indicate an important difference between the EU and the Netherlands that due to the linear presentation did not become apparent in the previous figure.[91] 38 percent of the organizations in the EU sample score low on the organization scale and high on the policy interest scale compared to only six per cent in the Dutch sample. Conversely, 30 per cent of the organizations in the Dutch sample have a high score on the organization scale but have only limited interest in engaging in the policy process. Thus, in the EU we have a large group of organizations that could mobilize constituents (but does not actually do so), and in the Netherlands there is a large group of organizations that could influence policies (but does not actually do so). This implies that in both systems there are large categories of organizations that neither fit the expected specialization (pluralist), nor the expected correlative nature of these dimensions (corporatist). It also suggests that groups have a 'latent' presence in certain policy fields (Truman 1951, 14-44).

To conclude: in the Netherlands policy interest tends to be lower and correlates well with representative organizational mechanisms focused on supporters. This implies that Dutch interest communities are interested in policies, but are also more likely to fulfill a linking function between state and society as understood in corporatist thinking. When aggregating the scores of the organizations according to the functional typology in table 9, I found large proportions of organizations that do not fit this picture in both the EU and the Netherlands. That is, in the EU there are quite some politically active organizations that do not seem to have 'representative' links to society; conversely, in the Netherlands, I found a large proportion of highly representative organizations without apparent political activities. Further research could investigate the empirical support for the positive evaluation of such organizations in the Netherlands, but my present aim is to examine why organizations are politically active. The complex interrelation of ways to be or become politically active, as shown in the figures, implies that, depending on political system, a thorough examination requires both combined and separate evaluations of the distinct organizational and policy-related aspects of political activity.

3.5.2. INTERACTION EFFECTS: COMPETENCES, DENSITY, AND BUSINESS INTERESTS

Before evaluating this 'complex' dependent variable I will discuss the relation between several independent variables per community (government competence, density and

[91] Small interest communities have a relatively large effect on the community-level analysis (compared to the aggregated figure per organization). It could be that smaller communities are overrepresented in either the extreme scores or the scores close to the regression line, thus producing the different outcomes at the different levels of analysis. This could, for instance, be due to variation in specialization

diversity) and per organization. More specific, in this section, I examine whether different areas of competence attract different types of interest groups. I use this variation in competence in two ways: First, I evaluate the relative presence of interest organizations at varying levels of competence, similar to analysis in federalist systems such as the US (Baumgartner, Gray, and Lowery 2009). Second, while correcting for the variation in competence, I examine the relative proportion of organizations representing business interests. The section evaluates the interaction between the candidate explanations for variation in political interest, but also addresses a substantive question: do government legal competences attract groups?

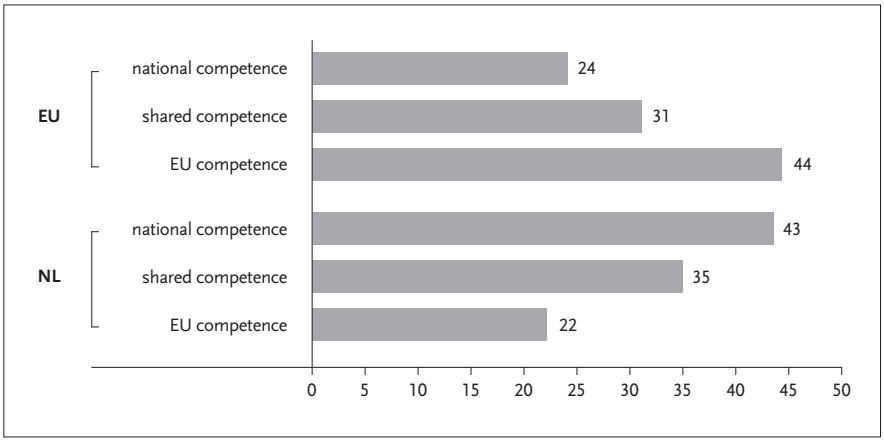
Figure 10 shows the proportion of organizations per sample per level of competence in the EU and the Netherlands. In the EU, for instance, we see that almost 45 percent of the interest groups are active in areas of EU competences. In general, the figure confirms what one would expect; I found higher numbers of interest organizations in policy fields that are the main competence for the level of government in question, and vice versa. In other words, organizations are interested in policies that are the main field of competence for that government level. In terms of proportions of organizations this means that, for the Netherlands, I found that about 20 per cent of the organizations work on policy fields of EU competence, and about 45 per cent on fields of national competence. The inverse is truefor the EU sample of organizations.[92] The axes in figure 11 are similar to figure 10 but it presents the data per interest community instead of per organization. The x-axis represents a standardized measure of the number of organizations in the policy community.[93] The y-axis shows the level of competence. The figure confirms the previous figure; it shows that that the large Dutch communities work on policies of national level competence, and smaller communities tend to work on policies of EU competence. Exactly the inverse is observed at EU level. Thus, we can model this relationship as an interaction effect when analyzing why organizations are politically active. More substantively, these figures suggest that government 'demand' at least partially gives rise to the organization of interests. It thus supports other research in this area (e.g. Baumgartner and Leech 2001) which finds similarities in the earlier pluralist notion that policy disturbances give rise to group mobilization (Truman 1951, 104-106). However, as seen in the smaller proportions in figure 10 and the magnitude of the effect in figure 11, an 'unexpected' organizational presence can also be observed in both political systems. As represented by

processes within communities of different size, or to the age of the community. However, this should then be visible in a correlation between the standard deviation of the scores in the community (indicator for specialization) and the community size. This is not the case with correlation scores for the EU of 0.12 (organization scale) and 0.15 (policy scale).

92 More detailed analysis is needed to evaluate the factors underlying the magnitude of this variation. That is, among other things we observe substantial numbers of organizations that lobby the EU in policy fields that formally belong to national competences. This may be an indication of a preference to shift a certain policy to the EU level, or it may be that the EU provides a more favorable political environment for certain activities.

93 This is the mean of standardized policy agenda density scores (not of the interest community density scores which produces similar results) of the organizations in the interest community. Standardized with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1 (default option in Stata command: egen std).

FIGURE 10 Proportion of organizations per sample per categorized policy field, NL (n=396), EU (n=226)[94]



the upper bar in figure 10, 24 per cent of the organizations in my EU sample primarily concern themselves with policies of national competence.[95]

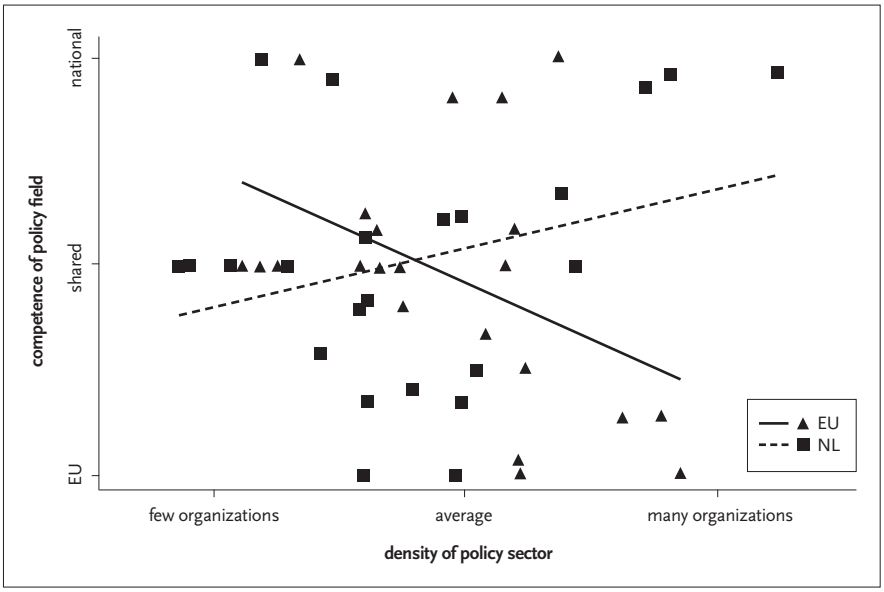
Figure 12 shows the relative proportion of business interests per legal competence of the policy field for the Netherlands and the EU. The axes in figure 13 correspond to those in figure 12, but instead of bars showing proportions of organizations, we here have points representing values of Dutch and EU interest communities. The x-axis shows the proportion of business interests per community. The y-axis, as in figure 12, presents the level of competence.

First, as shown in figure 12, in general we found relatively large proportions of organizations that represent business interests in the EU as compared to the Netherlands

[94] The levels of competence are defined on the basis of an adaptation of policy field categorization of the Policy Agendas project http://www.policyagendas.org/ (codes between brackets below), according to the following categories (largely similar to Articles 3-6 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union):
National (5 topics): Civil Rights, Immigration, and Integration (2), Healthcare (3), Education and Culture (6), Housing and City Planning (12), Democracy and Government (18).
Shared (10 topics): Macro-Economics and Taxes (1), Labour (5) , Energy (8), Traffic and Transport (10), Law, Court Rulings, Crime (12), Social affairs (13), Defense (16), Scientific Research, Technology, and Communication (17), Foreign Affairs and Foreign Aid (19), Spatial Planning, Public Nature and Water Conservation (21).
EU (4 topics): Agriculture and Fisheries (4), Environment (7), Enterprises, National Commerce (15), International Commerce (18).

[95] Further research is needed to investigate this more thoroughly. There seem to be at least three different plausible explanations: (1) these organizations seek European collective action for other reasons than influencing policies (e.g. for self-regulation in sectors or friendship/club/like reasons), (2) they seek to influencenational policies via EU institutions, or (3) they seek to shift national competences to the EU level.

FIGURE 11 Scatter diagram of EU and Dutch interest communities and regression lines for OLS regression of the density of the policy agenda on the level of competence, R2: EU: 0.2, NL: 0.09



(75 per cent as opposed to 27 per cent). The business dominance in the EU is not a new finding (Coen 2007; Mahoney 2008).[96] Second, and more interestingly, we observed strong variation in the proportion of business interests across the policy fields according to levels of legal competence. More to the point, in both the Netherlands and at EU level policy fields with high levels of EU competence show higher proportions of business interest organizations, albeit with the varying general levels of business interest representation. That is, the EU policy areas in which businesses dominate the field are also dominated by business interests at the national level. This is also reflected by the similar negative slopes of both the EU and the Dutch regression lines in figure 13. In that sense, the EU is not so different from interest representation at the national level, as such a bias seems a classic

[96] However, the Netherlands is probably not the best benchmark in this regard. In light of its corporatist tradition, business interests are likely to use a relatively small number of organizations to act collectively as compared to other interests,. That may be due to professionalization, the number of specialized interests they represent, and their presence in consultation bodies. However, due to the bottom-up sampling technique we have to a certain extent corrected for this, as this type of sampling results in a higher percentage of business interests since it also includes the individual business associations that are members of the umbrella organizations. The latter are usually the focus of interest representation studies in the Netherlands.

FIGURE 12 Relative proportions of organizations that represent business interests per sample per categorized policy field, NL (n=396), EU (n=226)[97]

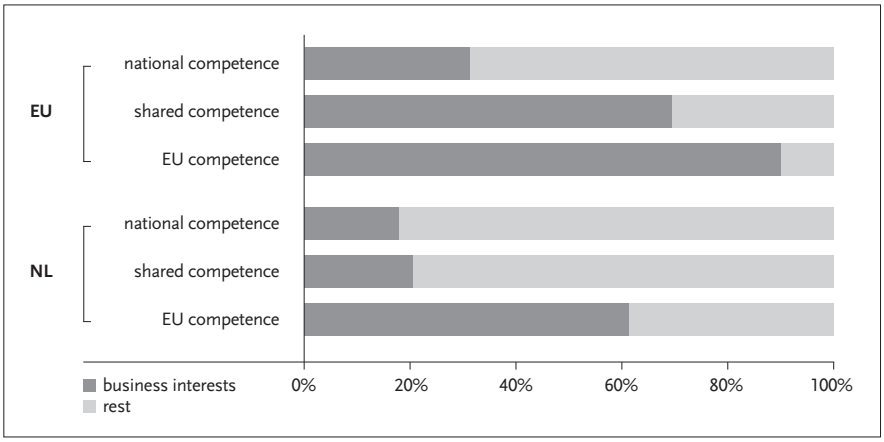
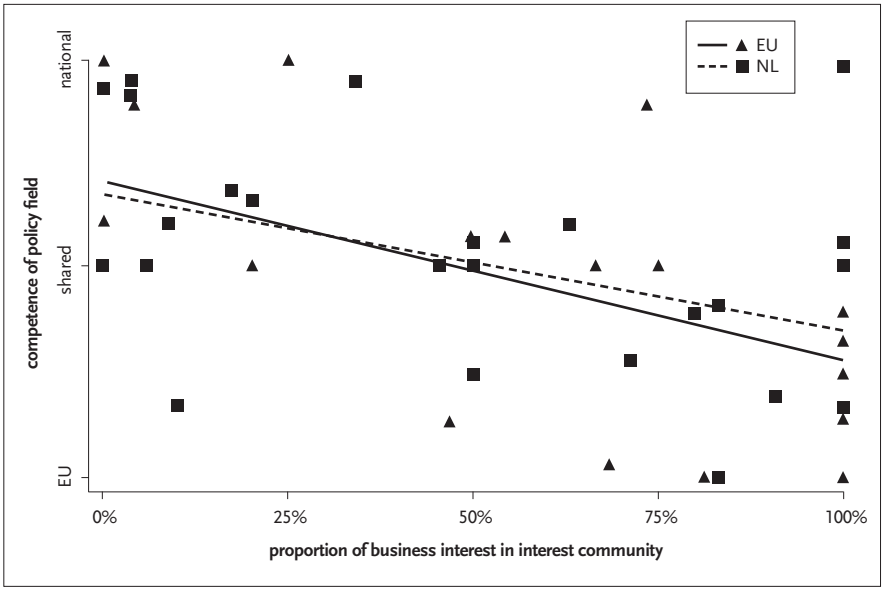


FIGURE 13 Scatter diagram of EU and Dutch interest communities and regression lines for OLS regression of the proportion of business interests in interest communities on the level of competence, R^2 :EU: 0.31, NL: 0.17



97 Organizations that have companies or professional, trade or employers' associations as members have been counted as representing business interests.

feature of interest representation more generally.[98] Business bias, while definitively larger in the EU, thus seems as normatively problematic as business bias at the national level.

The interrelation of business organizations, policy interest, and government competence is thus of substantive interest. In the next section we will see that their correlation makes it difficult to separately evaluate their effects on the level of policy interest of interest organizations.

3.6. Results II: Modeling Political Interest: Per System, Per Community and Per Organization

The previous results sections have shown that EU-level organizations are more interested in policies, that better organized Dutch interest organizations are more politically interested, and that business interests dominate the policy fields in which the EU has legal competences. While taking into account these complexities, in terms of interacting independent variables and the system-specific meaning of the dependent variable I will model potential explanations for the variation in policy interest at the community and organizational levels. I will start with the Netherlands, continue with the EU, and finish with a joint analysis.

3.6.1. The Netherlands

Table 11 presents five OLS-regression models. In these models the density, competence and business representation variables are regressed on the interest community means of the political interest indicator. As said earlier, this political interest variable is the sum of the standardized scores on the 5-point scales for policy interest and organizational capacity. In model 1, I examine the effect of the density of the policy sector in which the organizations of the community are active and the proportion of business interests in the community. Contrary to my expectation (Hc), the standardized measure of the number of organizations in the policy field (density) did not have a significant effect. As expected (Hb), the model suggests that communities with relatively large proportions of business interests are more likely to seek policy influence, and organize members so as to represent them before government. This effect is consistent across the models. The second model also takes the level of competence into account, with higher scores indicating EU-level competence and lower scores national competence. In this model 2 I do not find that policy-oriented communities are significantly more likely to be active in fields of EU competence (contrary to hypothesis Ha). In models 4 and 5, however, I find support for this expectation after controlling for several interaction effects. As discussed in the previous section, I find higher proportions of business interests in policy fields in which the EU has competence.

In model 3 this correlation is taken into account via an interaction term, which turned out significant and negative. The addition of the term also has the effect of increasing the magnitude of the constituent term, i.e., the proportion of business interests per community. This implies that, in the Netherlands, communities with large proportions of business interests which also are of EU competence tend to be less interested in influencing policies.

[98] The question that remains is: did the lobbying activities of business interests push for assigning the competences at the EU level instead of at national level? Or did business interests 'follow' a shift in governance competence? (e.g. Eising 2009)

At the same time, in communities that are of national competence, the effect of higher proportions of business interest is even bigger than shown in the previous model. In the Netherlands, business interests are generally more policy oriented (Hb), but especially so in fields of national competence and, contrary to my expectation (Ha), less so in fields of EU competence. This effect becomes insignificant, however, when another interaction is added in model 4. It seems, according to model 4, that policy interest comes with government competence, especially for business interests. This strengthens some remarks made in the previous section in regard to the number of organizations per policy field. The inclusion of the competence term in the model also made the effect of density in the policy sector significant. This seems to be related to the correlation between these terms. The interaction term in model 4 examines this correlation.

Model 4 is the most precise reflection of the factors related to the political nature of interest communities in the Netherlands. It shows an exceptionally high level of explained variance (R^2 of 0.72). It largely supports the findings of model 3, and additionally takes into account that larger communities (density) are interested in national policies instead of policies of EU competence. The interaction term on competences and density indicates that the crowded communities at EU levels of competence tend to be policy oriented, whereas crowded communities generally lead to lower interest in policies. When comparing the expectations in this regard, it thus seems that institutional effects (Ha) are stronger than interest population effects (Hc). The interaction term between level of competence and the proportion of business interests became insignificant. The communities with high proportions of business interests which also are in fields of EU competence are just as interested in policies as other groups. In contrast, other communities in fields of EU competence are more political in nature, as shown by the positive and significant coefficient of the constituent 'compentence' term. This supports my expectations in this regard (Ha).[99]

Model 5 examined an additional interaction effect. The correlation coefficient (-0.46) between density and business interest suggests that business interests tend to dominate smaller interest communities. For example, in my sample of about 400 organizations the

[99] As an example of the strength of the modeled effects, imagine a fictitious interest community of 'summer interests' consisting of an average number of organizations, about half of which are business (think of ice cream, beer, and sun cream producers, mixed with skin cancer specialists, surfers and tourists) and most of which work on policies of shared national/EU-policy competence. The model would predict a – 0.3 score on the scales that have been standardized with a mean of 0 on the political nature of this community, i.e., a very 'normal' community. If, for some reason, both the beer and the ice cream producers association ceased to exist and the 'summer interests' are now represented by a community consisting of only 20 per cent business interests, their predicted score would be - 1. The political interest scale ranges from – 3.8 to 3.4, so that a score of - 1 is a below-average score of about half a standard deviation per scale. If, at that point, the organizations consider themselves mostly affected by national policies instead of policies of shared EU/national competence, their predicted score would go up again to – 0.3. Thus, the strength of the 30 per cent business change and the competence effect is similar. Dutch interest communities find it easier to lobby on national policies. Unstandardized regression formula (used to calculate example): y^{Polint}=-7,6x^{Density}+6,5x^{Business}+1,7x^{Competence}-2,2x^{ComBus}+ 2,7x^{CompDens}-6,3. y^{Polint} has minimum of -3.8 and a maximum of 3,4.

TABLE 11 OLS regression on mean of the 'political interest' measure per interest community in the Netherlands[100]

NL. n=24	model 1	model 2	model 3	model 4[119]	model 5
density of policy sector: number of organizations (std)	-0.30 (-1.59)	-0.28 (-1.45)	-0.47** (-2.40)	-2.97*** (-4.31)	-3.49*** (-4.02)
proportion of business interests in community	0.41** (2.18)	0.34 (1.70)	1.75** (2.59)	1.26** (2.33)	1.38** (2.48)
competence of policy sector[101]		-0.20 (-1.09)	0.42 (1.26)	0.52* (1.96)	0.61** (2.18)
competence* business			-1.40** (-2.17)	-0.87 (-1.65)	-0.78 (-1.46)
competence* density				2.55*** (3.71)	2.92*** (3.74)
density* business					0.32 (0.99)
R^2	0.38	0.41	0.52	0.72	0.74

Standardized beta coefficients; t statistics in parentheses, *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01

interest community representing 'banking' consists of a single organization, whereas the community 'sport and recreation' consists of 45 organizations. However, at this point, the addition of the interaction term has hardly affected the effects observed in model 4. To summarize, these models support the expectation that interest communities working on EU fields of competence are more interested in policies (Ha). Further, I found that this effect is especially large for relatively big communities. The models also convincingly support the expectations that denser sectors (Hb) and communities dominated by business interests (Hc) are more politically active.

3.6.1.1. MODELING MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURES

Apart from expectations regarding the political nature of interest communities, I have formulated several hypotheses on the political nature of the interest organizations individually. These largely deal with the types of members of these organizations.[102] Evaluating membership data is more difficult than one might expect. Before I continue with the full evaluation of the hypotheses in this regard I will briefly examine several ways to model the membership structures of organizations. This is not so straightforward, because membership type is a categorical variable that additionally allows overlap between

[100] Competence: 1=EU, 2= Shared, 3=National. Positively signed effects mean 'more national', negative effects 'more EU'.

[101] Correlation coefficients motivating the interaction terms: Competence/Business: -0.42, Competence/Density: 0.3, Density/Business: -0.46.

[102] In terms of information gathered, I also have membership figures. These were not evaluated because of missing data (e.g. data for 65% of organizations with company membership, 32% for individual membership) and because of difficulties in comparing data across types of members.

the categories, as organizations can have multiple types of members. This is the case for 17 per cent of the organizations in the Dutch sample, and 20 per cent of the EU sample (see bottom row of table 15). For example, the Foundation 'Geleidehonden' allows both individuals and companies to donate money, or, the 'Federatie Nederlandse Levensmiddelen Industrie' accepts individual companies as members and grants a special membership status to associations of companies or trade associations. Categorical variables that are mutually exclusive are commonly included in regression models as dummies and interpreted in relation to a reference category (that is excluded from the model). Because of the overlapping nature of the categories there are several ways to include the membership variable. I could keep all categories and interpret the coefficients in relation to 'not having this type of member'. Further, I could separately evaluate effects of organizations that have a single membership type in relation to those with multiple types of members. In table 12, I present several of such models in order to find the most appropriate specification related to membership. In terms of specification, I did not find large differences in R^2 values. Because of these small differences I used the most convenient model, model 4, as a starting point for the more elaborate models presented in table 13. I will discuss the substantive aspects of these coefficients, together with figure 14 and table 13, below.

More substantively, figure 14 shows the regression lines per type of membership. The positive slope of the top lines indicates that organizations with companies or public organizations as members tend to be more interested in public policies, according to the measure discussed with figure 8 above. The negative slope coefficient of organizations that rely on donations from individuals implies that they tend to score low on the policy measure. The horizontal line indicates that there is no effect for organizations that have individual membership. There is no difference in policy interest between those organizations and the rest of the organizations in the sample. This suggests that individuals tend to be members of both organizations that lobby government and organizations that only sporadically seek access to the policy process.

3.6.1.2. THE NETHERLANDS CONTINUED

Table 13 presents several regression models on the policy interest values of Dutch interest organizations. All independent variables in the models are dummy variables, and can thus immediately be compared without standardization of the coefficient. This means that, in contrast to the previous regression tables, I report unstandardized beta coefficients. Model 1 shows the effects of membership and government interaction. Organizations with members are more likely to engage with public policies. This indicator is significant in all models and has a large coefficient; having members increased the predicted score by about 1 point (the standardized scale ranges from -2.9 to 2.5). As also reported in figure 14, organizations with individual members or contributors are less interested in policies than organizations with companies as members (this is the reference category). The insignificance of the coefficient regarding the membership of public organizations indicates that such organizations are equally interested in public policies as organizations with companies as members. These observations support my expectations on this point (H1), and correspond to the observations made at the interest community level, when I examined the proportion of business interests (Hb). They are also consistent across the three models in the table. When organizations allow multiple membership categories, they are more interested in

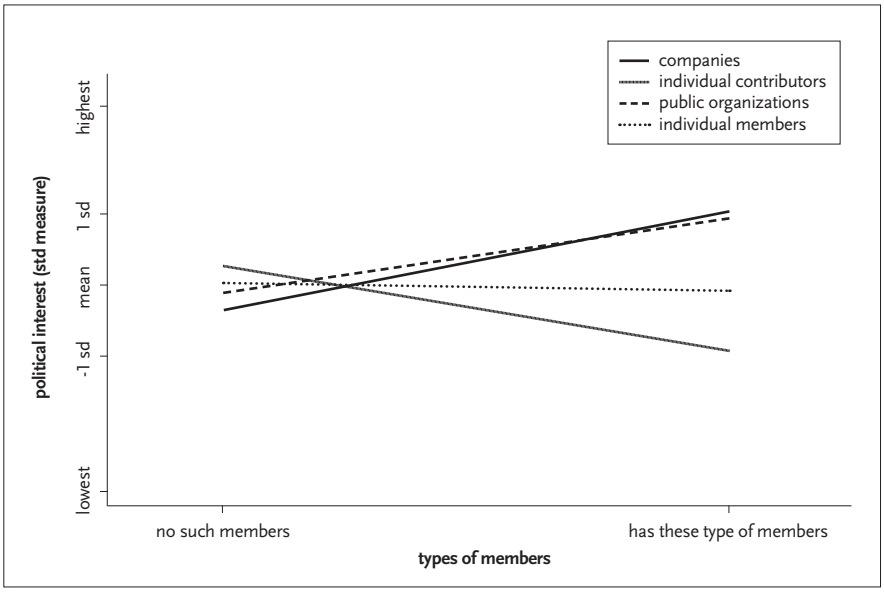
TABLE 12 OLS regression on the 'political interest' measure in the Netherlands: variation in membership

NL. n=378	model 1	model 2	model 3	model 4[119]	model 5
has members	0.11*	0.13	0.13	0.30***	0.32***
	(1.69)	(0.84)	(1.31)	(5.49)	(5.77)
companies	0.27***	0.27	0.24**		
	(4.26)	(1.38)	(2.09)		
public organizations	0.13***	0.22	0.12	-0.014	0.053
	(2.69)	(1.52)	(1.39)	(-0.25)	(0.66)
individual contributors	-0.18***	-0.27	-0.21*	-0.41***	-0.50***
	(-3.07)	(-1.45)	(-1.84)	(-7.16)	(-7.66)
individual members	-0.014	-0.054	-0.045	-0.30***	-0.34***
	(-0.22)	(-0.24)	(-0.34)	(-4.68)	(-4.95)
other types	0.12**	0.13	0.11	-0.037	-0.040
	(2.31)	(0.94)	(1.22)	(-0.71)	(-0.66)
multiple types of members		-0.088	0.032	0.24***	-0.0061
		(-0.28)	(0.27)	(3.70)	(-0.04)
multiple* companies		-0.031			
		(-0.23)			
multiple* individual members		0.069			0.14
		(0.31)			(1.08)
multiple* individual contributors		0.16			0.21**
		(1.03)			(2.38)
multiple* public organizations		-0.085			-0.025
		(-0.59)			(-0.26)
multiple* other		-0.0067			0.035
		(-0.06)			(0.49)
R^2	0.19	0.21	0.19	0.18	0.20

Standardized beta coefficients; t statistics in parentheses, *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01

policies. This contradicts my expectation that a more diverse membership base would make it more difficult to agree on a joint policy position (HII). A counter-argument could be that such diverse and 'broader' organizations have a strong position in the influence environment, and are thus attracted to developing exchange relations with policy makers. The strongest effect in this model comes from the indicator on government interaction (HIII). This is unsurprising, and not of direct substantive interest, given the use of this variable to control for exactly these close relationships so as to better see the true impact of group type. That is, organizations that seem to actually interact with governments are also interested in doing so. Thus, this indicator partly measures the same phenomenon as the dependent variable. The importance of this observation is largely methodological, as it supports the appropriateness of the measurement. If this variable did not have this effect, we would have to seriously reconsider our measurement. That is, the website coders, in general, should answer the question on the expected government interaction in a similar way as the question on the expected interest in policies.

FIGURE 14 Fitted values of regression for membership categories on the predicted values of policy interest in the Netherlands (n=378)



Model 2 shows the most interesting result in the table. That is, organizations which seem to receive government funding are no more (or less) interested in public policy. I expected financial ties with government to increase policy interest (HIII). As pointed out in the data section, financial information could be considered 'sensitive', and thus would not be published online. This could bias the outcome because for certain organizations government subsidies are indeed 'sensitive', whereas for others it is a sign of dependability and professionalism. However, if we accept the validity of the data, it seems that government is interested in funding relatively 'neutral' and 'disinterested' organizations. Not reported in the table is the finding that organizations that have members tend to be less likely to receive government subsidies; these variables have a negative correlation coefficient of -0.24.[103]

In model 3, I examined the impact of the legal status, the age of the organization, and the interest or economic sector in which the organization is active. Dutch law offers two legal categories for interest organizations: *stichting* (foundation) or *vereniging* (association).[104] These categories matter because 'verenigingen' are required to do such things as organize annual members meetings and to have (a committee of) members control the finances of the organization. Such organizations are thus expected to have a higher score on the organization capacity scale, and the measure also functions as a validity check on this organization scale. The insignificant coefficient in model 3 did not confirm my expectation that 'verenigingen'

[103] Correlation coefficients between government funding and membership categories: companies -0.09, public organizations 0.12, individual contributors -0.11 and individual members 0.05.

[104] Half of the organizations in the sample are 'vereniging', 40 per cent 'stichting', rest is 'unknown' or 'other'.

indeed have more organizational capacities.[105] This suggests that either the law works differently in practice (and legal status is thus an inappropriate indicator), or that the organization scale measures something other than opportunities for membership participation. I think it is likely that the first is the case, and that interest organizations hardly see a difference between 'stichting' or 'vereniging', and choose a legal status irrespective of their policy interest or level of membership engagement.[106] Another observation on the results for this model is that younger organizations tend to be slightly less 'political' in nature. This could be related to 'new' ways of organizing themselves for collective action in which 'checkbook' activism, loose networks, and awareness campaigns are dominant (Maloney and Jordan 2007). It could also be related to access. Corporatist consultation and Dutch committee traditions could be favorable to older interests, but out of reach for relatively young outsiders (Oldersma et al. 1999, 354). Lastly, on the one hand organizations active in recreation and sports activities tend to be less interested in policies, but on the other hand, organizations in 'commercial' economic sectors tend to score higher in terms of political action.[107] This is as expected (Hb). However, this effect is smaller than that of some of the other variables in the model and does not add much to the explained variance.[108]

To sum up, the organizational-level analysis for the Netherlands provides some support for the expectation regarding the political interest associated with collective action on the part of companies compared to organizations representing citizens (HI). However, irrespective of being measured via membership type or via economic sector, these effects are not as large as sometimes suggested in the literature, or assumed by policy makers. This suggests that other aspects of the influence relationship are more important. In my models, these are addressed via the imprecise government interaction variable. Besides these strong government-related effects observed in organization-level regression models, the strong outcomes of the community-level models further suggest that these phenomena at the level of the interest community are more important than simply being a business interest association or not. A new question that arises from this analysis is about the effect (or cause) of government funding: it seems to go to 'disinterested' organizations without members, such as expert groups or think tanks.

3.6.2. EUROPEAN UNION

I will present the results for the EU sample in a somewhat different manner. As for the Dutch situation I present a regression analysis of the interest communities. But, in contrast to the Dutch results, I next present a comparison-of-means analysis and a series of

[105] Correlation coefficient: 'vereniging'-organization scale: 0.26. While correlated, this does not give strong support to the validity of measurement of this scale.

[106] At the same time, in terms of policy options and regulation, this finding suggests that if policy makers would want to increase membership participation that they have the law on their side. It seems that quite some interest organization that are legally required to allow members control over finances and strategies do not do so in practice.

[107] Active in commercial sector 34 per cent, recreation and sports 22 per cent.

[108] The correlation coefficient between company membership and commercial sector is 0.5. I also examined models that included an interaction term so as to differentiate between the membership effect and the sector effect. This term is insignificant and adding it hardly changes the observed membership effects.

TABLE 13 OLS regression on 'political interest' measure in the Netherlands, with company membership as reference category

NL. n=378	model 1	model 2	model 3
has members	1.05*** (0.21)	1.04*** (0.22)	0.78*** (0.24)
members: public organizations	0.18 (0.28)	0.18 (0.28)	0.48* (0.29)
members: individual contributors	-1.00*** (0.20)	-1.00*** (0.20)	-0.80*** (0.23)
members: individual members	-0.58*** (0.18)	-0.54*** (0.18)	-0.34* (0.20)
other types	-0.21 (0.24)	-0.22 (0.24)	0.063 (0.24)
multiple types of members	0.61** (0.24)	0.59** (0.24)	0.44* (0.25)
likely to interact with government	2.32*** (0.14)	2.36*** (0.14)	2.13*** (0.15)
seems to receive government funding		-0.056 (0.21)	-0.021 (0.20)
is a 'vereniging'			0.15 (0.15)
founded after 1990			-0.092 (0.15)
economic sector and interest: recreation and sports			-0.53*** (0.18)
economic sector: commercial			0.32* (0.17)
constant	-1.76*** (0.18)	-1.77*** (0.19)	-1.62*** (0.21)
R^2	0.54	0.54	0.57

Unstandardized beta coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses, *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01

regression models on the relation between various types of membership and the organizational capacity and policy scales, as well as the combined measure of political interest. As discussed earlier, this better fits the nature of the political interest of organizations at the EU level.

Table 14 is similar to table 11 and presents the OLS regression of density, diversity, and competence variables on the political interest indicator as measured in 22 EU interest communities. These are problematic models, as the three main independent variables are highly correlated. This multicollinearity makes it even more difficult to examine the interaction variables than in the Dutch case. Moreobver, this problem cannot be solved with a different dependent variable as the multicollinearity also appears when the dimensions are examined separately. This collinearity also affects the joint model evaluated below.

TABLE 14 OLS regression on 'political interest' measure in the EU[109]

EU. n=22	model 1	model 2	model 3	model 4
density of policy sector: number of organizations (std)	-0.61*** (-3.62)	-0.69*** (-3.91)	-0.68*** (-3.29)	0.37 (0.59)
proportion of business interests in community	0.61*** (3.95)	0.49** (2.54)	0.41 (0.49)	0.35 (0.44)
competence of policy sector		-0.27 (-1.31)	-0.29 (-0.79)	-0.33 (-0.96)
competence* business			0.063 (0.09)	0.13 (0.19)
competence* density				-1.09* (-1.75)
R^2	0.51	0.55	0.55	0.62

Standardized beta coefficients; t statistics in parentheses, *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01

The significant indicators in models 1, 2 and 3 in table 14 support the observations regarding the Dutch model and the expectations I noted earlier. That is, dense interest communities tend to be less policy oriented, and business interests are more interested in policies. In model 4, however, all these effects are shown to be insignificant when their interaction is controlled for.

In the first four columns of table 15 the averages per organizational type are presented, and the last two columns show the means for all types of organizations in the EU and Dutch samples. All variables presented are coded as 0-1 indicators, which means that the scores can be read as proportions. The table also shows the results of a comparison of means t-test on these proportions. The first four columns in the table show that hardly any of the indicators potentially explains variation across the four categories of organizations. That is, almost none of the variables that I expected to affect the political character of interest organizations varies significantly across the categories. Only national associations show varying scores on the four categories. They tended to score low on the organizational capacity or means scale, which implies that their ties with their members seem to be of an 'administrative' nature.[115] This indirectly supports my expectation that national associations do not require as strong internal control mechanisms as EU associations need (HII).

Second, when we compare the sample means for the EU and the Netherlands in the last two columns, we find that they are similar on the point of the proportion of organizations that do not have members, seem to receive government subsidies, and allow for multiple types of members. These similarities are somewhat unexpected considering the different

[109] EU-community-level political interest scale ranges from -5,15 to 3,16. As discussed and modeled in model 4, the independent variables in these EU models correlate, correlation coefficients: density-business: 0,32, density-competence: -0,44, competence-business: -0,55. Similar results were found when the models were tested directly on any of the two scales.

[115] About half of the national associations in the sample have been left out of the analysis because we could not code them due to language problems.

TABLE 15 Means according to organizational typology in the EU, total for the Netherlands, n=220

	EU					NL
EU	1 : LL. n=27	2 : HL. n=18	3 : LL. n=83	4 : LL. n=88	ALL. n=220	ALL. n=378
	mean	**mean**	**mean**	**mean**	**mean**	**mean**
no members	0.15	0.17	0.16	0.15	0.17	0.16
members:[110] companies	0.56	0.61	0.47	0.52	0.51	0.24
members: public organizations	0.00	0.11**	0.01*	0.05	0.03	0.08
members: individual members	0.26	0.11*	0.28	0.22	0.23	0.62[111]
members: other types	0.04	0.00	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.11
multi level government interaction[112]	0.33***	0.50	0.59	0.59	0.54	0.53[113]
EU level government interaction[114]	0.44	0.50	0.40	0.39	0.40	
likely government funding	0.18	0.17	0.13	0.13	0.14	0.14
founded after 1990	0.30	0.11	0.22	0.20	0.22	0.28
economic sector and interest: recreation and sports	0.26***	0.11	0.05	0.03***	0.07	0.23
economic sector: commercial	0.63	0.61	0.59	0.67	0.63	0.33
national association	0.30**	0.06*	0.23**	0.09**	0.18	
multiple membership categories	0.22	0.27	0.17	0.22	0.20	0.17

Please note: LL: low on organization score as well as low on policy score; HL: high on organization score as well as low on policy score, etc. Difference of means t-test with rest of sample, one sided:*.1 **.05 ***.01 (no test on 'ALL' columns).

distributions in the EU and the Netherlands in the typology of organizations found earlier in table 9. For example, I found that in the Netherlands organizations that are not particularly interested in policies tend to indicate that they are subsidized. Considering the higher level of policy interest in the EU, I would have expected, all other things being equal, to have found fewer organizations receiving government subsidies. Further, the two last columns (giving the totals) show some differences, for instance in the higher proportion of business interests that were already found in some earlier figures, and the discussion of which I will not repeat here.[116]

110 Membership categories similar to those in the Netherlands, membership could be via national association.

111 Sum of individual members and individual contributors.

112 Organizations that have been coded as likely to interact with both national and EU government (either parliament or executive).

113 Contrary to the EU, this is the proportion of organizations that seem to have some kind of government interaction. In the EU sample this has been differentiated by level of government, so the Dutch score should be compared to the sum of the EU score (0,94).

114 Organizations that have been coded as likely to interact with only EU (either parliament or executive).

116 For instance, in the EU I found much higher proportions of business interests, both measured by company membership (51% versus 24 %) and economic sector (63% versus 33 %). While business dominance of the EU has been pointed out before, it has never been shown compared to any of the EU member states. The other side of this coin is that the EU, as compared to the Netherlands, has a very low proportion of organizations that are somehow linked to citizens (23% versus 62%). This proportion

For the EU organizational level analysis I found very little evidence in support of the hypotheses on membership, government ties, and membership diversity. I tried several ways to specify 'political interest'. Due to the lack of correlation between the policy interest scale and the organizational capacity scale in the EU, the combined political interest measure is not a good indicator of 'political interest (see figure 2 and discussion below). Furthermore, as shown below, separate models of the organization and policy scales produce generally insignificant results.[117] This is surprising in itself, as I expected membership and substantive interest variation to affect the political nature of the interest organizations (HI, Hb). In order to be sure that this finding was not caused by an inappropriate measurement of the dependent variable, I present average scores on four organizational types.[118] This should come closest to the theoretical classification presented in chapter 2. These categories of organizations are not significantly different in the ways that I expected them to be. Throughthis classification I focused on the 'extreme' scoring organizations, so that, if it was present in reality, it should have become especially apparent from the data in this comparison-of-means test.

Table 16 further illustrates the complex and weak nature of the relation between the political character of organizations on the one hand, and several of the expected relevant aspects of organizations in the EU on the other. The table presents three OLS regression models in which the combined dependent variable has been disaggregated into its two component parts, along with the combined measure. In the previous regression analyses I only used the combined measure, that is, the sum of the standardized organizational capacity and policy interest scales. As presented in table 9 and figure 9, I found that in the EU these scales correlate only partially. I will therefore examine them separately. Model 1 deals with variation in membership. It shows that there is no difference in the political interest between organizations supported by individuals as compared to those with company-members. I did find such differences in the Netherlands (table 13). This lack of significant variation is further emphasized in models 2 and 3, and also applies to organizations that do not have members. This contradicts expectations based on the varying problems these different types of supporters encounter when acting collectively. Uniquely to the EU, as also shown in the comparison of means in table 8, the model suggests that national associations tend to be less well organized and less interested in policies than other organizations. In model 2 I have also included the effect of government interaction. Remember that, in the Dutch case, this indicator was a very strong predictor of higher scores on the political interest scale. Neither organizations with contacts at national level,

includes EU associations with national associations of individuals as members. The proportions also confirm the exceptionally strong focus on public policies, 94 per cent of the organizations at the EU level seem to interact with government (relative to 53% in the Netherlands). Over half of these organizations simultaneously seek access to EU and national policy process.

117 Nor do analyses of other combinations of these scales, such as their sum or their product, or in separate indexes with some of the control variables, such as government interaction, financial ties, and national association.

118 Further, I also examined this data via logit models (per organizational category, and by multi-level or EU government interaction) and a multinomial logit model (with the four categories as dependent variable). Because the comparison-of-means tables already suggest that such models will not have strong explanatory power or produce significant effects, I am presenting the data via the means tests.

