

**Going to Brussels.**  
**A Population Perspective on Interest Representation in the EU**

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## **Abstract**

In this paper, we propose a new research strategy to better link interest representation studies to the study of European Integration. To assess the role of interest groups in European integration, we need comparative research designs to systematically vary contextual factors that shape the role of interest groups in a democracy. We develop a new comparative research strategy by focusing on organizational diversity of interest group populations. We define organizational diversity in terms of a policy orientation (i.e. the exercise of influence) and the means employed (i.e. participation of members). Based on a comparison of EU and a Dutch sample of interest groups, we find that membership orientation seems to be more important at the national level and that a policy orientation is more important at the EU level. We find that interest group activity is important throughout a wide range of policy domains and varies in terms of interests across national and European areas of competence. The business bias at the EU-level may be less normatively problematic given the inherent systemic characteristics of the EU. Our results confirm the usefulness of our research strategy in developing comparative designs in interest representation research and may be a start in building bridges between two important yet separate studies of EU policy making.

## **Introduction<sup>3</sup>**

Studies of EU interest representation have become more numerous and sophisticated over recent years (Beyers, Eising and Maloney 2008; Coen 2007; Eising 2008; Lowery, Poppelaars, and Berkhout 2008; Dur 2008, Naurin 2007). These recent developments immensely contributed to our knowledge about the role of interest groups in European policy making. Yet, we still grapple with one of the most fundamental theoretical and normative question specifically related to interest group activity in the EU. That is, we still (or again) find it difficult to include interest representation in theories of European integration and, in relation, we can only speculate about whether and how interest groups contribute to the democratization and politicization of Europe.

We argue that this omission is a result of two trends in EU research. First, interest group research is decreasingly included in theories of regional integration. And, second, EU interest groups scholars rarely engage in a normative evaluation of EU democracy and the role of interest groups therein. Consider the first trend – the limited examination by EU interest group researchers of theories of regional integration (but see Eising, 2004, Wessels, 2004). This is surprising because in the two most important integration theories, intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism, groups have a centre stage position: that is,

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preferences and demands of interest groups are important explanatory factors for, respectively, country positions in EU negotiations (Moravcsik, 1998) and for European integration and policy spillover (Haas 1958, Scheingold and Lindberg 1970, Schmitter 2005). Instead of examining these integration theories, group researchers have chosen other paths of theory construction. On the one hand, we welcome the turn away from sui generis notions inherent in integration theories because it allows for comparative research designs and the construction of research program around interest representation (Woll, 2006, Lowery et al. 2008). However, on the other hand, European integration should not be theorized in such a way that it only indirectly addresses group politics. This is what Hooghe and Marks (2008 18-19) do when they argue that interest groups decreasingly matter. They note that European issues are increasingly politicized in mass arenas and increasingly understood as an ‘identity’ issue that is outside of (economic) group politics (Discussed by: Kriesi, 2009).<sup>4</sup> Marks and Hooghe consequently propose a ‘post-functionalist’ theory of European integration that is very much focused on ‘identity’ questions and the related strategic interaction of political parties in relation to public opinion. While this is important, especially for integration or constitutionalisation of the EU, ‘regular’ European public policy processes also shape EU integration. Put differently, their assertion of decreasing relevance of interest group activity could partially be a result of a bias toward or exaggeration of only salient issues of EU integration rather than being applicable to the entire range of EU policy making. If these other kinds of less salient issues are nonetheless important, research findings on activities of interest organizations in relation to the whole of the EU policy process should contribute to the construction of the ‘postfunctionalist’ middle range theory on European integration that Hooghe and Marks propose. Most likely, interest group activity as such has not diminished but will vary across salient and non-salient issues, or more generally, across policy domains (cf. Borzel and Risse 2008). As a start in assessing this expectation, we examine in this paper the relation between level of policy competence and the number of interest organizations active in these policy fields (and further briefly suggest that, contrary to Hooghe and Marks implicit assumption, a sizable number of groups work on ‘non-economic’ issues).

Second, research on EU interest representation insufficiently engages in a normative evaluation of European democracy. The recent discussion on the ‘democratic deficit’ and the institutional ‘cures’ thereof almost exclusively deal with electoral competition, parties and

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<sup>4</sup> Please note that Hooghe and Marks make two assumptions here: (1) that issues that are salient in public opinion (in this case European integration after the decline of the ‘permissive consensus’) are relatively unaffected by group politics and that (2) ‘identity’ issues are generally mobilized by parties and not interest groups or social movements.

parliament (Schmitter, 2000, Hix, 2008, Bartolini, 2006, Magnette and Papadoulos, 2008). There are of course, good reasons for this focus. Political parties are at the centre of crisis of democracy more broadly (Mair 2006), and European level parties are a challenging starting point as the ‘non-barking dogs’ of European democracy (Schmitter, 2009). Still, interest group researchers could engage in this important debate in three ways. The first is by evaluating the management and regulation of access of lobbyists to EU institutions as a ‘constitutional issue’ that organizes certain conflicts into politics and others not (e.g. Balme and Chabanet 2008). Second, a normative contribution could be made by a critical examination of the policies of European Commission in relation to ‘civil society’ (on strategic rhetoric related to this term: Monaghan, 2008, Smismans, 2008, Kohler-Koch, 2008). That is, we know that early European policy makers had to rely on interest groups to provide them the necessary information and political support to foster the evolving European project (Streeck and Schmitter 1991). This seems to have resulted in a sustained bias towards business associations and individual firms that were drawn to Brussels (Coen 2007, Pollack 1997, Mahoney 2008). At the same time, the commission pursues an active outreach and subsidy strategy so as to diversify to include other types of organizations (COM 2002; Mahoney and Beckstrand 2008; Greenwood, 2007). Third, scholars of interest organizations could evaluate the extent and character to which these organizations deliver certain political functions, such as citizen participation, interest aggregation and effective political voice, thereby evaluating whether organizations live up to alleged beneficial contribution of civil society organizations to democratic societies (Halpin 2006, Jordan and Maloney 2007). Among others, if parties have problems in aggregating and articulating both latent and salient interests in society, could interest organizations do that better? And could interest organizations in that way provide a representative link to society, in addition to elections, in European level policy making? In this paper we examine whether the organizational infrastructure of EU interest groups is sufficiently situated so as to take such a ‘beneficial’ role.

The theoretical and normative discussions are related and both require fundamental information on the size and diversity of the EU interest population. That is not enough, however. A contribution to EU integration theory or an informed recommendation on the ‘democratic deficit’ requires a serious evaluation of the contextual factors that shape the organization and the activities of interest groups. These contextual factors typically vary across systems and thus require a comparative research design. The construction of such comparative research designs that include the EU system is challenging and, as a result, scarce (but see Mahoney 2008). This is so for empirical and theoretical reasons. First, while

comparative research is necessary to better assess the *sui generis* aspects of EU interest representation, it is precisely these aspects that may inhibit sound comparative research. For example, the multi-national and diverse membership of European interest associations is of a different nature than nationally federated interest organizations and thus to at least some extent incomparable. Second, the theoretical state of the art of interest representation does not help to advance comparative research either. Lowery, Poppelaars and Berkhout (2008) argue that framing interest group activity in functional terms of an ‘influence production process’ generally helps to segment the process of interest representation in meaningful substantive topics. This conceptualization thus facilitates the construction of middle-range theories on any given stage in aggregating and articulating salient interests and makes the linkages between the individual segments more explicit. Most of the existing challenges in contemporary interest group research indeed require theoretical linking of various aspects of interest representation (Lowery 2007). This is, for example, the case when examining political bias, the relation between political cleavages and interest representation and the ways interest groups combine organizational maintenance and political strategy, to name a few of such contemporary challenges (Beyers, Eising and Maloney 2008). What is even more important, such linkages arguably vary across political systems, making the use of a comparative research design an important – even necessary – strategy to advance our knowledge on EU interest representation.

In this paper, we take the opportunity to respond to the three challenges we identified above: (1) the repositioning of group politics in integration theory, (2) the provision of interest representation as ‘medicine’ against the ‘democratic deficit’ and (3) theoretical linking of organizational and strategic aspects of interest representation. We address this by offering a comparative design of interest representation at the EU-level and its member states. We present an organizational perspective on interest representation that allows us to simultaneously evaluate both membership-related and influence-related demands on interest groups. More specifically, we aim to answer the question of how interest groups vary in the way they strike a balance between these two sometimes conflicting demands and, in addition, why such variation may differ across various political systems. To answer this question, we test two organization-level scales with population data from the EU and the Netherlands by combining an informed descriptive analysis and a cluster analysis. We hereby offer a novel research strategy that aims to provide a first step in theorizing about the linkages between two important stages in the influence production process: organizational maintenance and political influence. This strategy is also beneficial to comparative research on EU interest

representation and, at the same time, our results speak to the normative and empirical debates on EU integration.

We proceed as follows: first, we present our way to evaluate organizational diversity of a community of interest groups. We suggest a typology of organizations based on two dimensions. Second, we formulate expectations about this diversity in the EU and the Netherlands. We follow with the description of our mixed-sampling method and website-based data. Then we evaluate several factors such as policy domain, political system, and policy competence, that may explain variation in the organizational typology and in the interest represented (business or not). We conclude with a short summary and implications for further research.

## **2. Examining organizational diversity**

When it comes to organizational diversity, scholars have evaluated the general democratic contribution of interest representation in the EU in at least two ways: within certain categories of interest organizations or across various types. First, within-group studies focus on specific types of organizations: social movement organizations (Lahusen, 2004, Imig and Tarrow 2001), business interest associations (Wonka, 2009, Eising 2009, Fairbrass, 2003) and civil society organizations (Kohler-Koch *et al.*, Steffek *et al.* 2008). Researchers of any of these categories of organizations, among others, examine the ways in which these organizations adapt to the EU system, formulate EU level strategies and to what extent they exert influence on EU policy making. A major disadvantage of such within group evaluations is that it does not allow for various ways in which interests may become organized and the relative input of various interests. Second, across group studies examine variation across different types of interest organizations. For example, such studies often concern distinctions between business associations and NGOs, reflecting the traditional collective bias argument of selective interests versus diffuse interests (Olson 1965; Denzau and Munger 1986). We see a similar pattern in contemporary research on EU interest representation (Eising 2004; 2007; Coen 2007; Pollack 1997). Both methods suffer from two related problems: first, the theoretical demarcation of various types of organizations (e.g. NGO's, SMO's, CSO's, BIA's) and the related types of interest will always be conceptually problematic. Second, this especially the case because the meaning of these concepts strongly depends on the political context in which it is used. For example, Dutch social movement organizations are different things than French social movements.

We therefore propose a different strategy. Comparative research in general benefits from a careful conceptualization strategy that relies on functional variation rather than the idiosyncracies of individual political entities (Sartori 1970; Dogan and Pelassy 1990). Our conceptualization strategy consists of two parts: first, we follow Lowery and Gray (2004) and differentiate various stages in the ‘influence production process’, second, we follow Streeck and Schmitter (1999), and differentiate various political functions that populations of interest organizations perform to varying degrees.<sup>5</sup>

Segmenting interest representation in meaningful functional stages advances theory development and comparative research design. That is, by studying a single stage in the influence production process, explanatory variables related to another stage can serve as constants (Lowery, Poppelaars, and Berkhout 2008). While comparative research on EU representation can benefit by segmentation of functional parts of the influence production process, conceptual and empirical breakthroughs will lie on the fine lines that separate these segments. For example, research indeed has shown that community characteristics such as the density of the interest population may affect both mobilization ratios as well influence tactics (Lowery and Gray 1995; Browne 1990). In this paper, we focus on the organizational configuration of interest groups as a potentially fruitful starting point for examining the linkages between the population and strategic stages of the influence production process.

Rather than focusing on system variation in any of the abovementioned organizational categories, we build upon the classic distinction of Streeck and Schmitter (1999) to distinguish between individual interest organizations along two dimensions. The first dimension addresses the organizational environment and the relative importance of political institutions vis-a-vis organizational members. The second dimension evaluates the types of (internal) organizational means that could be used in interaction with these environments.

First, the key contribution of Streeck and Schmitter is that ‘the organizational dynamics of intermediary organizations derive from their simultaneous involvement in two environments, the social group from which they draw their members (membership environment) and the collective actors in relation to which they represent these (influence environment)’ (Streeck and Kenworthy, 2005, 451). It is assumed that these two environments operate according to two logics of exchange, the often contradictory ‘logic of membership’ and ‘logic of influence’ (Schmitter and Streeck, 1999). On the one hand, the

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<sup>5</sup> Please note at this stage that we use the term ‘interest organization’ to denote a broad range of organizations that aims to influence public policy. This is similar to Beyers ea (2008), see for a discussion of such a functional definition: Jordan ea (2004)

socio-economic context provides support in terms of members, information and collective activities in exchange for the articulation of interests in the institutional environment. On the other hand, the political institutional context provides policies favorable to members and some sort of representational monopoly in exchange for compliance or political support. These exchanges matter for the individual organizations but are also characteristic of various systems. That is, the ways in which interest groups balance different demands defines a group system as pluralist or corporatist: '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.' (Streeck and Kenworthy 2005, 452).

Second, a less developed dimension that Streeck and Schmitter use to distinguish organizations is what they label the tension between the 'logic of effective implementation' and 'logic of goal formation'. In contrast to the first dimension these logics do not involve an exchange relationship. Therefore we will not use their terminology here. Instead we speak of administrative and representative means.<sup>6</sup> The first refers to the efficient operation of internal affairs, such as professional management and specialization, whereas the second refers to 'widespread membership involvement' so as to aggregate varying interests. The extent to which organizations choose any of these sometimes contradictory alternatives depends on environmental constraints and determines the function 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 figure represents the types of organizational tasks in relation to the two dimensions.<sup>7</sup>

[Figure 1 about here]

More recently, Kriesi (1996) conceptualizes organizations along two similar dimensions when he proposes a typology of the organizational environment of social movements. First, he differentiates political organizations between those oriented towards authorities and those oriented to clients. This is similar to the tension between the logic of influence and the logic on membership. However, he does not explicitly relate this to corporatist or pluralist systems.

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<sup>6</sup> This is in line with the original terminology that Schmitter and Streeck (1999 19-20) derive from Child ea (1974). Child ea use administrative rationality and representative rationality.

<sup>7</sup> We adapted the terminology somewhat.



In addition to this ‘orientation’ of organizations, he distinguishes the extent to which organizations seek to mobilize their constituents to participate in collective action. This is similar to the second dimension that we label the administrative and representative organizational means. Similar to Streeck and Schmitter, the two dimensions lead to four types of political organizations: *social movement organizations* that combine a strong orientation toward political authorities and direct participation of their constituency. Supportive organizations combine a limited focus on membership with a limited focus on political authorities. These are what Kriesi calls *service organizations*. *Self-help* or *altruistic organizations* actively engage their members and are more oriented towards than members rather than toward political authorities. Voluntary organizations or clubs belong to this category. And, finally, the category that Kriesi terms *political representation* comprises organizations that do not actively engage their members in their organizations but are dominantly oriented toward political interest groups. Labor unions and business associations belong to this category (Kriesi 1996, 152-154). Each type of organization thus engages in different types of activities and has a different political function. Again with some adaptations in terminology, figure 2 presents the typical organizational forms with several EU examples. Organizations and populations of organizations mix various forms and evolve over time. We use the term ‘logic of exchange’ and ‘orientation’ interchangeably to indicate the dimension relating to authorities’ orientation or logic of influence versus constituency orientation or logic of membership. We use ‘organizational means’ to refer to Kriesi’s participation dimension.

[Figure 2 about here]

These functional distinctions are useful for theorizing on the linkages of the influence production process. Indeed, what distinguishes interest groups from regular private firms is that they combine organizational survival with political clout. Organizational survival is not only about financial resources but concerns active membership as well (Gray and Lowery 1996). Interest groups may, however, do so or only be capable of combining these different, often conflicting requirements to different degrees.

We expect the way how interest groups strike a balance between the logic of influence and the logic of membership to vary along several important contextual dimensions such as interest representation regimes and policy domains. To cover the first dimension we compared samples of the EU and the Dutch interest populations (see section 3). First and importantly,

we expect the configurations of organizations to vary along the corporatist-pluralist continuum. In this regard, we have several specific expectations with regard to the EU that slightly deviate from some theoretical claims. A strong membership orientation is theoretically related to pluralism. Thus we may expect the ‘semi-pluralist’ EU to have large proportions of organizations that are dominantly oriented to their members. However, considering the multi-layered character of Euro-groups we do not expect the membership-orientation to manifest itself clearly at that level. We expect high scores on the policy influence scale. At the same time, considering the high level of professionalization needed for policy access at the EU-level, we expect that the participation dimension does not differentiate (economic) interest groups from social movement organizations. The two scales are not expected to be correlated.

In the traditionally corporatist Netherlands, we expect that, in contrast to the EU, we observe a clear tension between the logic of influence and the logic of membership. So, we expect more variation in the policy influence score that, additionally, positively correlates with the organization score. This means that we expected to find organizations that combine both high levels of policy orientation with the organizational characteristics to organize for collective action. This would be a direct result of the logic of corporatist systems to aggregate interest representation by requiring both representativeness of a given set of organization and professionalization in terms of policy orientation. For instance, the Dutch government actively encourages individual patient organizations to collaborate under the heading of one or two umbrella organizations so as to have a professional deliberation partner that can mediate between various interests (Poppelaars 2009a).