TABLE 16 OLS regression on organization policy and joint political interest measure in the EU. With company membership as reference category

EU	model 1			model 2			model 3		
	organization scale	policy scale	political interest	organization scale	policy scale	political interest	organization scale	policy scale	political interest
no members	-0.037 (-0.53)	0.024 (0.33)	-0.0048 (-0.07)	-0.046 (-0.62)	0.0047 (0.06)	-0.023 (-0.31)	-0.029 (-0.37)	0.0021 (0.03)	-0.011 (-0.14)
members: public organizations	0.033 (0.49)	-0.0057 (0.08)	0.0026 (0.38)	0.017 (0.24)	-0.010 (-0.14)	0.0039 (0.06)	0.022 (0.30)	-0.028 (-0.39)	-0.0034 (-0.05)
members: individual members	-0.13* (-0.80)	0.0039 (0.55)	-0.0056 (-0.79)	-0.15** (-2.10)	0.021 (0.28)	-0.088 (-1.21)	-0.13 (-1.62)	-0.032 (-0.40)	-0.10 (-1.30)
members: other types	-0.0090 (-0.13)	0.13* (1.92)	0.0081 (1.18)	-0.019 (-0.27)	0.14** (2.01)	0.079 (1.13)	0.0017 (0.02)	0.13* (1.81)	0.088 (1.23)
national association	-0.22* (-3.25)	-0.10* (-1.53)	-0.20*** (-2.97)	-0.25*** (-3.44)	-0.096 (-1.31)	-0.22*** (-3.02)	-0.26*** (-3.47)	-0.074 (-1.01)	-0.21*** (-2.90)
multi-level player				0.14 (0.54)	0.74*** (2.94)	0.58** (2.32)	0.13 (0.52)	0.68*** (2.71)	0.54** (2.16)
EU-level player				0.047 (0.18)	0.64** (2.50)	0.46* (1.80)	0.045 (0.17)	0.59** (2.30)	0.43* (1.67)
seems to receive government funding				-0.037 (-0.52)	-0.047 (-0.66)	-0.048 (-0.68)	-0.016 (-0.21)	-0.080 (-1.07)	-0.051 (-0.68)
founded after 1990							-0.066 (-0.93)	-0.034 (-0.48)	-0.075 (-1.07)
economic sector and interest: recreation and sports							-0.045 (-0.60)	-0.20*** (-2.78)	-0.16** (-2.21)
economic sector: commercial							0.046 (0.52)	-0.14 (-1.63)	-0.047 (-0.55)
observations	221	220	216	208	208	205	208	208	205
R^2	0.062	0.029	0.052	0.082	0.085	0.10	0.091	0.12	0.13

Standardized beta coefficients; t statistics in parentheses, *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01

i.e. 'multi-level players' (54 per cent of sample), nor organizations with only EU-level policy activities (40 per cent) have significantly different scores on the organization scale. Unsurprisingly, these variables positively affect the policy interest scale; but unlike the Dutch case, they do not add a lot of explanatory power to the model. This is due to the limited variation in this regard (94 per cent of the organizations seem to interact with government). As in the Netherlands, government subsidies do not seem to have any relation with means of organization or with policy interest of organizations. I will return to this observation in the concluding section of this chapter. In model 3, I have added information on organizational age and economic sector. As expected (Hb), and as also shown in table 8, organizations representing 'recreation and sports' interests tend to be less interested in the policy process (despite the 'representative' character of their organizations). As with the insignificant effect of company membership, organizations in 'commercial' economic sectors are no more or less interested in policies, nor differently organized with respect to representing members.

To sum up, in the Netherlands various aspects of organization (members) and organizational communities (density) explain why organizations become politically active. While for the EU aspects of organizational communities also seem to explain political interest, with my data it is impossible to definitively evaluate the community-related expectations. This is because the of the correlation of community density, proportions of business interest in the sector, and competence of the policy field. An additional problem in the EU, as seen in table 7 and 9, is that the organizational typology varies in a way that it is difficult to evaluate. Organizations are invariably focused on public policies and, consequently, only differ in the way they relate to their supporters. Furthermore, in the regression analysis in which I differentiated these dimensions, I did not find support for any of the organization-level expectations, such as the hypothesis about differences between organizations with different types of supporters. Some of the problems in the analysis, such as the significance problem in the EU case, could be reduced by increasing the number of observations by combining the data from EU and the Netherlands. Such a combined analysis could also help to differentiate system-specific and general effects. More generally, I examined differences between the EU and the Netherlands in a comparison of means (table 15) and in the earlier figures on the two scales. In the next section I will evaluate potential (empirical) problems in the joint evaluation of EU and Dutch interest systems (on theoretical challenges of comparative interest group research: Lowery, Poppelaars and Berkhout 2008), and then present the combined analysis mentioned above.

3.7. RESULTS III: COMBINING THE EU AND DUTCH DATA

The main challenges regarding evaluating interest communities in different systems are related to interaction effects and varying effects per system (a special kind of interaction). I examined two particular problems: the interaction between community density and business interest representation, and the varying effects of density on political interest in the EU and the Netherlands.

3.7.1. CHALLENGES OF A MULTI-SYSTEM ANALYSIS

First, figure 15 shows a scatter diagram of interest communities and the EU and Dutch regression lines. The x-axis represents values on the density of the policy sector, and y-axis indicates the proportion of business interests in the interest community. In table 11 and

FIGURE 15 Scatter diagram of interest communities, EU and Dutch regression lines for OLS regression of policy agenda density on the proportion of business interest.[119] R^2: the Netherlands: 0,21, EU : 0,10

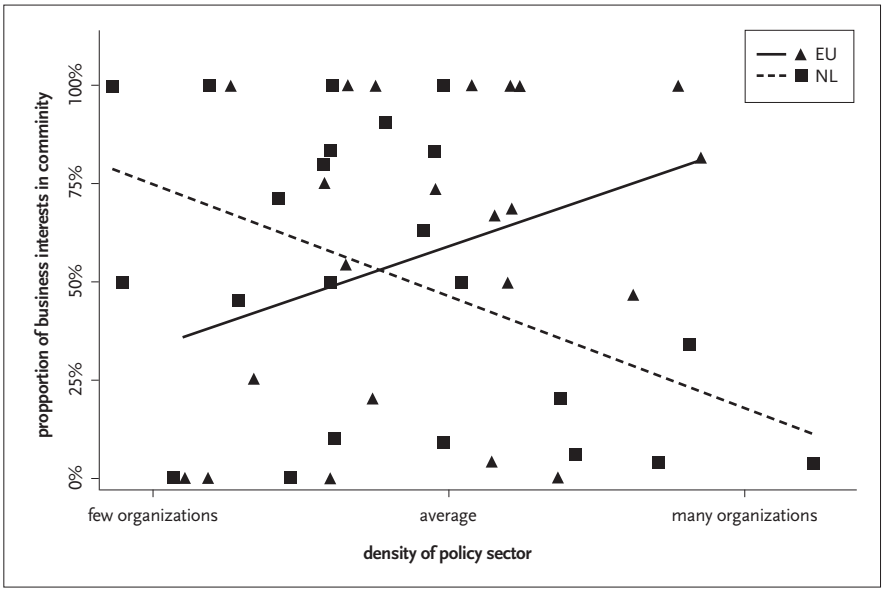
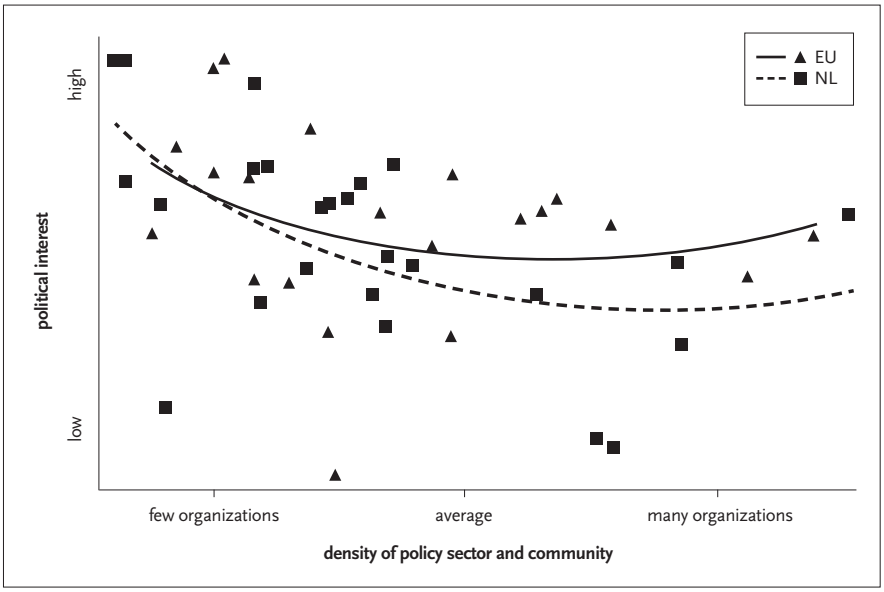


table 14, density and the proportion of business interests are shown to significantly affect the political character of interest communities. This is also the case when interaction effects between these factors are included in the models. Figure 15 shows that these interaction effects are different for the EU and the Netherlands. In the Netherlands denser policy sectors tend to be non-business communities, whereas in the EU denser sectors tend to be business dominated. This is the case regardless of the generally higher proportion of business interests in the EU (as represented by the higher predicted proportions at average community density). Thus, this implies that in a joint model the interaction term also interacts with the policy system, which requires an additional statistical control. More substantively, this figure shows that in the Netherlands business interests operate in less competitive environments than non-business interests. This suggests, for instance, that there is room for new business lobby organizations. It also suggests that the lower proportion of business interests in the Netherlands, as shown in table 15, may not imply that business interests are not well represented. Relatively few business interest organizations seem to be able to cover relatively large numbers of communities. In the EU this is exactly the other way around; here, we found that business interests are especially active on relatively crowded issue agendas, whereas non-business interests work on agendas containing relatively few other organizations.

[119] As said earlier, community level means of policy agenda scores have been standardized with a mean of 0 (ranging between -1,7 and 1,3).

FIGURE 16 Scatter diagram of Dutch and EU interest communities by sum of policy sector and community density, and political interest measure, R^2: EU: 0,10 NL: 0,32.[120]



Second, figure 16 shows a scatter diagram of interest communities and the predicted values of an OLS regression for the EU and the Netherlands. The density indicator (x-axis) is the sum of the standardized scores in the policy sector and interest community densities. The y-axis represents the sum of the standardized policy and organization scales, as used as my 'political interest' measure throughout the chapter. The figure shows (as already found in the regression models in table 11 and table 14) that interest communities with larger numbers of organizations generally mean that individual organizations become less politically active. This effect decreases with higher density values, which suggests that there is some sort of minimum of political interest in interest communities. That is, while political interest decreases with higher numbers of organizations in a sector, there will always be some organizations that seek to represent their interest before government even in sectors that are very crowded and competitive in this regard (except for a couple of outliers such as Dutch foreign aid charities). The EU and the Netherlands are broadly similar in this respect and could thus be evaluated in a single model (with the appropriate second-order polynomial functional form). This finding fits the results of Lowery, Gray and Monogan (2008) in terms of the lobby participation rate in US states; they found that the proportion of organizations lobbying per community is lower in dense communities.

[120] The density indicator (x-axis) is the sum of the standardized scores in the policy sector and interest community densities. The y-axis represents the sum of the standardized policy and organization scales, used as 'political interest' measure throughout the chapter.

These figures suggest that integrating the EU and Dutch analysis should be done very carefully. More generally, these figures, and previous comparative figures, suggest that analyses including even more countries may be even more challenging as interaction effect vary per system.

3.7.2. THE EU AND THE NETHERLANDS IN SINGLE MODELS

Table 17 presents three regression models on the political interest values of the EU and Dutch interest communities. The results largely correspond to the analyses for the systems separately (table 11 and table 14). In contrast to the system-specific models I specified the density term as non-linear and included system interactions. For all models I found that agenda density reduces political interest in a non-linear way (as presented in figure 16). Further, as shown in earlier figures, the results in table 17 indicate that communities of business interests are more policy oriented. Model 2 includes the competence of the policy sector specified per system, 'higher' levels of competence (EU) have been assigned lower scores. The coefficients indicate contradictory and counterintuitive effects in this regard. The effect of Dutch interest communities is captured by the variable that is not interacted by system (row four). It is significant and negative. So, higher competence scores (i.e. more national competence) imply lower political interest. Dutch interest communities that work in fields were the EU has legal competence are more politically active. This seems exactly the other way around in the EU. EU communities seem more active on policies of national competence. I did not find an indication of this effect in the system-specific models. Please note that I found that lower number of organizations work on policies that are not of legal competence of the respective layer of government (figure 12 and figure 10). In these models I controlled for several interaction effects, most importantly the dominance of EU sectors by business interests. Thus, the observed effect in model 2 is likely to be the result of these effects, and perhaps other interaction effects that cannot be modeled in the joint model. This would make the model too complex to produce any significant effect. In model 3 I additionally examined the strength of the effect found in figure 15, i.e., that larger EU communities tend to be business dominated and large Dutch communities tend to represent non-business interests. The difference between the systems can be seen in the positive sign of the first interaction term representing the Netherlands, and the negative and significant sign of the interaction term that represents the EU. With a R^2 of 0.59, this last model provides information on a large proportion of the variation in the extent to which that interest communities are politically active.

In table 18 I present several OLS regression models for the organization-level scores on the organization capacity, policy interest, and combined political interest scales based on the combined EU-Dutch dataset.[121] Model 1 examines membership effects. These effects explain about 10 per cent of the variation on the respective scales. I will discuss the results per variable. As expected and as presented earlier, organizations without members seem

[121] As we saw when comparing the explained variances of the different scales, I find that the models explain a larger proportion of the variation on the policy scale than on the organization scale. This is largely because the information on government interaction helps to explain the variation in the policy scale, but not on the organization scale. As discussed earlier, this supports the validity of the policy scale. Further, as now shown in the different R^2 values, it supports the validity of the organizational dimension, as this suggests that these scales refer to two different aspects of interest organizations.

TABLE 17 OLS regression on means of the 'political interest' measure per community in the EU and the Netherlands.[122]

EU and the Netherlands. n=47	model 1	model 2	model 3
density of policy sector: number of organizations (std)	-0.22 (-1.51)	-0.10 (-0.59)	-0.085 (-0.43)
density ^2	0.31** (2.11)	0.44*** (2.72)	0.64*** (3.59)
proportion of business interests in community	0.47*** (4.09)	0.39*** (3.02)	0.54*** (2.71)
EU community	0.18 (1.51)	-0.36 (-0.79)	-0.63 (-1.33)
competence of policy sector		-0.38** (-2.09)	-0.43** (-2.42)
competence* EU		0.58 (1.21)	0.67 (1.44)
business* density			0.42 (1.45)
business* density* EU			-0.39** (-2.56)
R^2	0.47	0.52	0.59

Standardized beta coefficients; t statistics in parentheses, *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01

more oriented on policies (HII). This effect is, however, not significant for the organization scale or the political interest scale, nor is it significant across the models. Again as expected and presented in the separate EU and Dutch models, organizations with companies or public organizations as members score higher on the combined political interest scale (HI). The higher scores on the combined political interest scale for organizations with company membership (in the third column) are mainly caused by their use of more representative mechanisms to relate to members. This can be seen in the large coefficient of the effect of organization scale for company membership (in the first column). By contrast, the lower scores on the combined scale for organizations with individual membership are due to lower scores on the policy interest scale.[123] More to the point, companies are better organized than individuals and associations of individuals seem less interested in policies. Model 2

[122] Standardization of scales was performed after merging the data, thus producing fully integrated measures. More complex models including other interaction effects (e.g. business* competence) have also been examined. These produced small or insignificant effects. However, these models (not presented here) did seem to show that especially communities of business interest organizations that lobby in policy fields of EU competence tend to be politically active.

[123] This effect decreases somewhat in models 2, 3 and 4 when other effects are also taken into account. When we carefully interpret table 9 on the EU only we also see this effect. However, because company membership functions as reference category in table 9, it is more difficult to differentiate between the contrasting effects.

includes a dummy variable for the Netherlands. In general, Dutch interest organizations have more representative relations with supporters, as seen in the positive coefficient on the organizational capacity scale (0.13). Despite this, they seem less inclined to become politically active. The addition of the system-indicator especially increases the explained variation on the policy scale (R^2: from 0.11 to 0.21). This is a nuanced confirmation of my expectation (H1). However, the political system indicator is no longer significant in model 4, where government interaction and economic sector have been controlled for.[124] In model 3 I examined government interaction. I specified this variable per political system because I find that 94 per cent of the EU organizations seem to interact with government (compared to 53 per cent in the Netherlands, table 15). As also shown in the previous analysis, the results confirm my expectation that having ties with government is related to policy interest (HIII). In the last model in the table, I further examined financial ties to government and the economic basis of the organization. Contrary to my expectation (HIII), (overt) financial ties do not affect any of the examined scales. I will come back to this in the conclusion. Again contrary to my expectation, the nature of the economic sector in which the organization (or its members) is active hardly affects whether organizations seem politically active. Even the most 'extreme' classification, which contrasts 'sports and recreation' with 'commercial' economic sectors, produces relatively small coefficients and hardly adds to the explanatory power of the model. It is plausible that the membership variables take up this role in the model. However, the significance of the coefficients of these variables is not much affected by the addition of the sector variables. This suggests that the membership variables are stronger predictors for political interest than the sector variables (at least at the level of the organization).

In sum, the joint analysis largely confirms the system-specific observations. It shows several strong and general tendencies in the political nature of interest organizations. This is especially the case for the community-level models presented in table 10. This table supports my expectations about the density dependence of political interest (Hc), the high policy interest of business interests (Hb), and the strength of government action in shaping political activities (Ha). I find similar but weaker support for the expectations related to aspects of the organization. More specifically, the membership-related factors only partly explain why organizations become politically active. At the same time, in the combined models I was unable to fully specify the interaction effects between several of the factors that I expected to matter. This was already difficult in the system-specific models, but because of the sometimes contradictory effects it is even more problematic in the combined analysis. These difficulties could be a warning for future researchers who aspire to include even more political systems in their analysis.

3.8. CONCLUSION

Why are some interest organizations more politically active than others? In this chapter I have examined several forces that could lead some organizations being more interested in politics than others. The forces that shape the political interest of organizations originate

[124] In these later models, the interaction between government interaction and political system takes up the role of this indicator. Remember that 94% of EU organizations seem to interact with government in some way.

TABLE 18 OLS regression on organization, policy and joint political interest measure in the EU and the Netherlands (n=599), unweighted by system

	model 1			model 2			model 3			model 4		
	organization scale	policy scale	political interest	organization scale	policy scale	political interest	organization scale	policy scale	political interest	organization scale	policy scale	political interest
no members	-0.037 (-0.57)	-0.14** (-2.17)	-0.10 (-1.62)	-0.065 (-0.99)	-0.060 (-0.99)	-0.073 (-1.14)	-0.034 (-0.57)	-0.017 (-0.35)	-0.032 (-0.63)	-0.017 (-0.27)	-0.0090 (-0.19)	-0.012 (-0.23)
companies	0.21*** (2.90)	0.068 (0.93)	0.16** (2.26)	0.20*** (2.75)	0.10 (1.49)	0.18** (2.45)	0.18*** (2.66)	0.072 (1.34)	0.15** (2.51)	0.16** (2.34)	0.066 (1.22)	0.13** (2.22)
public organizations	0.15*** (3.59)	0.056 (1.33)	0.12*** (2.90)	0.13*** (3.16)	0.11*** (2.65)	0.14*** (3.34)	0.12*** (3.02)	0.081*** (2.59)	0.12*** (3.39)	0.13*** (3.31)	0.098*** (3.13)	0.13*** (3.90)
individuals	-0.0062 (-0.08)	-0.28*** (-3.88)	-0.17** (-2.31)	-0.067 (-0.87)	-0.11 (-1.61)	-0.11 (-1.41)	0.0089 (0.13)	-0.0091 (-0.16)	-0.0012 (-0.02)	0.035 (0.48)	0.0035 (0.06)	0.023 (0.38)
other types	0.15*** (3.09)	0.010 (0.21)	0.095* (1.95)	0.13** (2.55)	0.082* (1.75)	0.12** (2.48)	0.10** (2.22)	0.046 (1.26)	0.087** (2.16)	0.11** (2.42)	0.062* (1.71)	0.10** (2.55)
NL				0.13*** (2.96)	-0.35*** (-8.91)	-0.13*** (-3.16)	-0.054 (-0.41)	-0.32*** (-2.90)	-0.14 (-1.13)	0.12 (0.58)	-0.14 (-0.84)	-0.0076 (-0.04)
likely to interact with government							0.099 (0.78)	0.43*** (4.04)	0.38*** (3.14)	0.25 (1.22)	0.56*** (3.49)	0.48*** (2.71)
government* NL							0.37*** (2.70)	0.23** (2.02)	0.27** (2.10)	0.20 (0.92)	0.055 (0.33)	0.14 (0.77)
seems to receive government funding										-0.014 (-0.37)	-0.020 (-0.66)	-0.017 (-0.50)
economic sector and interest: recreation and sports										-0.060 (-1.48)	-0.12*** (-3.82)	-0.11*** (-3.02)
economic sector: commercial										0.084* (1.84)	0.018 (0.50)	0.064 (1.63)
R^2	0.082	0.11	0.12	0.095	0.21	0.13	0.24	0.52	0.43	0.26	0.55	0.46

Standardized beta coefficients; t statistics in parentheses, *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01

from the organizations themselves, from their immediate policy environment, and from the political institutions that they may attempt to influence. In pluralist, corporatist, and organizational theoretical approaches these aspects are weighted differently. Pluralist scholars tend to focus on membership aspects, corporatist scholars on systemic or institutional aspects, and organization students focus on the immediate organizational context. These various perspectives have led scholars to make assumptions, for instance on organizational survival, that are only partly based on empirical evidence. Further, these various focus points will make the normative evaluation of interest group politics always inconclusive, arbitrary, and unspecified per political system, policy field, or interest. In order to start evaluating phenomena such as the power of interest organizations or their function as democratic 'transmission belts', group researchers need to know which organizations seem to be politically active and why they are so. It is not only the presence of organizations but also their relatively powerful 'position' or likely behavior that matters. I will first discuss the findings of this chapter in relation to the expectations and the theoretical implications, and second, discuss the normative or empirical relevance of these findings.

In terms of the difference between the EU and Dutch interest systems, I found, as expected, that the EU interest system is more closely oriented on the policy process. About 80 per cent of the interest organizations active at the EU level could immediately be coded as interested in public policies (see table 9), as opposed to the 40 per cent in the Dutch sample. However, these values need to be interpreted very carefully. Throughout the analysis I have found that this higher system level score could be understood via phenomena that vary per interest community or per organization. In the end, the crude 'political system' indicator included in the combined regression models proved insignificant. In simple terms, I found that the legal competence of the EU leads to larger proportions of business interest representation, which, in turn, leads to a stronger orientation toward public policies.[125] More broadly, this suggests that interest group scholars should be very careful in theorizing about 'general' system differences. Phenomena such as 'distinct lobbying styles', 'a culture of consensus', or historical traditions are, as indicated by my findings, only indirect explanations for the political character of interest systems. The 'real' factors are more likely to be found in aspects of the interest communities and organizations. Of course, this does not imply that interest organizations do not experience real systematic differences. Further, it should not inhibit researchers from engaging in comparative research. While the cross-system design leads to several methodological difficulties (such as contradictory interaction effects), I have benefited from employing such a research design to discover the phenomena that underlie some of the differences between these systems.

I formulated a variety of expectations on aspects of interest communities that are likely to make interest organizations more politically active. These were based on both organizational theoretical notions and more general assumptions on, for instance, differences between economic sectors. I expected organizations seemingly active in policy

[125] At the same time this implies large proportions of 'better' organized interest groups at the EU level, because organizations with companies as members tend to have more elaborate and more formal mechanisms for membership participation (via, for instance, expert committees, annual conferences and elections).

fields of EU competence to be more politically interested than organizations working on fields of national competence (Ha). Among other reasons, I suggested that this could be expected because of the 'indirect' nature of electoral control in these fields, which could lead policy makers to attract input from interest organizations. The evaluation of this hypothesis was complicated because of several interaction effects and the different governance implications of the competence coding for the Netherlands and the EU. The interaction effects I examined were, first, that larger communities tend to work on policies of the respective level of government (interaction of density and competence and system). Second, I found that business interests tend to dominate communities of EU-level competence (interaction business and competence and system). Third, the data suggested that in the EU more numerous communities tend to represent business interests, whereas in the Netherlands they tend to represent non-business interests (interaction density and business and system). Although I examined all of these relations in various ways, it proved very difficult to disentangle these effects (see especially table 11, table 14, and table 16). Nevertheless, it seems that, as expected, Dutch interest organizations are more politically active on policies of national competence (table 11). For the EU case, the interaction effects make it impossible to draw definitive conclusions.[126] Hence, I did not find support for the idea that it is the more indirect nature of democratic control, arguably present in policy fields of EU competence, that may explain the difference. However, considering the interaction effects it seems more likely that the types of policies (creating a need for certain interests to lobby) and the legal capacity of government to address those policies relate to the political activities of interest communities. This supports Baumgartner and Leech's (2001) analysis of the demand side of lobbying.

This is related to the second hypothesis that 'social, charity and recreational' interests, on the one hand, and 'business' or commercial interests, on the other, show little or strong policy interest, respectively. (Hb). I have examined this expectation per interest community (via the proportion of business interests) and per organization (via indicators for the respective sector). When evaluated per interest community, higher proportions of business interests lead to seemingly more politically active organizations. This effect is stronger in the Netherlands than in the EU. When directly contrasting the two sectors per interest organization, I found the expected effect, which especially manifested itself in the low policy-interest scores of organizations in social and charity sectors.[127] These results, together with the findings on the higher political interest related to government competence, suggest that government activity increases the need for interest organizations to become politically active. This is as expected and supports earlier research focusing on the demand side of lobbying referred to earlier (Baumgartner and Leech 2001).

[126] On the basis of a nearly significant positive coefficient in table 10 I would speculate that, in the EU, organizations tend to be more politically active when working on policies of national competence. This is related to the negative effects of dense communities and the lower density in fields of national competence. Simply said, without competitors or political opposition it is easy to lobby.

[127] At the same time, these models also include variation in different types of members. As companies tend to be members of organizations in ´commercial´ sectors these effects are difficult to differentiate.

The last hypothesis on interest communities is about the presence of other interest organizations in the field. On the basis of interest population studies I expected organizations in dense interest communities, policy agendas, or economic sectors to be not as politically active as organizations that find only a low number of similar groups in their environment. I found broad support for this expectation; the more dense the communities, the less politically active the organizations in that community. And, more importantly, I found that this effect is the same in the EU as in the Netherlands. Further, the effect is non-linear; interest in policies is lower in larger communities, but it will never disappear because at a certain point this decreasing effect flattens out and in the larger communities there is no further decrease observed.[128] This indicates that the concept of density dependence can travel across political systems.

Regarding differences between organizations, my main expectations were about the differences between organizations with different types of members. I additionally formulated expectations about ties to government and organizational age. I expected that organizations with companies or public institutions as members are more active in seeking to influence policies than those with individuals as members (HI). I found this indeed to be the case. This higher political interest largely manifests itself in stronger organizational ties with members as opposed to a stronger orientation on political institutions. That is, organizations constituted of companies tend to have more developed ways to give voice to members (annual meetings etc.), which seems to give them a powerful position in the policy context. A similar mechanism seems to have played a role in the evaluation of the second hypothesis. I expected organizations representing more diverse interests (of multiple types of members) to be less interested in influencing policies (HII) than organizations without members. The results do not support this expectation. I did not find significant differences between organizations with several diverse membership categories and other organizations with only a single type of membership. And, contrary to the hypothesis, organizations without members seem less politically active. More generally, membership types (but not diversity) matters for the political activities of interest organizations. This will also be addressed in chapter 4.

In terms of relations to government, overt financial ties to government do not seem to be related to interest in government policies (HIII).[129] This contradicts my hypothesis. Governments seem to be interested in funding organizations that are only sporadically politically active. For now, I can only speculate why this is the case, but it is definitively a subject for further research (Poppelaars 2009). Governments do not fund their political opponents, but do not hand money to political friends either. The last, minor expectation I examined, based on organization-theoretical literature, dealt with the relation between organizational age and political activity. Viewed from a long-term perspective the experience of older organizations (i.e. established before 1990) does not seem to increase political interest.

[128] Some of the larger interest communities again even show increasing scores on interest in policies.

[129] I did find that organizations that seem to have contact with government are more politically active. This is, however, of largely methodological relevance because substantively it is fairly similar to observed scale.

How do these findings relate to the theoretical perspectives discussed? First, in terms of levels of analysis, differences regarding aspects of the organizations themselves only partially accounted for political interest. Variation in aspects of the interest community provided substantial insight into the extent to which communities seemed politically active. The cross-system comparison has been very useful in terms of research design. However, as said earlier, general system-level theory construction is probably not the most productive way to build theories of interest representation. This is so because cross-system differences appeared to be related to differences in policy sectors and legal competences. This implies that interest group scholars are in need of theories that could be further developed at the sector, issue, or community level, instead of system typologies. Formulated differently, system differences seem to be best understood via aspects of policy sectors (i.e. competences) or interest communities (i.e. density). Second, in terms of theoretical perspective, I found some support for neo-pluralist related expectations on membership and the focus on organizations. That is, variation in mobilization, in this case examined as variation in membership types, was modestly related to the political interest of the organization. However, mobilization, and consequent organization of interests, definitively provides only the first step in the process leading towards organizational political interest (and further to political activities and influence). At this point, organizational theoretical and corporatist thinking on political organizations are probably stronger. That is, organizational context and government action seem to matter a lot in determining the extent to which interest organizations are politically active.

These observations matter not only as contributions to the academic debate on theories of interest representation, but also address several contemporary political discussions in the EU and the Netherlands. First, these results challenge the positive normative claims related to 'civil society organizations' as useful transmission belts between citizens and policy makers. I found important differences between organizations representing citizens' and business interests. More to the point, citizens' groups, when organized, do not seem particularly politically active, and thus do not 'transmit' a lot to policy makers – even less so when it comes to the EU or EU policies. Business interests, in contrast, seem better organized and more politically active. They are definitively more favorably positioned to influence policies. Second, Lowery and Gray (1995, 25) have suggested that the 'natural', self-limiting nature of interest communities could make certain aspects of lobby regulation irrelevant. The density-dependent nature of organizational growth and political interest has been supported by my data. However, this seems not so strongly self-limiting that it serves as the 'brake' on lobbying activities that policy makers may wish for. That is, very crowded communities also remain politically active. Thus, considering the variation in political interest, a true lobby register should, besides names, also include information on attempts (or even aspirations) to influence policies. Third, the image of strong-armed interest organizations capturing all kinds of public policies does not seem to apply to the two systems investigated. The observed variation in political interest across policies and organizations does not fit such a broad image of systematic domination of politicians by interest groups. Such problems are likely to be sector specific. Future research could embark on a more precise, sector-specific analysis of interest group politics that goes beyond counting and coding. In such an analysis I would expect to find a couple of sectors in which interest organizations

improperly dominate decision making, but also sectors in which organizations function as efficient and 'democratic' transmission belts.

In this chapter I have examined why some interest organizations are better positioned to be politically active than others. In the next chapter I will evaluate which organizations are actually politically active, and in what ways they are so. I thus take a sequential view on the political activities of interest organizations, in which the organization (and its aspirations and possibilities) comes before the political action, which, in turn is followed by the potential political outcomes.

CHAPTER 4
Exchanges in action

4.1. INTRODUCTION: EU INTEREST ORGANIZATIONS REACHING OUT TO SUPPORTERS, INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC OPINION

In the previous chapter I examined why interest organizations are politically active. In this chapter, I take closer look at the types of political activities different organizations engage in, and examine why interest organizations are politically active in the way that they are. I focus on activities related to political communication. These necessary imply a relationship, or an attempt towards a relationship, with other actors. This relational aspect of communication directly addresses the core of the exchange theory of political activities introduced in chapter 2, and links organizational (population) and behavioral (strategies) aspects of influence production. Why do interest organizations seek exchange relationships with supporters, political institutions, and the news media? I expect that only certain organizations communicate their political activities in detail to all these politically relevant audiences. Organizations vary in their preferences, and the opportunities they have to actively build exchange relations with actors in other environments than those in which they find themselves.

In addition to normative concerns about interest system bias, interest group power, and potentially biased policy outcomes discussed in the previous chapter, the normative issues related to the activities of interest organizations are about democratic procedures. Unlike parliamentary and electoral politics with their public debates and voting procedures, group politics can be either explicitly shielded from public scrutiny (lobbying) or of an exceptionally public nature (demonstrations).[130] By bypassing parliamentary institutions, either of these pathways to influence may lead to a decrease of trust or increase of political cynicism among large parts of the electorate, even if voters identify with the cause promoted by interest organizations. That is, the connection between citizens and their elected representative could compete with connections between representatives and interest organizations. Put simply, when representatives listen to interest organizations they do not, at the same time, listen to voters. In addition, even if citizens agree with the policy outcomes of interest group politics, they may have preferences regarding the pathways or procedures of politics. In that case, trust in the political system is likely to be higher when parliamentary procedures are followed than when outcomes seem determined by lobbying or public

[130] Thus, in terms of the importance of groups' working methods, as argued by Gais and Walker, the strategies of interest groups are especially relevant 'when we consider their aggregate effects' (1991, 104). That is, a system that is dominated by certain types of methods or strategies (e.g. inside-oriented) is likely to be different in 'the interests represented, in the systems' capacities for comprehensive change, in the autonomy of elective and executive institutions, and in the precision and types of political issues raised' (Gais and Walker 1991, 104) from a system that is dominated by other methods (e.g. outside oriented).

action. From this line of argument it follows that certain activities of interest organizations are democratically 'better' than others. More to the point, more 'open', public, and accountable interest group activities are, in light of public trust in government institutions, preferable to lobbying in 'closed' policy circles.

As discussed earlier, interest groups researchers focus on different factors that seemingly structure the activities of interest organizations. Depending on these perspectives, interest organizations seem to choose their influence activities on the basis of either the preferences of their members, the access opportunities of political institutions, or the perceived public support for a specific issue. Each of these aspects seems to matter. Interest group research remains inconclusive on the question which of these factors best explains typical behaviorof interest organizations. These inconclusive results may be partly related to conceptual problems in the field (Lowery, Poppelaars and Berkhout 2008). These inconclusive findings seem also related to two methodological problems.

A first problem is that, as became evident in the previous chapter, very complex research designs are required to simultaneously compare of aspects of the political issue, the institutional context, and the interest organization in relation to various forms of political action. In the previous chapter I sought to reduce this complexity by focusing on only the general political interest of organizations. In this chapter I specify political interest by examining three potential targets of this interest. This specification comes at the cost of a cross-system comparison and the evaluation of variation among interest communities. By focusing on the EU I reduce variation on both the independent variable and dependent variable side of the equation. On the independent variable side, I reduced institutional variation by leaving out a cross-system comparison. On the dependent variable side, i.e., the types of activities that organizations could engage in, I reduced the likelihood of organizations seeking to influence public opinion via public action, such as demonstrations or media campaigns, and thus adapt their broader strategies according to public opinion (e.g. Kollman 1998). This is an unlikely mode of group activity in the context of the EU, in light of the 'public sphere deficit and the national fragmentation of European public opinion. Thus, the remaining theoretical explanations, i.e., on the effect of members or interests, should be even more clearly delineated in the EU interest system than in other circumstances. Therefore, I focus on types of interests represented and the membership of EU-level interest organizations.[131]

[131] Furthermore, in relation to the EU, the internet matters especially for European Union-level organized interests because of the higher cost of communication associated with international activities. Whereas online communication may be more important for EU groups, their communicative action repertoire is also probably very different from national level groups. First, this may be because of the diversity in types and nationalities of members; we now find organizations with very mixed membership/mixtures of members, including individuals, public institutions, companies, national sector organizations, regional representations, and national NGOs. Different types of members want different types of communication; but in what way do we indeed observe this variation between organizations? Second, we do not find a 'public sphere' comparable to national political environments. That is, there are no European-wide media that allow for an exchange of political views and address a cross-national European 'public' (Eriksen 2005; Schlesinger 1999). Thus, groups that want to communicate outside the 'Brussels' sphere of groups and official institutions will need to tailor their message to the different national media and publics.

A second problem arises from the fact that existing research largely relies on survey and interview data to examine the activities of interest organizations. Research based on survey data seems inconclusive on the empirical tactical differences among organizations. Some researchers have reported limited variation in the use of certain tactics: all organizations employ all kinds of methods (e.g. Baumgartner and Leech 1998).[132] Other researchers point to more pronounced differences between organizations (e.g. Binderkranz 2008). It could be that via surveys or interviews it is difficult to examine the differences in the frequencies or importance of specific activities. That is, in typical surveys respondents are presented a list of activities (i.e. direct contact with MP, issue press statement) and may be likely to agree with all answer categories. Nevertheless, organizations are likely to differ in the frequency of use of certain activities. For instance, every organization would like good relations with the press and favorable media attention. However, for certain organizations these are matters of survival (e.g. campaign groups), whereas for others they are a mere convenience that may help in lobbying activities (e.g. the chemical industry). The former type of organization probably engages with the press and public opinion in a more intense and more elaborate way than the latter. Further, surveys and interviews usually tell us quite a lot about the immediate motivational reasons for adopting specific strategies but tend to miss some of the underlying factors that lead to certain organizational behavior. In this chapter I make use of the new opportunities that the internet offers researchers to overcome these problems. The research presented in this chapter surveys the websites of a sample of interest organizations.[133] In their websites, interest organizations make their communication strategies evident to the world using a common communication platform that allows for systematic comparison.[134] Websites show part of the actual behavior of organizations.

[132] This part of the literature suggests that all groups, irrespective of interest, institutional context, or public opinion, routinely use a broad range of strategies. In their literature review on lobbying tactics, Baumgartner and Leech conclude that 'specialisation by tactic is rare' (1998: 154, 48-57). This is also what Caldeira, Hojnacki and Wright (2000) found in their study of lobbying activities in U.S. Federal judicial nominations. Similarly, Kriesi (2004: 46-50; 2007: 70) did not find different public-oriented action repertoires across different groups, different policy sectors (with different institutional actors), or different perceptions of public opinion.

[133] More specifically, I have gathered information such as press statements, reports and links from the websites of a sample of organizations. This sample was drawn from two official lists and two published directories, and reflects the EU interest group population in terms of interests and membership type. The website information was aggregated into indexes in order to differentiate between types of communication aimed at several types of audiences.

[134] When looking at websites I have assumed that the use of online and offline media of interest organizations has largely converged, and that websites mirror the broader action repertoire of organizations. This is consistent with findings of similar research in the United States by Foot and Schneider (2006). The websites reflect and affect political positions, policies, and the public debate on the issues that the organizations are involved in. Thus, my interest in online political action is not related to the 'newness' or difference with 'older' media, as I assume that, in terms of fundamental aspects of political action, no such difference exists. However, the internet has probably made existing group activities more visible to a broader audience of parties, journalists, and citizens, and thus more

I examined the activities of interest groups working on European Union policies. Why are EU interest organizations politically active in the way that they are? I am interested in the variation in insider, mobilization, or outside-oriented activities of theoretically relevant sections of the EU interest population. As will be further discussed below, the mobilization of memberships could be especially pronounced in citizen groups whereas the direct lobbying of the EU institutions may be the dominant strategy of business interest associations. On the basis of the interrelations introduced in the exchange theory, I would expect that strategic differences mainly depend on the types of supporters of interest organizations.

The chapter starts by outlining the general theoretical explanations for variations in the use of communication strategies by interest groups. On this basis, I will formulate four hypotheses: (1) on the difference between organizations with citizen and corporate membership, (2) on the difference between corporate and government membership, (3) on the difference between umbrella groups and direct membership groups, and (4) on the difference between business and social interests. The chapter continues with several examples of literature on online political activities. Subsequently, I present the research design, the sampling methods, and the specification of the indices and the models. After that the results are presented, evaluating differences and similarities among websites of categories of organizations that represent different kinds of interests and have different kinds of members. This is followed by a conclusion that draws attention to the varied impact of organized interests on the ways EU policies are communicated.

4.2. THEORIES ON INTEREST ORGANIZATION STRATEGIES

As discussed in the theory chapter, theories on groups may be conveniently presented by way of the 'influence production process' (Lowery and Gray 2004, Lowery and Brasher 2003: 16-19). This implies a division of research on interest representation into four stages or modules: (1) the mobilization and maintenance stage, (2) the interest community stage, (3) the exercise of influence stage, and (4) the political and policy outcome stage. In this chapter I focus on the activities of interest groups (the third stage of this process); in the previous chapter the focus was on the organization and population aspects of this process (i.e., the second stage). In this thesis I aspire to link these two stages, aiming to explain the relationship between variations in one stage (population of types of groups) and variations in the other (activities of interest organizations).[135] I understand aspects of the

relevant to the broader political process. Also, as the internet has made it easier, cheaper, and more attractive for groups to pursue 'traditional' forms of political communication, such as newsletters and policy reports, it becomes more important to understand what it is that drives such communication.