Second, such organizational configurations arguably vary along policy domains as well. Messer, Berkhout and Lowery (2009) show how the density of the EU interest population significantly varies across functional policy domains (measured by the NACE codes of economic activity). Including policy domain as full variable in interest population theories is complicated by its conceptual vagueness and the inconclusiveness of its impact over time.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, solid theorizing on how ‘natural’ characteristics of policy domains

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<sup>8</sup> First, consider conceptual fuzziness. When we examine the literature, we find terms such as policy issue, policy area, policy sector all used interchangeably to indicate a variety of policy-related variation. That ranges from aspects of political conflict or competition on issues to the institutional framework in sectors. Scholars refer to variation in issue attention either from the government or the public (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Baumgartner and Leech 1998), structural variation such as the well-known Lowi (1964) typology of regulatory, distributive and redistributive policies, or indicate substantive aspects such as the complexity or heterogeneity of given policy topics (Gormley 1983). This conceptual fuzziness seems to result in multiple studies including different independent variables to explain a somewhat different dependent variable and thus inhibiting the development of solid testable hypotheses on how policy-related aspects relate to interest group behavior.

affect interest group behavior goes beyond the scope of the paper. Yet we assume that the combination of political and membership orientation is likely to vary across policy domains. For instance, policy domains may vary in type and level of government attention as a direct result of different competencies related to different governance levels, i.e. national versus EU-level. By varying such contextual factors systematically across policy domains, we should be better capable of explaining variation across EU member states and across national and EU level governance. More to the point, and given the relation between government action and increasing levels of interest group activity, we expect that organizations in our EU sample dominantly work on policies of EU competence. Further, we expect that organizations in our Dutch sample tend to focus on policies of national competence. We also hypothesize that business interests tend to focus on policies of EU competence. However, we think that this is irrespective of the level of government of these policies. So, also in the Netherlands we expect to find higher proportions of business interests working on policies of EU competence.

In addition, we expect to find variation across different substantive types of interest groups. Usually, classifications of interest groups rely on a substantive variation relating to the type of interest they represent: NGO, business associations, and so on (Beyers and Kerremans 2004; Mahoney 2004; Poppelaars 2009). How individual organizations combine maintenance and political behavior requirements is likely to vary within as well as across such substantive categories as well. For instance, environmental NGO's may vary considerably in the extent to which they actively engage their members. Greenpeace may rely more on checkbook membership (Jordan and Maloney 2007) than an ad hoc environmental protest organization while they both belong to the same substantive category. Generally, however, NGO's are likely to more actively engage their members than business associations will do. We will therefore include a substantive distinction between NGO's and business interests in our analyses to verify these assumptions and to provide a comparison with the scales we developed.

### **3. Design**

To examine how organizational configurations of interest groups vary, we used several censuses to construct our samples of NLD and EU-level interest groups. Studying interest group populations in the Netherlands is challenge of its own kind as there is no census of the

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A second and related aspect includes the frequent inability to account for the time dimensions associated with interest group behavior. Most of the scholars that formulate structural aspects of policy domains to have an effect on interest group behavior assume that policy structures behavior and do not fully account for the potential of the reverse effect, i.e. that policy may follow social (interest group) behavior (see Baumgartner and Jones 1993).

existing interest groups from which to draw a random sample. The important or ‘big players’ among the interest groups are often well-known to policy makers in the Netherlands. But 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 also restrict themselves to the largest ones (Hart de 2005, 2008) concern sector specific studies (Akkerman 2005; Huitema 2005), or study a particular type of organizations, such as professional associations (Visser and Wilts 2006). Such studies do not accumulate and thus fail to provide a full overview of the interest group population. We thus need to develop another strategy to study interest group populations and apply proper sampling methods.

We use the association and foundation database generated by the National Chamber of Commerce in the Netherlands (NCC) as starting point for generating a database of the Dutch interest group population;<sup>9</sup> Their trade, association and foundation registers are available online and accessible via a NCC coding system. We use this system to make a crucial selection step, because it provides codes for associations and activities related to interest groups. Based on these codes we produced a database of 7,565 organizations (Poppelaars 2009a; Poppelaars 2009b). From these 7,565 organizations, we randomly sampled 1582 organizations. Then we took a second important selection step based on the website-information of the organization;<sup>10</sup> 380 turned out to be nationally active interest groups with online presence.

This way of sampling can be termed as bottom-up sampling in the sense that we used a census of *all* organizational activity in the Netherlands and selected the type of organizations that could be classified as interest groups. This arguably results in a different set of organizations than those organizations that interact with the government. Theoretically, we would expect the proportion of civil society organizations to be higher in the total population compared to the proportion in the subset of organizations that interacts with the government. In general, we could assume that the organizations that interact with the government are a subset of the total population.

Sampling EU interest organization is not troubled by a lack of data as in the Dutch case. Yet EU sampling has to address the variation in multiple data sources that are available

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<sup>9</sup> The NCC is an autonomous public agency (in Dutch: zelfstandig bestuursorgaan (zbo)) under the auspices of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The NCC not only administers the trade register, but also administers an association and foundation register (Register Act 1997). Essentially, every citizen in the Netherlands either planning to establish his or her own company or start any type of foundation or association needs to register with the NCC.

<sup>10</sup> We selected those organizations that could be counted as an active interest groups based on the information they provided on their website. This does exclude organizations which may be interest groups, but have no online presence. The dataset, and accordingly the sample, exclude individual firms and advisory councils.

to avoid sampling bias. Therefore, the sample of EU organizations is drawn from a combination of data sources. Apart from the register of Interest Representatives that the Commission started in June 2008, they are CONECCS (August 2007, n=749), the register of lobbyists accredited to the European Parliament (April 2008, n=1534) and the Public Affairs Directory by Landmarks (online version July 2007, n=2522 after deletion of duplicates). Each of these lists is produced for 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; Wonka 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 & Lowery, 2008). These data sources have been merged and the duplicates have been removed by Arndt Wonka (2008).<sup>11</sup> A random sample of 400 organizations is drawn from this merged list that combines three different data sources.

This mixed database provides the most diverse snapshot of interest organizations active at the EU level. However, the database 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 undergo substantial changes. First, CONECCS is no longer available. Second, Public Affairs Directory has recently changed ownership to Dod's that may lead to editorial changes. Third, the EP register is frequently up-dated and the most straight forward. That is, every lobbyist that enters the EP building needs a doorpass and consequently 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 lead to a decline of national associations on this list.

We have added a random sample of 100 organizations from the new register of Interest Representatives kept by the European Commission to properly address these challenges.<sup>12</sup> Apart from getting more up-to-date data, this allows us to compare this source to the other sources and thus examine the usefulness of this data source for future interest group research. After removal of seven duplicates we have a sample of 493 organizations.

We adapt our samples in such a way that it maximizes the comparability of the results of the two samples. First, the Dutch sampling method is explicitly 'bottom-up'. That is, we

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<sup>11</sup> We thank him for providing this database

<sup>12</sup> This new register is part of the Transparency Initiative (n=786, January 2009) and it's early 'success' is disputed (European Voice, Feb 5, 2009).

sample organizations that are likely to be organized for collective action but do not necessarily have contacts to the government. The bottom-up nature of the Dutch sampling procedure increases the likelihood of this expected outcome we described earlier. Namely, as a result of the bottom-up sampling we may find more organizations that are oriented toward their members rather than political authorities and actively engage their members rather than not. In other words, the Dutch sample may be biased towards civil society organizations. We correct for this: remember that we have selected organizations on keywords that refer to some sort of political association and that we have excluded organizations that could not be considered interest groups. This produces a sample that is largely similar to top-down samples. In order to check the validity of this procedure we produced this figure for different sub-samples of our Dutch sample.<sup>13</sup> We present the full sample but we exclude recreation, voluntary and sport groups. These exclusions serves as an additional correction to potential sample bias. So, by taking several selection steps, with key words and internet searches, we make our sample more like a ‘top down’ sample.

Second, for the EU sampling method we work exactly the other way around. We take a top down strategy and consequently adapt the resulting selection. We select organizations for which we know that they actively seek to influence policies. Either, they open an office in Brussels and consequently end up the Public Affairs directory. Or, they enter the EP building and end up in the EP lobby register. However, we additionally use data sources that allow for voluntary registration irrespective of policy activities, such as the new register. This is a bottom up effect. Further, we select only those organizations that could have ended up in the Dutch sample as well. That is, we focus on organizations that are specifically designed to allow for collective action. In sum, have adapted, via stratification, filtering and oversampling, the Dutch and EU samples in order to maximize comparability of the samples. Thus, differences between the organizations in these samples should therefore be largely ascribed to real-world phenomena.