[135] I do not consider questions of mobilization (why certain interests are organized and others are not) or questions on policy outcomes (why some interests seem to secure favorable policies and others do not). The first motivation for this is that many of these agenda-setting and outcome-oriented research questions can only be answered if we first have a general notion of strategic opportunities for and efforts on the part of organized interests. Second, the clarification of these linkages would allow us to make reasonable claims about group activities on the basis of population data, such as registers and directories. This is hardly needed, especially in the context of the European Union, as the European Commission seeks to make lobbying more transparent via a new register for representatives of interest organizations.

organizational environment, such as other interest groups or members, as contextual, independent variables that affect activities. These activities I conceptualize as exchange relationships, or attempts to maintain or construct these relationships. I am here presenting the theoretical notions in a slightly different way from the exposition in the previous chapter. In contrast to the general views (pluralism, corporatism and organization theories) highlighted in the previous chapter, in this chapter I develop narrower expectations, regarding only the organization level determinants. Contrary to chapter three I will be more specific on the types of activities that I expect of certain type of organizations.[136]

As said earlier, students of interest organizations have pointed to several factors that shape the activities of organizations. First, (neo)pluralist scholars argue that group behavior is driven by membership and problems of collective action. Different political o rganizations have different types of members or supporters (companies, governments, individuals) that supply the organization with critical resources and in return demand specific types of political activities from the organization. In this view, it is the types of resources such as money, information, or political support that matters in relation to the political strategies. For example, the Association of Dutch Municipalities produces expert studies and policy conferences, and occasionally reacts to journalists. This is a markedly different range of activities than, for instance, the environmental campaign group 'Milieudefensie'('Friends of the Earth Netherlands') which spends energy on recruiting new members, organizing public action, and occasionally submitting a policy statement. In a (neo)pluralist view this difference arises from the different types of members and interests represented by these organizations. Secondly, corporatist scholars, and some researchers of social movements, indicate that the action repertoire of political actors is primarily shaped by institutional opportunities and structures. Interest organizations seek access via specific channels or venues, and develop corresponding methods or communicative norms in order to influence policies. The last category of answers deals with the public opinion and media context in which organizations tailor their message. Political actors are expected to use a different type of political communication if issues are salient and/or popular in terms of public opinion.

In the specific context of the EU the 'pluralist' answer, with a focus on collective-action-related membership mechanisms, seems the most plausible answer of the three. That may be because, compared to cross-national differences, the institutional variation between parts of the EU institutions is relatively small. Of course, different institutional venues, such as the European Parliament or the European Commission, will require different approaches. But these differences are smaller than the difference between, for example, corporatist German-style consensus politics and pluralist UK lobbying. Further, considering the 'public sphere deficit', public opinion is probably less important for group strategies in the EU than it is in the national context. In terms of the design of this research, this means that there is a selection control for part of the likely effects of institutions and

[136] Thus, I am not formulating theoretical expectations about community-level phenomena (as in the previous chapter), nor do I evaluate the data in that way. In another analysis, however, (not presented here) I have examined certain community-level phenomena, such as the effect of density on the type of political activities in interest communities. These analyses did not produce sufficient results to merit a fully developed argument in this chapter.

public opinion on the action repertoire of interest organizations. Moreover, I have examined the (semi) public, i.e., online, behavior of interest groups. Because of its open and communicative character it seems likely that this part of the repertoire is especially sensitive to member preferences and input.

Thus, the resource- or membership-oriented explanations provide the main variables in the research design in this chapter. These explanations focus on the relation between the types and volume of resources needed for organizational maintenance and survival on the one hand, and the tactics and strategies employed by the organization on the other. In my exchange scheme the organizational resources come from exchanges between supporters and leaders and the tactics relate to the exchange relations with leaders and policy makers. Scholars tend to agree on the mutual dependence of organizational supporters and political activities. However, different researchers have pointed to different mechanisms that govern or constrain these two exchanges: (1) collective action problems in combination with organizational lock-in effects, (2) the structural aspects of the transaction between leaders and members, and (3) the exit options available to supporters.

With regard to the first mechanism, Gais and Walker (1991: 106) suggest that citizen groups continually need to reinforce the loyalty of their members, and the groups consequently need to continually demonstrate their activism. This means that such organizations rely strongly on 'an outside strategy of public persuasion and political mobilization'.[137] This empirical conclusion finds theoretical support in Olson's *Logic of Collective Action* (1965), which purports to show that it is more difficult for diffusely spread interests to organize than interests that are concentrated in a smaller number of members. Groups with citizens instead of companies as members are more likely to represent exactly these kinds of diffuse interests. Moreover, these differences in mobilization problems have persistent consequences as organizations gain established status. Gais and Walker (1991) argue that organizations get 'locked in' specific ways of seeking political attention.[138] Early mobilization experiences weigh heavy on the organizational culture. Organizations adapt to new circumstances only slowly and continue to rely on their expertise, experience and networks that they have built up over time. Thus, arguments and issues are processed within this political instrumentarium developed in early stages of organizational development.[139]

The second mechanism that relates leaders and members is put forward by neo-corporatist scholars. I have discussed this in the theory section under 'logic of support'. In this case, a specific transaction underlies this relation. That is, in exchange for contributions and 'discipline', the leaders of an organization provide the members with mechanisms for controlling the leadership (e.g., elections) and with platforms to voice members' preferences (annual meetings) (Streeck and Kenworthy 2005, 452).

[137] This is also supported by other research. Hansford (2004), for example, has shown that especially membership-based groups consider the question whether the media covers certain issues in their decision to start campaigns.

[138] This path-dependency argument finds theoretical support in historical and sociological theories of institutions (e.g. Thelen 1999).

[139] This contradicts the two other perspectives in which it is assumed that groups are perfectly able to choose and design strategies on an ad-hoc and contingent basis, dependent on specific issue contexts or institutional venues.

Jordan and Maloney (2007) present a third perspective, they suggest that collective action problems are not as significant as Olson argued, and that (neo-) corporatist linkages between leaders and members are not as strong as they used to be. Despite this decline in the efficacy of the 'voice' mechanisms, they nevertheless argue that organizations more strongly tailor their activities to be in line with their supporters or members preferences than in earlier days when members may have participated in organizational decision making. This is the result of an increase in competition among interest organizations and the corresponding easier 'exit' of supporters. Leaders will want to prevent members or supporters from leaving the organization. Jordan and Maloney's (2007) empirical work is theoretically supported by Hirschman's model described in *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* (1970).

Thus, regardless of the exact mechanism, all these scholars emphasize the importance of the relationship between group activities and members or social base. In general, organizations that depend on individual contributions are assumed to be more active in public relations and outside lobbying. On the other hand, organizations that represent business, professional and bureaucratic interests are expected to be focused on narrower policies and to rely more on inside lobbying.

This leads me to the first hypothesis: Unlike organizations with companies as members, organizations with individuals as members should have larger websites and tend to target their websites at their members and the broader public. These arguments also lead me to expect that there is no difference between the political activities of organizations with public sector organizations as members, and those of organizations with companies as members. This is the second hypothesis.

There are reasons to expect that these mechanisms work differently for certain organizations involved in EU policy making. This may be the case because of the unique and complex organizational structure of certain EU-level umbrella organizations. More specifically, these kinds of organizations may (1) consist of national associations and (2) have multiple membership categories. This leads to a specific 'internal' political dynamic in which, first, an additional layer duplicates some of the described mechanisms, and, second, various types of members puts additional pressure on the leadership to aggregate likely different strategic preferences and needs of the different types of members. For example, Mental Health Europe represents (national) organizations that work on mental health issues; these may be groups of patients, public social welfare institutions, and expert institutions. In terms of communication repertoire, this organization may choose to inform a broader public about mental health problems in order to mobilize support for patient groups, or it may focus on policy reports in order to facilitate learning among social welfare institutions. In this complex membership constellation national group leaders must play two-level games and the European association must overcome potentially conflicting preferences of different types of constituents. This may blur the expected relation between membership types and communicative action. This leads to a third hypothesis: due to the greater likelihood of political deadlock within the organization European organizations with multiple membership categories and multiple membership 'layers' will, have smaller websites and their target behavior will not be strongly related to types of members (private, public, individuals).

This research project is designed to explain variation based on aspects of the organization. However, for now I cannot fully isolate these from the other factors in the environment of interest organizations that affect their behavior. That is, differences

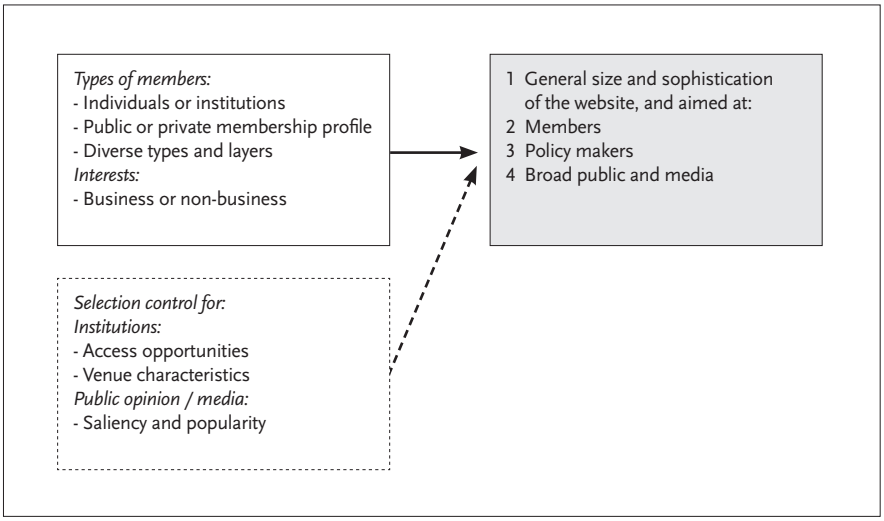
in institutional environments or political opportunity structures also influence the types of activities of interest organizations. These are either understood as general characteristics of a political system or as characteristics of certain parts of a system. First, very broadly, classic authors have differentiated interest organizations as either institutional 'insiders' or 'outsiders', and consequently explained respective activities. That is, 'outsiders' or challengers of public policy outside or excluded from established institutional arenas *necessarily* equip themselves with symbolic, media- and public-oriented action repertoires (Lasswell 1950, 236; Schattschneider 1960, 40; Wilson 1974, 284-89). Exclusion from institutional access of interest organizations may thus determine their media-oriented political action. In more open institutional environments, in the line of this argument, interest organizations will find it easier to be politically active in more 'institutional' ways, using insider strategies. For this chapter I have selected only organizations active at the EU level and those that are relative ´insiders´ in the EU policy process. This factor is constant across organizations and it does not matter whether the EU institutions are open or closed to various interests.[140] A cross-national research design would be required in order to observe sufficient institutional variation that is needed for an evaluation of these broader differences between political systems.

Second, more specifically, the influence environment may also be understood to refer to specific institutional access points that vary in terms of the types of activities they seek to attract. That is, even if groups have 'insider' status, we may observe further variation across different venues or institutional arenas of the policy processes. For example, Beyers (2004: 212) points to the different roles of each institutional actor in 'multiple arenas and layers', which creates 'multiple access points'. This encourages strategic venue-shopping and the parallel adaptation of activities on the part of interest organizations (Mazey and Richardson 2001). Also basing himself on EU-level research, Bouwen (2004) shows that the Commission and the Parliament require different 'access goods' and seemingly attract different actors with different informational 'supplies', such as expert knowledge or information on national or European encompassing interests in a certain sector. So, we know that these institutional demands matter when we want to determine the use of 'insider' influence activities by interest organizations such as the 'informal' direct contact with policy makers.[141] However, it is unclear whether organizations adapt the full range of their influence activities, including press contacts and member-mobilization, corresponding to their use of direct contacts as influenced by the specific institutional context in which they lobby. So, variation between organizations in lobbying specific European venues, and the corresponding institutional openness, is unlikely to explain variation in the public or membership-related activities of groups.

[140] The variation in national institutional contacts of organizations could, however, indirectly affect the 'experience' of organizations and make it more or less likely that organizations persist in a specific strategy (i.e. organizations from 'closed' systems in which 'protest' is the main channel to voice concerns could be less likely to develop fundamentally different tactics at the EU level).

[141] However, as discussed earlier, organizations probably use a broad range of tactics and thus do not specialize in influencing one venue. It is unclear in what way specific differences in institutional venues affect the broader repertoire of activities, or the more specific public strategies of interest organizations.

FIGURE 16 Model of membership type and target audience



As a third general focus point, interest organizations may adapt their activities in light of the perceived support or opposition for their issues. As discussed in the theory chapter, Kollman (1998: 155-165) focuses especially on public opinion, pointing to the importance of public salience and public popularity of the lobby issues. *Salience* refers to the intensity of preferences of supporters of certain sides of an issue, whereas *popularity* refers to the support for certain interests more in general. He measures both with public opinion polls. On the basis of these two dimensions groups make different strategic choices (see also: Schlozman and Tierney 1986 170-99, Smith 2000 13-15). As a fictitious example, imagine a farmers' association, usually lobbying on 'unpopular' issues such as food prices. Such a group would find it more advantageous to use inside-oriented tactics or, in Kollman's words, 'elitist' strategies. But if for some reason (local) food security becomes popular in public opinion, then, instead of institution-oriented activities, the farmers' association could use this popularity to attract attention via 'outside' or media-oriented tactics. It then engages in so-called 'comforting politics' to take advantage of public opinion to secure favorable public policies (e.g. subsidies to grow certain crops).

In this thesis I do not examine public opinion data. However I examine this phenomenon indirectly. I assume that for organizations that represent broader, diffuse, and non-business interests it is easier to relate to 'popular' issues than it is for other interests. As these organizations are more likely to perceive 'latent support' for their position, they will address the public as part of their influence strategy, whereas other organizations are probably likely to use public strategies only when the public obviously supports them. Although related to the first hypothesis on membership, this is a separate, fourth hypothesis: As compared to non-business interests, business interests, should have smaller websites and target their communication at policy makers.

In short, the interest group literature is inconclusive on the factors that explain the different ways in which interest organizations are politically active. However, the

literature discussed does provide us with several plausible factors (supporters, institutions, public opinion) that may explain activities of interest organizations and the underlying mechanisms. Figure 16 graphically represents the hypotheses formulated and the alternative explanations. The dashed arrow represents an expected relation between variables that is kept relatively constant in the research design. The solid black arrow represents an expected causal relation for which the design of the research guarantees sufficient variation.

4.3. ONLINE POLITICAL ACTION

As said earlier, previous research on interest organizations has largely relied on surveys and interviews for information on the types of activities undertaken by organizations. There are three potential challenges to this method, besides the general difference between surveys and website analysis mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. First, these methods produce data on whether organizations engage in certain activities or not (e.g. contacts with parliamentarians). Such 'crude' information (yes / no) does not tell us anything about the frequency of that activity and will suggest a more diverse action repertoire than it is in reality. Second, survey questionnaire usually pose the questions on behavior in the form a list of activities. This may lead respondents to easily and quickly tick boxes in the list. Third, it could be the case that respondents may find it socially desirable to emphasize the diversity of activities of the organization. Organizations want to appear 'active' and not 'passive'. All these things may suggest that organizations behave very similar whereas in reality they are very different (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). I thus sought for a measurement that is more likely to show differences between organizations. By focusing on actual behavior I hope to come up with more valid measures than taken from survey or interviews. I have chosen to investigate the actual (online) activities of interest organizations in order to more precisely specify the relative focus on specific types of activities (e.g. those related to public policy).

However, the use of online observations has some challenges as well. It is possible that certain organizations present only part of their activities online; if so, that will result in a biased view of their activities. Further, it could be that online political action cannot be understood in the same conceptual terms as 'traditional' action. This could be the case especially when new media, such as blogs or reputation systems, are used. A further downside of coding website-features is that the method does not allow for the inclusion of organizations that do lobby (e.g., regional representations, companies) but are not interest organizations with members. Such organizations tend to have some kind of online presence, such as a 'public affairs' section on the general website, but cannot be examined with the same scheme as other interest organizations. Please refer to the theory chapter for a conceptual discussion of this problem (section 2.3). However, other methods such as surveys or interviews have similar problems.

A discussion of previous literature on online politics may help to evaluate the likelihood of these potential problems. What types of political action may we observe on the internet? And do new communication technologies critically affect some of the expectations we may have developed on the basis of off-line political activity? The studies discussed below exemplify the research into the websites of different political organisations.

Cammaerts and Audenhove (2004) have examined the online activities of Belgian social movement organisations. They were interested in the use of social movements'

websites as a communication tool between members and within a movement consisting of various organizations (ad-hoc networking). Their main interest was in mobilisation and organization, but they also addressed agenda-setting questions. Their findings suggest that in order to reach the political agenda, organizations continue to rely on the traditional, mainstream press, despite opportunities offered by online and new media (Cammaerts and Audenhove 2004, 78).

Rogers (2004) analysed several online practices of 'information politics', such as methods to get online attention, epistemological practises to shape the issue, and strategies to move the debate out of national arenas into a more favourable international environment. In terms of political actors' tactics, he argued that 'informational politics [are] becoming the norm and that classic politics [are] in tatters' and that, therefore, the classical institutional or insider strategic repertoire should not be the exclusive focus of researchers (2004, 174).

Koopmans and Zimmermann (2007) coded a large sample of websites of political actors (selected on the basis of their offline visibility) in order to compare the differences between offline and online activity. They conclude that 'Despite the fact that the offline and online mechanisms of selection could hardly be more divergent, their outcomes are as we have seen virtually indistinguishable, both when we look at the distribution among actors of different levels of institutional power, and at the visibility that is given to actors of different geopolitical scopes' (Koopmans and Zimmermann 2007, 252-53). This conclusion strengthens our assumption that we can use online data to explain offline phenomena.

Finally, the work by Kluver and his colleagues (2007) involved a large comparative research project on online campaigning on the part of political parties in several political systems. This was a large-n study and entailed the coding of parties' websites. It was similar to other research on political parties (Foot and Schneider 2006; Norris 2003; Strandberg 2008; Trechsel et al. 2003). In an analysis of parties campaigning for the 2004 EP election, Kluver et al. constructed indices with two clusters of features: one set focused on providing information and another on citizen engagement. These features presumably have different target groups, with information provision targeted at a broader audience of potential voters, and engagement features, such as online donation and discussion option, targeted at the parties' members. Their assumptions on the relation between features and target groups and their survey questionnaire have provided a useful starting point for my research (Also: Foot and Schneider 2006, 216-19).

These studies demonstrate the importance of online media for all kinds of activities by political actors. They tentatively suggest that the online world may look different, but may not lead to fundamentally different kinds of political activities or outcomes. Activities observed online are likely to be very similar to those observed offline. For instance, if an interest organization publishes press statements on its website it is very likely that this organization also sends out this statement via 'traditional' ways. Furthermore, these prior studies of the political use of new media do not seem to affect the truth status of our explanations for the strategies that organized interests use to influence politics and policy. That is, the theoretical arguments about the different activities of different types of interests and organizations are not immediately related to the differences between offline or online politics. They also present the analysis of online information as a promising, valid and reliable alternative method to survey or interview research.

At the same time, these studies are rather different from my research. That is, none of them examined communication strategies targeted at policy makers or journalists.

Nor did any of these studies probe the causes for variation among different (types of) actors. That is, these studies did not specifically address any of the general expectations developed by group researchers about the action repertoire of interest groups, as discussed in the previous section. Besides, none of these studies address EU-level interest organizations and the specific character of the European context. On these points my research is the first of its kind.

4.4. SAMPLING, CODING, AND EXAMPLE

The research described in this chapter is based on a different, earlier sample of EU organizations (2005) than the sample examined in the previous chapter (2009). The sampling procedure and data sources, however, are similar. In the results section I will briefly examine the differences and similarities of the samples in terms of the independent variables of membership and interests (proportions and correlation). This allows for an evaluation of the validity of the samples and consequently the validity of the findings based on either of the two samples.

The sample was derived from four sources: CONECCS (October 2005), the European Parliament register of accredited lobbyists (October 2005), the European Public Affairs Directory 2005, and the Directory of European Union Information Sources 2002. These data sources have been described by Berkhout and Lowery (2008) and were also discussed in the previous chapter. The CONECCS register is a voluntary register, kept by the EC, that is open to EU-wide associations only.[142] The EP register includes all lobbyists that apply for an EP-door pass. The Public Affairs and Information Sources directories predominantly include organizations that maintain offices in Brussels.

From each of these four data sources, about 50 organizations were randomly selected, thus producing a sample of about 200 organizations proportionally distributed over the sources. This first sample includes only relatively few organizations that represent government or public sector interests. Because my second hypothesis specifically addresses the activities of these types of organizations, I additionally sampled about 20 organizations with public sector organizations as members from the Landmarks Public Affairs Directory and the EP register, in order to allow for a proper evaluation of the expectation that public-sector develop similar collective action repertoires as private-sector organizations. Thus, the final sample is a relatively accurate representation of organizations active on EU policies, especially more accurate than those studies that rely on a single source.[143] As known from earlier research, the community of EU level interest organizations includes a high number of business interest organizations (Balme and Chabanet 2008; Coen 2007; Mahoney 2008).

[142] The European Commission replaced this list by the register for interest representatives in June 2008. The CONECCS list is no longer available.

[143] However, please note the overrepresentation of organizations with public institutions as members. Further, national associations are probably slightly underrepresented in the sample because they are not included in the CONECCS directory, and very few are included in the Euroconfidentiel directory.

The information on both the independent and the dependent variables is gathered from the websites of interest organizations.[144] For the independent variables on membership and substantive interest I use fairly straightforward categorizations that have been used in previous research. The gathering of the data on the dependent variables entailed more elaborate coding of website features. However, the coding scheme does not require sophisticated interpretation on the part of the coder and takes about 20 minutes to complete per website.

Figure 17 specifies the operationalization of the design. I will discuss the independent and dependent variable(s) below.

The independent variables include the types of members[145] and categories of substantive interest.[146] These were coded from the online membership lists and the relevant

[144] We coded the following variables (apart from those mentioned in other footnotes): **access date**, **Coding problem** (No website, Website no longer available, Organization no longer exists, Website does not contain information, Other), **introduction page** (Y/N), **language** (two options from: English, French, German, Other), **biography / about us section** (Y/N), **Statements of opinion** (number, Y/N past three months), **Speeches** (number, by members, by others, Y/N past three months), **Press releases** (number, Y/N past three months), **Bulletin or newsletter** (number, available online, email (members only or also non-members) Y/N past three months), **Calendar or list of events** (number of events, events by others (Y/N)), **dominant perspective of the news on the website** (Not available, on internal organization matters, on EU policies, on the industry / sector, on national policies / affairs, other), **dominant aim of facts and figures** (Not available, Research based and policy oriented, Research based general orientation, Research based market / sector information, Promotion of sector to policy makers, Promotion of sector to consumers, Unclear aims, Other), **Reports** (number, by organization, by others), **Political images** (EU flag / logo (1), Maps with navigational function, Maps without navigational function, Graphical reference to EU logo (2), National flags / logos, Other political symbols (3), None), **Reputational images** (Atmospherical photographs or illustrations? (1), Graphics (representing data), Graphics (not representing data), Organizational logo (2), Organizational slogan or motto (2), Quality label, Campaign logo (3), Campaign slogan (3), Navigational logos, Fonts of sponsors, Logos of sponsors, Fonts of members (5), Logos of members (5), Other (specify) (4), None), **event images** (Photographs of meetings or speeches (2), Photos of (board) members of the organization (3), Other (specify), Tourist image of event (location) (1), None, Logos of conference/fair), **audio or video** (Y/N), **members only section** (Y/N), **Forum or Guestbook or Blog** (Y/N), **open to new members?** (No information available, Not open, explicitly closed, Yes, subscription possible online, Yes, but no form or policy, Yes, under specific conditions and procedure, No info, but presumably open, No info, but presumably closed), **external links** (number, three categories, No link page, no links, No link page, some links in other sections, Official (European) institutions, Member organizations, Similar / Friendly organizations, Similar / Opposing organizations, Expert organizations, Political organizations (parties), Official specific administrative agencies, Other, Campaign website), most recent update (no of months), visitor counter (Y/N, number), *if institution*: **type** (Lobby Firm with Public Affairs / Media section, Lobby Firm general website, Company with Public Affairs / Media section, Company general website, Public / Government institution with PA section, Public / Government institution general, Other), **political content** (high, medium, low).

[145] **Membership**: (number, three categories), No information available online, National association of membership groups, National association of regional/local association, National association of public institutions, National association of private institutions, Local / Regional association, Public institution,

FIGURE 17 Specifications of the model of membership type and target audience

sections on the website. Members were classified irrespective of their internal status, so they may be 'supporters' without specific voting rights or rights to specific services. A total of sixteen categories of members are differentiated with multiple categories per organization. In addition, the dominant substantive interest of an organization was classified using the 28 categories adapted from Gray and Lowery (1993, 90). These membership and interest variables will be analyzed at different levels of aggregation.

Remember that I expect that organizations with different types of members, or representing different types of interests, produce websites that are varyingly conducive to engaging in exchange relationships with members, policy makers (politicians and bureaucrats), and the broader public or the media. These groups are now understood as target audiences and are directly related to or involved in the three types of exchange relationships introduced in the theory chapter.

The three exchange relationships are different in their both form and content. They could be about substantively different things and definitively have a different form, i.e. require different types of organizational activities. I am interested in the form and not the content of exchange. That is, interest organizations have certain political preferences (content of exchange) and can offer political and technical support to policy makers (form of exchange). At the same time, such preferences or specific political positions always require political activity to be realized. By itself the substantive dimension either does not add information on exchanges, or is very similar across the different exchanges. So, studying the specific policy preferences of interest organizations will not help me to examine the relative importance of various exchange relationships of organizations. However, activities related to different exchanges are likely to vary considerably across the environments in which exchange relationships can be constructed. That is, membership exchanges can for instance be about contributions, annual meetings, newsletters et cetera, whereas media exchanges deal with such things as press statements, public action, and relevant

Private institution, Affiliate / similar organization / association, Supporting / sponsoring member, Other, Mixed public/private institution, Membership Group, European (sub sector) association, Individuals),

146 **Substantive interest** (Agriculture, Banking, Big business, Business Services, Civil Rights / Liberties, Communications, Construction, Education, Environmental Interests, EU Region, Foreign Policy, Health, Hotel/Restaurant, Insurance, Labour Unions, Law, Local Government, Manufacturing, Natural Resources, Non-EU Government, Other, Religion, Small Business, Social Welfare, Sports & Recreation, Transportation, Utilities, Women's Interests).

information needed by the media for their own purposes. Thus, I do not examine the specific content of various forms of communication, but only evaluate the form or medium of the activities of interest organizations.

This is in line with previous research. For instance, Foot and Schneider (2006, 168) found a strong relation between the chosen format or web practice and the intended target audience. While seemingly unproblematic, such assumptions require careful empirical operationalisation. With certain features the communication format makes the supposition about the relationship with the target audience immediately plausible: press statements are targeted at the media, members-only sections are designed for members, and reports aim to influence policy makers. With other features, additional coding has been done to specify the link between format and target audience. This more thorough examination has, for example, been done for newsletters, which may be targeted exclusively at members but may also be aimed at non-members, such as close contacts or policy makers. This is also the case for the coding of the 'news' and 'facts and figures'. Here, I categorized news perspectives and aims of facts and figures, in order to differentiate between presumed audiences. The assumptions on the targets of different features are specified in table 19. I will further discuss the table below.

On the basis of these assumptions features are clustered in indices. A similar indexing method was used by Foot and Schneider (2006; 157-58) when they defined 'clusters of features that correspond conceptually and functionally with each practice'. As indicated in the table and discussed below, some of the coded features are double-weighted in order to reflect their relative importance in reaching certain target groups. These indices have allowed me to present the data at higher levels of aggregation in a theoretically meaningful way.

A typical website includes several of these features. The indices for these features are composed of different types of variables: (1) dummies, which indicate the presence of certain features such as a members-only section, (2) variables that represent the frequency of a specific feature, such as press releases, and (3) indicators that are categorized, such as the 'perspective of the news'. I have further weighted some of these features according to the median number found in the full sample, with a website in which a specific feature was found in an above-the-median-number frequency being counted twice.[147] Each of the indices also contains mutually exclusive variables in which coders are forced to choose between categories. It was, for instance, impossible for coders to indicate that organizations presented both members-oriented figures and policy-related figures; they could only indicate either type of figures. This increased the difference between the indices and lowers the correlation of the index scores.

First, the index for members-oriented features includes aspects of the websites that facilitate communication between members and the interest organization. These could be features that inform members on organizations' activities (e.g. a calendar) or services (e.g., contracted reports, market or sector-oriented information). The members-only section is doubly weighted because it probably incorporates some additional member-oriented

[147] I have examined the consistency of these indexes in terms of their constituent terms. The indexes on policy makers and on members have satisfying Cronbach's Alpha (>.5) scores, and no specific outliers. The score on the index on the broader public proved more problematic, but because of its theoretical coherence it is presented anyway.

TABLE 19 Assumptions on features and target audience

	index (rescaled 0-10): target audience		
composition of index:	**members**	**policy makers**	**broader public and media**
a single score based on the absence or presence of feature	• market or sector oriented facts and figures, • images of events, • links to members, • news on internal organization matters or on the industry or sector	• political images and symbols, • links to official institutions, • news on EU or national policies	• general and consumer-oriented facts and figures, • 'atmosphere' images, • links to 'friends', • campaign logos/ websites/links, • online registration for membership, • other news perspectives and figures
a double score when above-median frequency score	• online newsletters, • reports (others), • list or calendar of events	• statement of opinion, • reports (own)	• press releases
a double score based on absence or presence	• members-only section	• newsletters available via email list, • policy-oriented facts and figures	

features which cannot be observed and coded. Further, aspects of the website that encourage communication among members themselves are included, such as links to other members. Second, the index on policy-oriented communication includes formats that address the institutional policy-making process. These features are relatively readily recognizable, such as (policy) statements of opinion, reports, email-newsletters aimed at non-members, and the use of EU symbols (flag, logo). In this index the presence of policy-oriented facts and figures is counted double because earlier research has suggested that policy makers especially value the expertise of interest organizations. Third, the aspects of the website that are supposed to be targeted at a broader audience are difficult to differentiate from communication aimed at members or the policy process. This index includes, among other things, more general graphical attractiveness, campaign material, possibilities to become a member online, and general or consumer-oriented figures. As almost all websites have a biography or 'about us'-section it is not included in this index despite that it is aimed at a broader audience.

Last, besides the targeted activities, I examined the general level of political interest of organizations as indicated by their websites. The size or sophistication of a website is measured by the number and diversity of different forms of communication, such as online newsletters, reports, press statements, and so on. In part these features are also included in the indices on the target audience discussed above. However, in addition, several non-substantive website features were coded to compose this general indicator for the size or scope of the website. These features are: an introduction page, audio or video content, discussion forum, visitors counter, recent updates, and so on.

As examples of the features and the indices, picture 1 and picture 2 show screenshots of the home pages of two European interest organizations. Screenshot 1 shows the web page of the Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment. According to the online membership list this organization represents the interest of three beverage carton manufacturers and its seven suppliers. The web page contains various features that are part of the target audience indices such as press releases, slogans, different types of images, and news. This organization has chosen a balanced communication strategy, targeting members, policy makers, and the broader public. This can be seen from the formats chosen and types of information, with first the members' section, campaign material, calendar, and internal news (a new chairperson) targeted at members. Second, the position papers and other publications are presumably targeted at policy makers. Third, the reputational images, slogans, and press releases are aimed at a broader public.

The second example is the web page of the European Social Insurance Platform, which represents 35 (public or semi-public) agencies that manage social security funds, such as pensions and accident insurance funds. This page is not aimed at a broader public; almost all the publicly accessible information is targeted at policy makers. These include the images of the EU flag and logo (and building), the position statements, and the links to official (European) institutions and agencies. The remainder of the website is aimed at members and is protected by a sign-in procedure.

4.5. RESULTS

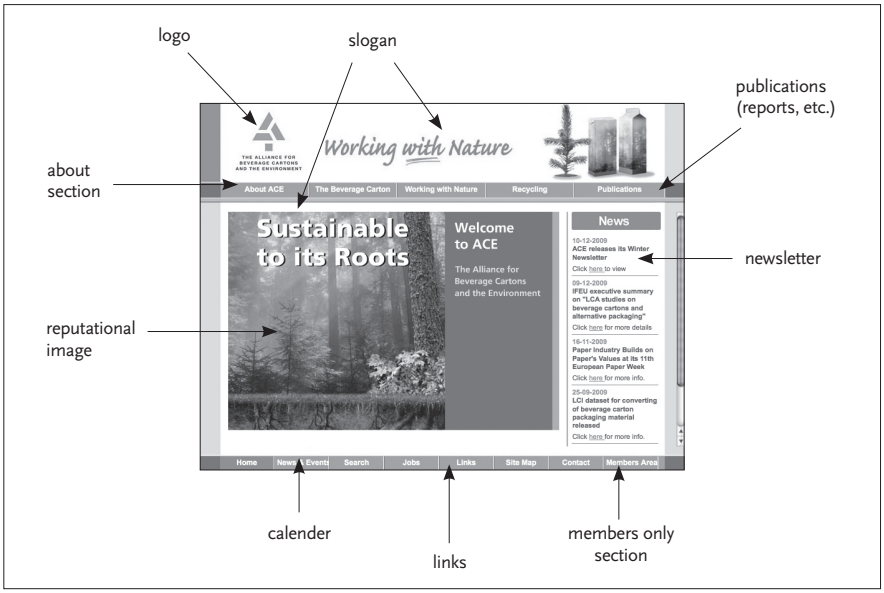
The main aim of the analysis is to examine the differences and similarities in the way in which interest organizations address certain audiences. The results are presented at varying levels of aggregation, and in three ways. First, I use descriptive statistics to separately present aspects of the independent and dependent variable. This includes on the one hand the data in terms of membership and interest, and on the other hand the use of several website features addressed at specific audiences. Then, I move on from the analysis of individual website features to the analysis of the clustered features of the target group indices. A comparison of the means of the indices of several categories of organizations is presented. Then, I present several regression models on the indices to validate the comparison of means tests. Finally, Venn diagrams are used to evaluate the relationship between different types of communication of different organizations at an even more aggregate level, by combining scores on the three indices. In contrast to the regression models this allows for a simultaneous analysis of the scores on the three indices for subsets of the sample.

4.5.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Of the 229 organizations in the sample, 17 organizations (7%) did not have a website, and 47 (20%) organizations represent interests but are no associations or groups such as regional representations, company liaison offices, international organizations, and lobby firms.[148] The coding scheme was not designed for the websites of these types of organizations, so I only registered whether these contained a separate public affairs section and whether

[148] Of this 20 per cent about a third are lobby firms, a third companies, and a third public institutions. Slightly under half of them have separate public affairs sections.

PICTURE 1 Opening page of the website of The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE), April 2010, www.ace.be



PICTURE 2 Opening page of the website of the European Social Insurance Platform (ESIP), April 2010, www.esip.org

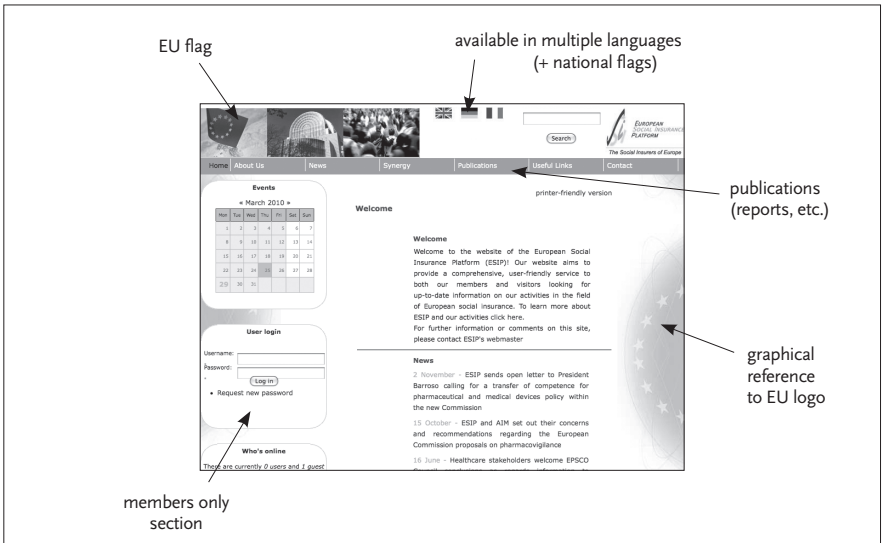
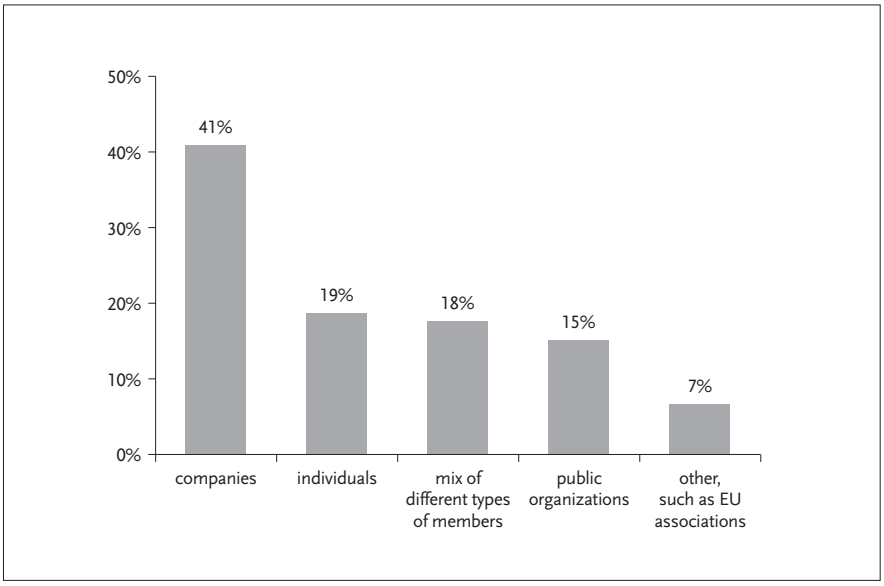


FIGURE 18 Proportion of organizations by types of membership (n=165)[149]



this contained 'political content'. Consequently, the useable sample consisted of 165 coded websites of organizations. I will first examine this sample in terms of types of membership and categories of interest, and then discuss types of communication and the scores on the audience indices.

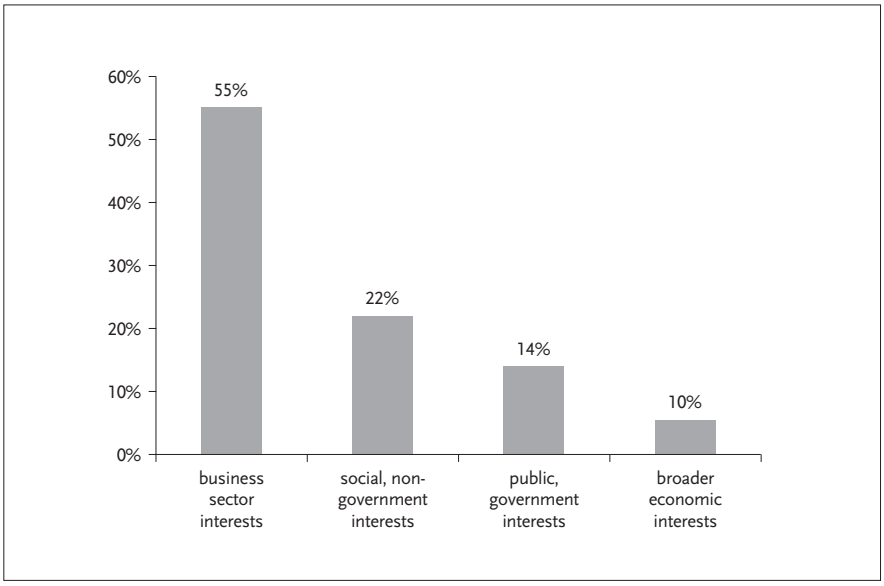
Figure 18 and figure 19 present the proportions of organizations by membership and represented interests, respectively. These categories have been aggregated from the more detailed coding described above.[150] [151] To give an example of this recoding: the International

[149] The 2009 sample of EU level organizations (n=226), used in the previous chapter, excluding 12 national associations and 27 (national/EU) organizations without members (making a subset of 186), is distributed as follows: 60% companies, 28% individuals, 5 % public organizations, and 8 % other. Or, when expressed with a separate category for the 41 organizations with overlapping membership types (subset of 159 after deduction of 27 organizations without members/info on members): 40% companies, 25 % individuals, 26% multiple membership categories, 3% public organizations, 6% other.

[150] Recoding of 29 categories of (economic and social) interests (see footnote 147): "**Business sector interests**": 1 "Agriculture", 2 "Banking", 4 "Business Services", 6 "Communications", 7 "Construction", 12 "Health", 13 "Hotel/Restaurant", 14 "Insurance", 16 "Law", 18 "Manufacturing", 19 "Natural Resources", 26 "Transportation", 27 "Utilities". "**Broader economic interests**": 3 "Big business", 15 "Labour Unions", 23 "Small Business". "**Public interests (gvt)**": 8 "Education" 10 "EU Region" 11 "Foreign Policy" 17 "Local Government" 20 "Non-EU Government". "**Social interests (non-gvt)**": 5 "Civil Rights" 9 "Environmental Interests" 21 "Other" 22 "Religion" 24 "Social Welfare" 25 "Sports and Recreation" 28 "Womens Interests"

[151] Recoding of 16 categories of members (see footnote 146): "**Companies**": National association of

FIGURE 19 Proportion of organizations by type of represented interest (n=165)



Association for Soaps, Detergents and Maintenance Products is a combination of 39 national associations of soap producers and ten big producers of soap, such as Unilever and Procter and Gamble. This organization was classified under 'companies', because both the members of the national associations and the direct members of the EU association are companies, and was also classified as a business sector interest because it represents a specific business sector (not business interests more generally).

Figure 18 shows that the largest category (41 per cent) in the sample consists of organizations with companies as members, either via national associations or via direct membership. Organizations of individuals, public organizations, or a mix of the aggregate categories are each represented in just under 20 per cent of the sample. Figure 19 presents a similar distribution when organized by types of interest. As expected, business interests dominate, and this proportion is even larger than suggested by the membership data in figure 18. Fully 55 per cent of the organizations represent business sector interests, and an additional 10 per cent represent more broad economic interests, which adds up to 65 per cent. This high proportion, when compared to the 41 per cent of organizations with company membership, raises questions about the relation between membership and

private institutions, Private institution. "**Individuals**": National association of membership groups, Membership Group, Individuals. "**Public organizations**": National association of public institutions, Public institution. "**Other**": No information available online, National association of regional/local association, , Local / Regional association, Affiliate / similar organization / association, Supporting / sponsoring member, Other, Mixed public/private institution, European (sub sector) association,). "**Mix of types**": Members in different aggregate categories.