### **3.1 Data collection and measurement**

To collect the data, we used a website search, which is a method that is well suited to gather this type of data. Limits of using a website search include a bias to organizations with online presence and a strong reliance on the information offered by the websites. This is particularly

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<sup>13</sup> The results of the presented sub-sample are similar to the full sample results (relevant categories varying about three per cent points). If we further narrow down the sample, for example by excluding organizations that could not be related to any economic sector (according to the NACE codes), we observe a more substantial decline in the proportions in the lower left quadrant of the figure (from 27 per cent to 19 per cent).

disadvantageous to collecting more sensitive data such as on interactions with the government or receiving government grants. Yet, in general, a website search provides a first solid starting point to collect data on interest group characteristics and activity (Berkhout 2008).

We use several classification schemes to collect data on type of interest groups, the relation between policy domains and interest group activity and, most importantly, on the organizational diversity in terms of organizational means and policy orientation.<sup>14</sup> To indicate the type of interest groups, we use a substantive typology of organizations.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, we gathered data on membership,<sup>16</sup> economic sector,<sup>17</sup> substantive interest<sup>18</sup> and policy topic.<sup>19</sup>

Further, to explore the impact of policy domains on interest group communities and behavior, we used a combination of economic and policy classifications. First, we included the major topic areas of the NACE coding system to account for economic activity in detail. A second classification we used is a policy issue classification that is widely used in the international agenda setting literature (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; (Breeman et al. 2008). These codebooks include detailed descriptions per topic. 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. Most interest organizations hardly span different policy fields. So, we only use the first topic code. We recoded the nineteen main topic codes into three levels of competence. That is, we distinguished between national level of competencies, shared level of competencies and an EU level of competencies.<sup>20</sup> Including the agenda-setting classification to classify interest group behavior

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<sup>14</sup> Our coding system did allow for (1) choosing multiple categories of the nominal classifications rather than restricting the coding to only one category and (2) in an additional variable forced the coder to choose the most important category. Allowing for multiple categories allows us, for example, to address the fact that interest groups may be relatively heterogeneous in terms of membership as well as in terms of functional orientation (being a religious organization active in development aid, for instance) (Brasher, Lowery, and Gray 1999)

<sup>15</sup> 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, labour 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

<sup>16</sup> 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

<sup>17</sup> According to main NACE codes: < [http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/index/nace\\_all.html](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/index/nace_all.html)>

<sup>18</sup> According to Gray and Lowery (1993, 90).

<sup>19</sup> According to Policy Agendas Codebook.

<sup>20</sup> Adaptation of policy field categorization of the Policy Agendas project <<http://www.policyagendas.org/>>. According to following categories (largely similar to Articles 3-6 Treaty on the Functioning of the European

is novel in itself as this classification is normally used to track variation in issue-attention over time, rather than revealing individual-level presence (and thus implicitly individual-level activity).

We employ two typologies of interest organizations and both rely on a combination of variables. First, a combination of substantive characteristics (NGO's, employers) and membership: We combine two classifications to address the *type* of interest groups, namely, a classification to account for the type of membership and a classification to account for substantive variation. Second, as discussed in section 2, we evaluate organizations on two dimensions: (1) a scale that indicates to what extent they are oriented to lobby activities / policy making (logics of exchange) and (2) a scale that refers to the extent to which organizations certain exhibit organizational characteristics to perform tasks in a administrative or representative manner (organizational means). Both scales consist of five-point scales that we included in our web-site based coding scheme.

For the policy orientation scale, we assign high scores to organizations that seem dominantly oriented at the political institutions. For example, when we find references to legislative processes or when we observed activities that directly seek government recognition for some sort of social problem. In addition to this policy orientation scale, we have coded, also on a five-point scale, the types of organizational means to further the aims of the organization. For this second scale, we looked for and coded accordingly organizational mechanisms to facilitate representation of members, such as annual members' meetings and members' recruitment activities. The rationale of this second scale relates to opportunities for participation for citizens and mechanisms that may increase the representative character of the organization. Using such scales may be a good starting point for linking organizational aspects and political aspects intrinsic to interest representation. That is, how to combine organizational maintenance and survival and political influence. And, as such, the combination of these two scales is a new research strategy in comparing interest group populations across national and EU levels of governance.

In order to identify different types of organizations in terms of collective action potential and orientation toward political authorities, we conducted a cluster analysis. Cluster

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Union): National: Civil Rights, Immigration, and Integration, Healthcare, Education and Culture, Housing and City Planning, Democracy and Government

Shared: Macro-Economics and Taxes, Labour, Energy, Traffic and Transport, Law, Court Rulings, Crime, Social affairs, Defense, Scientific Research, Technology, and Communication, Foreign Affairs and Foreign Aid, Spatial Planning, Public Nature and Water Conservation

EU: Agriculture and Fisheries, Environment, Enterprises, National Commerce, International Commerce



analysis is a helpful tool in exploratory research design to help identify several groups in the data which share similar characteristics. That is, cluster analysis maximizes between-group variation and minimizes within-group variation. In our case, we used cluster analysis to identify sets of organizations that share similar degrees of collective action potential combined with a certain degree of authority orientation (Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984). More specifically, we used two-step cluster analysis as this technique can handle relatively large databases and a combination of categorical and continuous variables. In this respect, we were informed by the design used by Minkhoff, Aisenbrey, and Agnone (2008) to identify organizational diversity in the US advocacy sector. Two-step cluster analysis is dependent on the sequence of the cases in the dataset and the outcomes may thus vary across datasets with a different order of cases. We checked for this by conducting a stability analysis, i.e. we ran different cluster analyses for various randomized orders of the observations. The four clusters which appeared originally appeared to be stable throughout the different datasets.<sup>21</sup>

#### **4. Explaining organizational diversity of interest populations in the EU**

In this section, we empirically examine the variation in internal (organizational means) and external (logic of exchange) dimensions of interest organizations in the Netherlands and the EU. We first use a descriptive empirical assessment of how the two scales vary across the EU and the Dutch population. Second, we use a different typology to examine how the percentage of business associations versus NGO's varies across policy domains. We then unravel how the combination of policy and collective action orientation result in different clusters or groups of interest organizations via a cluster analysis. And, finally, we test whether variation in interest representation regimes, policy domains and types of interest groups can explain cluster membership. Taken together these empirical strategies offer a first testing of a comparative research strategy based on organizational diversity across policy domains and different levels of governance.

#### **How organizational diversity varies across the Netherlands and the EU**

We start with a comparison of the two scales across the EU and the Netherlands. The figures below show the scores for the organizations in our samples in the EU and the Netherlands.

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<sup>21</sup> The political and organizational structure scales can be interpreted both as ordinal and continuous scales. We therefore tried to include them as continuous and categorical variables. The analyses with the continuous variables were stable across the different datasets while the categorical ones were not. We therefore opted for the cluster analysis based on the continuous measurement scale despite its non-normal distribution to which two-step cluster analysis seems is quite robust.

The scales are recoded into three categories and the middle category is removed. The x-axis represents the 'organizational means-scale. The y-axis shows the scores on the 'logic of exchange'-scale. The circles in each quadrant represent the proportion of organizations with the corresponding scores. As with the other figures, we use a subset of the EU sample that includes only EU and national associations with sufficiently informative websites.

[Figures 3 and 4 about here]

In the EU, as expected, we observe generally high proportions of organizations that at the policy influence side of the logic of exchange scale, the y-axis. About 75 per cent of the organizations seem to be actively aiming to influence European public policies. The high EU scores on this scale are supported by the more precise coding on interaction and cooperation with government actors. In the EU, only about four per cent of the organizations do not seem to have some sort of interaction. In the Netherlands, only about half of the organizations show on their websites interest in contact with government.

The focus on public policies and the parallel lack of orientation towards clients and members is uncharacteristic of pluralist systems. It is assumed (Salisbury 1968, Schmitter and Streeck 1999) and shown (Walker 1991) that competitive pressures for members necessitate stronger client-orientation than in corporatist systems. With this seemingly weak logic of membership the EU may not be as pluralist as has been claimed (Eising 2007, Greenwood 2007; Schmidt 2006).