FIGURE 20 Relative proportion of organizations by type of membership by represented interest (n=165)

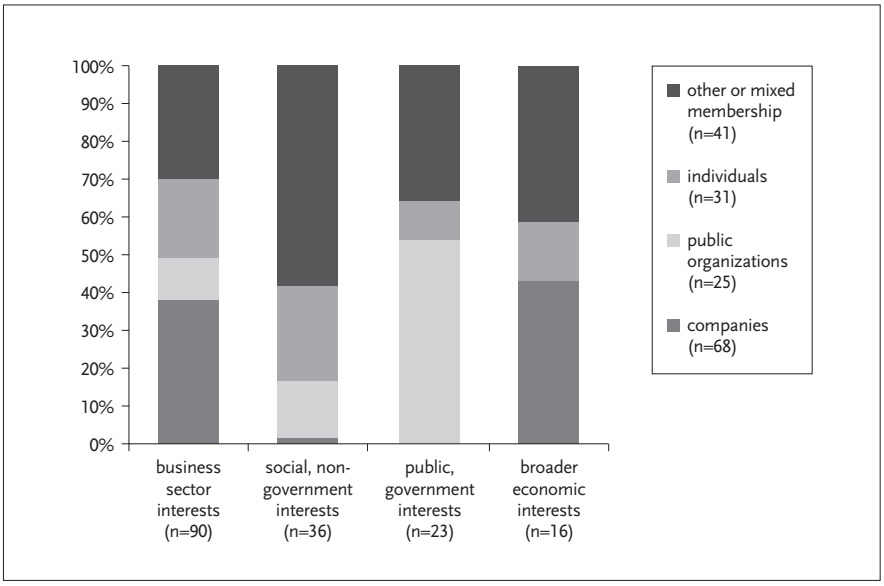
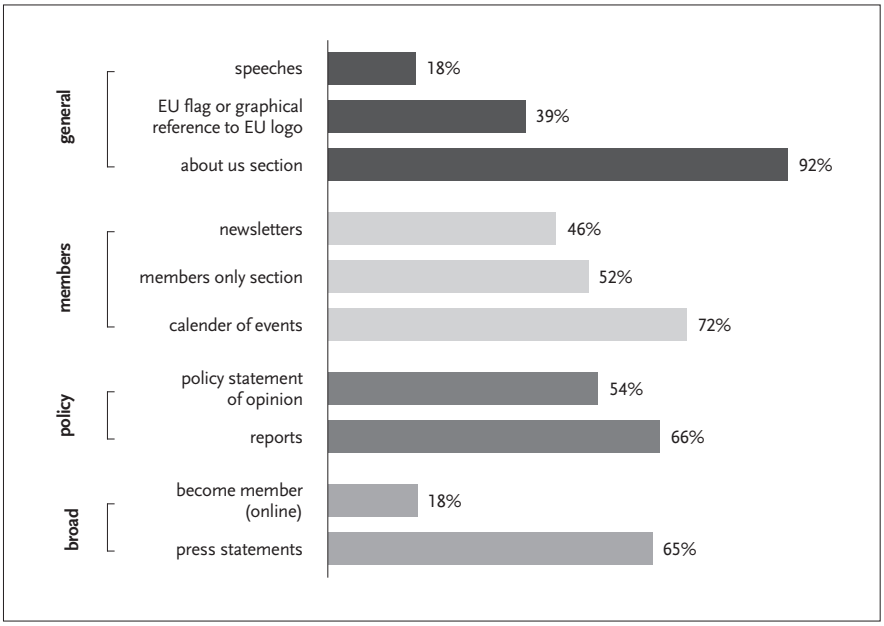


FIGURE 21 Proportions of organizations (n=165) with selected features on their websites, per target audience



represented interest. That is, it would seem logical for business associations to represent business, and for membership groups (citizens) to represent social interests. Figure 20 examines this relation.

Figure 20 shows the same categories of represented interest as figure 19, but displays the proportion of organizations in these categories for certain types of membership. The figure shows that the relationship between membership and interests is more complex than one might expect. That is, organizations with individuals as members do not 'automatically' represent diffuse or 'social' interests. As seen in the first column of the figure, organizations with individuals as members (about 20 per cent in that category) also promote business sector interests, for instance via professional organizations. This column also shows that only about 40 per cent of the organizations working in specific business sectors are (exclusively) supported by companies. The second column of the figure presents the membership information regarding organizations representing 'social' interests, such as religious, social welfare, or environmental organizations. Only 20 per cent of these organizations fully depend on individuals or national associations of individuals. About half of them rely on some mixture of membership types. For example, the European Federation for Street Children receives EU subsidies (and has a 'framework partnership agreement with the European Commission') but also relies on 33 national organizations for contributions. These include for instance the Talinn Centre for Children at Risk in Estonia, War Child in the United Kingdom, and the International Child Development Initiatives in the Netherlands. These member organizations have very different sources of support, ranging from individual donations to public subsidies and direct public provision. These results suggest that membership and interests only partially correlate. They are thus likely to have independent effects on the types of political activities of interest organizations, and so merit separate analysis (presented below).

Which specific features do we find on the sampled websites? Figure 21 shows the proportion of websites that contain specific sections or features. The features are categorized by the target audience they seem to address. The upper three bars show general website features that are not included in any of the specific audience indices. The third bar from the top, for example, shows that nearly all websites have a separate section on the history, background, and mission of the organization ('about us'). The bars related to member-oriented features shows that 'member only' sections seem popular with about half of the organizations offering this selective service. More generally, the figures show that most organizations care about their websites, as they frequently feed it with different types of information. This supports the assumption that websites reflect a variety of political activities of interest organizations. At the same time I found substantial variation in the use of important features. This suggests that the data provide sufficient statistical leverage to make substantive claims about the factors that may explain such variation. The following figures, on the scores on the indices, further support this.

Figure 22, figure 23 and figure 24 show the proportions of organizations by their scores on the respective audience-indices. Some organizations have none of the features included in a certain index, while others have all of them, up-to-date, and in great numbers. Further the distribution of the scores on these indices generally seems close to a normal distribution.[152] As can be seen in figure 22 and figure 24, this is especially the case for the

[152] There are several more precise tests of normality. The indexes have the following 'skewness' scores that

FIGURE 22 Proportion of organizations by score on members index

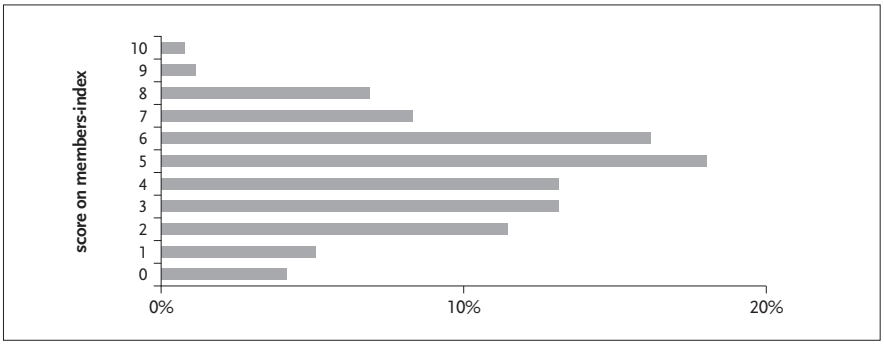


FIGURE 23 Proportion of organizations by score on policymakers index

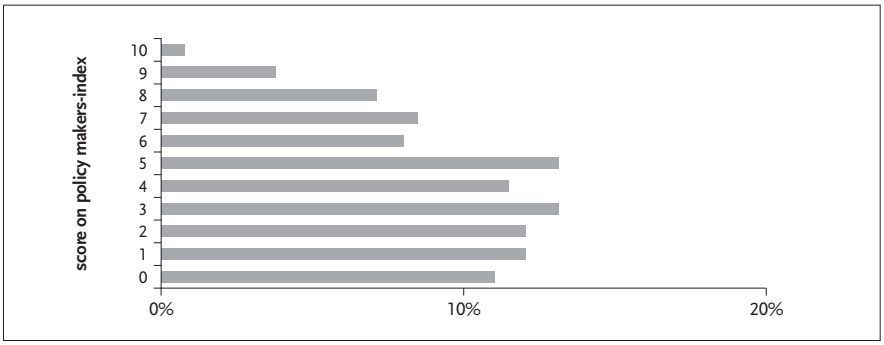
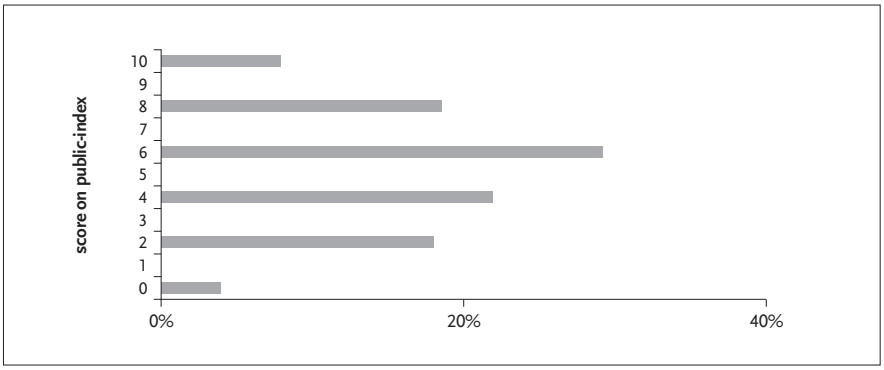


FIGURE 24 Proportion of organizations by score on broader-public index (note rescaling of y-axis and recoding of x-axis to allow comparison with other figures)



indices on features aimed at members and the broader public, respectively. Figure 23 shows the distribution of organizations on the index on policy-related features. This distribution is somewhat skewed towards lower scores. About twenty per cent of the organizations have a score of zero or one on this index. They do not show any interest in addressing policy makers online. When compared to the features aimed at their membership, I found such low scores for about 10 per cent of the organizations. These low policy scores are unexpected when compared to the results in the previous chapter, and also in light of earlier research on the EU. In the research described in previous chapter I found that the population of EU interest organizations is relatively politically active and oriented on influencing policies above other political activities. This could be related to the higher threshold for creating website features aimed at policy makers than for features aimed at members. For instance, it is fairly easy to publish some pictures of the annual meeting on the website of the interest organization. It takes more expertise and consideration, however, to professionally publish a policy report or statement online. This increases the variation across organizations in this regard, which should make it easier to distinguish theoretically expected differences on this index.

4.5.2. RELATING POLITICAL INTEREST AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

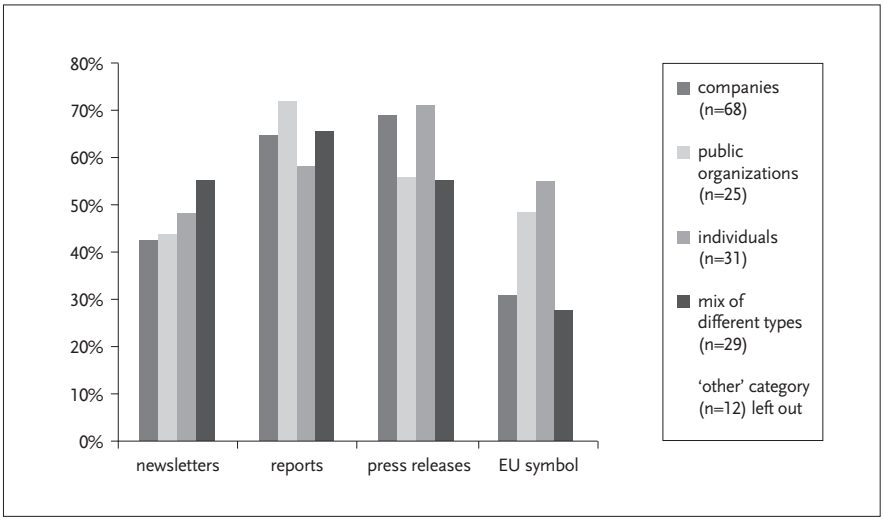
The previous figures show variation across all the organizations in the sample in their use of certain specific features and in terms of scores on the indices clustered per target audience. In this section, I will present several figures on the average presence of specific website-features and on the means of the indices of the clustered features. I will examine the variation in the averages per subsections of the sample. This is a first step in the evaluation of the differences between organizations as categorized by membership or interest. In the next section I pursue the same goal by means of a more comprehensive multivariate regression analysis.

The next two figures show the variation across membership categories (figure 25) and interest categories (figure 26) regarding the presence of selected features. The general presence of the selected features is the same as the proportions presented in figure 21. In general we do not observe that certain features are disproportionately used by either organizations with certain types of members or by organizations that represent a certain category of interest. This can be seen from the relatively limited variation within each feature. This contradicts all of the four hypotheses in which variation between membership types and interest is expected to occur. The absence of variation is especially striking across the different categories of interests presented in figure 26. For example, as seen in the second set of bars in figure 26, the proportion of organizations that presents policy reports on their website is similar for groups that represent 'social interests', such as women's or environmental interests, as for groups that represent business interests such as banking or chemicals. This is in contrast with the fourth hypothesis in which I expected business interests to be more policy oriented.[153]

support the remark in the text (zero, not skewed; negative score is positive skew, and positive score is negative skew, Stata command, sum, detail): members: -0.07, policy makers: 0.26, public: 0.06.

153 As a second example, I did not expect to find any difference between organizations with public or private (company) membership. However, I did find differences, as shown in the third set of bars in figure 25. Press releases are more generally used by organizations with companies as members than by

FIGURE 25 Proportion of websites with selected features per membership-category



However, some differences between categories of organizations seem to confirm some of my expectations. For instance, the second set of bars in figure 25 shows that reports are more often used by organizations that represent public institutions (72%) than by organizations with individual membership (58%). For press releases this is exactly the other way around. The third set of bars in figure 25 indicates proportions of 57% against 70%, respectively. This partly confirms my first hypothesis on the targeting activities of organizations that represent bureaucratic organizations as compared to individuals.

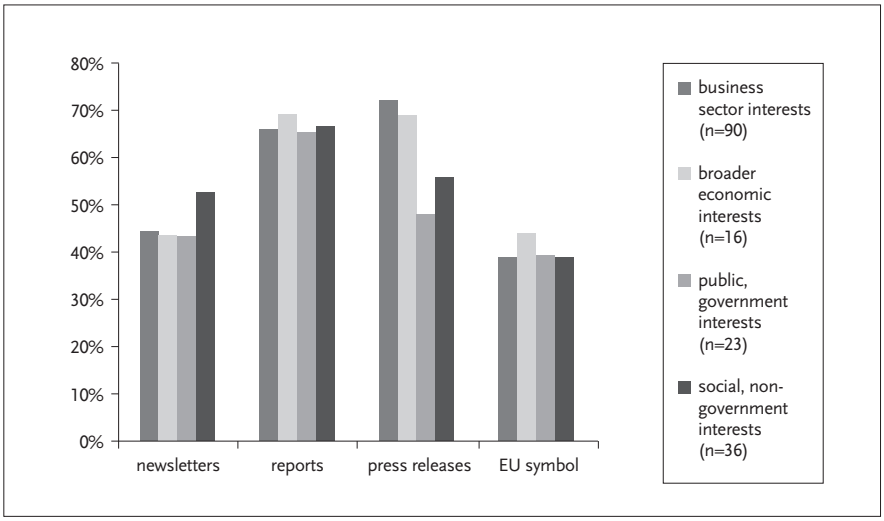
In the next figures I present a series of comparison of means tests for subsets of the sample. I examined whether the average scores for organizations with certain types of members, or representing certain interests, are different from the rest of the sample. In this section I use the audience indices constructed. Further, I use a more precise categorization of membership types in order to differentiate between direct or indirect membership, i.e. between European federations (of national associations) and European associations (of, for instance, companies).[154]

Figure 27, figure 28, figure 29 and figure 30 show the average scores on the indices and confidence intervals of different subgroups of the sample. The horizontal grey bar represents the 95 per cent confidence interval of the mean of the full sample. From left to right, the figure indicates, first, the means of organizations with high (above mean) values on other indices, second, the means of subsets defined by membership types, and last, the

organizations with public organizations as members (70 per cent versus 56 per cent). A similar difference in terms of interest is shown in the third set of bars in figure 26.

154 In contrast to the previous figure, where I constructed a separate category for organizations with multiple types of members, I have now used indicator (as opposed to categorical) variables, so that organizations could be counted as having several categories of members.

FIGURE 26 Proportion of websites with selected features per interest-category



means of subsets defined by represented interest. Taken together, these figures suggest that hardly any of the subgroup scores differ from the average of the full sample. This can be seen in the overlap of all the black spikes with the grey area that represents the full sample average. With the usual statistical t-test that compares the subgroup with the rest of the sample, some of the subgroups, however, do have discernibly different scores from the rest of the sample. These categories are indicated by a star on the x-axis of the figures.

Figure 27 shows the scores on the index for the general size of the websites. This can be understood as the general extent to which organizations are politically active. In terms of membership and represented interests there is no significant difference between the subgroups and the full sample mean, as none of the variables show a significant t-test result. However, not included in the other figures, I also examined these results by data source. Organizations derived from the Coneccs list and the EP register show higher means than organizations from the paper directories by Landmarks and Euroconfidentiel. This could indicate support for more institutional explanations of group strategies. That is, for organizations from the Coneccs list and those from the EP register we know for certain that they are involved in some form of inside lobbying, whereas for organizations from the other two sources, the directories, we cannot be so sure. The higher means for organizations from the institutional data sources seem to indicate a positive correlation between inside lobbying and outside-oriented, online activities.

Figure 28 shows the mean values on the index of members-oriented website features. In the right section of the figure the averages of the index are shown for subgroups that represent certain interests. The figure shows that organizations representing 'social interests' average 3.6 on membership-oriented communication, as opposed to 5 for business-sector interests. As shown in the middle of the figure, similar contrasting scores were found for organizations with companies as members (5.3) and organizations with individuals or groups of individuals as members (3.4). This contradicts my expectation that

FIGURE 27 **Means and confidence intervals of sample subsets of the index on general website features**

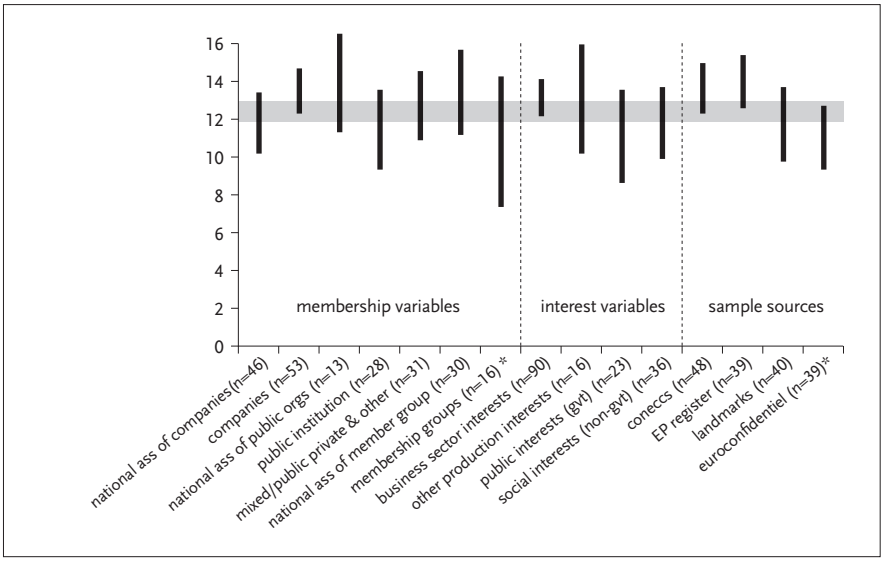


FIGURE 28 **Means and confidence intervals of sample subsets of the index on members-oriented website features**

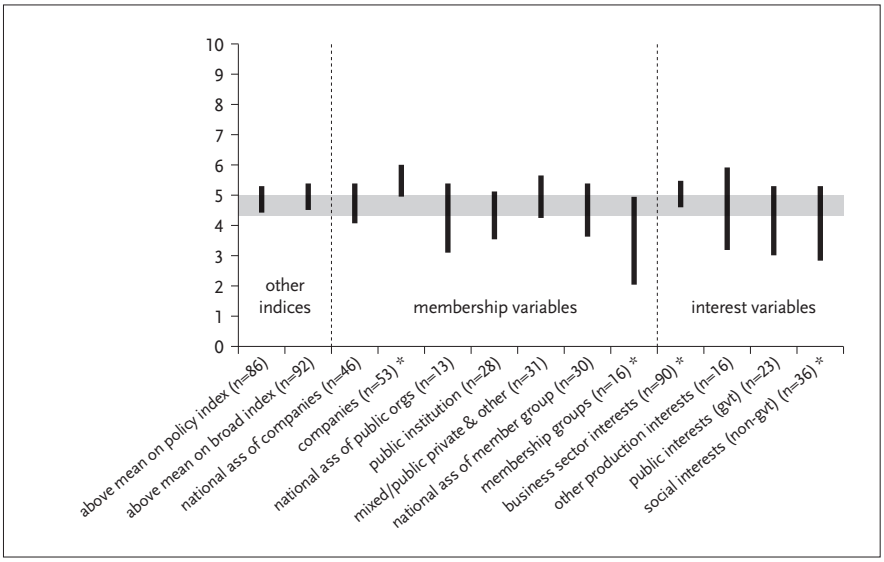


FIGURE 29 **Means and confidence intervals of sample subsets of the index on policy-oriented website features**

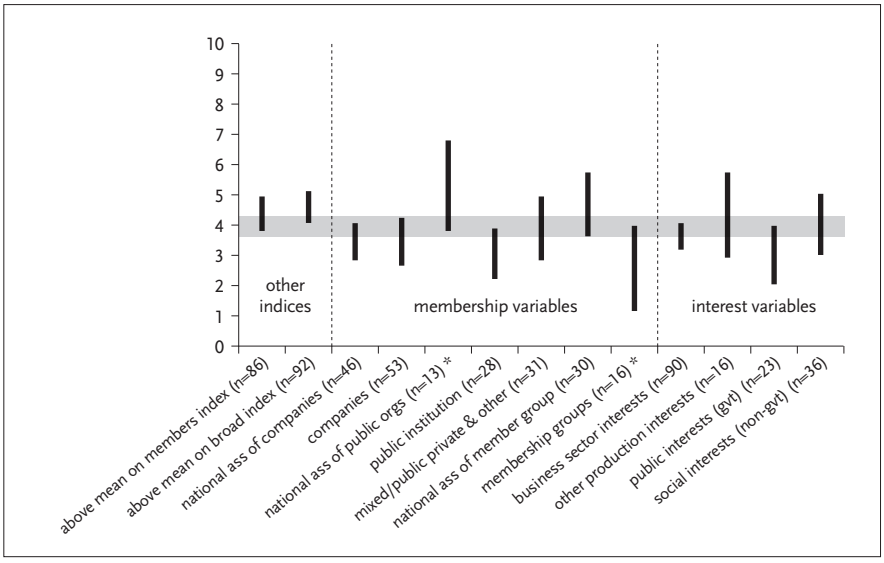
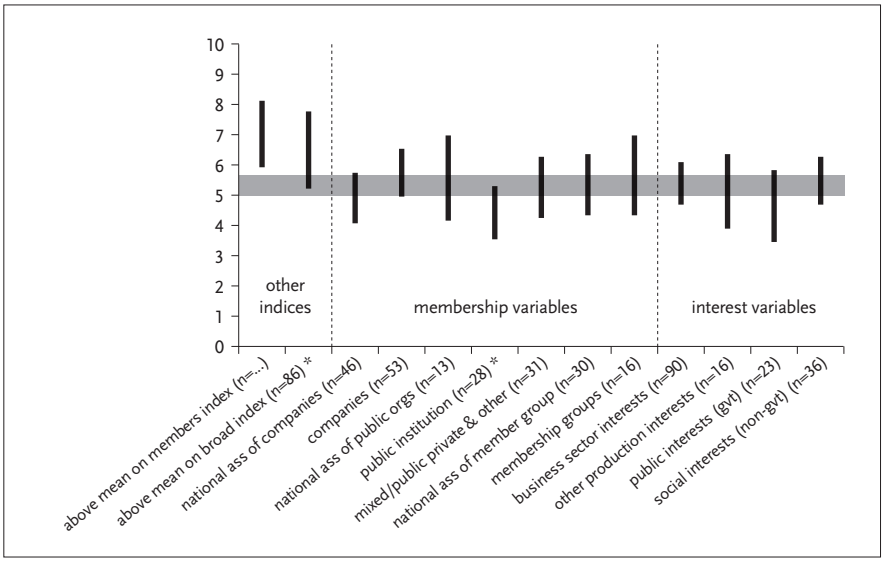


FIGURE 30 **Means and confidence intervals of sample subsets of the index on website features oriented at a broad public**



organizations that represent social interests or have individual members will do more to build a lasting exchange relationship with members, and thus produce relevant online features to connect with their constituents. The high scores indicate that business interests or organizations with companies as constituents are actually more active in this regard.

Figure 29 shows the averages scores on the index of policy-oriented website features. Again, it shows relatively little variation in policy-oriented communication between the subsets. As shown in figure 23, the scores for this index are more widely distributed, with a slight downward skew. This makes it more likely to observe groups of 'outliers'. Regardless of this higher likelihood, only the (small) subsets of organizations consisting of either national associations of public institutions or of membership groups show significantly higher and lower levels of activities designed to address policy makers, respectively. In neither figure 28 and nor figure 29 (left most bars) did I find that organizations with higher scores on, for instance, the members index also had significantly higher scores on the index on policy-related features. This suggests that these indices do not correlate (correlation coefficient of 0.16).[155] This is partly a result of the coding method, in which coders had to choose between any of two constituent terms of the indices.[156] However, this also indicates real-world differentiation between organizations. That is, it suggests that certain organizations specialize in attempting to influence policies, whereas others focus on their exchanges with members. I found a similar specialization in the previous chapter (table 9).

Figure 30 shows the averages scores on the index of website features aimed at the media and broader public opinion. In contrast to the previous figures, the left most bars in figure 30 show that organizations that have strongly developed any of the other communication repertoires are also particularly likely to broaden their activities towards a wider audience. This indicates that such broader communication may be a 'by-product' of, or something of a second-order nature relative to any of the other types of communication. Contrary to the specialization suggested earlier with regard to members- and policy makers-oriented communication, organizations do not seem to specialize in media-oriented activities (typically associated with social movement organizations).

The overall result that comes out of these figures is the absence of variation in the main explanatory variables in relation to the dependent variables. I find that only a couple of theoretically relevant subsections of the sample engage in significantly different political activities (as measured by the average presence of certain website features). The results further indicated a specific interrelation between the exchange relationships of organizations with their members, policy makers and the broader public. This is addressed in section 4.5.4. Furthermore, the relatively little variation shown in these figures suggest that a regression analysis would not have strong explanatory power, nor indicate large effects for specific variables. However, in a comparison of means analysis, variables are examined individually and we cannot determine the explanatory power of the various independent variables relative to each other. In the next section I will present such more sophisticated models.

[155] Correlation coefficients: between members index and policy index: 0,16, between members index and broad index: 0.24, and between policy index and broad index: 0.3

[156] For instance, they had to choose between either policy-oriented or sector-oriented figures.

4.5.3. MODELING THE RELATION BETWEEN INTERESTS, MEMBERS AND ACTIVITIES

Table 20 presents several OLS regression models on the respective audience indices. Model 1 deals with the indicators for the types of interest that organizations represent and the scores on target audience indices. The variation on these aspects explains between 11 and 14 per cent of the variation on the respective indices. This is a low score, especially in light of the theoretically expected strong differences between types of interests, and the mutually reinforcing nature of several aspects of political activities. The first set of rows present the data on indices. As discussed earlier in relation to figure 30, organizations with political activities that attempt to attract broad attention also engage in activities aimed at either members or policy makers. This can be seen in the significant coefficients in the third column 'broad public' under model 1. The second set of rows show the differences between organizations representing different interests. Because these are indicator variables derived from a categorical variable, the business sector interest indicator has been left out (reference category). In general, none of the categories of interest show significantly different scores on any of the indices relative to business sector interests. This is similar to the comparison of means figures. This is in contrast to my expectations on, especially, the higher level of policy interest of business interests. The opposite even seems the case when it comes to relations with members. On the index on members-related features, I found that organizations representing social interests score significantly lower than those representing business sector interests. As also discussed in relation to figure 28, this is in contrast to the fourth hypothesis set out at the beginning of this chapter, as I expect social interest groups to be especially active in relation to their constituents. It could be that organizations representing social interests seek to attract attention from a broader public and in doing so 'forget' their members. This would produce the negative effect observed, but it would also lead to higher scores on the index of features aimed at a broader public. Since this coefficient is insignificant, this is unlikely to be the case.

The second model additionally examines the variation in the index scores in relation to the types of members of organizations. Adding this set of indicators does not substantially change the effects observed in the variables included in the first model. Relative to the first model, the second model produces in an increase of the explained variance of about 8 percentage points in terms of the R^2.[157] The first column under model 2 reports the coefficients related to members-oriented features. Several categories of organizations show significantly higher scores than others. These are organizations whose members are companies, public institutions, mixed public/private institutions, or national associations of membership groups. This suggests that organizations that allow for direct membership, i.e. without the level of national associations, more actively seek exchange relationships with members, by offering them important website features. I expected organizations with multiple layers of membership, i.e. structured via national associations, to have smaller and untargeted websites. When it comes to membership-oriented activities, this expectation

[157] Such an increase of R^2 values without significant explanatory terms suggests that the independent variables correlate. This correlation between interest and membership indicators, as discussed with figure 20, is lower than could theoretically be expected.

TABLE 20 Regression on website-features indices

n=165 website features oriented at:	model 1 members	model 1 policy makers	model 1 broad public	model 2 members	model 2 policy makers	model 2 broad public
index on members		0.100 (1.25)	0.20*** (2.64)		0.10 (1.28)	0.21*** (2.67)
index on policy makers	0.098 (1.25)		0.27*** (3.56)	0.10 (1.28)		0.29*** (3.76)
index on broad public	0.21*** (2.64)	0.28*** (3.56)		0.21*** (2.67)	0.29*** (3.76)	
INTERESTS						
public, government interests	-0.12 (-1.57)	-0.030 (-0.38)	-0.055 (-0.71)	-0.10 (-1.10)	-0.088 (-0.91)	0.0093 (0.10)
broad business interests	-0.053 (-0.69)	0.078 (1.01)	-0.038 (-0.49)	-0.038 (-0.51)	0.079 (1.05)	-0.045 (-0.59)
social, non-government interests	-0.25*** (-3.24)	0.048 (0.59)	0.051 (0.64)	-0.20** (-2.16)	-0.0027 (-0.03)	0.058 (0.62)
TYPES OF MEMBERS						
national association of companies				0.087 (0.93)	0.0063 (0.07)	-0.18* (-1.90)
companies				0.28*** (3.11)	-0.15 (-1.65)	0.085 (0.90)
national association of public institutions				0.088 (1.07)	0.15* (1.84)	-0.052 (-0.63)
public institution				0.20** (2.17)	0.013 (0.14)	-0.22** (-2.37)
mixed public/private and other organizations				0.23*** (2.86)	-0.017 (-0.20)	-0.086 (-1.01)
national association of membership groups				0.15* (1.68)	0.094 (1.01)	-0.11 (-1.17)
membership groups and individuals				-0.084 (-1.06)	-0.13 (-1.64)	0.11 (1.33)
R^2	0.13	0.11	0.14	0.22	0.19	0.21

Standardized beta coefficients; t statistics in parentheses, $^{*}p < 0.10$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{***}p < 0.01$. Reference category on interest indicators: business sector interests

finds support in the significant and positive coefficient for the indicators for the membership categories of companies, public organizations and mixed public/private. Organizations with these direct and uniform membership profiles have websites that seem especially attractive for their constituents.

The middle column in model 2 reports the regression results for the index on communication aimed at policy makers. While the regression on member-oriented communication showed some significant variation across the categories, policy-oriented communication seems to be completely unrelated to categories of membership or interests. None of the variables that represent the several theoretically defined categories have a significant effect on the score on the index on policy-oriented communication. This contradicts all my hypotheses, but is especially surprising in relation to the first hypothesis, on the difference between company-membership compared to individual membership. As also suggested in the evaluation of figure 29, this lack of variation may be explained by the strong institutional embedding within the European Union, which gives all types of groups incentives to address policies.

The results of the regression analysis on the index of features targeting a broad public, presented in the last column of the table, suggest that outside-oriented communication follows from the development of features aimed at members or policy makers. This can be seen from the significant and strong effects of the other indices on the score of this index. Put in simple terms, it seems that organizations prioritize to write newsletters for their members, then produce policy statements for politicians and, depending on the membership, send out a press statement to attract broader attention. For this index, membership still matters; organizations with public institutions or national association of companies as members tend to have few more broadly oriented features on their website. That is, they are less inclined to publish press statements online, link to public campaign websites, illustrate their website with topical images, or present figures oriented at consumers or the general public. As with the index on policy-oriented communication, interests do not seem to matter. Business interests seem similar to social or public interests in their involvement (or lack of it) in the broader political debate. This contradicts the first and fourth hypothesis.

The regression analysis confirmed some of the tendencies found in the comparison of means analysis. In general, while there is variation in the political activities of the organizations in my sample, the theoretically defined subgroups categorized by interest or membership are very similar. They vary only slightly in the types of political activities they engage in.

4.5.4. THE VARYING INTERRELATIONS OF SUPPORTERS, POLICY, AND MEDIA EXCHANGES

As a final way to analyse the data a series of Venn diagrams was constructed.[158] This way to

[158] As an alternative to the analysis of Venn diagrams I also constructed logistic regression models on indicator variables, based on the scores on the members-index and policy makers-index. I produced four of such categories (high/low, high/high, low/low, low/high). This logistic regression, using the same independent variables as in the OLS regression presented, did not produce other substantial interesting outcomes than the findings presented.

present the data is uncommon but makes it possible to simultaneously compare the scores on the three indices for relevant subsets of the sample. By such a simultaneous comparison I aimed to construct characteristic communication profiles for certain types of organizations. At the same time, such profiles represent the varying priorities or opportunities of groups of organizations to construct lasting exchange relations with members, policy makers, or the broader public opinion.

The scores of the target-audience indices have been recoded to indicate above- or below-average scores. The areas in the diagrams represent the number of organizations with an above-mean score on a certain index. The 'no target' area represents those organizations that score below the mean on all the indices. The membership data have been aggregated into five mutually exclusive categories (companies, public institutions, individuals, mixed, other). The interest data have been aggregated to two categories: business interests and other interests.

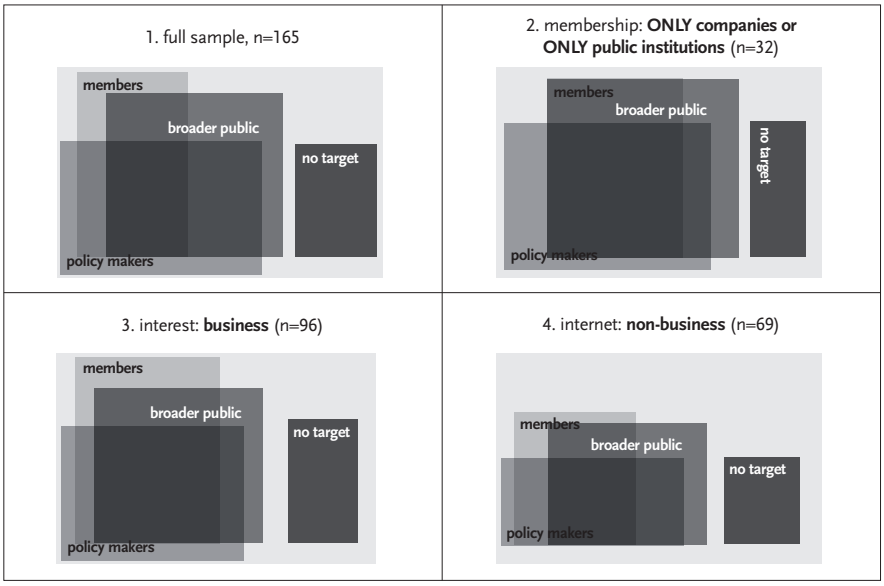
The Venn diagrams in Figure 31 and Figure 32 should be read by comparing the size of three pairs of areas. First, the general magnitude or ´size´ of the websites is represented by the relative size of the triple-overlap area. If a specific category of organizations has a relatively high proportion of above-average scores on all three indices, this indicates that these organizations are politically active in a variety of ways. Second, the variation within a category of organizations in terms of various forms of political activities is indicated by the size difference between the area of triple overlap and the 'no target' area. If these differences are relatively large, there is a broad variation of political activities within that group of organizations, with some (very) active organizations and others far less so. Third, the relative size of a specific non-overlapping area indicates the proportion of organizations within that category that is fairly active in seeking exchange relations only in that specific context. I will discuss the figures in more detail.

Figure 31.1 shows the full sample. As can be seen from the similar sizes of the triple overlap area and the 'no target' area, there is quite some variation in the variety and scope of political activities of interest organizations. This confirms the variance observed in the figures on the distribution of the index scores. Furthermore, never do any two areas fully overlap each other. This follows from the limited correlation among the indices reported earlier. However, as said before, there is a relatively sizeable overlap between membership and broader oriented communication indices. The correlation between the respective indices is .23, and .3 between the dummies used in the figure.

Figure 31.3 and Figure 31.4 present the diagrams for the subsets of organizations representing business interests and non-business interests, respectively. Surprisingly, websites of organizations that represent business interests seem generally more likely to score above the mean on all indices, and less likely to score below the mean on all three indices. This can be observed by comparing the dark areas. This contradicts my fourth hypothesis, which states that business interests are be less likely to have a substantial online political communication repertoire. Again, contrary to the expected policy-oriented communication of business interests, the figure indicates that business and non-business interests are quite similar in their online targeting behavior. The sizes of all four areas

[159] A minor difference can be seen in the sizes of the two-way overlapping areas. That is, organizations that represent non-business interests on the one hand combine policy-oriented communication with either

FIGURE 31 Communication profiles for the full sample, by interest and by membership



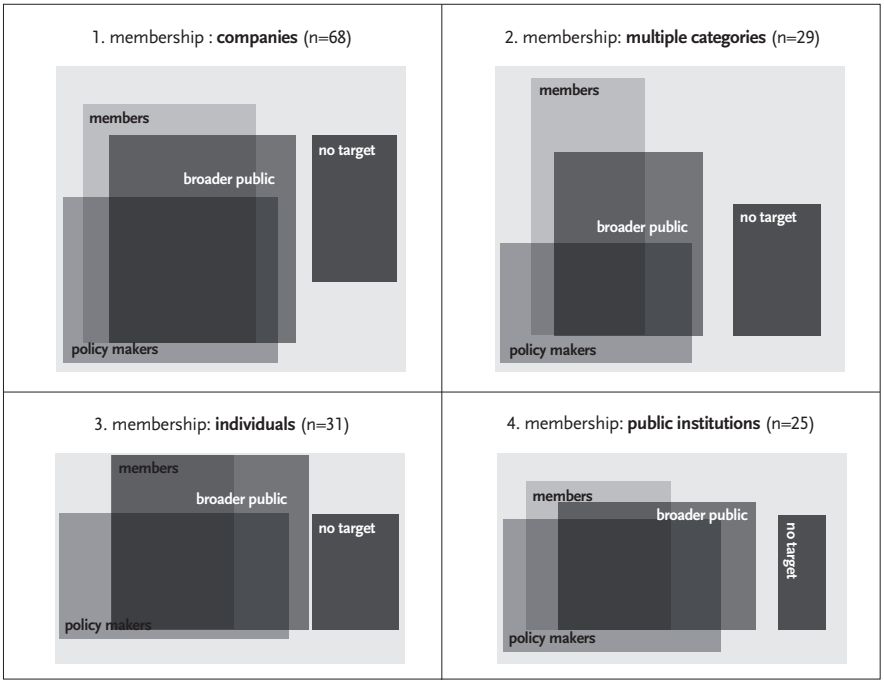
and their overlap are relatively similar across the figures.[159]

In figure 31.2 and figure 32 the communication profiles of organizations with different categories of members are visually represented. These figures address hypotheses one, two, and three. Figure 32.1 and Figure 32.3 show the results of the subsets of organizations with company and individual membership, respectively. They neither show differences in the general size of the websites, nor more variation within these two categories. That is, the relative size of the three-dimensional overlap is similar and the difference between the two darker areas is also comparable. This again contradicts the expectation that organizations with individuals as members tend to be more active online. A more interesting observation from Figure 32.3 is the absence of a light-grey area. This means that none of the organizations depending on individual supporters have an above-average score on membership-oriented communication only. For these organizations, websites are always a tool to (also) reach an audience outside their existing membership. They only develop member-oriented communication together with other types of features. Thus, the expected exclusively-membership orientation of organizations with individual members is not confirmed.

Figure 32.4 deals with the organizations that have public institutions as members. I expected their political activities to be similar to organizations that have companies as members. Figure 32.4 is, as expected, generally similar to Figure 32.1, which deals with the

membership- or broader public-oriented communication. On the other hand, business interests combine membership-oriented communication with public- instead of policy-oriented communication. This can be seen from the relatively large sizes of the overlapping proportions. This suggests a slight differences in priorities.

FIGURE 32 Communication profiles per aggregate membership profile; category 'other' (n=12) not in figure



subset of organizations with company membership. However, as seen by the larger dark 'no target' area in Figure 32.1., the variation in terms of general size of the website is larger for organizations representing companies.

Figures 16.2 and Figure 32.2 address the third hypothesis, on the complexity of the organization in terms of different types of members (Figure 32.2) and multiple layers (figure 31.2). Several aspects of these figures support the hypothesis that more complex organizations have more difficulty in developing a coherent communication profile. For figure 31.2 organizations have been selected that have a relatively 'simple' structure, that is, those organizations with only one membership layer (no national associations) and only one type of membership (only companies or institutions). For these types of organizations we found a very consistent and elaborate communication pattern. When comparing the dark areas we found relatively little variation within this group, and the full-overlap area is large compared with the rest of the areas, indicating above-average scores on all indices. Further, none of the selected organizations score above average on members-oriented communication only. Like organizations representing individuals (figure 32.3) these 'simply structured' organizations always combine a higher member orientation with a broader political communication repertoire. Thus, it seems that a low level of organizational complexity produces organizations engaged in a wide range of political activities that are well-positioned to construct exchange relationships in several contexts.

In further support of the hypothesis, figure 32.2 shows that more complex

organizations with multiple membership categories, for example both companies and bureaucracies, have a weak and strongly varying communicative pattern. When comparing the full overlap area with the rest of the areas, we see that only a small proportion of these organizations score above average on all three indices and that a high proportion score below average on all three target audience indices. Considering the high proportion of above-mean scores on members-oriented communication, it seems likely that these organizations have, as expected, some internal political dynamics arising from their complexity that prevents them from broadening their action repertoire.

The Venn diagram analysis would thus suggest a rejection of hypotheses one, three, and four, and support for hypothesis three. Further, the analysis shows that at a high level of aggregation we still find systematic relations between the theoretical concepts. In the following section I compare these results with the findings from the descriptive and regression analyses.

4.6. CONCLUSION

Why do interest organizations seek exchange relationships with supporters, political institutions, and the news media? I expected that only certain organizations elaborately communicate their political activities to all these politically relevant audiences. The investigation discussed in this chapter has produced evidence for substantial variation in the political activities of interest organizations. This variation is important for the normative evaluation of interest group politics. The level of activity of specific subsets of organizations may affect the potential policy effect of the biases that may be present in the numbers of sections of the EU population of interest organizations. When, besides being more numerous, for instance, business groups are also more politically active than other organizations their potential for influence would be magnified even beyond their numbers. Further, the extent to which the political activities of groups are open and public could affect systemic public support for or cynicism about politics. The character of the EU political system has led me to expect the variation in political activities to be mainly caused by the differences among organizations in the type of members they have and the interests they represent. That is, by focusing on the EU, I arguably minimized the effect of otherwise important aspects of political issues, interest communities, or political institutions.

My conclusion here has to be a sobering one. I found only a very weak relationship between types of membership and the interests that organizations represent on the one hand, and the types of communication strategies used by organized interests on the other. After gathering information about over 200 websites of organizations active at the EU level, and presenting this at several levels of aggregation by means of descriptive statistics, comparison of means analysis, regression statistics, and Venn diagrams, I found an exceptional similarity between different types of organizations and interests. Among other aspects, organizations representing broader social interests proved likely to be as active in producing policy reports as organizations representing the interests of a specific business sector. As a nuance to this broad conclusion, I found empirical support for the EU-specific expectation that more complex, multilayered membership structures seem to make organizations less politically active.

Table 21 summarizes the main results per hypothesis. My first hypothesis was not supported empirically: organizations that represent companies turn out to have similar websites compared to organizations that represent individuals. My original expectation

was based on the variation in the severity of the collective-action problems that continue throughout organizations' lives. The results suggest that that collective action is as much (or as little) of a problem for companies as for individuals. This is at least the case when it comes to organizing at the EU level; for example, as other associations with other types of members, associations of companies also have to carefully maintain and construct relations with their constituents. These member-related activities seem to have a moderating effect on the more active stance I expected them to have in the policy sphere.

The second hypothesis was not supported by empirical evidence either: organizations that represent public sector or bureaucratic organizations were found to be likely to have different communication priorities. These organizations tend to score higher in terms of policy-oriented communication, but lower in terms of broader oriented communication. In terms of policy activities, the higher scores may be caused by the easy connection of membership-oriented activities (eg expert meetings) to policy activities. In terms of public-oriented activities, associations of public organizations could be bound by their political 'masters' to reduce any political communication beyond the technicalities of their tasks.

The third hypothesis did find empirical support. Interest organizations with various membership categories tend to score lower on all indices. I expected this to be the case because of internal political difficulties in agreeing on collective activities. I found that EU umbrella associations of national associations especially have relatively few members-oriented activities. This suggests that in the two-level political dynamic between EU leaders and national members the national members seek to retain their own types of activities and 'out-source' only the policy-related activities to the EU associations. Such a dynamic is absent in organizations with direct membership.

The fourth hypothesis was rejected. All three methods of analyzing the data led to the conclusion that business interests are not only policy-oriented in their online communication. I expected business interests to be more policy-oriented because of their likely relative lack of popular public opinion support. So, the absence of evidence for this expectation could be the result of the selection of EU-level activities on which public opinion may be of lower contextual relevance. However, because of the broad variation in the activities of business interests observed, I think it unlikely that in other systems, in which public opinion is more important, the activities of business interests are so very different. Certain aspects of their activities may be affected by their 'bad' reputation among the broader public, but certainly not all of them, and perhaps not even in the negative direction I expected.

By focusing on aspects of the organization in explaining the action repertoire of interest organizations, I tried to create conceptual links between population research and research on political strategies. The inconclusive empirical results suggest that the theoretical links between the interest group population, understood in terms of interests and members represented, and the likely political activities of such populations must be specified more precisely. For example, it now seems inappropriate to assume that populations dominated by business interests attempt to influence policies only via inside lobby campaigns. The findings of this chapter indicate that organizations in such interest communities will engage in a range of political activities, including membership mobilisation and public relation campaigns.

A more precise specification could be based on the broad notions of the exchange

TABLE 21 Summary of the main results of the three analyses

	descriptive statistics	regression analysis	venn diagrams
H1: Membership of individuals increases communication repertoire	Not supported. Similarity between companies and individuals	Inconclusive. Insignificant results	Not supported. Individual membership: combine members-oriented and broad communication
H2: Similar repertoire for companies and bureaucracies	Not supported. Bureaucratic membership increases policy communication	Not supported. Bureaucratic membership decreases broader communication	Supported. Company membership: More variation in the scores
H3: Multiple layers and membership categories complicate communication	No results	Supported. Members-index significant higher for uni-level categories	Supported. All types of communication higher for uni-level categories
H4: Business interests tend to target policy makers	Not supported. Business interests target members	Not supported. No variation in policy-oriented communication	Not supported. Business interests have an elaborate communication repertoire

theory. In that case, there are at least two venues that require further evaluation. First, additional aspects of the organization could be more important than I expected; for example, along with a precise membership classification and count, other indicators such as the relative use of staff and budget for certain activities could be important. Greater attention to these variables could more precisely relate certain activities of interest organizations to certain types of exchanges that they seek or maintain. In part these could be obtained from websites, but some may require other research methods. Second, the results would suggest that we need to focus on additional aspects in the environment of interest groups in order to explain the variation in their communication repertoire. For example, the political dynamics of issues was excluded from this investigation, while research has shown these to be relevant. That is, organizations may engage in different types of activities if they work on issues involving upcoming legislation or having a high-profile, 'hot' character. And in order to examine the effect of institutional context it would also seem useful to compare activities in the EU with those in member states, or to compare the strategies of organizations across specific EU policy venues.

Although there are various ways in which this type of research may be improved, the results are fairly convincing on the limited effect of variation in constituents on the activities of organizations. In terms of the exchange theory motivating this research, it shows the seemingly weak effect of the 'logic of support'. This partly contradicts the findings reported in the previous chapter, i.e., that interest communities have varying levels of political interest depending, among other things, on the proportion of business interests in the community. The seemingly weak effect of the factors related to the 'logic of support' could also be related to the choice of research design and case selection. That is, I have chosen EU organizations because I wished to focus on an expected strong effect of membership- and interest-related

factors on political activities in the EU. This implies two contradictory alternatives: either the weak effects of supporters-related factors are even weaker in other systems, or the EU is more of a 'normal' system than I expected it to be, with, for example, a 'normal' degree of influence of public opinion on political activities. However, in other aspects of the research, such as the multi-level membership structures, I did find EU specific effects. This suggests that system-specific phenomena can be used to strategically select cases in order to hold certain aspects constant. At the same time this suggests that comparative research is required in order to point to the differences between systems on the basis of which exactly those case selection decisions could be made. More specifically, we probably do not know for sure whether public opinion really matters in EU group politics or not.

A potential explanation for this null result could be that several aspects of the EU environment reduce the variety of political activities that interest organization can engage in. Aspects that may matter are the nature of the EU institutions, its particular history as an international organization or the absence of a European public sphere. These factors would lead interest organizations to behave more similarly to each other than is common in national lobbying communities. At the same time, this would reduce the general variation found in the sample. However, I did find significant general variation among the organizations in the sample on the composite measurements of each of the exchange relationships (with supporters, policy makers and public). Thus, EU institutions do not seem to lead to a uniform behavioral pattern on the part of interest organizations. In this sense, the null results suggest the weakness of the logic of support but they do not show the strength of the logic of influence either. That is, under the logic of influence, the exchange demands of EU institutional actors would have produced more similar strategies among all of the organizations in my sample.

In the next chapter I will examine whether the activities of interest organizations matter for policy debates in the media in several European countries. That is, now that we know that organizations engage in a broad variety of activities, and that they prioritise or find opportunities in their activities in different spheres, the question is what kind of opportunities media-oriented action offers?

CHAPTER 5

Interest organizations in the news: being heard?

5.1. INTRODUCTION: EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

Because I understand political activities as being fundamentally exchange relationships, activities of a party always depend on other actors and the environments in which they take place. For instance, organizations can only lobby if there is a government institution to be lobbied. This also applies to activities that require public attention to be effective. That is, without attentive publics, means of communication, or news media, it is unthinkable that interest organizations would engage in activities that (ultimately) depend on publicity as a means to political influence. This is true both for political activities directly aimed at a broader audience (public campaigns) and for those that indirectly rely on the potential publicity of certain arguments or preferences. As such, the news media offer opportunities for political action. As with the variation in the openness of political institutions discussed in previous chapters, I assume that the news media are 'open' to interest organizations to varying degrees, or in other words, differently value exchange relations with interest organizations.

These differences in the accessibility of news media or the sensitivity of the news media to political action are probably related to aspects of political issues, the nature of the political actors, and media system characteristics. Researchers have too easily treated this variation in media openness through time, sector, and system as a contingent factor without a systematic relationship with political activities. The media context seems a missing explanatory variable. This makes it very difficult to evaluate the importance of various political activities related to the news media, public opinion, constituents, parliaments, and bureaucracies, especially because we do not know how different aspects of the media system affect different categories of political actors. Are some actors more advantaged or disadvantaged by particular kinds of media openness? So, in order to even start a serious evaluation of outside-oriented strategies of interest groups, group researchers require information on the variation in the openness of the media and how this influences the potential political success or influence that organizations may gain via such media coverage. This is the theme of this chapter.

In the previous two chapters I examined the 'interest organization side' of what I understand to be political exchanges. In contrast, in this chapter I will focus on the news media side of the exchange relation.[160] I examine why news media report on political activities. This is to assess the influence political actors could derive from attention in the media.

[160] I do not, however, focus on the specific mechanisms or processes of interaction related to such exchanges, but examine the outcomes in terms of media coverage. Such an abstract or aggregate analysis makes it possible to look beyond the specifics of the political issues at hand or the specific histories of policy sectors.

I evaluate the relative presence in the press of government vis-a-vis non-state actors. Thus, the question guiding this research is: under what circumstances do non-state political actors receive media attention? In this chapter I will investigate the relation between media attention and changes in the types of political actors covered in the news media, at the same time also examining variation across countries and issues. I have statistically controlled for such effects so as to specifically evaluate the changes in the actor constellation of policy issues that are related to the level or magnitude of the media attention. Country differences are understood to result largely from differences in institutional structure, such as federalism or corporatist traditions. Differences in policy areas are then understood to be of a different nature, such as the required level of expertise in the field, the role of the market, or religious, regional or international identity. I use data on political claims in newspapers from six European countries in 2000 and 2002.

This merits remarks on the definition of the actors included, on the selection of policy topics and on the country selection. First, remember that I conceive of interest organizations in terms of political behaviour. Interest organizations attempt to influence policy without being part of government. In the previous chapter, I was required to narrow down this definition for reasons related to the research design and methods. In this chapter, I stick to the broad conceptual behavioural definition which, as discussed, is fully consistent with the exchange theory. I thus include all organizations that make political claims in the news paper but are not part of the state. Second, I focus on a selection of policy topics. As discussed below, these should be a sample of topics that is reasonably representative and show reasonable variation in terms of the involvement of non-state political actors.[161] This selection has been made for research workload reasons. Third, I examine the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, France, Spain and the United Kingdom. This selection assures that countries are fairly similar in their general characteristics (all being Western European). But at the same time these countries are assumed to have rather different traditions in terms of their media system (Hallin and Mancini 2004). As further discussed below, this selection allows for an evaluation of such assumptions.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: First, I specify the exchange relations between the news media and political actors in relation to different political functions of the news media. Second, I formulate three hypotheses on the expected presence of non-state actors at varying levels of media attention, after which the data and the research method are presented. The data are analyzed by means of descriptive statistics, OLS regression models, and logistic regression models. In general I find strong variation across issues and limited variation across countries. The media-related variables have a small but significant country-specific effect. Finally, I conclude that the news media environment is generally unfavourable to interest organizations. It seems that news media generally prefer to engage in exchange relationships with stronger, more institutionalised actors than with various types of political actors that are rooted in society, such as interest organizations. This requires a different and probably more indirect understanding of the effect of what I label the 'logic of reputation'.

[161] The selection of topic assures variation in terms of the policy competences of the European Union. We know that interest organization activities are different at different levels of government. Variation in competence should thus correlate with variation in such activities.

5.2. POLITICAL RELEVANCE OF THE NEWS MEDIA

Attention to public policies and political actors in the news media is important for the political process (Walgrave and van Aelst 2006).[162] First, news coverage is related to public opinion, which indirectly affects public policy (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002; McCombs 2004). News media affect or follow the preferences of the electorate and consequently matter for the election or re-election of political parties. They affect or reflect which issues have the attention of the public (Dearing and Rogers 1996). Second, news coverage is related to policy makers in a more direct way (Baumgartner et al. 1997; Paletz 1998). That is, since politicians evaluate media coverage as an indicator of (future) public preferences, policy makers adapt policies in light of media coverage (Walgrave et al. 2008), especially when the news media identify social problems that policy makers do not prioritize. In addition, the dynamics of the news media allow political actors to present certain constructions of policy problems, consequently affecting the policy frames used in the policy sector (Cobb and Elder 1971; Cobb, Ross and Ross 1976). In this case, news coverage affects the policy response of policy makers regardless of its possible relation to public opinion (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; 2005).

Research remains inconclusive about the circumstances under which news coverage affects policies indirectly (via public opinion) or directly (via signalling, framing, or 'shadow of the future') (Cobb and Elder 1983; Kleinnijenhuis 2003; McCombs 2004; Walgrave and Aelst 2006). However, regardless of the direction of causality and of the precise role of journalists in this, we have theoretical and empirical reasons to assume that news media coverage affects the activities of the government. And following the 'displacement' of politics to the media, this is now perhaps even more so than in the past (e.g. Manin 1997 218-236, Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999, Kepplinger 2002). This matters for the working of the political system and the related normative issues associated with the quality of the news media, for instance, the quality of the function of the media as facilitating intermediation between citizens and government.

Apart from important system-level effects, news media attention is a potential pathway to political influence (Beyers 2004; Kriesi, Tresch and Jochum 2007). Because important aspects of policy decisions are affected by media dynamics, political actors are interested in getting news media coverage. But whereas constitutional or institutional powers are relatively constant, the 'power' that actors derive from statements in the news media changes day by day and results from subtle exchanges between interacting systems. Apart from their actions being covered in the news media, political actors also seem to adapt their broader activities in light of media attention for specific issues. That is, political leaders seem to use media attention in inter-institutional politics (Kernell 1993), and interest groups may change their lobby in light of public opinion (Kollman 1998). Media attention seems related to changes in the power balance within policy communities (Schattschneider 1960; Gamson 2004). The focus of this chapter is on the types of political actors that seem to benefit from the spotlight of the news media.

[162] Please note that I do not examine the influence of journalists in shaping politics. I refer to media attention or coverage, independent of the exact mechanisms that explain why that coverage is as it is.

5.3. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I examine the stability and punctuation of media attention to policy sectors (when?), distinguish the various exchange relationships between political and media actors (who?), and relate these to expectations on variation across countries (where?). I will elaborate these points here.

First, political claims in newspapers or statements on television are not modern equivalents of the fireside chats of Enlightened deliberators. The exchange of arguments and the explication of positions in the media are part of the political conflict among the diverse manifestations of group interests that challenge or defend existing policies. I assume that media attention to political actors produces power, if not directly in terms of influencing policy then in terms of influencing the structure of debates on that policy. This implies that we can understand the relative attention given to political actors in the media as some sort of indication of the potential power actors derive from media attention. It further implies that we should view the interaction between journalists and political actors as a power relation, or rather a relationship about power. Thus, I can extend my exchange theory beyond interest organizations and use it to better specify the relationship between state and news media actors (Blau 1964, Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993). On the basis of these exchange relations I can construct expectations about the media presence of both state-related actors and other political actors.

Second, the configuration of political actors voicing preferences on policy issues in the media is in constant flux, with issues and actors changing simultaneously. Researchers of both political conflict and the substantive character of policies both find similar patterns of change. In terms of *political conflict*, increases in attention to issues are usually related to expanded conflicts that involve more actors. As Schattschneider (1960, 37) put it: 'Private conflicts are taken into the public arena precisely because someone wants to make certain that the power ratio among the private interests shall not prevail'. Political conflicts that are fought out in the news media are likely to be broader conflicts that consist of a greater variety of political actors than the more limited set of actors in the policy circles of 'daily' politics. In terms of *policy change*, at moments of policy punctuation a greater variety of actors take positions on issues than in periods of stability (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). I combine these conflict and change perspectives. This implies that it is especially important for political actors to have media presence at moments when an issue is 'hot', contested, and at a moment of policy punctuation. I specifically examine variation in the types of actors present in the news media at different levels of attention. Political researchers have divergent expectations about whether either state-actors or other political actors are likely to be present in the media at these critical and influential moments. I outline these below.

Third, in order to understand the politics-media interaction as a power relationship consisting of varying dependencies and exchanges, we require a conceptualisation of the resources and regularities of that relation. That is, we already have ideas about which resources are attractive to certain political actors, we also need, associated to that, to understand the news media as political institutions, in need of certain political resources (e.g. Cook 1998; 2006; Donges 2007; Schudson 2002). We know that the 'rules of the game' of the news media, as an arena of political struggle, are different from other political arenas, such as parliament, the government institutions, and the propaganda media of electoral campaigns (Bennett and Entman 2001; Schudson 2005).

As a first step I here differentiate three types of political products that are constructed via exchange relationships between the news media and political actors. That is, such exchanges (1) produce input for policies, (2) facilitate the communication of government plans, or (3) provide an additional arena to resolve social conflicts. These different types of political products are built upon different relationships of the news media with a variety of political actors. For instance, when a journalist produces a newspaper article presenting the position of various representatives from society, he or she 'constructs' a political arena, independent or complementary to other arenas such as parliament. However, journalists could also be interested in reporting on new government plans and, therefore, seek exchange relationships with important government leaders. In that case journalists facilitate the communication of policy plans. Thus, these are two different political products that news media deliver to political systems, and that determine the opportunities and constraints ofinterest group activities in getting media presence. Comparative studies of the news media suggest that country differences matter especially in the types of products that news media tend to deliver, i.e. their political function (Hallin and Mancini 2004). Hence, I use the country typology put forward by Hallin and Mancini in order to construct hypotheses on the relative importance journalists attach to exchange relationships with state versus non-state actors. These hypotheses are examined in a cross-country comparative research design.

5.4. THE EXCHANGE THEORY OF POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR EXTENDED

The way in which the news media cover policies, represent alternatives, and frame actor positions depends on the regularities in the behaviour of at least three main categories of actors: the state, the media themselves, and society-based actors. I understand the interaction between these actors as exchanges that result in policy-specific news.[163] Focussing on policy-specific news coverage means concentrating on two exchanges: between state actors and news media, and between non-state actors and the news media.[164] First, the exchange relations are discussed. The character of these exchanges is expected to be different in different media systems, which leads to three hypotheses on the relative presence of non-state actors in the news media in different countries.

[163] As discussed in the theory chapter, such an understanding is similar to but less restrictive than a resource- or power-dependency approach (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978), such as recently applied to interest organizations by, for example, Beyers and Kerremans (2007) and Poppelaars (2009). Exchange approaches in the context of interest representation have dealt with the relation of interest groups and their members (Salisbury 1969; Ware 1992), of groups and policy makers (e.g. Bouwen 2004; Molina 2006; Pizzorno 1978; Woll 2007) and a combination of those relations (Schmitter and Streeck 1999; Streeck and Kenworthy 2004). Exchange relations with media actors are notably absent in this literature on the organization and strategies of interest groups (but not so in the literature on social movement organizations: starting with Lipsky (1968), and more recently Gamson (2004)).

[164] For now I will adopt a high level of abstraction and do not differentiate between various actors within the state or within society or within the news media. These actors are understood to relate to three different domains. Remember that I focus on exchange relationships that cross domains (section 2.4.2). This justifies the collapse of all actors per domain as these should exhibit typical exchange relationships with actors in other domains.

As discussed in the theory chapter, I draw on exchange theory as developed by Emerson (1962; 1976) and Blau (1964) in order to conceptualise the relationship of political actors with the news media.[165] Blau and Emerson are interested in exchanges between actors in order to evaluate the power relations between actors. Power is defined as 'the ability of persons or groups to impose their will on others despite resistance through deterrence either in the form of withholding regularly supplied rewards or in the form of punishment' (Blau 1964, 117). Thus, in this definition power is seen as an aspect of a relationship and not of an actor. Similarly, 'a resource is an ability, possession, or other attribute of an actor giving him the capacity to reward (or punish) another specified actor' (Emerson 1976, 347). Exchange relations involve the reciprocal flow of valued behavior, or, formulated differently, the exchange of resources between two actors.

First, the exchange relations between the state institutions and the news media have several distinguishing characteristics. Most importantly, in this type of exchange the news media tend to be in a dependent position. State-related actors have the institutional power of the state to control information and act on behalf of the collective. Their position as a focus of attention is further strengthened by the symbolic attraction of the (national) leadership that figures so nicely in media narratives (Discussed in: Helms 2008). State authorities can thus offer news media 'exclusive' information and the symbolic attraction securing involvement in the game of politics (Bennett 1990; Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston 2007). In exchange, state-related actors benefit from media attention. Such attention may bring latent compliance with policies when interest groups and the broader public become convinced of certain policy views. The attention also helps in 'internal' negotiations. Kernell (1993), for instance, found that presidents increasingly use their public speeches to 'win' Congress for supporting policy programs (also see: Groseclose and McCarty 2001). For officials that seek re-election attention could have future electoral benefits as it allows for credit claiming and the demonstration of statesmanship. However, such mutually beneficial exchange may be constrained by the strategic behaviour of state actors. That is, they want to avoid the responsibility to publicly account for their activities because this would allow other, opposing actors to scrutinise their policies and promote alternatives. Thus, the likelihood of exchange seems to depend on political circumstances and the interests of those in the structurally stronger positions of government.

Second, advocates from society, such as experts, company spokespersons, or interest organisations, exchange quite different resources with the news media. These more dependent actors also provide information. In contrast to state-media exchanges, the information provided by these advocates is not exclusive held but is offered as publicly as possible, and made available to a broad range of actors. From the perspective of the journalist the information is unlikely to have as much value as that provided by state actors because various sources can be chosen to rely upon. The information thus needs something more to attract media attention: expertise or event value. That is, claims of advocates from society could either be valued by journalists because of their professional policy-related knowledge, or because of the news value of symbolic political events such as demonstrations or campaigns.

[165] Exchange theory or power-dependency theory has been applied to news media before: for example in order to evaluate the relation between media and their consumers/readers (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur 1976) and news media and social movements (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993, 115n.)

TABLE 22 Two types of political exchange of the news media

state related actors	exclusive information, leadership symbolism → ← latent compliance, future electoral support	news media
society-based actors	expertise information, events and action → ← latent support (mobilisation), actor validation	news media

Taking the other side of the exchange, interest organizations or other actors seek specific resources in the exchange with news media. That is, coverage by news media offers latent or potential public support for advocacy groups. This could be beneficial in both policy lobbying and the recruitment of new members (mobilization) (Jordan and Maloney 2007; Rucht 2004). Further, news media attention has reputational benefits as well. As pointed out by Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, 116), news media offer validation or standing for political actors. When actors are 'validated' by journalists they are likely be recognized by the state as a valid voice as well. Considering these arguments one would expect that large proportions of interest organizations would attempt to construct lasting exchange relationships with the news media. Recent research, however, has been inconclusive about such aspirations or the opportunities to realise them (e.g. Kollman 1998; Kriesi, Tresch and Jochum 2007; Thrall 2006). The aspiration is evident for some proportion of political organizations, such as political parties or campaign groups, who may benefit from any attention they get, whether negative or positive (Gamson 2004). However, it seems likely that large proportions of organizations are more likely to keep media contacts to the minimum. That is, some political actors lose influence as the scope of a conflict is broadened via media attention. As argued by Lowery (2007, 37): 'the influence of organized interests seems to be negatively associated with the scope of lobbying battles as measured by the number of organizations involved, the intensity of their lobbying, and how attentive the public is.'[166] This is certainly the case for those interests advantaged by more closed or narrow debates over policy (Jones and Baumgartner 1991).

Table 22 summarises the two types of political exchange involving the news media discussed above. The upper rows show exchange relationships between state-related actors and journalists. Exclusive information and the symbolism of government (personalities,

[166] At the same time, there is increasing evidence of 'cumulative inequality' mechanisms encouraged by mediated politics (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993, 117). Thrall (2006), for example, observes for the US case: 'Rather than the pluralist marketplace of ideas envisioned by theory, the American news system more closely resembles an oligopoly, with a few market leaders in each policy niche doing most of the

'official' positions) is needed by journalists and supplied by state actors. In return, the latent compliance with policies and potential electoral support that may come with media attention and is needed by state actors is provided by the news media. The two lower rows represent the exchange relationships between actors in society, such as interest organizations, and journalists. As said earlier, interest organizations may offer expertise or events needed by journalists to create news stories. In return, interest organizations could benefit from attention, as the public support for their cause (and their membership dues) may increase and they (and the issues they promote) may be recognized or validated politically.

5.5. EXPECTATIONS ON SOCIETY-BASED CLAIMS

In order to understand the variations in the relationships between state- and society-based political actors and the news media, I need firmer expectations about (1) this variation in relation to strategic considerations about media attention per se (character of exchange relations), (2) the relation between media attention and issue expansion or containment more generally (number of exchanges / political claims in media), and (3) the effect of the media-systemic context (country differences). In the formulation of the hypotheses, I view a political claim in a newspaper as the product of a power-producing exchange between a journalist and a political actor. I assume that the value of such an exchange is higher at moments of political conflict, as these situations may lead to policy change. I also assume that political actors who are successful at these moments derive more power from mediated political debate than do other actors. In terms of research design, I use variation in the levels of media attention to differentiate between the different hypotheses and to distinguish the differences arising from 'media effects' from those due to other factors.

The likelihood and character of these actor-specific exchange relationships depend on the country-specific, structural, systemic relation between the news media and the political system. That is, the media themselves have a special role in shaping structure and content of political conflict (Bennett and Entman 2001; Graber 2006; Pfetsch 2004; Scammell and Semetko 2000; Schudson and Waisbord 2005). Structurally, media systems differ across countries, most importantly in the extent to which the media system parallels the conflict lines of the political system (Hallin and Mancini 2004). This, in turn, is reflected in reporting norms; do newspapers, for example, aspire to be 'internally pluralistic' in their reporting? Or do they develop a specific profile related to politically inspired target groups? Consequently, across different systems media actors exhibit varying behaviour in the politically important selection of framing and commenting on news. Similarly, depending on these contexts, national political actors have developed specific patterns of mediated interaction. In the research presented here media primarily matter because of their structuring role (and not as 'independent' agenda setters), varying across countries.

The media system determines the relative value that actors attach to resources and thus the likelihood of journalists choosing state actors or non-state actors as their sources. I use the country categories derived from the cross-country study by Hallin and Mancini (2004):

talking. Moreover, because news coverage can benefit interest groups by spreading their message to potential members and patrons, the interest group/mass media connection is a self-perpetuating system.' This effect seems similar to what Merton has called the ´Matthew´ effect in systems of science, but also in other aspects of social life (Merton, 1968) (cited by Kriesi, Tresch and Jochum 2007, 53).

TABLE 23 Expectations on the constellation of actors at varying levels of media attention. Between brackets: countries that are part of my research

	media attention	
	low	high
democratic corporatism (Germany, The Netherlands)	similar composition	
polarized pluralism (France, Spain)	social actors dominate	state dominates
pluralism (United Kingdom, Switzerland)	mixed composition	social actors dominate

democratic corporatist, polarized pluralist, and pluralist media systems. Using these three theoretical types I have formulated three hypotheses. According to my first, democratic corporatist hypothesis, the news media intermediate between state and society, and governments react to mediated signals from society. In the second, polarized pluralist hypothesis, the news media depend on state actors who use the public outreach of the news media to create momentum for policy changes. Third, I present a pluralist hypothesis, in which the news media participate in their own arena of political conflict, which is generally friendlier to challengers of state policies than to state actors.

First, for democratic corporatist systems I assume that the news media share their signalling and intermediate function with other institutional intermediation systems such as political parties, citizen participation, and interest representation. Given such alternative ways to keep in touch with citizen preferences, state actors attach only low value to the policy signals provided by the news media. As a mirror of political reality the media are limited to reporting on the policy responses of political leaders. At the same time, from the perspective of the news media the informational resources of society-based actors offer an interesting alternative opportunity for exchange. Thus, in such systems both the contacts with society and relations with state actors are valuable for journalists. In such structures there is no reason to expect that the relative value of these exchanges depends on the level of media attention. I thus expect a similar actor composition at varying levels of attention. Non-state actors will get a sizeable proportion of media attention, irrespective of the total level of attention for a certain issue.

Second, in the polarized pluralist hypothesis I expect a higher proportion of state-centred claims when media attention is relatively high. In this hypothesis state-centred actors, driven by bureaucratic or electoral politics, use the media to create (or contain) a policy crisis, or to overstate (or minimise) social problems (Franklin 2004; Huntington 1961; Meyer 2002). Due to their political dependency news media are attracted by the inherent news value of state elites even more than in other systems. The other side of the coin is that the exchange with society-based actors is only beneficial for journalists in the absence of state-related exchanges.

I expect the third hypothesis to apply to pluralist media systems. For this hypothesis to be true we will need to observe a higher proportion of society-centred claims when media attention is relatively high. The media are understood to be an instrument of challengers of the status quo, and the state is assumed to be a defender of existing policies (or at least use other means to change policies than challengers) (Lasswell 1950; Schattschneider 1960, Lipsky 1968). Society-centred actors benefit from media attention as it expands a conflict to a broader range of actors. The resources (events, expertise) at the disposal of society-related actors are more highly valued by news media than those of state actors (personality, exclusive information), because journalists consider themselves to be independent watchdogs of power. An issue will eventually move from the media arena to political institutions, which will lead to a decline of media attention as issues move further along stages of the policy process (Downs 1972). Table 23 summarizes the hypotheses and the countries I expect them to apply to. The Netherlands and Germany are considered democratic corporatist; I expect France and Spain to fit the polarized pluralist hypothesis. the United Kingdom, lastly, should largely conform to the expectations related to the pluralist media system. Switzerland could either be expected to be pluralist or democratic corporatist. The fact that the Swiss public sphere is divided by language could make the observation of a clear media system type more difficult.

5.6. DATA AND INDICATORS: POLITICAL CLAIMS IN NEWSPAPERS

The data were derived from the Europub dataset of political claims in news papers across several European countries (WP2: http://europub.wzb.eu/; Koopmans and Statham 1999; Koopmans 2002).[167] These claims were coded from a sample of articles on specific policy areas from different newspapers on different days of the week in the years 2000 and 2002. These claims have a variety of aspects (such as target and location) or forms (such as a interview, press statement, or protest manifestation). I have only used the information on the claimant, and differentiated only two types of political actors: state-related and non-state related actors. Non-state actors were broadly defined to include actors such as experts, companies, and interest groups. Claims by journalists were not taken into account. State actors include members of parliament and, obviously, any type of governmental actors such as municipalities, central banks, and ministers.[168] The subject areas, or issues, were pre-defined and selected in order to increase the variation in terms of EU competence. These are monetary politics, agriculture, immigration, troops deployment, retirement policy, education, and European integration.[169]

[167] Thus, the data are part of the larger project "The Europeanization of Political Communication and Mobilization in European Public Spheres" (http://www.europub.com) that has been sponsored by the European Commission in the context of its Fifth Framework Program (project number HPSE-CT2001-00046). Other publications based on this dataset include, among others: Kriesi, Adam and Jochum (2006), De Beus and Mak, (2009), Tresch (2009), Koopmans (2007), Statham and Koopmans (2009).

[168] Claims by journalists themselves are not considered to be 'non-state claims'. Non-state actors include political parties, economic interest groups, civil society actors, and other actor (e.g., experts). State actors include all levels and branches of government (including legislative/judiciary).

[169] Considering the relatively low number of political claims on retirement policy I did not evaluate this policy area. I also excluded Italy, and the (partial) data for 1990, 1995, and 2001.

The level of attention was measured by the number of claims on a specific issue per day per country. The original data were reshaped from a list of political claims into a list of days. The dependent variable is the proportion of claims by society-related actors in newspapers on a certain issue in a certain country on selected days in 2000 and 2002.

5.7. RESULTS

The results are presented here in a variety of figures and models. First, I will present the proportion of non-state claims per policy field per country, and then examine the changes in these proportions for high and low levels of attention. Further, I examine the nature of the variation in media attention involving many days of low attention and several moments of exceptionally high attention. Then, I present several figures on the distribution of the dependent variable, i.e., the proportion of non-state actors in the news media. The last two tables consist of a series of OLS regression models and three logit regression models. The aim of these analyses is, first, to present differences in the relative presence of non-state actors in the news media across countries and policy sectors. This could be understood as an assessment of the more general 'openness' of the political system and policy sectors to interest group politics. Second, while acknowledging these differences, I will focus on media system factors, or at least media-related variation, that influences the likely types of political exchanges. In this regard I will focus on variation in media attention related to the expectations formulated here.

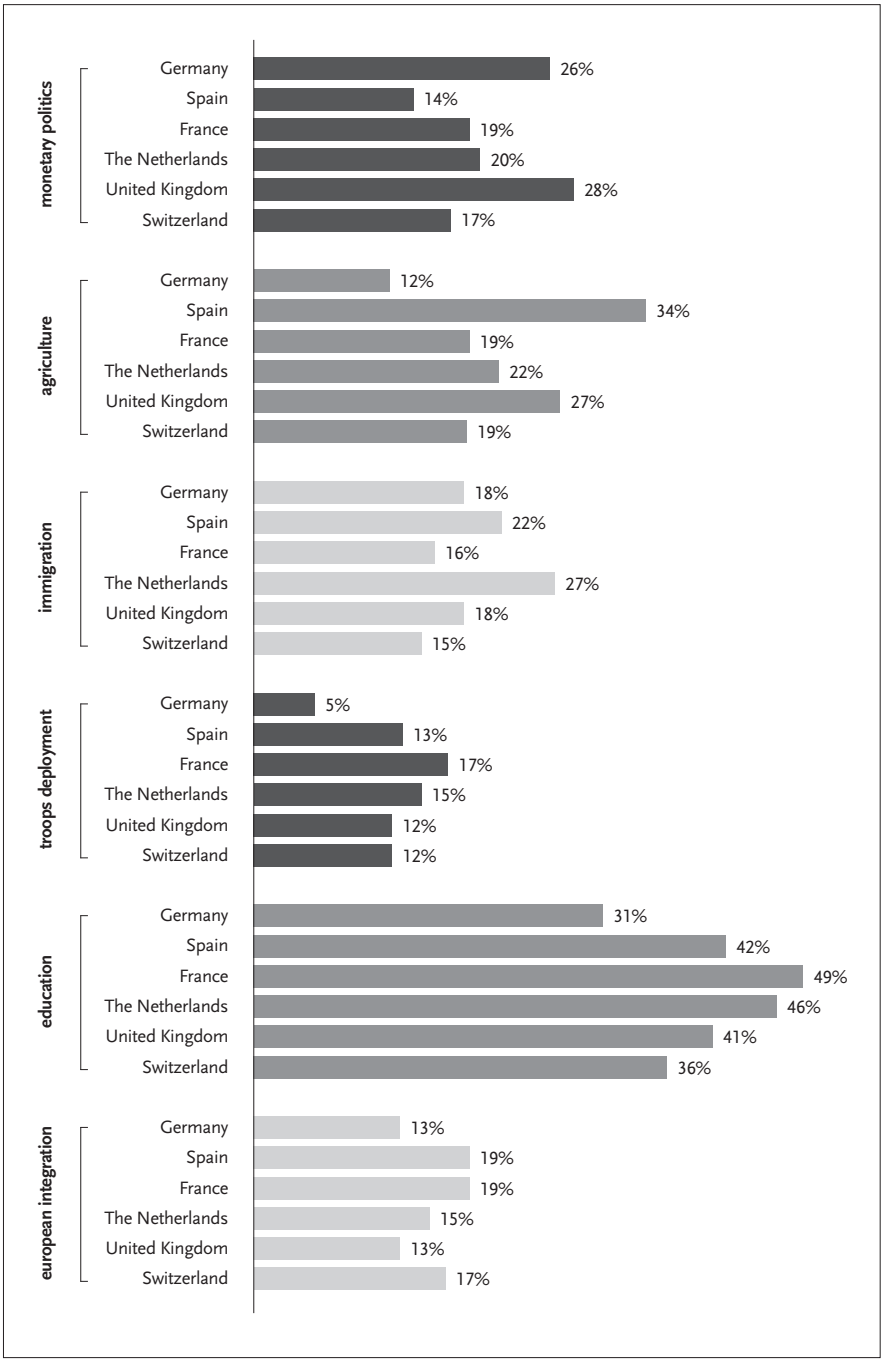
5.7.1. ISSUE AND COUNTRY DIFFERENCES

Figure 33 presents the average proportion of claims by non-state actors per day, policy field, and country. For instance, the uppermost bar indicates that on average 26 percent of the claims on monetary policy in Germany are made by actors unrelated to the state, on the days in the sample in which a claim on monetary politics was made in Germany. At the same time, state-related actors have a corresponding share of about 74 percent of the claims per day (100 minus 26).[170] The topmost set, of dark bars, deals with monetary politics. Proportions range from 14 percent in Spain to 28 percent in the United Kingdom. Compared to the other policy fields, indicated by the lighter bars, these are typical proportions. The other fields also show similar variation in proportions across the countries.

These results merit three remarks. First, in general, policy-related news tends to be oriented on state actors. On most of the days, state actors command a large share of the media attention for these policies. In most policy fields, in most countries, actors without direct political institutional affiliation represent only about 20 percent of the claims per day. For education policies, however, I find consistently higher proportions. On an average day when education policies are in the news in France, about half of the media claims are made by non-state actors. This is the highest proportion I found. On the other side of the spectrum we find that mediated claims on troop deployment and European integration are almost exclusively made by state-related actors. The low proportions of non-state actors statements occur despite the (very) broad definition of group actors that I have employed in this regard.

[170] Please note that claims by journalists have been excluded. This is a small proportion. This means that one can not directly assume that all the other claims have been made by state-related actors.

FIGURE 33 **Average proportion of claims by non-state actors per day, by policy field and country, n=3261**



This unexpected general tendency is also noted by Koopmans (2007), and cannot be immediately explained. In terms of type of media system this suggests that the news media are not an additional or uniquely special arena for political conflict, as expected in pluralist systems. News media hardly add to the diversity of interests or voices that already find representation in the state institutions (including the parliament).

Second, as will be further examined below, the variation between policy sectors seem larger than the differences across countries. For instance, the proportions of non-state actors in the field of 'troops deployment' range from 5 percent in Germany to 17 percent in France. These 12 percentage points may seem a lot. But compared to the scores on education policies of 31 percent in Germany and 49 percent in France, the cross-sector difference exceeds the cross-country difference by a large margin. Media system theories (as well as interest system typologies) take countries instead of policy sectors as their unit of analysis. This makes it problematic to relate this cross-sector variation to the system-related expectations. I will further discuss this in the conclusion of this chapter, because it raises question about future theory construction.

Third, I found certain 'outliers' that suggest that certain sectors have characteristics that set them apart: certain sectors may have different histories or country-specific importance. For instance, the low proportions of non-state actor claims on troop deployment in Germany could be related to the historical sensitive character and the related relatively high political profile required for decisions. The character of this study does not allow for a case-oriented approach for the examination of these outliers. However, the statistical significance of such country-sector combinations will be examined below.

The observed variation between countries and policy fields forms the basis for a focus on specific media-related variation at high and low levels of media attention. This is shown in the next figures. Figure 34 and figure 35 indicate the average proportion of political claims of non-state actors (y axis) at high and low levels of attention across countries (figure 34) and policy fields (figure 35). The distribution of the oval (low level) and diamond-shaped (high level) points indicates the difference in proportions at high versus low levels of attention. Remember that the level of attention is measured by the total number of claims per day per country per policy field. On the basis of the pattern of variation shown in figure 33, I standardized this level of attention with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of 1 (again per country, per day and per policy field). High levels of attention are those days with above median scores on this standardized score; low is below median. As in the previous figure, both figures show that non-state actors represent a relatively small proportion of political claims.