The relatively strong orientation towards public policy is irrespective of their organizational capacity to organize collective action, in other words, their representative organizational means. This merits two remarks. First, the EU data does not support the theoretical function of this dimension. It does not help us to differentiate between, in Kriesi's terms, economic interest groups and social movement organizations. Second, it suggests that the EU is different from other political environments. That is, at least in the EU, political organizations are capable of addressing policy issues with authorities *without* having fully developed organizational mechanisms that traditionally allowed for a claim on representativeness. We can only speculate about potential explanations for this. It may be that organizations do not need to orient themselves towards social supporters because EU institutions or other patrons support them (Lahusen, 2004; Mahoney and Beckstrand 2008). It may also be that these client- or member-related mechanisms are present at the national level and that consequently we find few of them at the EU level. This is most likely a logical result

from a constituency that is usually nationally defined rather than in supra- or international terms.

In the Netherlands, we observe, on the one hand, large proportions of organizations with high scores on both scales and, on the other hand, large proportions of organizations with low scores on both scales. This implies that both scales matter and that they correlate. This confirms our expectation. That is, Dutch interest groups involved public policy making seem to combine a strong policy orientation with several organizational mechanisms to organize collective action and serve their members via representative means. These organizations conform to the traditional neo-corporatist expectation of functioning as an intermediary between citizens and government. Umbrella organizations in the Netherlands, for instance, combine a strong policy involvement orientation with heavy emphasis on their added value for their members by offering them a variety of membership services and collective action mechanisms.

The other large proportion of the Dutch interest group community does not have organizational mechanisms to relate to members and are only limitedly active on policies. Such organizations tend to be oriented towards bringing people together to advance a certain cause, such as in the areas of development aid and environmental issues, without the immediate aim to influence policies. They use administrative means of checkbook involvement and professional management. These are also organizations that bring together experts to facilitate exchange of expertise on a certain matter. In this sense they clearly engage in collective action to pursue a common yet private cause and will only occasionally intersect with public policy. We did not find such groups at the EU level. It is unclear in what way this type of organizations fits corporatist discussions. That is, because of a lack of traditional political organization and only indirect, ad-hoc attempts to interact, these groups do not have an immediate political function. These service-minded groups are usually out of the scope of neo-corporatist theory.

Thus, in terms of political organization we observe several remarkable differences between the EU and the Netherlands. Additionally, we find relevant aspects of the respective interest communities, which are not addressed in common theoretical approaches toward interest representation. In terms of differences, in the EU we find a stronger focus on policies than in the Netherlands. This, then, does not come with involving their constituents. Part of the Dutch organizations seems to take a stronger mediating role by combining policy orientation with organizational capacity for collective action.

### **How interest group activity varies across different areas of competence**

In the previous section we showed how organizational diversity in terms of collective action and policy orientation varies across national and EU levels of governance. In this section, we examine whether different areas of competence attract different types of interest groups. We use this variation in competence in three ways: first, we evaluate, similar to analysis in federal systems such as the US (Baumgartner, Gray, and Lowery 2007), the relative presence of interest organizations at varying levels of competence. Second, while correcting for the variation in competence we examine the relative proportion of organizations representing business interests. Third, we evaluate whether the regularities observed at high levels of aggregation are also observed in specific policy fields.

In order to evaluate our expectations concerning variation of interest group activity across different areas of competence (see section 2), we combine and recode the information that we coded from the interest organizations' website. We use the policy topic classification of the Policy Agendas project.<sup>22</sup> We only evaluate the variation between business interest associations and other organizations. We combine the functional (ie employers- and professional associations) and membership-based classifications (companies as member) of business interest groups. This is thus the most encompassing definition of organizations representing business interests. Figure 5 shows the proportion of organizations per sample per level of competence in the EU and the Netherlands. For instance, at the EU level, we see that almost 45 percent of the interest groups is active in policy area of EU competence.

[Figure 5 about here]

In general, the figure supports our expectations. That is, we indeed find higher numbers of interest organizations in policy fields that are the main competence of the respective level of government and vice versa. Between policy fields of EU and national competence, we observe variation between about 20 and 45 per cent. More detailed analysis is needed to evaluate the factors underlying the magnitude of this variation. That is, among others, we observe substantial numbers of organizations that lobby the EU in policy fields that are formally national competence. This may be an indication of a preference to shift a certain

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<sup>22</sup> These codebooks include detailed descriptions per topic. 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. Most interest organizations hardly span different policy fields. So, we only use the first topic code.

policy to the EU level. Or it may be that the EU provides a more favorable political environment for certain activities.

[Figure 6 about here]

Figure 6 shows the relative proportion of business interests within the same categories as in the previous figure. The figure shows the general proportion of business interest and the variation across policy fields. In case there was no correlation between policy fields of EU competences and policy field that attract business interests, we would observe similar proportions per category. These proportions could, of course, then, vary between the Netherlands and the EU.

First, in general, compared to the Netherlands, we find relatively large proportions of organizations that represent business interests in the EU (75 per cent relative to 27 per cent). The business dominance in the EU is not a new finding (Coen 2007; Mahoney 2008). However, the Netherlands is probably not the best benchmark in this regard. In light of its corporatist tradition, business interests relative to other interests, are likely to use a relatively small number of organizations to act collectively. 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, to a certain extent, correct for this phenomenon. Bottom-up sampling results in a higher percentage of business interests as it also includes the individual business associations that are a member of the umbrella organizations. The latter are usually the focus of interest representation studies in the Netherlands.

Second, and more interesting, we observe strong variation in the proportion of business interests across the levels of EU competence. Albeit the varying general levels, in both the Netherlands and at EU level, policy fields with high levels of EU competence show higher proportions of business interest representation. That is, the policy areas in which businesses dominate the field are also dominated by business interests at the national level. In that sense, the EU is not so different from interest representation at the national level, as such a bias seems a classic feature of interest representation in ‘economic’ policy fields. In a way, this also seems to make the business bias at the EU level less problematic from a normative perspective. Given the nature of its competence, its history and its multi-level nature a business bias may be a logical consequence of European integration. However, such a normative conclusion requires two assumptions: first, that we are sufficiently satisfied with

the state of business influence/bias at the national level. And, second, that there is hardly any spill-over from the business bias in certain policy fields to other fields (e.g. from foreign trade to health care). The examination of specific policy fields below suggests that we cannot automatically assume the latter.

When we observe the figures for the Netherlands, we note some interesting variation as well. Business interests are overrepresented in areas with an EU competency, while other interests, organized in what we for now label NGO's, make up a larger proportion of the organizations involved in shared and national competences. This confirms the earlier trends we discussed as related to the figures above. A general implication we could derive from these pictures is that NGOs are apparently less active in areas of shared and EU competence levels, which could indicate that the threshold for them to become active in these areas may be bigger and that policy involvement in the Netherlands in these areas is relatively confined to business interests. Figure 7 illustrates this point further.

[Figure 7 about here]

The figure shows the proportion of organizations active in the sector relative to other fields and the proportion of business interests per sector. It does not correct for the overall difference between the EU and the Netherlands in terms of business interests. Like the previous figures, the policy topics are ordered by the level of EU competence and explicitly specify the policy domain in which NGO's and business interests are active. The figure illustrates the general trend depicted in figures 5 and 6 nicely. Policy areas dominantly associated with national competences such as education and health care show a larger proportion of NGOs. Yet, the variation across business interests and NGOs in the area of health between NLD and the EU might show the relevance of within policy domain variation rather than across policy domain variation. Several aspects of health care, such as the pharmaceutical industry or, more generally, regulation related to competition, are EU competences and attract business interests (Greer et al. 2008). Other aspects such as treatment norms or medical research attract other types of interest groups, which is reflected in the relatively large proportion of NGOs active in this field. Another interesting difference relates to the field of foreign affairs. In the Dutch case, there were no business interests observed that were active in this field and all of the organization involved in this field or other types of interest groups. Apparently, and similar to the health care example, the nature of foreign affairs is different at the Dutch national governance level compared to the EU level. This

probably relates to the strong tradition of development aid in the Netherlands. A final striking feature is the difference in the area of environmental policy. Organizations active at the national level all are other types of interest, while at the EU-level this area is dominated by business interests. These, for example, work on issues such as the REACH legislation. Again, this reflects within policy domain variation across national and EU level competencies. Comparing policy domains across different levels of government thus provides an additional perspective on variation across types of interest groups active in various fields.

### **Identifying groups of interest organizations**

Four models of different combinations of political orientation and organizational means emerged from the cluster analysis. We label the varying roles that the typology implies as follows: service providers, clubs, policy experts and interest representers. In table 1 several descriptive statistics are reported including the percentage of each cluster of the total population and mean values of the scores on either the membership or the political authority scale. Figure 8 positions the typology in the same manner as described in section 2.