Figure 34 shows the variation *across countries* in the average proportions of claims by non-state actors, and the variation in these proportions related to changes in media attention. The figure indicates that for all countries about 15 percent of the political claims are made by organizations that are unrelated to the state. As also shown in the previous figure, the data show a consistent lack of variation across countries. This contradicts my expectation that news media would have different political functions in different countries, and would consequently show varying roles of non-state actors in the news media.[171] This lack of

[171] This lack of variation also contradicts to comparative research on interest organizations or social movement organizations, which would lead one to expect very different populations / structures of

FIGURE 34 The proportion of statements by non-state actors *per country* at high (i.e., above median standardized numbers of claims per day per issue per country) and low levels (below median) of media attention. Percent points differences given next to bars.

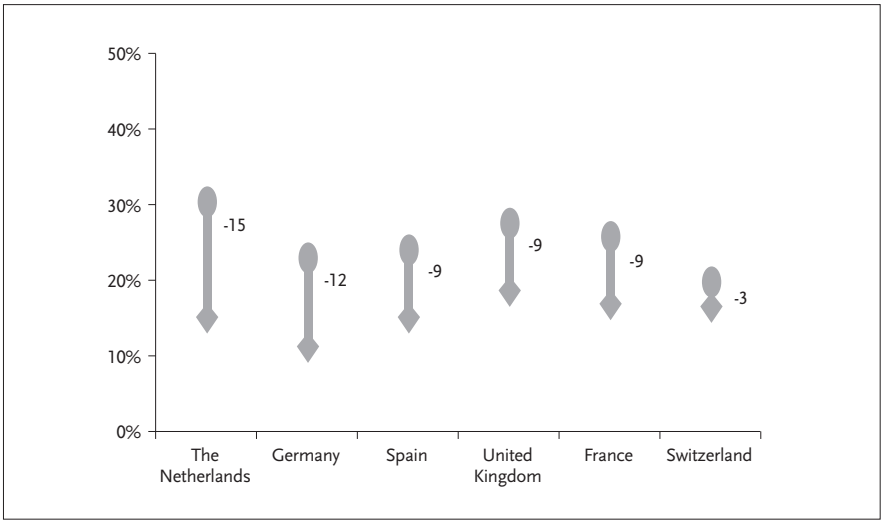
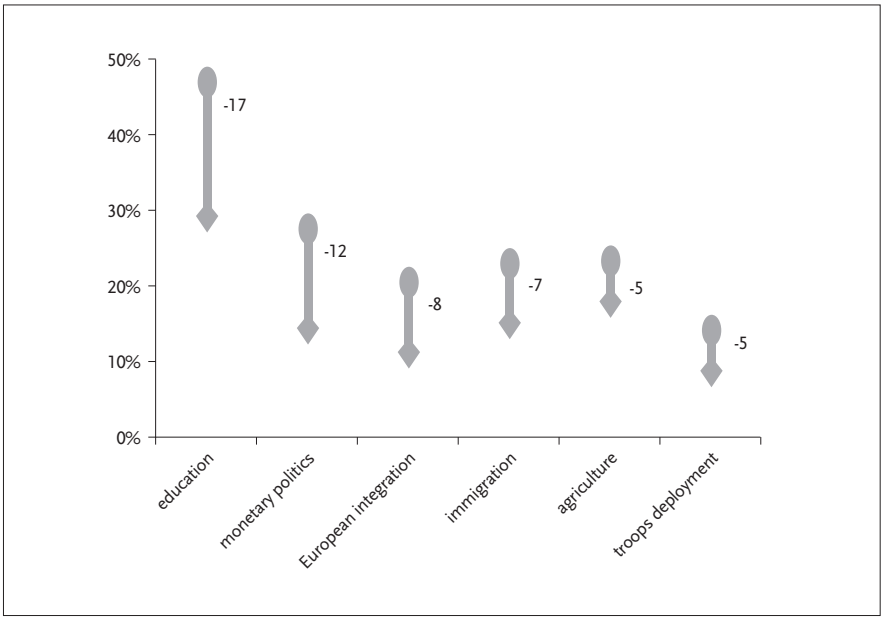


FIGURE 35 The proportion of statements by non-state actors *per issue area* at high and low levels of media attention



variation makes it difficult to evaluate the hypotheses more generally. The figure, however, does show variation across countries in the differences between high and low levels of attention. This is indicated by the length of the bars. In Switzerland there is a limited difference between 'hype' moments and 'normal' moments in the proportions of non-state actors. This conforms with the 'pluralist' system expectation I formulated for this country. For Germany and the Netherlands the data suggest that when attention is on the rise the state takes control over mediated politics and drives out non-state actors as sources. At low or 'normal' levels of media attention for certain policies, non-state actors get about 30 percent of the attention in the Netherlands. This drops to 15 percent (i.e., a decline of 50 percent) when media attention goes up. A similar decline can be observed in Germany. I expected this to be the case in 'polarized pluralist' media environments such as France and Spain, so this finding inconsistent with my expectation of small differences as typical of democratic corporatist countries such as the Netherlands and Germany. In none of the countries, nor any of the policy sectors, do non-state actors seem to gain from greater media attention for public policies. The decline in Spain and France confirms their classification as 'polarized pluralist' systems. As expected in democratic corporatist systems Switzerland shows a very similar composition of the media debate at both high and low levels of attention (however, remember that I expected Switzerland to show more non-state actors at high levels of attention).

Figure 35 shows the differences between *policy fields* in proportions of non-state actors and media attention-related changes. As with the country differences presented in the previous figure, in different policy sectors the news media affect the actor composition of the debate in varying ways. The variation in bar lengths indicates that claims on agricultural policies or on decisions about the deployment of troops are less affected by the heat of the debate than are those on monetary politics or European integration. For the first two fields I did not find large differences between types of actors in the media at different levels of attention. For the last two fields I found that state actors take up far larger proportions of the public claims at higher levels of attention than at other moments. This variation does not immediately address the hypotheses because existing theory did not allow me to formulate hypotheses on such sector-specific differences. However, some sectors seem more 'pluralist' (agriculture, deployment) with only marginal differences related to media attention, and others more 'polarized pluralist' (education, monetary politics), with state-related actors definitively dominating 'hot' debates.

5.7.2. EVALUATING THE DISTRIBUTION OF MEDIA ATTENTION AND PRESENCE

Before I examine these effects in regression models I will first examine the distribution of the media attention variable and the variable representing the proportion of non-state actors in the media. This is necessary in order to properly specify such models, given possible non-normal distributions, and is also of substantive interest. That is, first, the distribution of the number of claims per day per issue per country shows how media attention changes over time. Media attention is related to attention in public opinion and

political organizations depending on the national context. As figure 2 shows, cross sectoral variation may be more important in this regard.

the policy process more broadly. Consequently, the structure of media attention change is likely to be replicated in the structure of policy change (Jones and Baumgartner 2005). That is, policy attention is affected by media attention, so when media attention fluctuates in a specific manner it is likely to affect policy changes in a similar way. As Baumgartner, Jones and Leech (1997, 350) write, 'these patterns of imitation [between media and politics] mean that a major source of change in American politics is the shifting attention of the media'. Hence, this affects the structure of policy change, perhaps making it more incremental, or exacerbating punctuations in policies. Moreover, in light of the expected effects of varying levels of media attention, the distribution of media attention indicates the magnitude of the time slots of 'high' or 'low' attention. More to the point, certain theories about activities of interest organizations (e.g. Kollman 1998) suggest that organizations adapt their strategies to changing media circumstances. When we find strong changes in attention over very short periods of time, it is unlikely that political organizations can fully adapt their activities in a quick reaction to such developments.

Second, there are at least two types of patterns that the dependent variable could take: a normal distribution or a distribution that is categorical in nature. The proportion of non-state actors in the news media could vary per day along a continuum from 0 and 100 percent, with a typical value normally distributed around 20 percent (as is the typical mean in the previous figures). In such a case, news media would seemingly construct a daily 'dialogue' between state- and society-based political actors. This would fit in with studies of political conflict in which powerful (state) actors are immediately challenged by 'weaker' society-based organizations. The news value in such cases lies in the conflict between state and society itself. This news value is 'optimal' when political actors are present in the same outlet on the same day, as this 'best' presents the contrast in positions. However, agenda-setting studies would lead us to expect a somewhat different pattern, which includes larger proportions of extreme values. Such studies suggest that the state- and society-based actors dominate the news in a more sequential manner. Society-based actors claim attention and, after a certain period of time, state-actors will recognize a political problem and engage with the issue in public debate (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). In such a situation, either society-based actors dominate the news (pre-agenda setting) or, later, government or political institutional actors are centre stage (after problem recognition). This would either lead to a relatively strong or exceptionally weak presence of non-state actors in the news, i.e., proportions of either 0 or 100 percent. Such a variable should then be treated as a categorical variable.

Figure 36 and figure 37 deal with the distribution of media attention measured by the number of political claims per issue per day per country. Figure 36 presents the number of claims (x-axis) by the number of observed days (y-axis). As shown by the first bar, on most days (1177, i.e., 36 percent) there was only a single claim on a certain issue. This proportion decreases non-linearly with the number of claims per day, with only a small number of days on which I found more than about six claims (>6, 364, i.e., 11 percent) on a specific issue. This attention structure is similar to changes in policy observed in policy agenda studies (Baumgartner and Jones 2005; Baumgartner et al. 2009). In these studies, government activities where found to change in two modes: incrementalism (small changes) and punctuations (large changes). A more precise evaluation of such media changes would require time series data, in which the changes themselves (as opposed to attention levels) can be measured. This is difficult with the Europub dataset, as the sample of certain days per week produces only fragmented time series.

FIGURE 36 Distribution of media attention: Number of claims per day by number of observations (n=3261)

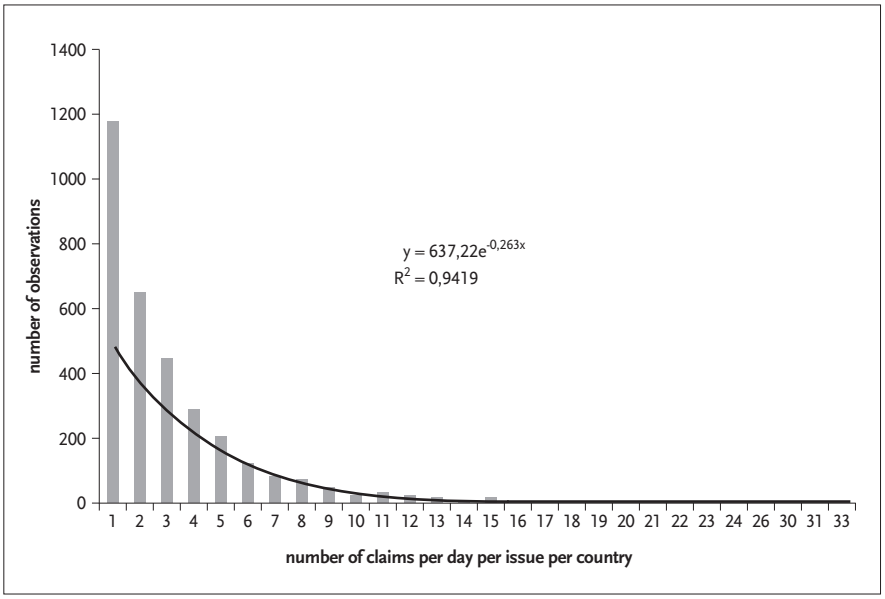
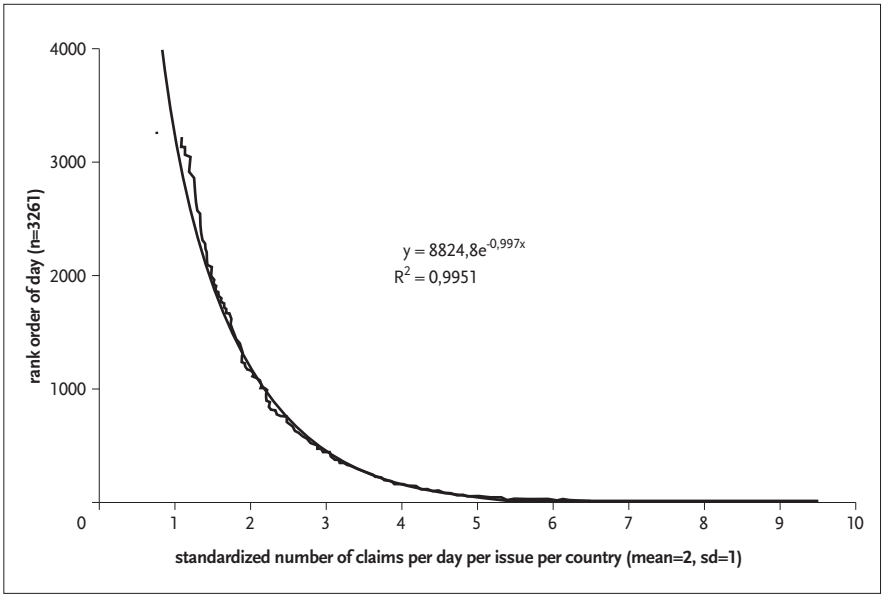


FIGURE 37 Distribution of media attention: Standardized number of claims per day by frequency (n=3261)



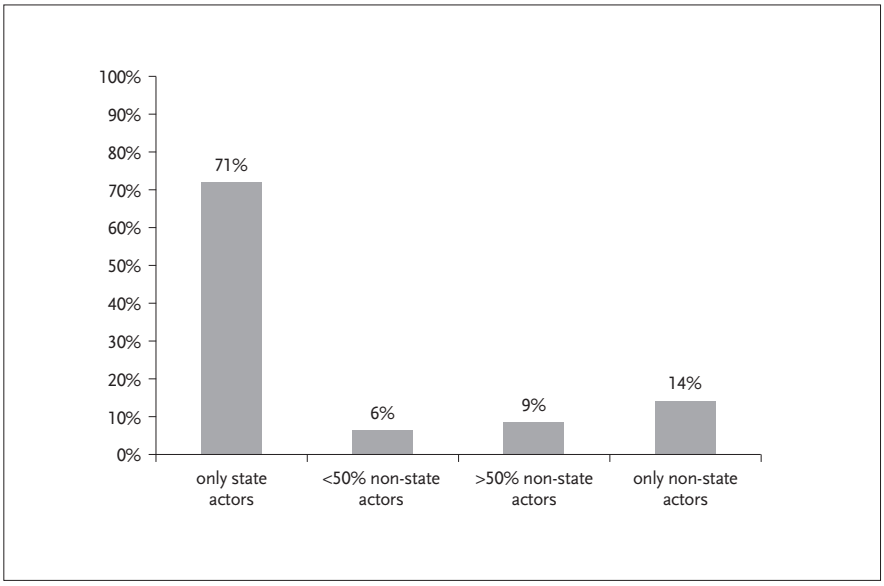
Further, the crude number of claims may not be the best measurement of attention. There is variation between the total numbers of claims per country and the total numbers of claims per policy field. Thus, three claims on monetary policy in Germany may be relatively few compared to three claims on education in France. In figure 37 I use a different measure to (partly) address this problem. I standardized the number of claims per day by policy field and country, thus correcting for differences between the numbers of claims in certain countries and policy fields. Figure 37 presents a scatter diagram of the 3261 observations ranked by the value of the standardized measure. If media attention had been normally distributed this figure would indicate a linear relationship. Instead, the line represents an almost perfect power distribution (R^2: 0.99), and so confirms the remarks I made on the distribution of attention change observed in figure 36. This figure, again, suggests that media attention to public policy changes in spurts and punctuations. This is similar to changes in policies themselves. Further, these figures suggest that this measure of media attention should be included in regression models via a quadratic term in order to capture the nonlinear aspect of the distribution.

Figure 38 shows the proportion of days of the total over four categories of days, those with: state claimants only, a mixture of state and non-state actors (>< 50 percent), and non-state actors only. As seen in the left-hand bar, on 71 percent of the days I find only claims of actors directly related to political institutions. As shown by in the middle two bars, on 15 percent of the days (sum of bars 2 and 3, 6 plus 9), there is a mixture of state-related and society-based organizations. The right-hand bar of 14 percent represent days in which only non-state actors appear in the news media. In reference to the discussion in the previous section, this is not a normal distribution around 20 percent (the mean), but is strongly skewed toward 0 (or 100 percent). This figure, and figure 39 and figure 40 below, show that an almost categorical distribution. This makes it difficult to generally model my expectations about the variation in media attention and relative presence of state and non-state actors. This categorical distribution of the dependent variable does not fit the assumptions inherent in regression models and the form of my expectations which have been formulated as differences in degree (more / less). First, I did not specifically formulate expectations about the 0 and 100 percent categories of media presence. These categories, however, seem to be more important than I expected and thus merit specification in the hypotheses. Second, OLS regression models assume that the dependent variable has a normal distribution. Categorical or ordinal variables require different models. The large proportions of 0 and 100 values suggest that these had better be treated as categories than as scores on a normally distributed scale. In order to address this modelling problem I will present OLS as well as logit regression models below.

Further, this distribution raises questions about the structure of political conflict in the media. It seems that the media allow for a simultaneous coverage of various (state and non-state) political actors only infrequently (15 percent of the days). This suggests that media coverage of policies tends to be of a sequential nature, or perhaps of a 'decoupled' character, in which 'social' problems are discussed separately from 'policy' problems. A more sequential structure would fit in with agenda setting literature that differentiates several phases in the policy or agenda setting process (Downs 1972). It also suggests that the news media do not offer a forum of political conflict that is different in terms of actors than institutional arenas of politics.

This specific distribution should also be observed in aspects of the variation in the actor

FIGURE 38 Distribution of actor attention per issue per country per day (n=3261)



composition of debates at varying levels of attention. This is shown in figure 39 and figure 40. These figures resemble figure 38 but represent subsets of the sample. Figure 39 shows the distribution of actors at high levels of media attention, figure 40 shows the same distribution at low levels of media attention. The leftmost bars in figure 39 and figure 40 show a similar proportion of days (72 percent versus 70 percent) with only state actors cited in the news media for two subsets at both high and low levels of attention. The middle two bars in these figures show that at high levels of attention the proportions of days in which both state and society actors are present in the media are higher (28 percent, 15+13) than at low levels of media attention (9 percent). The right-hand bars in the figure 39 and figure 40 indicate the exact opposite relation for the days in which only non-state actors make claims. At high levels of attention I found only non-state actors on only 2 percent of the days, whereas at low or 'regular' levels of media attention, non-state actors act as sole claimants on 20 percent of the days. This suggests that at low levels of attention society-based actors take a seemingly more important position as sole claimants, unchallenged by state actors. These are probably attempts to secure government recognition for certain problems in an early stage of the agenda-setting process. As seen in the middle two bars in figure 40, they then seldom (9 percent of the days) make claims simultaneously with state actors, suggesting that these society-based actors do not (yet) have government recognition. When media attention is high (figure 39), it seems likely that society-based actors have moved the issue slightly further up the government agenda. They then frequently (28 percent of the days) find themselves represented in the news media together with institutional actors.

These figures thus suggest an important relation between the level of media attention and the types of political actors in the news. However, in order to evaluate that relation while accounting for country and issue differences, they should be examined by more

FIGURE 39 Distribution of actor attention per issue per country per day at high levels of attention (>0 of standardized (mean=0) attention measure, n=1130)

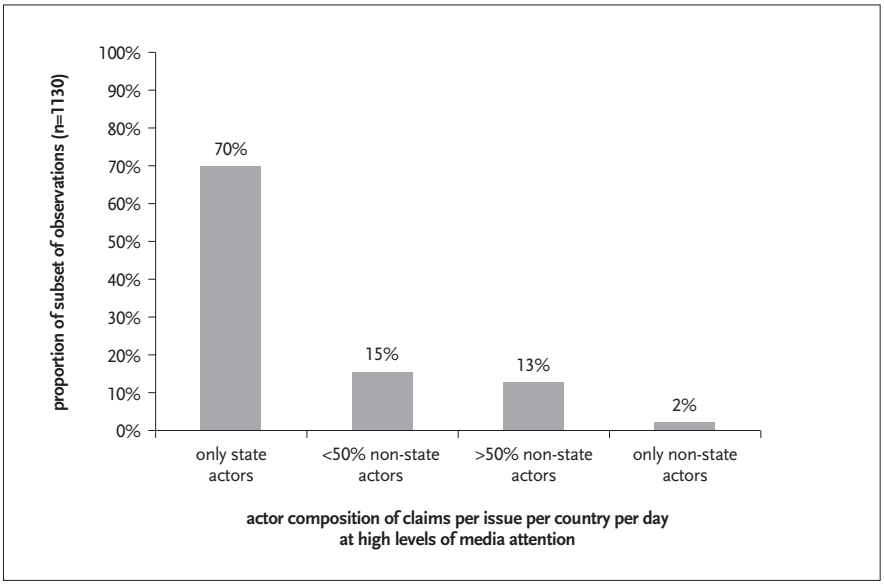
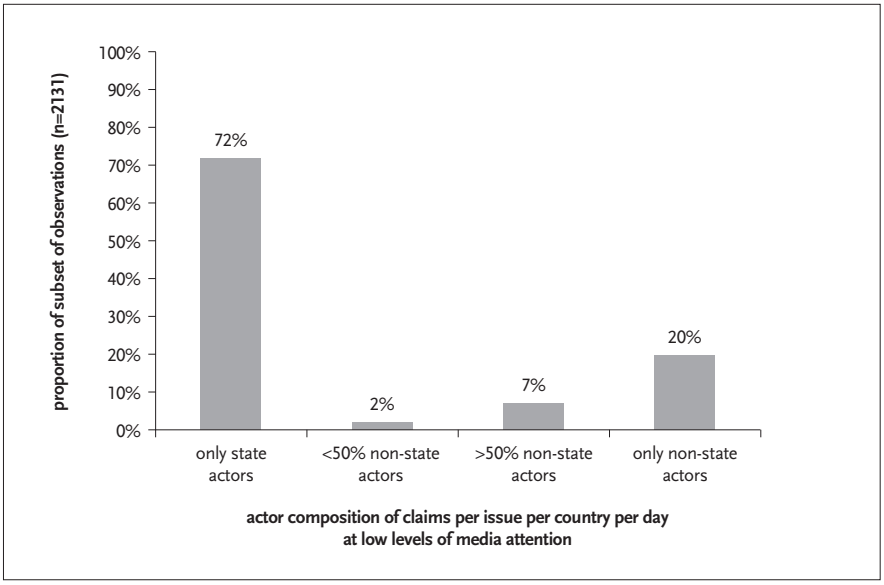


FIGURE 40 Distribution of actor attention per issue per country per day at low levels of attention (<0 of standardized (mean=0) attention measure, n=2131)



sophisticated statistical methods, such as regression models. At the same time the initial results suggest that, when treated as a normally distributed dependent variable, any OLS regression model will be wrongly specified. Therefore I will present both OLS regressions and logit models in which the categories are treated as dependent indicator variables.

5.7.3 MODELLING ISSUE, COUNTRY, AND ATTENTION DIFFERENCES

5.7.3.1. OLS REGRESSION ON MEDIA PRESENCE

The OLS-regression analysis confirms several of the findings reflected in the more straightforward descriptive figures. Table 24 presents the result of the OLS regression analysis where the dependent variable is the proportion of political statements by non-state actors in newspapers. On the independent variable side of the equation, I use a series of indicator variables per country, policy area, and the standardized and multiplied measure for media attention. In the first model I only evaluate the country and policy area variables. Because both models include mutually exclusive categorical variables, it was necessary to assign reference categories for which I have chosen education policies in the Netherlands.[172] As already found in the previous figures, the differences between policy sectors are definably more important than differences between countries. All policy area variables show significant differences with education policy, whereas only Germany shows a small but significant difference with the Netherlands. The coefficients are negative, which indicates that, relative to the Netherlands, the other countries show marginally lower proportions of claims of non-state actors. The effect of policy field is stronger and shows more variation. Compared to education, European integration and the deployment of troops are less likely to be debated by non-state actors. These fields are the focus of state actors only. As seen in the smaller coefficients, slightly weaker but significant negative differences with the proportion of non-state actors found in education policy (the reference category) can be observed in the fields of monetary politics, agriculture, and immigration.

In the second model I additionally evaluate interaction effects between policy areas and countries. The rationale for these specific interactions is somewhat based on traditional understandings of national 'sensitive' policy areas, such as the deployment of troops for Germany.[173] In these areas there may be more chance to find higher proportions of society-based actors, as discussed in relation to figure 1. Most of these interactions are insignificant.

[172] This is a common way to use categorical independent variables in regression analysis (Long and Freese 2006, Hardy and Reynolds, 2004), implying that the coefficients have to be understood as indicating the difference from the reference categories. The choice of the reference category affects the significance of the coefficients. That is, as seen in the earlier figures, both the Netherlands and the 'education' topic showed relatively high proportions of non-state actors in the debate. Consequently, the difference between these and the other indicators is large and more likely to be significant. I also examined models using other reference categories. This did not substantially affect the significance of the country effects, but did influence the significance of the issue effects. I have taken this into account in the interpretation of these outcomes.

[173] Switzerland and immigration policy (strong right-wing party), UK and monetary politics (discussion on membership of Eurozone), Netherlands and education (pillarized school system, '*schoolstrijd*'), Germany and troops deployment (WOII guilt), France and troop deployment (outside NATO), Spain and agriculture (big sector....).

TABLE 24 OLS regression on the proportion of non-state political claims per day, per policy field, per count

n=3261		model 1	model 2	model 3	model 4
country: NL reference category	Spain	-0.0028 (-0.13)	-0.011 (-0.47)	-0.0036 (-0.16)	0.072 (1.06)
	France	-0.0038 (-0.17)	0.00050 (0.02)	-0.0023 (-0.10)	0.050 (0.70)
	Germany	-0.053* (-2.23)	-0.037 (-1.39)	-0.054* (-2.30)	-0.034 (-0.46)
	Switzerland	-0.037 (-1.66)	-0.030 (-1.28)	-0.037 (-1.68)	0.15* (2.20)
	United Kingdom	0.00076 (0.03)	-0.011 (-0.43)	-0.0047 (-0.21)	0.093 (1.42)
issue: education reference category	monetary politics	-0.21** (-8.06)	-0.22** (-7.16)	-0.21** (-8.00)	-0.21** (-8.04)
	agriculture	-0.17** (-7.39)	-0.18** (-6.98)	-0.17** (-7.28)	-0.17** (-7.30)
	immigration	-0.20** (-8.41)	-0.19** (-7.03)	-0.20** (-8.44)	-0.20** (-8.45)
	troops deployment	-0.23** (-10.24)	-0.21** (-7.51)	-0.22** (-10.18)	-0.22** (-10.21)
	European integration	-0.31** (-11.08)	-0.29** (-9.65)	-0.30** (-11.04)	-0.30** (-11.08)
interaction: countries and issues	CH* immigration		0.0045 (0.22)		
	UK* monetary politcs		0.044* (1.97)		
	NL* education		0.023 (1.14)		
	DE* troops deployment		-0.025 (-1.14)		
	FR* troops deployment		0.011 (0.51)		
	ES* Agriculture		0.050** (2.61)		
attention	no. of claims per day (std,-1/x)			-0.15** (-8.92)	-0.22** (-4.83)
interaction: countries and attention	attention* CH				0.20** (2.87)
	attention* DE				0.022 (0.29)
	attention* UK				0.11 (1.59)
	attention* FR				0.055 (0.76)
	attention* ES				0.081 (1.17)
R^2		0.047	0.052	0.070	0.073

Standardized beta coefficients; t statistics in parentheses, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

However, I did find that debates on monetary policies in the UK and on agriculture in Spain are significantly more likely to have higher proportions of non-state actors. Explanations for such specific effects are likely to be related to specific policy histories or specific issues debated in 2000 and 2002 (the years to which the data apply). Interpretation would require a more detailed study of these outliers; more generally, however, we can say the insignificant results of the other 'sensitive' policy areas indicate that such specific stories, while perhaps convincing when studied in isolation, are generally part of very systematic differences between policy areas and countries, and hence not so unique as traditional understanding may suggest.

In the third model I start evaluating the effect of the news media by taking into account variation in attention. The indicator for media attention has a significant negative effect on the proportion of claims by non-state actors. More attention generally leads to lower proportions of claims by actors such as companies, interest groups, and experts. This also supports the general bivariate comparison between high and low levels of attention reported in figure 34 and figure 35. The size of the effect is similar to that of the effect of the policy sectors indicators. But remember the categorical distribution of the actor-compositions which could imply a more complex relation than indicated by this OLS regression model. That is, figure 39, figure 40, and the logit regression analysis below indicate that this is indeed the case and that the average proportion is not a proper measurement.

The fourth model shows the effect of variation in the total level of media attention in a more exact manner, presenting the effects of media attention on the relative media presence of non-state actors per country relative to the Netherlands. Whereas the country differences themselves are insignificant, the differences in the dynamics between attention and (non-) state related claims are significant. Especially in the Netherlands, greater attention is associated with lower proportions of non-state actors in the news media. This effect seems smaller in other European countries. For Switzerland I did not find the effect; that is, the positive significant coefficient (0.20) compensates for the negative coefficient reflected in the 'total attention' (-0.22), in this case reflecting the effect in the reference category the Netherlands.

5.7.3.2. LOGIT ON CATEGORIES OF MEDIA PRESENCE

Table 25 shows the results of two sets of three logit regression analyses on three actor composition categories: days with only state actors in the news (models 1 and 4), days with both state and non-state claimants (models 2 and 5), and days with only non-state actors (models 3 and 6). These days are represented by dummy variables, and are the dependent variable in each of the models. The descriptive analyses of these three categories in figure 39 and figure 40 generally suggest contrasting effects of changes in attention. That is, days with only non-state actors in the news tend to be days with low levels of media attention, whereas days with both state and non-state actors seem likely to be days with high levels of media attention. In this logit I found similar effects while additionally controlling for country differences.

The first three columns in the table, models 1, 2 and 3, present the coefficients of the country indicators, issue indicators, and the standardized measurement of media attention. The country and issue indicators generally show similar effects as in the OLS regression analysis. That is, policy sector differences are more important than country differences.

TABLE 25 Logit regression on actor composition indicators

actor composition:	model 1 only state actors	model 2[174] mixed state and non-state actor	model 3 only non-state	model 4 only state actors	model 5 mixed state and non-state actor	model 6 only non-state
Spain	-0.100 (-0.71)	0.338 (1.73)	-0.187 (-0.97)	-0.525 (-1.18)	-0.227 (-0.41)	0.774 (0.76)
France	-0.0349 (-0.25)	0.198 (1.00)	-0.0190 (-0.10)	-0.310 (-0.67)	-0.293 (-0.52)	0.450 (0.44)
Germany	0.182 (1.39)	0.0677 (0.37)	-0.502** (-2.85)	0.496 (1.18)	-1.184* (-2.31)	-0.720 (-0.73)
Switzerland	0.0784 (0.56)	0.351 (1.86)	-0.617** (-3.08)	-0.891* (-2.02)	-0.0112 (-0.02)	0.588 (0.58)
United Kingdom	-0.127 (-0.93)	0.477** (2.58)	-0.642** (-3.29)	-0.305 (-0.77)	-0.308 (-0.59)	1.452 (1.70)
monetary politics	0.872** (6.60)	-0.703** (-3.89)	-0.860** (-4.95)	0.879** (6.65)	-0.694** (-3.83)	-0.854** (-4.93)
agriculture	0.974** (6.30)	-0.822** (-3.83)	-0.800** (-3.98)	0.979** (6.31)	-0.823** (-3.82)	-0.810** (-4.02)
immigration	0.963** (6.54)	-0.684** (-3.43)	-1.184** (-5.91)	0.970** (6.56)	-0.692** (-3.46)	-1.225** (-6.00)
troops deployment	1.599** (8.55)	-1.368** (-5.34)	-1.546** (-5.98)	1.603** (8.56)	-1.374** (-5.36)	-1.567** (-6.00)
European integration	1.058** (8.27)	-0.546** (-3.21)	-1.545** (-8.59)	1.067** (8.31)	-0.539** (-3.16)	-1.599** (-8.78)
no. of claims per day (std,-1/x)	-0.131 (-0.69)	4.040** (14.03)	-5.621** (-15.72)	0.235 (0.46)	5.475** (6.28)	-6.929** (-6.91)
attention* CH				-1.683* (-2.31)	-0.849 (-0.75)	1.704 (1.22)
attention* DE				0.524 (0.78)	-2.707* (-2.57)	-0.231 (-0.17)
attention* UK				-0.306 (-0.49)	-1.736 (-1.61)	2.884* (2.48)
attention* FR				-0.469 (-0.62)	-1.116 (-0.95)	0.646 (0.44)
attention* ES				-0.724 (-1.01)	-1.270 (-1.11)	1.362 (0.97)
constant	-0.0800 (-0.45)	0.941** (4.05)	-4.248** (-14.52)	0.129 (0.39)	1.581** (3.70)	-5.147** (-7.07)
observations pseudo R^2	3261 (0.028)	2820 0.11	3261 0.17	3261 0.031	2820 0.11	3261 0.18

t statistics in parentheses, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$

[174] I have also calcultated this model using more precise indicators (resp over and under 50 percent), but these did not change the results. Please note that when examining this model I excluded the observations in which I found only non-state actors. So, the coefficients address the difference between 'mixed' and 'only state actors'

However, when it comes to country differences the different specifications of the dependent variables pinpoint some small but significant differences between the Netherlands (reference category) and the other countries. As seen in the first model, the presence of only state actors in the news media does not vary across countries. The second and third models show significant differences between Switzerland and the United Kingdom on the one hand, and the other countries on the other in the likely presence of non-state actors. In Switzerland and the United Kingdom it is more likely to find days in which society and state actors are simultaneously present in the news media. The odds of this being the case, as compared to situations in which only state actors make claims, are about 1.5 times larger than in the Netherlands (and the other countries that are not significantly different from the Netherlands).[175] An exactly opposite effect is found for the presence of only society based actors, the odds of society-based actors being the only claimants as compared to any other situation are 0.5 in Switzerland, Germany and the United Kingdom (again compared to the reference category, the Netherlands). These country differences suggest varying agenda-setting dynamics in these countries.

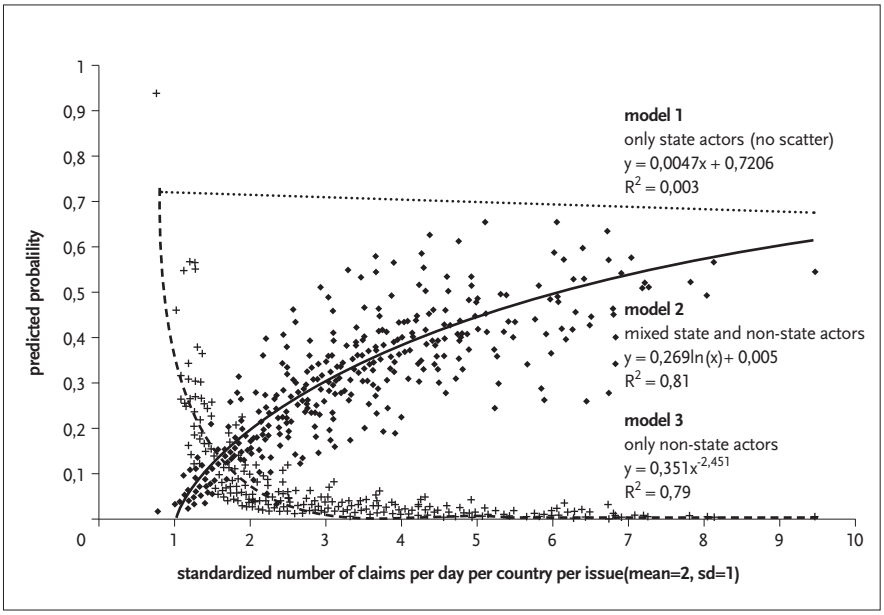
More importantly, they suggest that media system effects could matter. The newspapers in Switzerland and the United Kingdom seem more 'pluralist' than those in the other countries. The coefficients addressing differences in policy fields show similar differences to those reported in the OLS regression. However, these logit models show them more convincingly, with even higher significance levels and suggesting stronger effects. For instance, the odds of observing a day in which both state and non-state actors present claims on troops deployment relative to days in which only state actors are present are 0.25 times higher (i.e., 4 times lower) (relative to the reference category of education).[176]

The most important results of these analyses were found in coefficients examining the variation in media attention as measured by the standardized and adapted numbers of claims per day; I found exceptionally strong and significant effects in this regard. As seen in the insignificant coefficient in model 1 (and model 4), this is not the case for the likelihood of observing only state actors in the news papers. Variation in attention matters only for the relative presence of non-state actors. Because of the adaptation of the attention variable, it is difficult to directly interpret the size of the effect from the coefficient or the additionally computed odds ratios. Therefore, I present a scatter diagram of the predicted probabilities of observing any of the three actor compositions (y axis) set out against the level of media attention (x axis). This is shown in figure 41. The upper, dotted line in this figure represents the probability of finding only state actors in newspaper. This is, unrelated to the level of attention as also reflected in the insignificant coefficient in model 1. The second, solid line shows the predicted probability of finding a mixed-actor composition. This probability

[175] The odds ratios are not reported in the table but I use them in the text to facilitate interpretation of the size of the effect. Further note that I examined this model while excluding the observations in which I found only non-state actors. So, the coefficients address the difference between the 'mixed' and 'only state actors' situations.

[176] By way of comparison: the odds of observing a day in which only state actors present claims on troops deployment relative to days in which both state and non-state actors are present are 5 times higher (relative to the reference category of education).

FIGURE 41 Predicted probability scores by level of attention of logit models 1, 2 and 3



is higher at higher levels of media attention. This is a substantial effect; when the number of claims increases by a standard deviation, the likelihood of a mixed actor composition increases by 10 percentage points. The last, dashed line shows the probabilities for the third model, about days with only non-state actors. It shows that such actors have a high probability of being the only claimants at low levels of media attention. As soon as the media increase their attention, more political actors are involved, and non-state actors have an extremely low likelihood of being the only actors cited in newspapers. I presented similar findings in figure 39 and figure 40.

In models 4, 5 and 6 in table 25, I additionally examine the country-specific effect of variation in attention and the actor composition of newspaper claims making. Most of these interaction coefficients are insignificant. The negative significant coefficient of the Swiss interaction term in model 4 indicates that, in Switzerland, the state is less often the sole claimant at higher levels of attention. As seen in the negative, significant coefficient in model 5, the generally higher likelihood of a 'mixed' composition of actors being reported on is somewhat lower in Germany. Model 6 shows that in the United Kingdom the generally strongly negative effect of attention on society-only claims making is significantly, but only slightly less strong.

In general, the expected powerful indicators of the role of state and non-state actors in the news media were found to have a weaker explanatory power than expected. That is, the differences in policy issue, country, or general levels of media attention only partly explain the relative attention to non-state actors in the media. This can be seen from the low R-square values in all models and the generally small coefficients. However, while there remains a lot to explain, I found distinct patterns of variation in the types of political

actors present in the news media. The findings also show that differences across policy issues are definitely more important than differences across countries. This seriously challenges the idea that media systems are of critical importance for the ways in which political actors present their cases in the news papers. At least when it comes to the relative presence of certain political actors, my findings indicate that aspects of the policy sector in question are more important. In both the OLS regression and logit models policy sector differences significantly affect the presence of non-state actors, whereas country differences do not. Because the hypotheses are related to differences between country-specific media systems, I can evaluate them only partly.

Further, the level of media attention significantly affects the presence of non-state actors in the news media. This relation is more complex than I hypothesized. That is, non-state actors have a higher probability of being present in the news at higher levels of attention. At the same time, they have a lower probability of being the only claimant at these times. This finding should be understood in light of general low presence of non-state actors in the news media.

5.8. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have evaluated the relative presence of government vis- à-vis non-state actors in the press. I examined why news media report on political activities in order to assess the influence that various political actors could derive from attention in the news media. I assumed that this varies between democratic corporatist systems (the Netherlands and Germany), pluralist systems (the United Kingdom and Switzerland), and polarized pluralist systems (France and Italy). In order to better differentiate between these systems I specifically focussed on presence at different levels of media attention.

The results of this research merit several conclusions. These address our theories of interest intermediation, political communication, and political science more broadly. First, in terms of exchange relations, the data suggest that state-related actors have a more favourable exchange relation with the news media than do society-based actors. Actors in stronger institutional positions dominate the news. This challenges assumptions in certain areas of interest group research in which it is implied that groups, as setting the agenda of the media, almost always benefit from greater media attention as compared to bureaucrats or other targets of influence. As Gamson (2004, 252) says, 'no news is bad news'. Thus, the result that institutional actors dominate the news suggests that we may need to re-evaluate the incentives and capacities of interest organizations and social movements to engage in 'outside lobbying' and 'going public' (Beyers 2004; Kriesi, Tresch and Jochum 2007; Binderkrantz 2008). One seemingly fruitful start along this line of prospective research would be to examine cooperation among different types of political actors in order to generate combinations of resources. This might include, for example, interest groups providing media-relevant information to members of parliament so as to combine sector-level expertise with political leverage, in order to create a more productive media exchange. In terms of theory and in line with recent research on interest groups (Thrall 2006), the data do not support the pluralist notion that such actors routinely use the news media to challenge existing policies.

Besides from the general pattern of state dominance, I found interesting variations related to the level of attention paid by news media to certain issues. That is, at very low levels of attention society-based actors are more likely to appear alone in the newspapers, whereas

at higher levels of attention they appear together with institutional actors. However, when they share the media spotlight, society-based actors are far more likely to be present. From the perspective of society-based actors this result seems to pose a strategic dilemma. Such political actors are either present at moments that matter but cannot control the frame of the debate, or they are present at less relevant moments but as sole claimants seemingly in control of the policy frame. Because I assume that high levels of media attention are related to potential changes or punctuations in policies, political actors probably find it more important to be present in the news media at these moments. So, from that perspective, the higher non-state presence at these moments supports the idea that news media are allies of the society-based actors. The opportunity to challenge state actors at moments of punctuation, which the news media offer interest organizations, benefits both the media and the interest organization. At the same time, certain political actors may prefer to find their claims unchallenged and to be the single claimant. This could put them in a position to frame policies according to their preferences, as there is no need to conform to the 'language' of other participants in the news media.

Second, I started this chapter with several expectations derived from a media systems typology, and the implied consequences of this for the presence of non-state actors in the news. I expected to find (1) in a democratic corporatist system fairly high proportions of non-state actors in the news media, irrespective of media attention, (2) in a polarized pluralist system lower proportions of non-state actors, and even lower in cases of high attention, and (3) in pluralist systems fairly high proportions of non-state actors, especially at high levels of attention.

In terms of the general media presence of state actors all countries in this research could be categorized as polarized pluralist. According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), polarized pluralist media systems are typically present in Mediterranean Europe, in this research represented by Spain and France. The result is thus in contrast with these expectations. Pluralist and democratic corporatist countries exhibit similar scores as polarized pluralist countries. I expected a dominant position of state actors in polarized pluralist countries and I found such a dominant position in all countries with the average proportion of claims per day made by state actors across Europe of about 80 percent. This varies a bit per country and substantially per policy sector, with education especially being an outlier. At the same time, as said earlier, I found that this state dominance of newspapers should be understood in light of the increasing probabilities of society-based actors gaining access to the news media at moments of high attention. This effect, contrary to the media systems theory, varies only slightly across countries. While this has theoretical implications, suggested below, it also gives rise to more normative questions about the appropriate function of the news media. It seems that the policy-making institutions and the news media are very close in terms of political functions and mutual dependencies. That is, the media are as good or bad as the quality of the political system. As Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston (2007, 39) write, 'the press system works well when the political system is already doing its job of debating and giving public scrutiny (...)'. My findings seem to support this, as I found that the news media do not seem to have a fundamentally different 'rhythm', since their attention changes according to a similar pattern as policy attention changes, and the news media hardly give access to political actors that do not (yet) have access to political institutional venues. At the same time, as said earlier, the 'closeness' of the news media to the formal actors in the political system comes at the cost of a lack

of access to news media for other actors in society, such as interest organizations. This inaccessibility seems larger than theoretically expected or, perhaps, normatively hoped for.

Third, a more general remark on theory construction. The research project has shown substantial differences across policy fields but limited variation across countries. This implies that we need to start thinking more seriously about constructing sector-level theories instead of country typologies. It seems that the nature of policies fundamentally affects the working of different political systems in similar ways. Comparative agenda-setting studies have made some first steps in this direction (Green-Pedersen 2007; Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008; Green-Pedersen and Wilkerson 2006). However, we are still a long way away from a theoretically consistent typology of policy fields in relation to political organization and behaviour. From an exchange perspective, such a typology would consider the ways in which exchanges between different fields of actors or domains takes place. That is, certain resources (e.g., media attention, members mobilisation, expertise) could be more valuable in certain policy communities or for certain types of political conflicts. In classic pluralist views within political science it is assumed that it is the interaction of political actors which constructs the scope and location of conflict (e.g. Schattschneider 1960). However, this would imply that the same issues could have very different properties in different systems, as they have varying histories of policy struggles. But this is countered by the consistent similarities across systems observed in mediated debates across Europe presented in this chapter.

In this chapter I hope to have shown that non-state actors in general, and especially interest organizations as part of that group, are in unfavourable positions in the exchange relationships of news media and political actors. However, my findings suggest that, irrespective of the media system, interest organizations have some opportunities to engage in politics as represented in the stories found in newspapers. That is, at low levels of attention they could attempt to frame issues according to their preferences, and at higher levels they may use the attention to claim latent public support and challenge policies. This finding contributes to a more precise specification of the conditions under which interest organization may have beneficial exchanges with the news media.

CHAPTER 6
Conclusion

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Why do interest organizations do what they do? I started this thesis by suggesting three conceptual starting points from which to understand the existence and activities of interest organizations. Organized political activities could find their basis in the desire for organizational survival. In that case, activities will be primarily related to the preferences of members and the competitive environment within a population of interest organizations. Alternatively, the activities of interest organizations may be mainly understood in relation to government institutions and public policy. The aim of interest organizations is then to attempt to influence public policies. Last, one could start with ideas; without arguments there is no action. The key rationale for political activities will in that case be most fundamentally related to influencing frames on public policy, ideas about change, or certain political principles more generally.

These starting points were consequently understood as exchange relationships, and related to the typical activities undertaken by organized interests. These activities were then seen as produced in several steps, each of which I examined in the empirical chapters. First, assuming the existence of a population of interest organizations, in chapter 3 I addressed the question why certain organizations are more politically active than others - a prerequisite for a more specific characterization of the ways in which interest organizations are politically active. This second step was the subject of chapter 4. And lastly, in chapter 5, I considered a specific part of the outcome of political activities, in this case the attention paid to the activities of organized interests by the news media.

In concluding this analysis I will first summarize the most important results of each chapter, and then evaluate the strengths and limitations of the study. Following that, I will discuss the importance of the empirical results more broadly. More to the point, I did not find evidence for several broadly held assumptions about the importance of members, organizations, and political systems. These null results nevertheless do matter for future research and the validity of the findings of previous research. After a reflection on my exchange-theoretical framework I will conclude with several remarks on group politics as part of democratic political systems.

6.2. POINT OF DEPARTURE: EXCHANGE THEORY

In chapter 2 I sought to develop a theory about organized political activities that balances the more commonly examined effects of structural forces with characteristics or traits of political actors. Several theoretical starting points were discussed before focusing on the interest organization as a meaningful unit of analysis. This means that certain phenomena were excluded from the analysis, including the motivations or considerations of the individual leaders or members of interest organizations. Both in terms of theoretical assumptions and in terms of empirical analysis these are assumed to be relatively inconsequential in aggregate terms. This is the result of organizational, issue-related, and

systematic forces that are expected to affect political activities and thus constrain the behaviors of individual actors. Second, I did not try to develop a theory based on country-specific system typologies, such as pluralism or corporatism. The abstract and general relations between political activities and structures of opportunities would have required an elaborate conceptual specification that would not fully have served the more modest research aim of this thesis. That is, system-specific theory construction requires the development of conceptual relations between the various components of the political system (party system, 'culture', media system) and the groups system as part of that – and the way these affect group strategies. Third, recent interest group research has increasingly been designed via the selection of political issues (Baumgartner et al. 2009). In terms of theory construction, however, issues as units of analysis are less frequently used and are consequently more challenging starting points for constructing a conceptual framework on interest representation. Apart from these challenges related to existing paths of theory construction, the most important argument justifying a focus on organizations follows from the expected importance of interorganizational dynamics. That is, the density and diversity of the population of interest organizations seems to considerably affect the activities of organizations. In order to examine such effects one needs to conceptually relate, for instance, the density of the interest community to the political activities of interest organizations. In order to relate the two stages of interest representation (population and influence strategies), I have chosen a similar organizational level of theory construction.

In order to study the activities of interest organizations under various circumstances, I conceptualized these activities as relationships between different pairs of actors in their environment. The behavioral rationale of interest organizations is assumed to be shaped by a combination of factors that are generated internally and externally to the interest organization. Such shaping operates via a variety of mechanisms. Besides exchange relationships I discussed several other ways in which organizations interact with their environment, such as competition or the partitioning of valued resources. The strongest type of organizational interaction, and theoretically most broadly developed, is the exchange relationship. This is especially so in research on interest representation, where we find several research traditions related to different logics of exchange. The logic of influence is compatible with neo-corporatist thinking (e.g., Schmitter and Streeck 1999), the logic of reputation relates to social movement literature (e.g. Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993; Rucht 2004), and the logic of support draws on pluralist literature (Salisbury 1969, Gais and Walker 1991, Olson 1965). These refer to exchange relationships of interest organizations with policy makers, public opinion, and the constituents of interest organizations, respectively.

The exchange theory I have developed seeks to contribute to these traditions by examining the interrelations between each of these logics. I expect, for instance, that the ways in which interest organizations deal with government depend on the ties organizations have with their members. That is, if an interest organization manages to organize a large part of the sector in which it works and is one of only few organizations in the sector, it is more likely to be politically active, as it is in a far more favorable position to influence policies. Such an organization will have a monopoly on the representation and expertise that policy actors need to do their jobs. The idea that the contacts of interest organizations with actors in various environments are interdependent is an addition to existing 'exchange'

approaches. Existing approaches tend to separately examine the policy, support and public environments of interest organizations, or tend to point to the relation of two environments only. Below I will discuss environments, types of goods, and exchanges.

First, the supporters' environment creates opportunities for the exchange of institutional- and reputation-related goods provided by and for supporters. These are: (1) constituents' compliance, (2) leadership control, (3) members' public action, and (4) the organizational promotion of public visibility of a political issue. Two contextual forces affect the exchanges of these goods. First, the exchange depends on the type of supporters and the nature of their interest. The variation associated with the difficulty of mobilizing constituents also leads to differences in the value of the goods that organizations can offer in the influence or media environments. Also, the environment of other interest organizations matters. The composition of the interest community itself affects the opportunities for lasting exchange relationships with supporters. As in markets, monopoly as opposed to competition influences the nature of exchanges.

Second, the political institutional environment creates opportunities for the exchange of supporters- and reputation-related goods provided by and for policy makers. Constituents could benefit from (1) organizational privileges and favorable policies if they exchange (2) supporters' discipline and political/technical support. Through their involvement in the news media, interest organizations can exchange (3) political information in return for (4) the public use of policy frames that are 'acceptable' to policy makers. These exchanges are affected by several contextual factors, depending on the type of political control of the actor or venue (parliament, minister, bureaucratic venue) and on the system of structured interest group access more broadly (pluralism, corporatism).

Third, the news media or public environment create opportunities for the exchange of supporters- and influence-related goods provided by and for journalists and other relevant public fora such as blogs, conferences and public debates. Regarding supporters, these are (1) newsworthy 'events and drama' in exchange for (2) latent public opinion support, and, in relation to influence environment, (3) policy-relevant newsworthy information in return for (4) validation and issue expansion. These exchanges are conditioned by the media system in specific countries and by public opinion or public mood on the specific policy issue.

The exchange relationships in these three environments can be understood to be part of the discussed multi-staged influence production process. The strategies of organizations (third stage) are then (partially) explained by the aspects of the population of interest organizations (second stage), and provide likely explanations for policy outcomes (fourth stage). The third stage, which deals with influence activities, can be further partitioned into smaller steps. The first step is that exchange relationships require interest organizations to be politically active. Before we can start studying exchange relationships we need to have an idea about the variation among organizations in their political activities, as opposed to merely counting them as part of the population. This was the theme of the third chapter. Following their general political interest, interest organizations vary in the types of exchanges they seek. This can be seen as a next step in producing influence, and was the subject of the fourth chapter. The activities are likely to have some effect or outcome, and are likely to be affected by the outcomes that organizations expect of them: media outcomes were the subject of the fifth chapter. I will summarize the results of these chapters in the following sections.

6.3. WHY ARE INTEREST ORGANIZATIONS POLITICALLY ACTIVE?

A major concern regarding interest representation is the bias within the interest system. That is, specific sections of society are more likely to be organized, use more effective influence strategies, and secure favorable government policies. This concern is sometimes substantiated by pointing to the very large proportions of, usually, business organizations present in almost any political system (e.g. Coen 2007; Mahoney 2008). However, this is only a partial indication of the types of bias in the interest system. That is, besides being more numerous, some interest organizations may also be more politically active. To paraphrase Schattschneider (1960, 35), the flaw in group politics it is not only the upper-class accent the chorus sings in, but also that those with upper-class accents sing louder and more continuously. Surprisingly, this last concern has hardly ever been evaluated empirically or theoretically. This inattention seems to be the result of two aspects of theories on interest representation.

First, pluralist, corporatist, and organization theories have diverging foci and assumptions about the political orientation of interest organizations. These have led researchers in each of these traditions to neglect the question, for different reasons. In pluralist thinking, interest organizations are expected to be only minimally different in their aspirations to influence policies. Interest organizations, by definition, exist to influence policy. Bias in group systems can thus fairly easily be understood as bias in the ratio of subsections to the full population of interest organizations seeking representation. In corporatist thinking, bias, government favors, or undue power of certain interest organizations could also manifest itself in the absence of policy interest. That is, in corporatist systems, favored interest organizations are assigned a governance or policy-making role that makes them powerful. Thus, in such a view, both variation in the numbers of organizations and their immediate lobbying activities do not necessarily address bias, nor cover the full range of political activities of all interest organizations. In organization-theoretical views, political activities are but one of several activities that guarantee survival. So, why seek political influence? To answer this question, we need to understand the competitive environment of an organization in terms of similar organizations and of members. The known variation in these phenomena leads us to expect substantial variation in the political activities of interest organizations. However, such expectations have rarely been examined in relation to bias in the group system.

Second, in addition to this theoretical differentiation, research differentiation further complicates the evaluation of bias. This relates to the segmentation of different stages in the influence production process and the theoretical challenge to link them. Interest group scholars tend to have some knowledge about the composition of populations of interest organizations, and they have a general idea about the dominant influence strategies found in particular systems. However, these two aspects of interest representation are understood in isolation. This makes it difficult to evaluate normative concerns, because we do not know whether bias in the population also implies that the same one-sidedness is found in the influence activities of interest organizations in a particular system. Such isolated studies are, further, likely to produce only partial explanations of s trategies of interest organizations. They typically do not fully account for the inter-organizational context (the interest community) in which organizations work and that seems to determine some part of the repertoire of activities of organizations.

In chapter 3, I sought to empirically address these challenges by relating important

characteristics of the population of interest organizations (its density and its diversity) to the extent to which interest organizations are politically active. On the basis of information gleaned from the websites of 517 interest organizations, I compared political interest in several ways: between the EU and the Netherlands, among policy sectors, and among interest organizations. For each of these comparisons I formulated specific expectations based on several research traditions, the exchange theory, and 'common sense' arguments found among policy observers.

In terms of cross-system differences, the findings indicate that as expected, organizations in the EU are more interested in influencing public policy and organize their constituents in a more formal, representative manner. In the EU about 80 percent of the organizations in the sample have high values on the indicator that I used to measure policy interest and organizational capacity. In the Netherlands, only 40 percent of the organization in the sample scored similar values. The EU interest system is definitely more closely connected to the EU policy process than the Dutch system. I found that this higher system-level score could be understood via phenomena that vary by interest community or by organization. When this variation was controlled for in regression models, the crude 'political system' indicator did not affect the political interest of interest organizations. That is, I found that the mix of policy competences in the EU leads to larger proportions of business interest representation, which in turn leads to a stronger orientation towards public policies. The specific mix of policy competencies of the EU and the types of interests that these policies attract explain its difference with the Netherlands in terms attempts by interest organizations to influence policy. I will discuss this further in section 6.7.3. This implies, more normatively, while keeping in mind the relatively low variation in political activities found among EU organizations, that the bias towards business interest organizations in the EU population, also observed in earlier research, is further increased via the more active stance on policies shown by organizations representing business interests. At the same time, domestic political systems, in this case the Netherlands, exhibit similar biases on the policy fields in which the EU has competences.

In terms of differences between policy sectors, I expected to see differences based on the idea that government activity generates 'demand' for political activities. Government is expected to be more active generating demand when they have legal competence (EU or national) and when policy sectors are close to 'core' government tasks (i.e., market regulation as opposed to recreation). Both expectations were substantiated by the data. Organizations were found to be more politically active in sectors in which government has a more important role. These results suggest that government activity increases the need for interest organizations to become politically active. Exchange relationships in the institutional environment thus seem to depend on the expected value of such relationships for both partners. This seems to be true irrespective of the specific institutional context (EU or the Netherlands). Government activities raise the stakes of exchange relationships and make them more valuable to the actors involved.

The ways in which organizations mobilize their members for political engagement depends on supply factors or exchange relationships in the supporters' environment. This membership mobilization is also part of the measurement of political activities of interest organizations. When it comes to populations of interest organizations, the findings show that dense interest communities are less politically active. Higher competitive pressures require organizations to focus on surviving as an organization (e.g., by specializing

in particular services) and lower interest in political activities. Also, interest organizations in dense environments could 'free ride' on the influence activities of other interest organizations. This directly addresses the normative concern about bias. Measuring bias by the numbers of organizations found in certain pockets of an interest population is likely to lead to an overestimation of bias in terms of political activities. The more numerous interest communities are, the less politically active each community will be. This does not preclude, however, that there could be other dimensions of bias, such as business bias, that span multiple communities. This was shown clearly in the analysis of the differences between organizations with different types of members. Organizations made up of companies tend to have more developed ways to give voice to members (annual meetings etc.) which seems to give them a powerful position in the policy context. At the same time, the findings in this chapter suggested that collective action by citizens or by a variety of categories of constituents is not as strongly oriented at public policy than action by companies or public organizations.

I will discuss two aspects of these results in more detail in section 6.7 below. Most importantly, the findings in this chapter suggested, first, that general system differences do not explain the extent to which interest organizations attempt to influence policies. 'Lobbying culture' or political traditions do not seem to matter when controlled for other aspects, such as legal competence and business interest representation. Second, various aspects of interest organizations, such as receiving government subsidies and the nature of membership, while seemingly affecting political activities, had far lower explanatory power than aspects of the policy topic or interest community. Organized political activity seems best understood as part of a collective of organizations working within a sector.

6.4. WHY ARE ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN THE WAY THEY ARE?

Apart from bias in the interest system, a second concern in group politics deals with the working methods of interest organizations. By their very nature interest organizations do not follow democratic, parliamentary procedures. Interest organizations are not elected and, by claiming representation in non-parliamentary forums, even compete for influence with the electoral ties between government and citizens. This could increase political cynicism among those parts of the electorate who value the voting procedures and legitimacy of representative institutions. This is especially so when the activities of interest organizations are hidden from public scrutiny (lobbying), or are of a disruptive nature (demonstrations). In contrast, activities that are potentially aimed at voters (media statements) or contribute to the production of publicly available policy relevant information (policy reports) may reinforce the electoral ties between government and citizens. Thus, the typical variation in the activities of interest organizations affects the democratic evaluation of interest representation more broadly.

In order to evaluate such concerns, in chapter 4 I examined differences in political activities among interest organizations. I aimed to relate this variation to differences in the mobilization of interests, for instance, of business relative to social interests. Therefore, I tried to isolate how variation among organizations with different types of members, or those representing different interests, determines the use of various ways to gain influence. By selecting only organizations active at the EU level I sought to isolate these effects from other plausible effects, such as those of public opinion and variation in institutional structures across countries. As in the analysis in chapter 3, I aimed to relate variation

in the mobilization of different types of constituents to types of political activities. These political activities are directly related to the three logics of exchange. The elaborate coding of the websites of a sample of 165 EU level interest organizations produced detailed information on the activities related to members (logic of support), policy makers (logic of influence), and a broader public (logic of reputation).

This fourth chapter also merits some comments on methods, theory, and the normative evaluation of interest representation. First, in terms of methods, I made use of the new opportunities that the internet offers for the study of political activities. Unlike survey and interview methods, websites highlight the actual behavior of organizations. This allows for a more accurate evaluation of the intensity of the use of specific influence tactics. It also precludes recourse to motivational explanations for the choice of certain strategies, sometimes predominant in research based on interviews, but allows for the examination of structural factors underlying these choices, such as the type of membership of interest organizations. The coding of the websites was based on the theory developed in chapter 2. I constructed indexes of online activities that reflected the three exchange relationships introduced in the theory chapter. For instance, the presentation of an online calendar of events and online versions of newsletters would be coded as 'members-oriented communication'. Such clustering methods have been used in research on websites of political parties, but are new in interest group research. This method proved successful in gathering data on both 'objective' information (membership, age) and behavioral data, such as press statements or policy briefs presented online.

Second, in terms of theory, earlier interest group research led me to formulate expectations on the different political activities of interest organizations that represent different types of constituents. Previous theoretical and empirical research especially suggested strong hypotheses when it comes to the ways in which companies and individuals, respectively, collectively represent their interests. Associations of companies are expected to actively seek exchange relationships in the influence environment via communication activities such as policy reports, position statements, and website links to official institutions. I expected associations of individuals to be less active in this regard and more likely to focus on exchange relationships with constituents or potential supporters via the news media. Surprisingly, given their frequency in the prior literature, the findings did not support these expectations. The composite measures (indexes) of communication aimed at members, policy makers, and the public, respectively, did not vary in the ways theoretically expected. A variety of measures and analyses were used to examine these expectations.

A potential explanation for this null result could be that several aspects of the EU environment, such as its institutions, its particular history as an international organization, or the absence of an EU public sphere, reduce the variety of political activities that interest organization can engage in. This would lead interest organizations to behave more similarly than is common in national lobbying communities, and at the same time reduce the general variation found in the sample. However, I did find significant general variation among the organizations in the sample on the composite measurements of each of the exchange relationships (with supporters, policy makers, and public). Thus, EU institutions do not seem to produce a uniform behavioral pattern on the part of interest organizations. In this sense, the null results suggest the weakness of the logic of support, but they do not show the strength of the logic of influence either. That is, under the logic of influence,

the exchange demands of EU institutional actors would in my sample have produced more similar strategies among all organizations. I consider it more likely that the variations can be explained by factors other than institutional structures but that were also excluded from the research design. More to the point, it could be that several aspects of the policy sector or the political issue affect the types of political activities organizations engage in. These sector dimensions crosscut the organizational categories that I evaluated in chapter 4. Policy topics or issues vary along several aspects such as their technicality, regulatory or distributive nature, the immediate involvement of bureaucracy, the salience in public opinion, whether or not issues are under legislative consideration, or the types of other political actors involved. Such differences among issues and policy sectors require further study in research designs that deliberately seek variation on such dimensions. Aspects related to public opinion were excluded from consideration because I assumed that in the EU system, due to the absence of a public sphere, public opinion would hardly affect lobbying. In terms of the exchange theory this implies that the results do not affect the theoretical validity of the assumptions under the logic of reputation because these have been evaluated only partially. I will further discuss the sector differences in section 6.8.

Third, in terms of the normative evaluation of various types of group strategies, the findings did not indicate that the categories on which we find bias in the interest system (e.g. business) are also the organizational categories in which we find different tactics. This is good news for those who expected that, among other things, business interests were not only more numerous but also used more 'hidden' influence or organization methods. Business interest associations engage in various activities and, like other categories of organizations, target their members, the policy environment, or public opinion. This is bad news for those who expected that 'civil society' organizations representing 'social' interests and linking citizens and EU government would use more 'open' attempts to influence EU public policy. The *activities* of such organizations do not seem to make the EU policy process more transparent or more visible to citizens than the *activities* of business interest organizations. Regardless of the exact definition of these subcategories (by membership, by interest), the findings show that similar political activities are employed by these subsections of the interest community. While the EU business bias is strengthened through their relatively active political stance, as shown in chapter 3, these activities are not tactically different from those undertaken by other interest organizations.

6.5. WHY DO INTEREST ORGANIZATIONS GET MEDIA ATTENTION?

The studies described in chapters 3 and 4 were motivated by two potentially negative systematic effects of group politics. In chapter 5 the focus of attention was on a possible positive effect of interest organizations on the quality of democracy. This potentially positive effect is related to the contribution of interest organizations to political debate in the mass media. There are several variants of this classical argument in which positive effects of the mass media (watchdog role, creating critical citizens) are combined with positive effects of a pluralist group struggle (fragmentation of power, openness to outsiders) (e.g., Truman 1951, Wilson 1974). Democratic systems are 'good' when 'an active and legitimate group in the population can make itself heard effectively' (Dahl 1956, 145). In some variants of the argument the emphasis is on the outside strategy as an instrument of the 'powerless', weak, or challengers of government (Lipsky 1968, 1144; Schattschneider 1960, 40; Wilson 1961, 291). As Lasswell (1950, 235) writes, 'an established elite is usually so well situated in control

of the goods, violence, and practices of a community that a challenging elite is constrained to rely chiefly upon symbols'. Other variants of the argument emphasize the positive aspects of political deliberation more generally. This is for instance the case with those scholars who follow Habermas's evaluation of nineteenth-century thought in this regard (Norris 2000; Held 2006, 237-290; Hirst 1994), in which 'the public competition of private arguments' produces a consensus on the general interest (Habermas 1989, 83). Modern news media, however flawed, could facilitate such competition, and interest organizations could provide 'private arguments'.[177] Indeed, the quality of this competition is probably of increasing relevance considering a seeming 'displacement' of politics to the mass media (e.g. Kepplinger 2002; Manin 1997, 218-236; Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999).

Regardless of the exact line of argument and the nuances in each, most theories of democracy agree that the news media should potentially be open to interest organizations. This is crucial for organizations if they are to challenge government policy, and for the news media to stage deliberative debates that are independent from government actors. The extent to which news media are open to political actors from society, and the parallel extent to which interest organization could potentially use the news media as a pathway to political influence, thus are important aspects in evaluating democratic systems. In terms of empirical work, agenda-setting research and research on political communication has shown a variety of ways in which news media attention for political issues affects the policy process, both via public opinion and more directly (Walgrave and van Aelst 2006). Of importance to research on interest representation, a serious evaluation of the outside-oriented influence strategies of interest groups also requires information on the variation in media openness under various circumstances. This was the theme in chapter 5, in which I examined circumstances under which non-state political actors receive media attention.

In chapter 5 the focus was on the logic of reputation. I developed expectations about the importance for journalists of engaging in exchange relationships with state actors relative to exchange relationships with non-state actors. In the exchange relationship between state-related actors and journalists, exclusive information and the symbolism of government is exchanged for latent compliance with policies, and potential electoral support that may come with media attention. In the exchange relationship between actors in society and journalists, expertise or access to newsworthy events is exchanged for potential public support for certain causes and the validation of the political actor making a statement.

The value of these exchanges is assumed to depend on the media system. I formulated expectations in relation to the classification of media systems developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004). The Netherlands and Germany are considered democratic corporatist countries, and so I expected to find a balance between state and society-based actors in the news media. I expect France and Spain to fit the polarized pluralist expectation, with state actors expected to be more prominent. Switzerland but especially the United Kingdom, lastly, should be closest to the pluralist media system, in which I expected society-based actors to definitely use the news media to challenge government policy or address social

[177] However, note that Habermas is not so optimistic when it comes to twentieth-century practice in this regard: he observes a restricted public debate which takes place in the 'circuit of power, (...) between the private bureaucracies, special-interest associations, parties, and public administration (...) [where] the public is included (...) only to contribute its acclamation' (Habermas 1989, 176).

concerns, and thus to take up larger proportions of the statements on public policy in newspapers. The selection of countries covers the three types of media systems present in Western Europe. Variation in the level of attention for a policy topic was expected to emphasize the differences among the systems and increase the magnitude of the expected system effects. The analysis was based on the Europub dataset of political claims in news-papers in the European countries mentioned above. The dependent variable was the proportion of claims of non-state actors in selected newspapers on a specific day on a specific policy topic in any of the countries included.

The findings allow for conclusions on interest group behaviour, media system typology, and the normative relevance of the observations. First, in terms of exchange relationships, the data suggest that state-related actors have a more favourable exchange relationship with the news media than society-based actors. Actors in strong institutional positions dominate the news. On an average day, 80 per cent of the claims covered by newspapers are made by state actors. This suggests that, contrary to the remark by Schattschneider (1960, 37), expanding the conflict via the public arena of the news media does not seem to change the existing power ratio among interests that are likely to be present in policy circles, as implicitly reflected by media presence of especially institutional actors. That is, while speculative, the proportion of interest organizations present in the media seems similar to that found in other venues of political struggle such as bureaucracy. This suggests that interest organizations in general potentially benefit or lose from media attention no more or less than other actors. While this is unexpected in light of certain studies of group politics, this fits recent political communication theory on the selection and processing behaviour of journalists. In the indexing theory of reporting, journalists are expected to rank 'official' sources and 'official' conflict more highly than other sources (Bennett et al. 2007).

Besides this general pattern of state dominance I also found a specific dynamic based on the level of media attention. That is, at a low level of attention non-state actors tend to be sole claimants, whereas at higher levels of attention they share the media space with state actors. It is unclear in what way this benefits interest organizations, but I think that interest organizations are especially successful at low levels of attention. The premium that comes with setting the debate as sole claimants at certain moments is probably more highly valued than an imprecise and perhaps unnoticed coverage when competing for attention with state actors at high levels of attention. The strategic considerations of interest organization regarding outside strategies are definitely more complex than suggested by previous interest group and social movement literatures, which suggest that because of their 'outsider' status interest organizations, always favour a public fight over a private fight.

Second, in all the countries included the news media were similar in their relative attention to state or non-state actors. This similarity is surprising in light of the fundamentally different media and political systems upon which I based my hypotheses. All countries seem to be 'polarized pluralist' with a strong focus on state actors. The findings did, however, show some differences between the countries depending on the level of attention. The 'pluralist' media systems in Switzerland and the United Kingdom were different from the other countries studied: when media attention increased, state actors were significantly less present (Switzerland), and non-state actors were, at least sometimes, the sole drivers of the higher levels of attention (United Kingdom). This was not observed in other countries, where I found the pattern described above, i.e., frequent situations of mixed state-, non-state presence in the news media, and lower proportions of non-state actors as sole claimants.

The general similarities between countries in this regard raise at least three points about the use of the media typology for political research. First, the null results cannot have been caused by an inappropriate specification of the media system typology in my research design: the key assumption for the typology is that there are differences between countries. The specification, then, deals with the types of differences we should expect between media systems and hence is not the problem. Second, the typology seems to have difficulties travelling between communication studies and political behavioural studies. That is, the media system typology may very well describe political communication cultures across Europe, but these 'cultures' do not affect the fundamental character of political conflict between various types of political actors. A solution could then be the use of country typologies that are original to political science, such as welfare state typologies or interest system typologies. These perhaps more directly allow for the formulation of expectations about the 'outside' strategies of interest groups or the 'openness' of the media to such strategies. However, this is unlikely to be a solution because the null results relate to a lack of variation, and not to the direction of such differences. Third, does an adaption of the media system typology based on this and other political research offer a way forward? The similarity in political activities within policy sectors across countries offers a potential direction for theory construction that is highlighted by the findings in this chapter. News media across Europe report similar proportions of non-state actors in various policy fields, with for instance education exhibiting very large proportions of non-state actors, and troop deployments or European integration rather small proportions. Theories of political communication or political behaviour more in general will have a stronger explanatory power when such sector-level differences and similarities are taken seriously. It may also be possible to integrate sector-level variation into country typologies; such a multi-dimensional approach would yield a fruitful avenue for theory construction. However, I did not find such associations between country-types and sectors categories. In the models on the proportion of non-state media claims I examined several 'obvious' interactions between countries and sectors, such as troop deployments in Germany, but did not find substantial differences. Therefore, as I will further discuss below, sector, topic, or issue level theories should be constructed separately from country typologies. The results indicate that any country typology should be treated with great care and requires evaluation while controlling for sector-level variation.

Third, do interest organizations, via their voice in the news media, contribute to making democratic systems more capable of 'hearing' social problems? In this respect the findings in chapter 5 are not encouraging. Interest organizations, even when defined as 'non-state actors', attract only a small proportion of the media attention for public policies. It could be that this small proportion is of an exceptional quality and that their statements are followed up by policy makers in an appropriate manner. This could be deduced from the specific distribution of media attention for interest organizations. The presence of non-state actors at different levels of attention indeed suggests such a sequential 'follow-up' process. Interest organizations signal problems as sole claimants on policies at a low level of attention, and challenge government claims at higher levels of attention. However, while this dynamic seems to fit the 'desired' public function of interest organizations, the generally low proportions nevertheless suggests that this function is relatively weak. State actors are definitely more visible in the news media. Future research could further examine the suggested sequential elements that are highlighted by my findings. Such research would

point to more substantial aspects of the claims put forward by interest organizations, such as the actual political positions taken, the frames presented, and the formats used.

6.6. Strengths and limitations of the research project

The strengths and limitations of this research project are related to the research methods chosen and the exchange theory developed in this thesis. First, the strength of the exchange-theoretical framework lies in its capacity to integrate various perspectives on the activities of interest organizations. The framework accommodates the overlapping conceptual origins of neo-corporatist, pluralist, organizational, social movement, and political communication theories. In parts of each of these separate literatures, political interaction that spans social fields has been understood as exchange relationships. These parts have been brought together in the theory chapter. This conceptual integration has allowed me to examine seemingly disparate political phenomena in a consistent manner. However, this strength is at the same time a limitation. The level of abstraction of the concept of exchange makes falsification difficult. For instance, when I found (as described in chapter 4) that exchange relationships between members and leaders do not seem to be particularly important when one wants to explain differences in the political activities of organizations, I could not generalize this finding to other types of exchanges, such as those between policy makers and leaders. A similar conceptual dilemma arises from the definition of the organizations to which exchange theory should apply. That is, the broad, behavioral conceptualization of interest organizations allows for the study of a broad range of political activities, and guarantees sufficient variation in the types of organizations included in the study. A strong point of the research project is that this allows conclusions on the effects of differences between categories of organizations, in contrast to researchers who focus on specific types of actors, such as unions, and cannot then tell for sure whether their findings also apply to other types of political organizations.[178] However, such encompassing concepts produce relatively abstract knowledge that makes practical recommendations difficult. That is, business interest lobbyists seeking practical strategic advice on whether to engage in a parliamentary lobby or mobilize members will find only indirect recommendations in this study.

Second, the methods employed in this thesis, and especially those in chapters 3 and 4, are innovative in a number of ways. Apart from (1) the broader variety of methods used throughout the study, chapters 3 and 4 stand out because of (2) the sampling procedure, (3) the number of organizations studied, (4) the classification methods and (5) the coding and clustering of website features. First, I employed different research methods in each of the studies described in the empirical chapters. Because each of these chapters addressed slightly different questions, the use of different methods did not have a triangulation function (although I did cross-validate the EU data used in chapters 3 and 4). However, the use of various methods has contributed to the breadth of the research, as it allowed for the evaluation of several research questions. This breadth can especially be found when comparing the methodology of chapters 3 and 4 with that described in chapter 5.

[178] At the same time, the broad notion of interest organizations used in this study allows for only partial contributions to existing theories on specific categories of interest organization. Instead, by employing a broad notion I have sought to contribute to theory construction on political activities.

Second, a key strength of the research presented in chapter 3 and 4 is the sampling method. The selection of interest organizations fundamentally affects research outcomes. Selection choices are, however, far from obvious. In contrast to research on, for instance, political parties or public opinion, interest organizations are defined neither formally nor institutionally (as parties are), nor do they form a 'natural' population such as the electorate. This requires researchers of interest organizations to balance several selection dimensions and to work with the imperfect sources available. The mixture of sources and selection methods that I employed produced representative and comparable samples of organizations that potentially attempt to influence policies. However, future research would greatly benefit from true lobby registers, or an academic, continuous data gathering project that could provide a standard in this regard. A third strength of the studies presented in these chapters is the high number of organizations included. Via the website coding method I gathered data on three samples with high 'response rates': an EU organization data sample (n=226, 2009, 80 percent), an EU website-feature data sample (n=165, 2006, 93 percent), and a Dutch organization data sample (n=396, 2008, 54 percent). In addition to these large sample sizes, a fourth strength of these studies lies in the generalizable classification of the organizations and the theoretically embedded coding of their activities. The innovative use of several classification schemes that are usually used for slightly different purposes allows the data to be related to other research. That is, as discussed earlier, on the basis of their websites organizations could constructively be coded in several schemes addressing economic position (NACE codes), substantive interest (adapted from Gray and Lowery 1993, 90), and policy interest (agendas codes). Finally, in chapter 4 I have developed a scheme to evaluate political activities based on website information. As discussed above, the strength of this scheme lies in observing activities instead of reporting them, on the basis of surveys or interviews, measuring the intensity of specific tactics, and the clustering of activities so as to relate them to the exchange relationships developed in the theory chapter.

There are, however, some downsides as well related to the methods used in chapters 3 and 4 as regards the use of website information. First, websites could have a limited function for interest organizations and may only partially reflect the broader repertoire of their activities. This could make activities of organizations seem more similar to each other than if the whole range of political activities had been examined. At the same time it could also increase the variation among organizations, as some organizations will emphasize the importance of certain activities by reporting them online. However, earlier research on online activities of political parties suggests that this is not that much of a problem (Foot and Schneider 2006). A second limitation to using information available online is that the online presence of certain types of organizations such as lobby firms, public affairs departments, or public agencies, cannot be compared to that of other interest organizations, whereas their lobby activities may be very similar. I have necessarily excluded such organizations from the study. So, I cannot evaluate whether such organizations engage in fundamentally different political activities than other types of interest organizations.

In the study described in chapter 5 I did not use website information. The information on political claims in newspapers proved especially suitable for cross-country and cross-sectoral analysis. However, a key methodological challenge of this information is related to the absence of full time series in this data set. That is, I found indications of a sequential agenda-setting process in which non-state actors proved important at 'earlier' moments, in which the newspapers pay only limited attention to the policy subject. However, I could

not specifically evaluate this process because of the non-continuous nature of the sample of days, which included a variable selection of days per week.

6.7. Relevance of the results: problematic assumptions in interest group research

Taken together, the findings in the three empirical chapters suggest that interest group researchers need to re-examine several theoretical mechanisms and phenomena that have generally been assumed to be valid. I will discuss three such assumptions: on the relevance of collective action or mobilisation problems, on the importance of differences between/among organizations, and on the importance of the institutional structures of political systems.

6.7.1. Problematic assumption 1: membership matters

When we think of interest representation as sequential stages in an influence production process we may assume that phenomena early in this process affect aspects that come in later stages. For instance, the types of strategies employed on a specific issue by specific interest organizations likely affect the influence of certain organizations on the political outcome regarding that issue.[179]

I have presented a similar argument on the earlier stages of influence production. That is, the variation among interest organizations regarding the problems of mobilizing constituents should be associated with the types of political activities that organizations engage in. As discussed in chapter 4, this association could work via several mechanisms, of which Olson's (1965) logic of collective action is the most prominent. Without elaborating on the individual-level motivations he discusses, the bottom line of the subsequent argument is that more widely spread interests in society, usually those of citizens instead of companies, are more difficult to organize and thus require a broader and more public-oriented repertoire of political activities (e.g. Gais and Walker 1991). In this way the organizations that represent such interests should be more likely to combine their mobilization and recruitment activities with attempts to influence policies. At the same time it is assumed that organizations representing interests that are less diffusely spread have less need to integrate the different types of activities associated with mobilization and influence. Phrased differently, this interrelation is also part of the scheme of exchange relationships central to this thesis, in which the relationships between the supporters, policy and public environment are expected to be interdependent.

Neither this interrelation of exchanges nor the sequential nature of the influence production process have been supported by the findings in chapter 3 and 4. More to the point, as said earlier, I found only small differences between interest organizations that represent different types of members or different types of interests. These types of members or interests should, following Olsons (1965) line of argument, definitely have varying degrees of problems in acting collectively. In the literature this variation largely deals with business interests relative to other interests, and associations of companies

[179] An example is organizations that do not lobby parliamentarians but blockade the parliamentary building. They may affect the legislative outcome more strongly or in a different manner than organizations that engage in lobbying.

relative to other types of associations. However, such organizations only partially differ in the extent to which they become politically active (chapter 3) and are hardly different in their relationships with members, policy makers, and the broader public (chapter 4). Thus, while there could be fundamental differences in the mobilization of various types of interests, these differences do not manifest themselves in fundamentally different types of political activities: membership does not matter for political strategies.

Does this also imply that we should question the theoretical validity of the sequential nature of the influence production process? And that we should deal with every stage of that process as a separate field, unrelated to other aspects of interest representation? I will discuss these questions below. Among other things, I will highlight the plausible but problematic theoretical linking function of interest organizations as a unit of analysis between several stages of influence production.

6.7.2. PROBLEMATIC ASSUMPTION 2: ORGANIZATION MATTERS

A second assumption is that we can understand interest representation by studying interest organizations and their properties. This is an empirical, a theoretical, and a research design issue.

First, in line with the previous point on membership, aspects of organizations understood as relating to their members only partially explain differences in political behavior. Again, organizational categories based on membership types, represented interest, or combinations of these in more 'functional' schemes did not provide very useful categories to examine political strategies. Further, variation in organizational capacity as indicated by, for instance, internal elections or committee structures, as examined in chapter 3, are again only partially associated with various types of members or apparent interest in public policies. Thus, the empirical results are not so strong. This is especially notable when these findings are compared to the stronger outcomes of the analysis of interest communities. Whereas for instance representing business interests, as a property of interest organizations, only slightly affected the interest in public policy, the interest communities with large proportions of business interests showed significantly more interest in influencing policies. So, empirically, properties of interest communities seem to tell us more about interest representation than aspects of individual organizations.