[Table 1 and figure 8 about here]

The service providers represent roughly 21 percent of the total sample of interest groups. That means that roughly one fifth of the sample is neither strongly oriented towards engaging their members nor towards political influence. Strictly speaking, one could wonder whether such groups should actually be considered an interest group, yet they embody a potential to represent interests but their interests may simply be not salient. This cluster could include charity organizations or organizations that provide very selective incentives (e.g. insurance) of which the active engagement of members in the collective organization is not important. A second cluster of organizational diversity we found is the cluster of ‘clubs’. This cluster represents almost 25 percent of the total sample and these organizations combine a strong focus on membership with a much smaller focus on political orientation. A third cluster of organizations concerns those termed as ‘policy experts’. This cluster makes up almost 17 percent of the total sample. Organizations in this cluster are strongly oriented towards political influence and are by low levels of direct membership participation. Finally, the cluster of ‘interest representers’ is almost 37 percent of the total sample. It is comprised of organizations that combine a strong political orientation with strong representative organizational means. Interest groups belonging to this cluster would be the social movement

organizations in Kriesi's terms (1996). In general, these clusters of organizational diversity resemble both Kriesi's typology and reflect Streeck and Schmitter's (1999) distinction between the logic of influence and the logic of membership.

### **Explaining variation in organizational diversity of interest groups**

We have seen that variation in interest representation regimes and policy domains results in variation in organizational diversity. In this section we test whether these variables explain cluster membership. To do so, we conducted a multinomial regression analysis including the category 'interest representers' as reference category. Further, we included an EU/NLD dummy to represent variation in interest representation regimes, and included categorizations to measure variation in type of interest groups and different competence levels. We also included the NACE-codes to show which of these classifications can better predict variation across policy domains.

[Table 2 about here]

When we observe the results we see some interesting variation. At EU level, the categories of 'service providers' and 'clubs' seem less likely than at the national level in the Netherlands. In contrast, it is more likely at EU level to find 'policy experts' than in the Netherlands. This confirms our earlier findings that the political orientation at the EU level seems to be more important than the orientation toward membership and actively engaging members in the organization.

In terms of theory, the relatively limited client orientation in the EU, (service providers and clubs) contradicts the usually pluralist conception of the EU. In the Netherlands we found large proportions of these service or solidarity minded organizations that have not been within the scope of neo-corporatist scholars. This is probably the case because these organizations are not officially or frequently in interaction with government.

Additionally, our results speak to recent research evaluating the Kriesi typology, as it challenges some aspects of this categorization. Most importantly, political organizations decreasingly can be differentiated by the ways they organize members' participation (their 'organizational means'). Social movement organizations professionalize to such an extent that they 'become rather like interest groups' (Kriesi, 2009, 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). This is not only a conceptual discussion on



the validity of a dimension. This dimension directly addresses some of the more normative claims of the participative benefits to democracy of organizations active in ‘civil society’ especially in the EU case. Although termed as relatively pluralist, a relative lack of membership orientation across different types of interest groups would suggest a more nuanced conclusion about the level and type of pluralism that characterizes EU interest representation. We could thus easily echo the US criticism on pluralism when it comes to membership participation (Skocpol 2003).

Second, we observe interesting results in terms of the distinction between NGO’s and business associations. As opposed to the category of ‘other organizations’, we find significant variation in terms of ‘clubs’ and ‘service providers’. However, the category ‘service providers’ is not significant, indicating that NGOs may be more membership oriented than until now is assumed. The different levels of competence, finally, do not explain much. Only in the case of political orientation membership, national competence results are likely to be associated with lower levels of political orientation. This basically reflects the variation in areas of competence we found earlier. NGO’s seem to be more active in areas of national competence and shared competences.

## **5 Conclusion**

We have argued that focusing on organizational diversity is a fruitful way to start explaining aspects of the EU integration process and assess the extent to which interest groups are helpful in democratization of EU policy making. Furthermore, we have shown that a comparative research design that focuses on functional aspects of political organizations helps to relate population-level research with behavioral aspects of interest representation.

By comparing scales of policy involvement and organizational means we provided an additional strategy to compare interest group activity across different systems of interest representation. We found some interesting differences, which we can summarize by a largely absent membership orientation at the EU level and a relatively large percentage of organizations that combine a weak policy orientation with administrative organizational means in the Netherlands. The results point to two potentially valid expectations. First, in terms of organizational infrastructure, in the EU the main function that organizations perform is related to public policies. This is done via administrative means, such as expertise, and representative means such as constituency-related political pressure of policy makers. For EU level organizations the ‘logic of influence’ is more important than the ‘logic of membership’. This contradicts early views on pluralism. That is, the EU is pluralist in terms of the number

of different interest groups representing specialized interests but less pluralist in its orientation toward citizen and individual participation. Second, a large proportion of organizations characterized by low levels of policy involvement and collective action potential in the Netherlands may suggest that corporatist systems may be more fragmented than until now is assumed in the literature. That is, we found substantial numbers of organizations that do not immediately aim to influence policies and survive by providing services or solidarity goods. These organizations could be seen as representing latent interests and could perform some functions attributed to be beneficial to society (social capital, 'schools for democracy', integration of society). Third, if we assume that these beneficial effects are real, than the EU does not score so well. So, supporting these functions, via subsidies for instance, seems an answer to this 'deficit'. However, considering the strong scores in the upper-left quadrant in figure 4, our impression is that this leads to even stronger orientation to the policy process. For now, alternative policy instruments may be more effective in reaching this aim.

Second, across policy domains we found expected variation in interest group activity and in the relative proportion of business interests. By focusing on the differences between the EU and the Netherlands, and across varying level of legal competence, we observed that government action seems to attract interest group activity. Business interests seem to prevail at national and EU level related to policy domains that are salient to them. So, given these natural tendencies, and assuming that business influence at the national level is considered democratically appropriate, than the overrepresentation of business interests in the EU is less problematic than seems to be the case when solely evaluating the EU. Differences between the type of organizations in areas such as health care and environmental affairs warrant a somewhat different conclusion, however. Given the high level of NGOs active at national level versus the small or absent proportion at the EU level do suggest a bias towards business that may be more problematic, but may also relate to within policy domain variation in competencies. Further, it suggests that business influence in specific fields (e.g. foreign trade) spills over to other policy areas that commonly or nationally characterized by a mixture of citizen groups, labor unions and a smaller proportion of business interests (environment, health care). This is more problematic and requires further scrutiny. So, an explicit focus on policy domains and areas of competence may result in a more nuanced picture of the role of interest groups in European policy making.

The cluster analysis showed that interest groups tend to combine different levels of policy and membership orientation. The indicators for cluster membership varied significantly between the EU and the Netherlands, and across various types of groups (NGO's, business).

Although the areas of competence are not a significant explanatory factor for cluster membership, our earlier analyses indicate that the type of interest groups vary along the areas of competences. Further, the type of interest groups is an important explanatory factor for cluster membership. Put concretely, group membership of ‘service providers’ and ‘clubs’ is most likely to be related with NGOs. We thus can cautiously infer that the organizational configuration varies across these levels of competence as well. In other words, EU areas of competence are likely to be associated with group membership of those clusters of organizations that are strongly oriented toward political influence. Further research is required to determine the extent to which organizational diversity exactly varies across these policy domains or areas of competence.

More generally, our results have two implications that warrant further research and require normative evaluation. First, they seem to confirm that a focus on organizational diversity related to areas of competence and policy domains is a fruitful comparative research strategy to better assess the *sui generis* aspects of EU interest representation. Further research should more explicitly hypothesize how interest groups combine the political and constituency related logics of exchange and specify the context-dependent aspects of these logics. This could then help us explain why in certain systems interest organizations provide different political functions and influence the policy process in different ways.

Second, by relating policy orientation and organizational means, we not only provide a first solid step on theorizing between different stages of the influence production process, we have also have empirical evidence of interest group activity that speaks to EU integration theory and the debate on the ‘democratic deficit’. Put differently, a focus on organizational diversity may be a good attempt to build bridges between EU interest representation and EU integration studies. For instance, we find a relatively large proportion of groups at the EU level that has a strong political orientation but cannot meet the representative demands, so as to perform as intermediate organizations between state and society. This is problematic in terms of their democratic contribution and shows that policy making in the EU is a matter of elite pluralism.

One could draw two conclusions from this, neither of which we find attractive. First, we could think of policies so as to arrive at a fully corporatist EU system with strongly representative criteria for organizations and forms of ‘de facto’ compulsory membership. This would strengthen intermediary functions of organizations. Second, one could think of fully relaxing the representative criterion and allow policy makers the discretion to choose among competing interests. This would largely be a continuation of the existing situation. If we want

to democratize or further politicize the EU we need to seriously think about the type of group system that we want or need. Also, or especially, if the main challenges for institutional reform need to address political parties, elections and political competition more generally, as is suggested in the recent debates in the area (e.g Hix, 2008).