Second, more theoretically, there are three points meriting attention: organizations as shaped by their environment, organizations understood as communities, and organizations as units of analysis bridging stages of influence production. First, for the development of the exchange theory of political activities, I took the interest organization as a unit of analysis. This made it possible to make several contrasting assumptions on organized political activity on the basis of different views on organizational survival. It is the organization that is expected to be involved in the action. This may be understood to assign a key role to interest organizations in shaping their environment; however, such an interpretation would be incorrect. Through the definition of exchange relationships between interest organizations and several environments, the theory places the main explanations for variation in political action both on the side of the interest organization and on the side of the exchange partners (members, policy makers, or journalists). Thus, the exchange framework puts a relatively low emphasis on the capacity of organizations to strategically choose their actions, and instead emphasizes circumstantial or contextual phenomena in the evaluation of political activities. Second, as said in chapter 3 above, I found that

communities of interest organizations in specific policy fields differ greatly in their interest in public policy. This variation could be understood by the types of interest that such communities represent, the numbers of organizations in such communities, or government competences regarding the policies that are of interest to the community. These results suggest that organizations should probably not be the main level of analysis but should rather be understood as part of a community of organizations. Such communities of interests, then, have typical ties to their members, policy makers, or journalists that shape their behavior. This shows the need for a thorough examination of aspects of the populations of interest organizations in relation to political activities. Third, this also addresses the null results reported earlier for mobilization differences in relation to political activities or interest. That is, in order to relate mobilization differences to influence activities we need to link these stages via aspects of the population of interest organizations. While mobilization and influence activities both arise from interest organizations, they are related only via the context of the population of interest organizations. For instance, the population shapes the competitive environment, both in terms of members and in terms of policy access. In each of these environments (and the media environment), interest organizations need to find niches in order to survive. This could necessitate the differentiation of interest communities within populations in a variety of ways, depending on the specific research interests or questions; by policy sector if interested in policy access, by economic sector if interested in mobilization, or by substantive interest if interested in population questions per se. While it seems problematic to theoretically link stages of the influence production process on the basis of only organizational-level aspects, the addition of community-level information should make theorizing about associations between these stages possible. We cannot assume that specific properties of interest organization are relevant throughout the influence production process; organizations should be understood against the background of different contextual factors, depending on the stage of the influence process.

Third, these points complicate the question what types of research design to use in the analysis of political activities. That is, we want to relate political activities to certain types of political actors or interest organizations, but when existing classifications of interest organizations (business, unions, social movements) do not seem to be related to typical political behavior, we need other types of theoretical classifications so as to point to regularities in the political strategies. Considering the explanatory power of variation across both interest communities and policy sectors, organizations could very well be classified along the lines of policy sectors or interest communities. That is, instead of thinking in terms of, for instance, professional associations and NGOs, we could more usefully think about variations across organizations active on interests such as religion, banking, or foreign policy. When designing studies on interest group strategies, seeking variation on such dimensions is likely to produce more interesting results than research designs based on functional or membership-related classifications.

6.7.3. PROBLEMATIC ASSUMPTION 3: SYSTEMS MATTER

In interest group research and in political science more generally, differences in the political systems of specific countries, such as the electoral system, political culture or the interest group system, are assumed to affect all kinds of political phenomena. For instance, the Dutch corporatist, tripartite socio-economic coordination system has been credited with successful economic policies throughout the nineties (Visser and Hemereijck 1998).

Or, the seeming tendency of the French towards more radical forms of political contestation, such as strikes or demonstrations, is explained by its institutional structure or political culture (Kriesi 2004). Such phenomena have led to the construction of various country typologies. In light of this thesis the most important are the typology of media systems by Hallin and Mancini (2004) (chapter 5), and the classification of interest group systems along a pluralist-corporatist continuum (chapter 3).

As said earlier, the findings in chapters 3 and 5 indicate that these typical systemic differences do not matter for the activities of interest organizations. This is surprising because these typologies are widely assumed to affect such activities. The differences between the EU and the Netherlands presented in chapter 3 could be explained by differences in legal competencies and the consequent 'attraction' of business interests. The differences between the six European countries regarding news media attention to non-state actors examined in chapter 5 were definitely smaller than the cross-sector variation in this regard. In short, the relative irrelevance of cross-country variation in explaining political activities suggests that variation in political institutional structures is not as important as is sometimes assumed.

This poses a challenge for theory construction in comparative political science. In terms of research design it suggests that we need designs and case selections that specifically seek variation in sector-level aspects. I will evaluate these challenges in the next section.

6.8. ISSUES MATTER, BUT WHY?

In the previous section I suggested that in construction theories on political action researchers cannot continue to rely on assumptions about the mobilization of interests, about the organization of their activities, and about differences among countries. At the same time, the findings suggest that variation between policy sectors, interest communities, or political issues could be a fruitful avenue for a cumulative research programme on interest representation. What kind of assumptions should such a programme make? I will indicate four types of forces that could be used to differentiate among interest organizations and their activities: economic forces, the nature of the policy being contested, degree or type of public contestation, and the specific interest in question.

First, the representation of interests varies by economic sector. The relative importance of the sector in terms of added value, the type of production (services, manufacturing), or the fragmentation of the sector has in previous research been suggested to affect the political activities of interest organizations (Bernhagen and Mitchell 2009). More traditionally, the conflicting interests of employers and employees are understood to be the key differentiating factor when it comes to economic interests.

Second, the activities of interest organizations vary by policy agenda. The technical nature of the policy, the type of implementation (e.g. via direct provision or via regulatory framework), or the structures of change (incremental, punctuated) could then be explored as potential differences in explaining activities of interest organizations. These are aspects of the policy that do not relate to institutional rules per se, but are rather linked to the 'management' or 'organization' of the policy. A categorization of policies along such lines is thus different from institutional classifications that, for instance, refer to legislative procedures. Government activity within certain policy fields is then seen as a leading a nd structuring factor in explaining interest group behavior.

Third, activities of interest organizations could also be seen as differing along political issues. Unlike policy sectors, topics, or agendas, issues are demarcated by the conflicting

interests of political actors, i.e. they are a political construction. Researchers cannot define such issues beforehand but need to rely on political actors to point to the 'field' of the political conflict. Political issues vary, for instance, in terms of public opinion (salience, popularity), number of actors, and the structure of the conflict (number of sides) (e.g. Baumgartner et al. 2009).

Last, it may be possible to combine several of these dimensions. The classification of interest communities used in this thesis is an example of a combination of economic and policy categories. Interest communities are then understood as shaped by aspects of economic or policy sector (and perhaps political conflict aspects as well). Political activities should then consequently vary between interest communities on the basis of aspects that shaped these communities in the first place (economic/social and policy factors).

When designing future research on the activities of interest organizations, researchers could fruitfully seek variation across the abovementioned categories. This would probably produce interesting variations in type and magnitude of the activities of interest organizations. Such variation could then form the basis for further theorizing, in addition to the existing typologies of interest organizations and country systems. At the same time, the exchange theory introduced in this thesis could be re-evaluated on the basis of explicit sector-level hypotheses. It is not the specific interest organization but a community of organizations that develops typical ties to members, policy makers, or journalists which determines the political behavior dominant in the interest community.

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Politieke activiteiten van belangenorganisaties: Botsende belangen, overeenkomstige strategieën

Nederlandse samenvatting

INLEIDING

Waarom doen belangenorganisaties wat ze doen? Er zijn ten minste drie conceptuele vertrekpunten om het bestaan en de activiteiten van belangenorganisaties te bezien. Ten eerste zou georganiseerd politiek gedrag primair het resultaat kunnen zijn van de overlevingsdrang van organisaties (bv. Lowery 2007). In dat geval moeten we politieke activiteiten relateren aan de achterban en de omgeving van politieke spelers. Ten tweede zouden we er vanuit kunnen gaan dat politieke organisaties voornamelijk bestaan om het overheidsbeleid te beïnvloeden (bv. Baumgartner et al. 2009; Schattschneider 1960). De samenhang tussen beleidsverandering en verschillende soorten activiteiten van belangenorganisaties is dan het startpunt voor onderzoek. Verder kan men belangenorganisaties zien als vertegenwoordigers van politieke ideeën, principes en perspectieven op overheidsbeleid (bv. Lipsky 1968). Belangenorganisaties bestaan dan om deze ideeën in brede zin uit te dragen.

In de studie worden de bovenstaande drie perspectieven gezien als drie vormen van politieke ruilrelaties. Deze relaties komen tot uiting in de activiteiten van belangenorganisaties, die op hun beurt weer onderdeel zijn van het zogenaamde *invloed-productieproces* (Lowery en Gray, 2004). Dit wordt besproken in het theoretisch hoofdstuk 2. Het invloed-productieproces bestaat uit vier opeenvolgende componenten: (1) *de mobilisatie van belangen*, (2) het voortbestaan van *een veld van belangenorganisaties*, (3) *de uitoefening van politieke activiteiten* en (4) *de politieke effecten en de beleidsinvloed* van belangenorganisaties. Het empirische onderzoek in de hoofdstukken drie, vier en vijf, bestaat uit drie stappen. Deze stappen liggen tussen onderzoek naar het organisationele veld en de politieke activiteiten van belangenorganisaties. In hoofdstuk 3 vergelijk ik de verschillen in de mate van politieke belangstelling tussen organisaties, tussen velden van organisaties en tussen Nederland en de Europese Unie. In het daaropvolgende hoofdstuk gaat het om profielen van politieke activiteiten in relatie met het beleidsveld, de achterban en het bredere openbare politieke strijdveld. Ik onderzoek of deze profielen aansluiten bij organisaties met een verschillende achterban (bedrijven, burgers). In hoofdstuk 5 vergelijk ik de verschillen tussen landen in de mate waarin politieke spelers uit de samenleving een stem krijgen in de media.
Het empirische onderzoek wordt gemotiveerd door drie maatschappelijke zorgpunten:

1. het bedrijfsleven zou zich een onevenredig invloedrijke positie in het beleidsproces kunnen verwerven doordat het gemeenschappelijke belangen beter organiseert en politiek uitdraagt dan anderen;
2. de politieke activiteiten van belangenorganisaties voldoen niet aan (politiek procedurele) normen van verantwoording en transparantie waardoor het publieke vertrouwen in het politieke besluitvormingsproces onder druk kan komen, en;
3. de diverse meningen van maatschappelijke groeperingen zouden onvoldoende toegang krijgen tot het openbaar debat en daardoor zou de media haar platformfunctie niet goed vervullen.

HOOFDSTUK 2 THEORIE VAN POLITIEKE RUILRELATIES

In hoofdstuk 2 worden de activiteiten van belangenorganisaties gepresenteerd in een model van politieke ruilrelaties. Dit model biedt ruimte aan een gelijktijdige evaluatie van structurele factoren en van de eigenschappen en het optreden van actoren. De belangenorganisaties worden theoretisch centraal gesteld, waardoor het mogelijk is om een conceptueel verband te leggen tussen studies van populaties van organisaties en het daadwerkelijke gedrag van organisaties. Dit organisatie perspectief is niet vanzelfsprekend. In de theorie-ontwikkeling over belangenvertegenwoordiging zien we ten minste drie alternatieve conceptuele perspectieven. Zo kiezen met name studies naar mobilisatie ervoor om het *individu* centraal te stellen. Sociologische of economische aannames over individueel gedrag liggen dan ten grondslag aan het conceptueel raamwerk (Olson 1965; Salisbury 1969). In vergelijkende studies is het daarentegen gebruikelijk om typologieën of schalen van *politieke systemen* te ontwikkelen. Het meest ontwikkeld is de schaal van pluralisme tot corporatisme waarbij het dan bijvoorbeeld gaat om het meten van de eventuele invloed van belangenorganisaties op delen van het overheidsbeleid (eventueel in samenhang met economische ontwikkeling) (Kenworthy 2003; Siaroff 1999). In studies naar specifieke aspecten van het beleidsproces is het gebruikelijk om *politieke kwesties* als eenheden van analyse te nemen (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Kingdon 1984). De dynamiek van beleidstegenstellingen bepaalt dan de reikwijdte van de kwestie (dit in tegenstelling tot bijvoorbeeld de afbakening van vooraf vastgestelde beleidsonderwerpen).

Politiek gaat over belangentegenstellingen en -overeenkomsten, en de daarmee samenhangende pogingen om invloed uit te oefenen op anderen. De staat en het overheidsbeleid zijn veruit de belangrijkste bronnen van maatschappelijk invloed. Daarom richt deze studie zich op de organisaties en de activiteiten die erop gericht zijn belangen te vertegenwoordigen bij de overheid en pogingen om het beleid te beïnvloeden. Iedere organisatie die dit probeert wordt gedefinieerd als belangenorganisatie, behalve organisaties die direct bij het electorale proces zijn betrokken ofwel de politieke partijen. Dit is een gedragsdefinitie van belangenorganisaties. Een dimensie die hieraan wordt toegevoegd is dat het moet gaan om organisaties. In conceptuele zin tellen alle vormen van organisaties zoals ondernemingen, overheidsonderdelen, verbanden, netwerken, lidmaatschapsorganisaties of denktanks. De onderzoeksopzet en methode van de hoofdstukken 3 en 4 laten het echter niet toe om een dergelijke brede definitie te handhaven en spitsen zich toe op organisaties met een vertegenwoordigend karakter ofwel organisaties met leden.

De ruilrelatietheorie in de traditie van Blau (1964) en Emerson (1962) gaat ervan uit dat personen of organisaties elkaar in eerste instantie beïnvloeden door het aangaan van ruilrelaties. Dit komt door het vrijwillige, wederkerige en wederzijds gunstige karakter van ruil. Machtuitoefening via andere vormen van interactie is kostbaarder. Zo zullen bijvoorbeeld competitie, debat of regulering pas in tweede instantie verkozen worden.

In studies naar belangenvertegenwoordiging bestaan drie tradities waarbinnen de logica van ruilrelaties conceptueel centraal is gesteld. Het verschil tussen de tradities zit in het aspect van de omgeving van de belangenorganisatie waarop men zich richt. In het neocorporatisch denken staat de ruilrelatie tussen belangenorganisaties en de staat centraal; de zogenaamde beïnvloedingslogica ('logic of influence') (Schmitter en Streeck 1999). Onderzoekers op het gebied van sociale bewegingen wijzen op de reputatielogica van de ruilrelatie tussen belangenorganisaties en actoren in het openbare politieke strijdveld, vooral journalisten ('logic of reputation') (Gamson en Wolfsfeld 1993). Binnen de pluralistische

onderzoekstraditie is de achterban- of ledenlogica het meest uitgewerkt ('logic of support') (Gais en Walker 1991; Olson 1965; Salisbury 1969). In dit proefschrift wordt getracht een bijdrage te leveren aan elk van deze afzonderlijke onderzoekstradities, voornamelijk door de verbanden tussen de drie ruilrelaties meer centraal te stellen dan gebruikelijk.

Met de *achterban* verruilen belangenorganisaties de instemming van de leden in ruil voor controle over het bestuur, en de openbare, nieuwswaardige zichtbaarheid van de achterban in ruil voor media aandacht voor een politieke kwestie of de promotie van de organisatie ter ondersteuning van leden- of fondsenwerving. De eerste twee relaties zijn van invloed op ruilrelaties in de beïnvloedingsomgeving, de tweede twee relaties staan in verband met ruilrelaties in het openbare politieke strijdveld ofwel de media. De achterbanlogica wordt beïnvloed door het soort leden (individuen/organisaties) en het karakter van het belang (diffuus/specifiek) dat de organisatie vertegenwoordigt. Dit vloeit voort uit de theoretisch veronderstelde verschillen in het gemak waarmee gemeenschappelijk optreden georganiseerd kan worden. De gemeenschap van organisaites is ook bepalend voor het karakter van de achterbanlogica van belangenorganisaties. Zo kunnen leden bijvoorbeeld in een sterk competetieve omgeving eenvoudig overstappen op een andere organisatie die dezelfde dienst verleent of zouden ze geneigd kunnen zijn om mee te liften op de belangenbehartiging van bestaande organisaties en dus af te zien van lidmaatschap.

Op basis van de relatie van de achterban bestaan er in de *beleidsomgeving* mogelijkheden om tot een ruil te komen van gunstig beleid of beleidstoegang voor politiek draagvlak onder de achterban en technische expertise. Het gelijktijdig optreden in het openbare politieke strijdveld maakt het mogelijk om relevante politieke informatie te verkrijgen in ruil voor het openbare gebruik van politiek acceptabele beleidsframes. Het optreden in de beleidsomgeving wordt beïnvloed door de politieke autonomie van de plaats binnen de overheidsorganisatie waartoe toegang wordt gezocht, en het gebruikelijke systeem van belangenvertegenwoordiging van een land.

Het *openbare politieke strijdveld*, de publieke sfeer of de media, is een omgeving waar belangenorganisaties nieuwswaardige gebeurtenissen kunnen aanbieden in ruil voor mogelijke verzilvering van latente steun in de publieke opinie. Deze ruil is mogelijk door de hulpbronnen die organisaties in relatie met de achterban verwerven. Door de betrokkenheid in de beleidsomgeving kunnen organisaties nieuwswaardige politieke informatie verruilen voor publieke erkenning of validering alsmede voor de verbreding van de politieke kwestie buiten het afgebakende beleidsnetwerk naar andersoortige politieke spelers ofwel 'issue expansion'. Dergelijke ruilrelaties zijn afhankelijk van het soort mediasysteem in een land en van de publieke opinie over een bepaalde kwestie.

HOOFDSTUK 3 VERSCHILLEN IN POLITIEKE BETROKKENHEID

Het lijkt erop dat met name belangen van bedrijven en welgestelde burgers een stem vinden in de vorm van belangenorganisaties. Juist deze delen van de samenleving organiseren zich. Dit komt vooral tot uiting in de aantallen organisaties die bedrijven vertegenwoordigen (bv. Coen 2007; Scholzman 1984). Voor een nauwkeurige evaluatie van deze 'bias' moeten we echter ook weten of deze organisaties politiek actief zijn (en, in een latere fase, of ze ook succesvol zijn). In hoofdstuk 3 wordt hiertoe een eerste stap gezet door te kijken naar verschillen in politieke betrokkenheid van belangenorganisaties in de Europese Unie en Nederland. Twee vormen van theoretische fragmentatie hebben ertoe geleid dat vragen over dergelijke verschillen nauwelijks zijn gesteld. Ten eerste komt dit

doordat de onderzoeksaandacht van pluralisten, corporatisten en organisatietheoretici op andere aspecten gericht is. Pluralisten gaan ervan uit dat belangenorganisaties bestaan om het overheidsbeleid te beinvloeden. De relevante vraag richt zich dan niet op de mate waarin organisaties dat doen maar welke belangen überhaupt georganiseerd raken. Immers, zodra er sprake is van organisatie is een belang actief. Voor corporatisten is zowel het aantal organisaties als de politieke activiteit eigenlijk geen goede indicator voor 'bias' of invloed. Immers, belangenorganisaties zouden een centrale beleidsmatige rol toegedeeld kunnen krijgen, waardoor zij invloedrijk kunnen zijn juist door de afwezigheid van concurrenten en juist door het politiek afstandelijk optreden. Organisatie-theoretici hebben ook weinig interesse in verschillen in politieke activiteiten. Het gaat om de overlevingskansen van organisaties en die zijn slechts ten dele afhankelijk van de beleidsomgeving, en waarschijnlijk in grotere mate afhankelijk van het veld van organisaties ('interest community') waarin een organisatie werkt. Een tweede theoretische verklaring voor de leemte in de literatuur is dat het 'invloed productieproces' weliswaar een nuttige manier is om het onderzoek te differentiëren, het zorgt er ook voor dat beïnvloedingsactiviteiten los van de populatie van organisaties wordt onderzocht.

Hoofdstuk 3 gaat over verschillen in de mate van politieke belangstelling. Deze verschillen zijn onderzocht aan de hand van een codering van 517 websites van belangenorganisaties in Nederland en de Europese Unie. De codering richtte zich op het belang, de achterban, de beleidssector, de mate van beleidsbetrokkenheid en de professionaliteit van de organisatie.Deze gegevens hebben de basis gevormd voor een vergelijking van de twee systemen, sectoren binnen de organisatie-populatie en organisaties.

Ten eerste bleken er verschillen tussen systemen. Zoals verwacht bleken de organisaties in de Europese steekproef aanzienlijk politiek actiever dan de organisaties in de Nederlandse steekproef. Dit verschil kunnen we echter volledig verklaren via aspecten van de sectoren en de organisaties. Bepaalde beleidsterreinen trekken bepaalde belangen aan, zowel in Nederland als in de Europese Unie. De beleidsterreinen waarop de Europese Unie juridische competenties heeft zijn met name van belang voor het bedrijfsleven. Daardoor zijn er meer bedrijfsvertegenwoordigers op Europees niveau. Dergelijke brancheorganisaties zijn gemiddeld 'formeler' georganiseerd en meer gericht op het beleidsproces. Daarom zien we de hogere scores. Dit betekent tegelijkertijd dat de oververtegenwoordiging van het bedrijfsleven in aantallen organisaties in de EU versterkt wordt door hun actievere politieke houding. Wat Nederland betreft zien we overigens dat in bepaalde sectoren (vooral waar de EU juridische competentie heeft) het bedrijfsleven zowel in aantal als in activiteiten de belangengroepenpolitiek domineert.

Ten tweede waren er verschillen tussen sectoren. Belangenorganisaties stellen zich gemiddeld politiek actiever op in sectoren die dicht bij de kerntaken van de overheid staan (bijvoorbeeld de taak van marktregulering versus ondersteunen van sport) en die tevens behoren tot juridische bevoegdheid van de respectievelijke overheidslaag (EU, nationaal). Naarmate het belang van ruilrelaties toeneemt, worden organisaties ter handhaving ervan actiever. Met betrekking tot de dynamiek in het veld van organisaties laten de uitkomsten zien dat in sectoren met een hoge dichtheid, dat wil zeggen met hoge aantallen organisaties, de politieke betrokkenheid lager is. Concurrentie in een dergelijke omgeving leidt er blijkbaar toe dat organisaties zich moeten richten op overleving, bijvoorbeeld door diensten voor leden aan te bieden. Dit impliceert overigens dat het meten van bias door uitsluitend organisaties te tellen waarschijnlijk een over-

schatting zal weergeven van een dergelijke bias in de zin van beleidsinvloed. Tot slot, de verschillen tussen de soorten organisaties, vooral gedifferentieerd naar leden, lieten relatief weinig variatie zien. De variatie in politieke betrokkenheid lijkt dus het beste te evalueren per sectie van de organisatie-populatie, dat wil zeggen per 'interest community'.

HOOFDSTUK 4 VERSCHILLEN IN SOORTEN POLITIEKE ACTIVITEITEN

Een punt van zorg over de activiteiten van belangenorganisaties is dat ze zich in bepaalde gevallen onttrekken aan de openbaarheid en niet onderhevig zijn aan verantwoordingsprocedures. Dit staat in tegenstelling tot het parlementaire politieke proces. Daarnaast kan het optreden van belangenorganisaties in buitenparlementaire politieke fora een concurrentie betekenen voor de volksvertegenwoordiging. Door het selectief overbrengen van de signalen uit de samenleving en door de buitenparlementaire vertegenwoordiging kunnen belangenorganisaties de electorale band tussen kiezer en gekozene vertroebelen. Hierdoor zou het vertrouwen in politieke instituties af kunnen nemen. Daarentegen kunnen belangenorganisaties ook een nuttige rol spelen die juist de vertegenwoordigende band kan versterken. Dit lijkt voor een belangrijk deel af te hangen van het soort activiteiten van organisaties. Dat wil zeggen, een politiek die gevoerd wordt in de openbaarheid, via de media, lijkt dan een meer legitieme manier dan een achterkamertjeslobby. Het is daarom van belang om te weten op welke manier organisaties van elkaar verschillen in de manier waarop zij de beleidsstatus-quo proberen te veranderen of te handhaven.

Hoofdstuk 4 is gericht op één mogelijke factor voor dergelijke verschillen: is het soort achterban bepalend voor het soort activiteiten? De onderscheiden soorten activiteiten sluiten aan bij de drie ruillogica's: activiteiten gericht op de achterban, op beleidsmakers en op het bredere publiek. De prioriteiten die organisaties stellen ten aanzien van deze drie doelgroepen worden verondersteld afhankelijk te zijn van het belang dat een organisatie vertegenwoordigd. Dat wil zeggen, beroeps- of branche-organisaties worden verondersteld zich meer op het beleidsproces te richten, terwijl organisaties die meer diffuse belangen vertegenwoordigen juist meer de openbaarheid zouden opzoeken. De gegevens in het hoofdstuk worden ontleend aan een steekproef van 165 websites van belangenorganisaties die actief zijn bij de Europese Unie. Een dergelijke selectie zorgt ervoor dat twee andere mogelijke verklaringen voor verschillen in activiteiten minder waarschijnlijk zijn. Dat wil zeggen, Europees beleid lijkt minder sterk beïnvloed door publieke opinie, en door één beleidsomgeving (i.e. de EU) te kiezen zijn er ook geen verschillen in de structuren van de politieke instituties van landen. In tegenstelling tot bijvoorbeeld interviews maakt de analyse van websites het mogelijk om het daadwerkelijke gedrag van organisaties waar te nemen. De vormen van communicatie zoals persberichten, beleidsstukken en nieuwsbrieven zijn gecodeerd. Deze codering is vervolgens geclusterd per doelgroep oftewel per ruilrelatie. Een dergelijke clustermethode is eerder toegepast in onderzoek naar politieke partijen, maar is nieuw in het onderzoek naar belangenorganisaties. Naast deze gedragscodering zijn er vanzelfsprekend ook data verzameld over de soort leden en de beleidsinteresse van de organisaties.

Uit de analyse bleek dat er grote verschillen bestaan in de soort activiteiten van organisaties. Sommige organisaties posten bijvoorbeeld veel regelmatiger persberichten op hun website en anderen publiceren bijvoorbeeld juist veel meer beleidsrapporten. Dit komt niet alleen tot uiting in de grafieken van frequentiescores van individuele onderdelen van websites, maar het blijkt ook uit de variatie in de scores van de gecluster-

de website-kenmerken. Echter, deze variatie volgt niet het theoretisch verwachte patroon. De verschillen zijn grotendeels onafhankelijk van het soort achterban van de organisatie. Het lijkt erop dat deze verschillen verklaard moeten worden op basis van aspecten die buiten dit onderzoek zijn gehouden. Het is het meest waarschijnlijk dat dit aspecten zijn die verschillen per politieke kwestie zoals het type beleid (regulerend, herverdelend), de ambtelijke betrokkenheid of de constellatie van andere betrokken politieke spelers. In verband met de maatschappelijke zorg dat bepaalde soorten belangenorganisaties zich sterker onttrekken aan openbare verantwoording dan andere is dit resultaat zowel positief als negatief. Het idee dat vertegenwoordigers van het bedrijfsleven zich uitsluitend in de achterkamertjes van de overheidsbureaucratie begeven is niet bevestigd. Dergelijke politieke spelers zorgen er zeker ook voor dat een gedegen communicatieprofiel wordt ontwikkeld gericht op het openbare politieke strijdveld. Aan de andere kant lijken de vertegenwoordigers van het maatschappelijk middenveld of 'civil society' zich niet uitsluitend op te stellen als transparante tussenpersonen tussen betrokken burgers en de staat. Een belangrijk deel van de activiteiten van deze meer sociale spelers is ook onttrokken aan openbare zichtbaarheid. Wat betreft de soort politiek optreden laten de gegevens tussen deze groepen geen verschil zien.

HOOFDSTUK 5 VERSCHILLEN IN UITKOMSTEN: EEN STEM IN DE MEDIA?
In hoofdstuk 5 gaat het om een potentiële positieve bijdrage van belangenorganisaties aan het politieke systeem. Het gaat dan om een combinatie van argumenten over de positieve effecten van media (waakhondrol, burgerschapsvorming) en van pluralistische groepsstrijd (toegankelijkheid, geen machtsconcentraties). Als maatschappelijke organisaties een stem krijgen in de media kunnen zowel de media als belangenorganisaties hun verbindende functie tussen openbaar bestuur en de samenleving vervullen. Groepen in de samenleving die niet via andere kanalen gehoord worden dienen in 'goede' systemen wel representatie te vinden in de media (Dahl 1956, 145). De platform functie van de media biedt eveneens ruimte voor politieke deliberatie waarin de 'openbare competitie van argumenten' consensus zou kunnen creëren over algemene belangen (Habermas 1989, 83). Dergelijke deliberatie heeft dan dus een conflictoplossende rol. In het licht van de 'verplaatsing van de politiek' van de traditionele partij-kaders naar de openbaarheid van de media lijken deze argumenten aan relevantie te winnen (Manin 1997, 218-236; Mazzoleni en Schulz 1999). De toegankelijkheid van de media is dus van belang voor de realisatie van deze argumenten over de stemmen uit de samenleving in de media. De variatie in deze openheid tussen landen en tijdsmomenten is het onderwerp van hoofdstuk 5.

De ruillogica van reputatie is in dit hoofdstuk verder uitgewerkt vanuit het perspectief van journalisten. Zij kunnen ruilrelaties aangaan met ofwel spelers uit de samenleving ofwel vertegenwoordigers binnen de beleidspolitieke omgeving. De politieke spelers die gelieerd zijn aan de staat kunnen exclusieve informatie en de officiële symboliek van de staat aanbieden aan journalisten. De media-aandacht van journalisten die daarvoor in ruil komt, kan leiden tot een latente naleving van beleid of draagvlak voor de beleidsvoorstellen of eventueel toekomstig electoraal succes. Belangenorganisaties zijn in dit hoofdstuk breder gedefinieerd dan in de eerdere hoofdstukken; het gaat om alle spelers die een politieke claim maken maar niet aan de staat verbonden zijn. Zoals gezegd verruilen zij expertise of nieuwswaardige gebeurtenissen voor publieke erkenning van een bepaalde kwestie, of voor zogenaamde 'validering' ofwel politieke erkenning van een bepaalde

organisatie (Gamson en Wolfsfeld, 1993). Het relatieve belang wat journalisten aan deze twee relaties hechten, en de samenhangende relatieve aandacht voor verschillende categorieën politieke spelers, wordt verondersteld afhankelijk te zijn van het mediasysteem in een land.

Hallin en Mancini (2004) maken een driedeling van systemen op basis van met name het zogenaamde politieke parallelisme, dat wil zeggen het samenvallen van politieke tegenstellingen met de tegenstellingen in de media. Voor de landen die in dit onderzoek betrokken zijn betekent dit het volgende. In Nederland en Duitsland, zogenaamde democratisch-corporatistische landen, kunnen we tussen politieke spelers van staat en samenleving een evenwichtige verdeling van media-aandacht verwachten. In zogenaamde gepolariseerde pluralistische systemen, in dit geval Frankrijk en Spanje, neemt de overheid naar verwachting een belangrijk deel van de media-aandacht voor haar rekening. Het Verenigd Koninkrijk en, in mindere mate, Zwitserland kunnen gedefinieerd worden als zogenaamde pluralistische mediasystemen waarin spelers uit de samenleving een meer geprononceerde indruk zouden moeten maken op de media-aandacht. De verwachte verschillen tussen bovengenoemde landen worden onderzocht aan de hand van een analyse van politieke claims in kranten over zeven beleidsonderwerpen. Deze gegevens zijn ontleend aan het zogenaamde Europubonderzoek. De afhankelijke variabele wordt gedefinieerd als het proportie claims van niet-statelijke spelers in de geselecteerde kranten per dag op een bepaald beleidsterrein in één van de onderzochte landen.

De resultaten geven ten eerste aan dat politieke spelers die verbonden zijn aan de staat een aanzienlijk gunstigere positie hebben om toegang te verkrijgen tot het openbare debat. In vrijwel alle Europese landen vormen zij met gemiddeld 80 procent van de claims per dag, de belangrijkste proportie van stemmen in het nieuws. Een verbreding van het politieke conflict van politiekinstitutionele structuren naar de media lijkt, in tegenstelling tot wat Schattschneider (1960, 37) hierover opmerkte, niet te leiden tot de betrokkenheid van een substantieel andere soort politieke spelers. Het lijkt dus onwaarschijnlijk dat belangenorganisaties strategisch meer geïnteresseerd zijn in het zoeken van contact met de media dan andere spelers. Zij zullen hier niet vaker of minder vaak voordeel van hebben. Overigens lijkt deze bevinding aan te sluiten bij recente theorievorming over politieke communicatie. Dat wil zeggen, de zogenaamde indexeertheorie zou voorspellen dat journalisten prioriteit geven aan officiële bronnen ten opzichte van onofficiële nieuwsbronnen (Bennett et al. 2007).

Ten tweede waren er in dit opzicht relatief weinig verschillen tussen landen. Deze algemene bevinding moet wel enigszins genuanceerd worden door de gevonden variatie tussen momenten van hoge aandacht, 'hypes', en momenten van lage aandacht. In sommige landen, zoals Nederland en Duitsland, vallen hypes samen met relatief omvangrijke aandacht voor de overheid, terwijl in andere landen, zoals het Verenigd Koninkrijk, juist politieke spelers met banden in de samenleving relatief veel aandacht krijgen tijdens hypes. De algemene overeenkomstigheid tussen landen in de media-aandacht voor de overheid staat echter haaks op de systeemtypologie. Het gaat dan niet om de specificatie van de typologie maar om het idee dat er verschillen zouden moeten zijn tussen landen. Aangezien die er nauwelijks zijn lijkt het zinniger om na te denken over andersoortige typologieën. Uit het onderzoek komen wel belangrijke verschillen tussen beleidsonderwerpen naar voren. We zouden dus kunnen overwegen om de landentypologieën te herconceptualiseren naar gecombineerde landen/sector types.

De resultaten van de voor de hand liggende, gevoelige gevallen, zoals onderwijsbeleid in Nederland of militaire interventie in Duitsland, zouden dan in ieder geval afwijkend moeten zijn. Omdat dit niet het geval was, is een herconceptualisering langs deze weg niet zo vruchtbaar. Een meer algemene sectorgerelateerde theorievorming lijkt daarom meer opportuun. Tot slot zijn de resultaten weinig hoopgevend voor diegenen die hoge verwachtingen hebben van de belangenorganisaties en de media als platform voor politieke deliberatie of als kanaal voor maatschappelijke stemmen. Ondanks de brede gedragsdefinitie van belangenorganisaties als iedere 'claimant' die niet direct aan de staat gebonden is, was er slechts een klein gedeelte van claims van dergelijke spelers. Het zou natuurlijk kunnen dat het karakter van de claims van belangenorganisaties zodanig agendabepalend of kaderzettend is dat zij desalniettemin een stem geven aan belangrijke maatschappelijke groepen. Dit zou een onderwerp zijn voor vervolgonderzoek.

HOOFDSTUK 6 CONCLUSIE

De conclusies gaan over de eerder genoemde zorgpunten en over de aannames die ten grondslag liggen aan de theorievorming over belangenorganisaties. Een eerste punt van zorg is de onevenredig invloedrijke posities die vertegenwoordigers van het bedrijfsleven zouden kunnen innemen. Deze zorg is in mijn onderzoek bevestigd. Dergelijke organisaties overheersen niet alleen in aantal, maar ook in de mate waarin ze politiek actief zijn. Dit geldt met name voor de Europese Unie, maar ook voor een aantal beleidssectoren in Nederland. De zelfregulerende krachten binnen velden van organisaties – het verschijnsel dat er in volle velden geen organisaties meer toetreden – zijn wel bevestigd, maar zijn niet zodanig dat dit eventuele eenzijdigheid zal doen verminderen. Een tweede punt van zorg betreft de werkwijze van belangenorganisaties en in het bijzonder de werkwijze van organisaties de slechts erg smalle delen van de samenleving vertegenwoordigen. Het lijkt erop dat er geen verschil van werkwijze is tussen organisaties die bredere of meer burgergerelateerde belangen vertegenwoordigen en organisaties die smallere of meer bedrijfsgerelateerde belangen vertegenwoordigen. De methode van invloedsuitoefening zou hiermee dus niet het kernprobleem van belangengroepenpolitiek moeten zijn. Een laatste punt is de mogelijkheid die de media zouden kunnen bieden aan het kanaliseren van maatschappelijke zorgen zoals verwoord door belangenorganisaties. De wellicht hooggespannen verwachtingen lijken zich wat dat betreft niet te verwezenlijken. Kranten geven over het algemeen weinig ruimte aan politieke spelers uit de samenleving en journalisten lijken de voorkeur te geven aan officieel nieuws.

De resultaten geven ook aanleiding tot een kritische reflectie op een aantal klassieke aannames in het veld. Allereerst lijkt het steeds lastiger om aan te nemen dat aspecten van de achterban en de verschillen in de mobilisatie van belangen, gedurende alle fases van het 'invloedproductieproces' relevant blijven. Dit is een lang bestaande aanname gebaseerd op Olson's (1965) logica van gemeenschappelijk optreden. Dat wil zeggen: belangen die moeilijker georganiseerd worden, zouden, indien eenmaal georganiseerd, ook op een andere, op de openbaarheid gerichte wijze vertegenwoordigd worden. Dit bleek niet uit de uitkomsten van mijn onderzoek, aangezien er nauwelijks verschillen werden gevonden in de omvang van de activiteiten (Hoofdstuk 3) en het soort activiteiten (Hoofdstuk 4) tussen diverse categorieën organisaties. Hierbij moet worden aangemerkt dat dit niet haaks staat op de eerdere conclusie dat bedrijfsbelangen actiever worden uitgedragen (dit heeft te maken met de aanvullende studies op het niveau van de beleidssector

en de achterban van beroepsorganisaties; namelijk, burgers treden ook op in de hoedanigheid van bedrijf).

Ten tweede moeten we oppassen met het centraal stellen van organisaties in de bestudering van belangenvertegenwoordiging. Dit is een empirische, een theoretische, en een onderzoeksopzet-gerelateerde uitdaging. In empirische zin laat deze studie, zoals in de vorige alinea is besproken, zien dat verschillen tussen organisaties relatief inconsequent zijn. Dit is met name het geval in vergelijking met de resultaten als ze bezien worden per veld van organisaties ('interest community'). Zo bleken bijvoorbeeld brancheorganisaties slechts ietwat verschillend van andere organisaties maar waren gemeenschappen van organisaties met hoge proporties bedrijfsbelangen aanzienlijk meer gericht op het beleidsproces. Meer theoretisch gezegd, wanneer organisaties centraal worden gesteld in de theorievorming, zoals in ruilrelatietheorie in dit proefschrift, impliceert dit niet dat organisaties een sterk vormende invloed hebben op hun eigen omgeving. Omgevingsfactoren blijven erg belangrijk en dat is juist in de ruilrelatietheorie uitdrukkelijk vorm gegeven in de wederzijdse afhankelijkheden tussen velden van het maatschappelijk leven. Deze opmerkingen maken het lastiger om een onderzoeksopzet te maken waarin politiek gedrag in samenhang met politieke organisaties wordt bestudeerd. De daarvoor gangbare classificaties van organisaties, zoals sociale bewegingen, vakbonden, NGO's en brancheorganisaties, bleken immers onvoldoende differentiërend. Het lijkt daarom zinniger om na te denken over onderzoeksopzetten waarin gemeenschappen van organisaties het onderzoeksobject zijn. In plaats van bijvoorbeeld vakbonden te onderzoeken zouden we beter afbakingen kunnen maken tussen velden van organisaties die bijvoorbeeld actief zijn op het gebied van religie, belangen van banken of het buitenlandse beleid.

Er is tot slot een nuancering nodig van het idee dat de unieke cultuur van bepaalde politieke systemen een verklarende factor zou kunnen zijn in het onderzoek naar belangenorganisaties. In dit proefschrift zijn twee typologieën van systemen aan de orde geweest; in hoofdstuk 3 ging het om het verschil tussen de semi-pluralistische EU en het corporatistische Nederland, en in hoofdstuk 5 om drie soorten mediasystemen. Tussen de EU en Nederland zijn wel verschillen gevonden, maar in de landenvergelijkende mediastudie bleken er nauwelijks verschillen tussen landen te zijn. De verschillen tussen de EU e n Nederland waren echter niet het gevolg van een unieke onderliggende cultuur maar konden verklaard worden door verschillen in juridische competentie en de soorten belangen die daardoor aangetrokken werden. De bevindingen in hoofdstuk 5 wijzen erop dat verschillen tussen beleidsthema's aanzienlijk relevanter waren dan verschillen tussen landen. Dit suggereert eveneens dat een algemene politieke cultuur weinig verklarende kracht heeft. Dit stelt de vergelijkende politieke wetenschap echter wel tot een uitdaging aangezien systeemtypologieën daarbinnen een belangrijke positie innemen.

Er blijft een aantal dimensies van analyse over die wel degelijk relevant lijken in de verklaring voor verschillen in politiek optreden van belangenorganisaties. Vervolgonderzoek zou zich dan bijvoorbeeld ten eerste kunnen richten op verschillen tussen *economische sectoren* in aantallen en strategieën van organisaties, waar bij de omvang of de productiewijze (industrie, diensten) als verklarende factoren kunnen dienen. Verschillen tussen de *beleidsagenda's* of de beleidsfase zouden eveneens een nuttig startpunt kunnen zijn in een vervolgonderzoek naar belangenvertegenwoordiging. Zijn bijvoorbeeld agenda's die makkelijker veranderen (parlementair debat) op een andere manier te beïnvloeden door belangenorganisaties dan meer 'vaste' beleidsagenda's (overheidsbudget)? Ten derde lijken

verschillen tussen *politieke kwesties* bepalend voor de betrokkenheid en mobilisatie van belangen. Vaak lijken deze verschillen situatiespecifiek maar wellicht zijn er systematische onderliggende factoren in bijvoorbeeld de dynamiek van het politieke conflict of de betrokkenheid van de publieke opinie die de bewegingsruimte en het handelingsrepertoire van politieke spelers bepalen (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Kollman 1998). Tot slot kunnen we denken aan een combinatie van dergelijke dimensies in de verdere ontwikkeling van onder andere de ruilrelatietheorie zoals gepresenteerd in dit proefschrift.

Curriculum vitae

Joost Berkhout is a post-doctoral researcher and assistant professor at the department of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam. His recent research is embedded in the EU-funded research project "Support and Opposition to Migration". He obtained a master degree in Political Science and in Media and Culture from the University of Amsterdam in 2004. Between 2005 and 2009 he has been a PhD researcher in the department of Public Administration at Leiden University. He has been a visiting researcher at the European University Institute in Florence in the spring of 2008. He has published in the *Journal of European Public Policy*, *West European Politics* and *European Political Science*.
Joost Berkhout was born on 14 July 1979 in Cothen, the Netherlands. He received his VWO diploma in 1998 from the Montessori Lyceum Herman Jordan in Zeist.

Joost Berkhout
Institute of Public Administration, Leiden University
d.j.berkhout@uva.nl

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