Further, if, since the decline of the ‘permissive consensus’, European integration can increasingly be explained by variation in public opinion and party competition, what’s left of the explanatory power of preferences, organization and activities of interest groups in regional integration theory? Our research suggests that at the level of policy domains, group politics could provide important explanatory insights that are lost if the focus is exclusively on salient, directly ‘European’ framed issues.

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	<i>Clusters of organizational diversity in the EU</i>			
	Service providers	Clubs	Policy experts	Interest representers
Percentage of total	21,34	24,54	16,97	37,14
Organizational means	1,47 (0,52)	3,94 (0,72)	2,05 (0,46)	4,61 (0,49)
Logic of exchange	1,32 (0,53)	2,22 (0,76)	4,51 (0,63)	4,62 (0,49)

Table 1 clusters of organizational diversity

<i>independent variables</i>	<i>clusters of organizational diversity</i>		
	Service providers	Clubs	Policy experts
EU vs NLD	-0.51(0.31)**	-0.91(0.29)***	2.42(0.33)***
NGO's vs rest	2.22(0.57)***	0.99(0.40)**	0.74(0.46)
business vs rest	0.11(0.61)	-0.11(0.42)	-0.79(0.45)
national vs EU competence	-0.46(0.35)	-0.46(0.32)	-0.61(0.36)*
shared vs EU competence	-0.05(0.34)	-0.16(0.31)	0.52(0.33)
intercept	-1.55(0.61)**	-0.40(0.44)	-1.80(0.51)***
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> (Nagelkerke)	0.33		
N	583		
$\chi^2$ model	215.90(15)***		

\*  $p \leq 0.1$ ; \*\*  $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$

one-tailed in cases of type of interest representation regime and type of interest group; two-tailed in terms of competence areas

Table 2 Explaining cluster membership

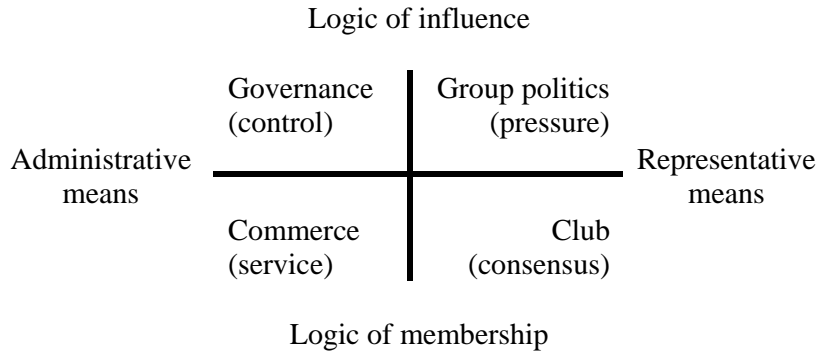


Figure 1: Typology of functions of interest organizations: Adaptation of Kriesi (1996 153) and Schmitter and Streeck (1999 21):<sup>23</sup>

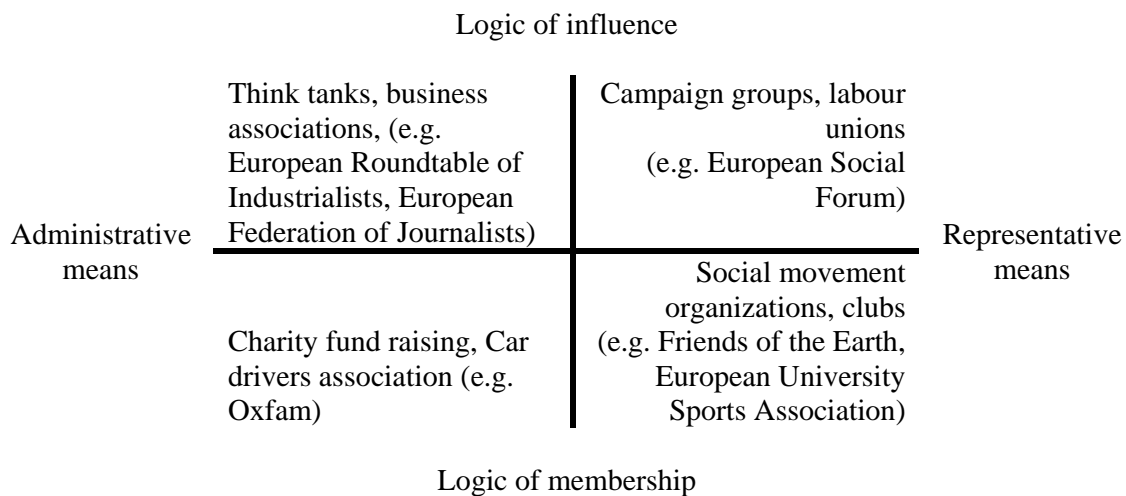


Figure 2: Typology of interest organizations with EU examples

<sup>23</sup> Schmitter and Streeck (1999 21) present a scheme that is at the same time more elaborate as more narrow. First, it is narrower in the sense that they predominantly emphasize the vertical axis, like later authors (Schneider and Grote, 2005, Streeck and Kenworthy, 2004). They take only two pages to evaluate the horizontal axis and refer to Child ea (1974) for an elaboration in contrast to about 60 pages devoted 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 ea (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 this does not refer to exchanges nor to organizational rationale. ‘Means’ refer 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. So, I use slightly broader, more nuanced terms here. This is appropriate especially because the authors expect that associations develop activities in all four realms (ie quadrants).

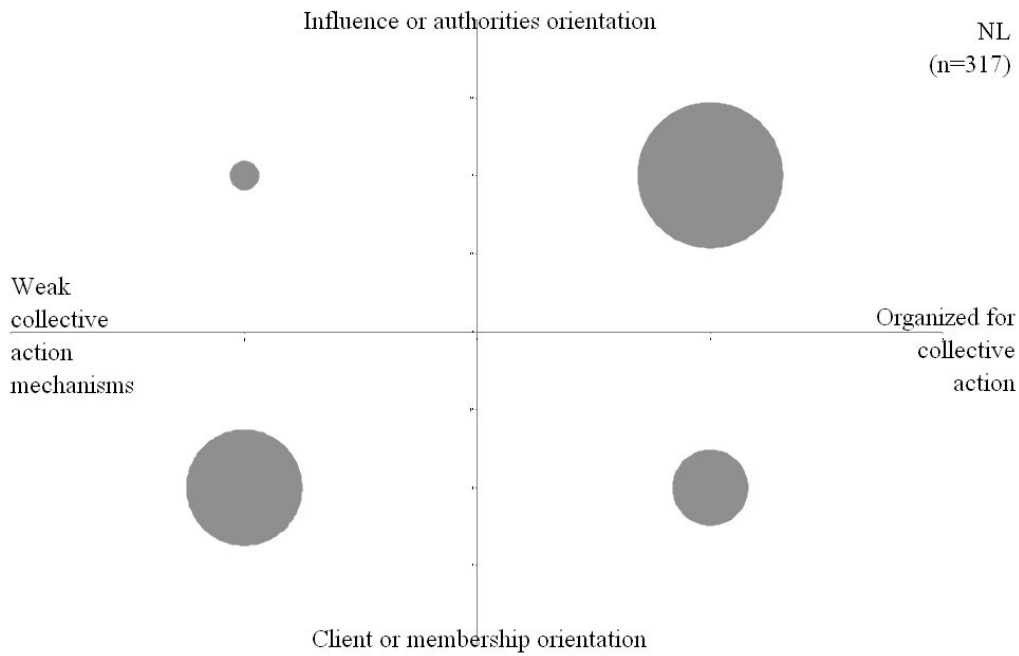


Figure 3: Proportion of Dutch organizations (n=317) by influence and organization dimension

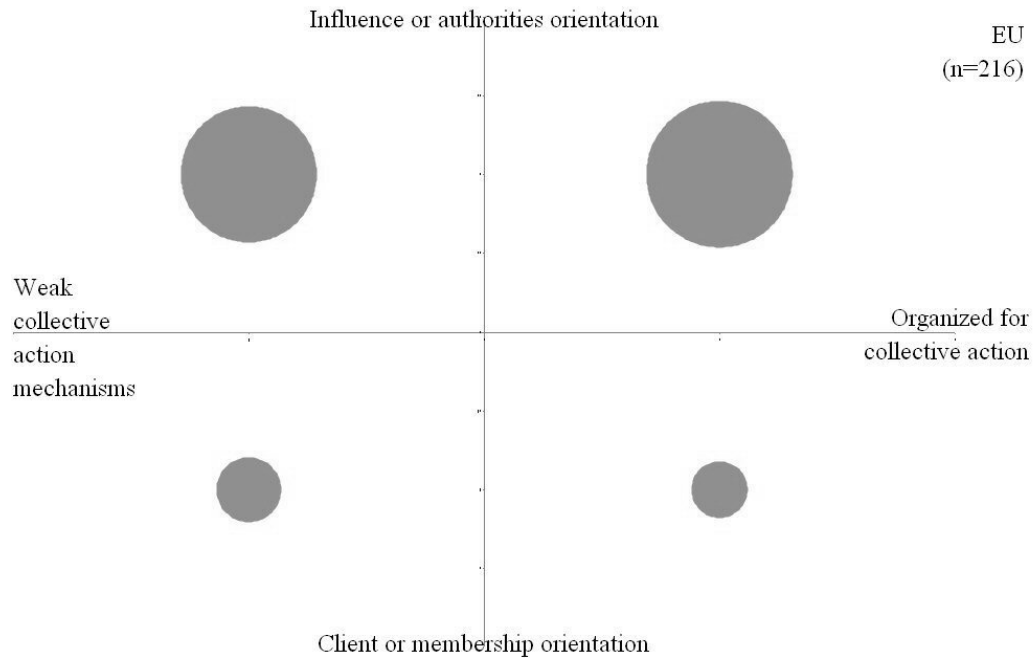


Figure 4: Proportion of organizations active at EU level (n=216) by influence and organization dimension

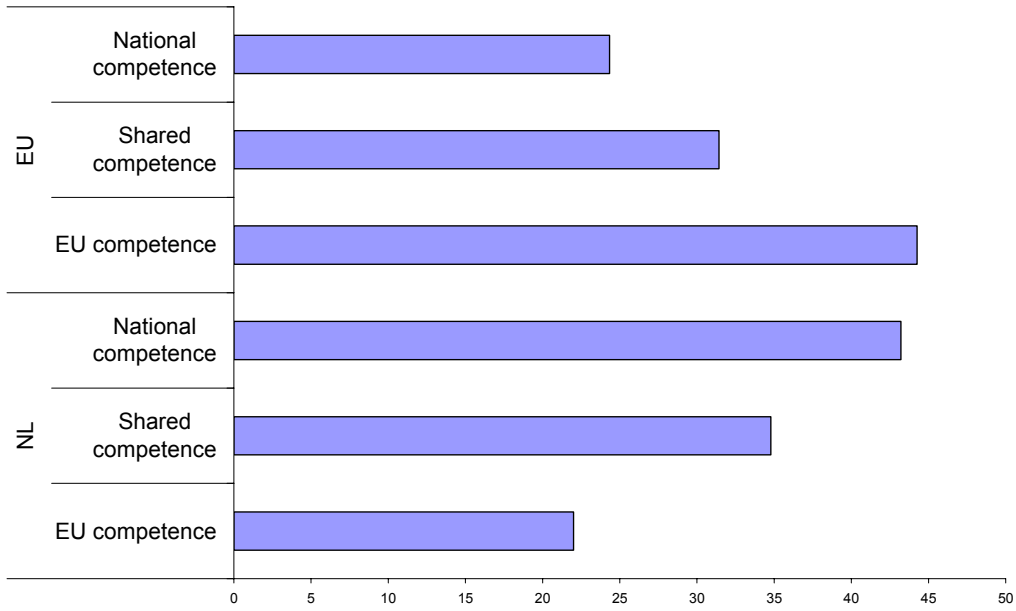


Figure 5: Proportion of organizations per sample per categorized policy field, NL (n=396), EU (n=226).

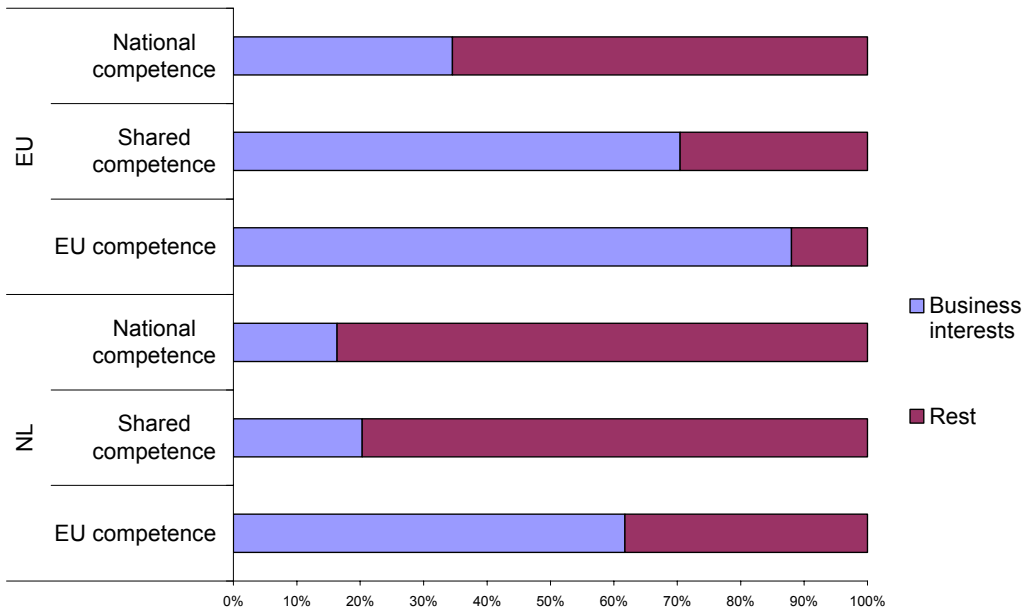


Figure 6: Relative proportion of organizations that represent business interests per sample per categorized policy field, NL (n=396), EU (n=226)

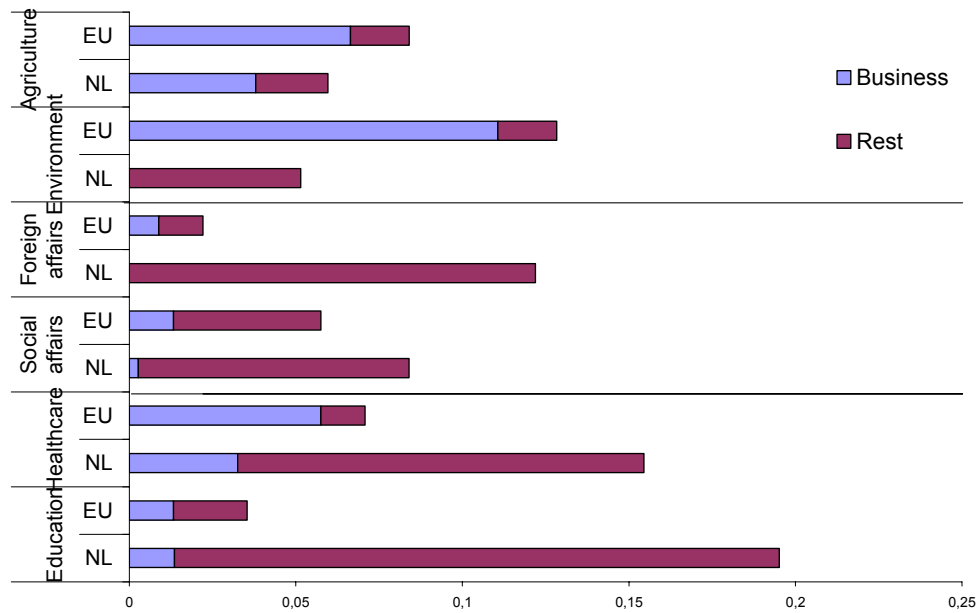


Figure 7: Proportion of organizations representing business interests per sample for selected policy fields, NL (n=396), EU (n=226)

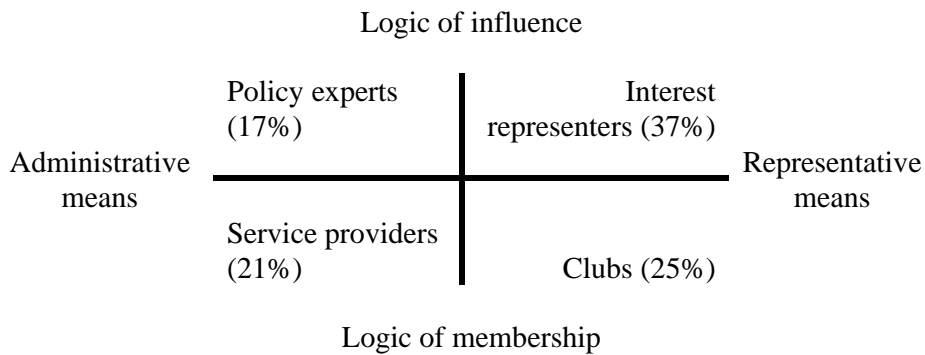


Figure 8: Typology of roles in the EU policy process based on cluster analysis, proportions between brackets