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# After accommodation? Inclusion and exclusion of emancipation interests in Dutch ‘democratic corporatism’

Robert J. Davidson<sup>1</sup> 

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## Abstract

One form of accommodating historically marginalised social groups is through ‘democratic corporatism’, in which government to some degree formalises emancipation interests’ representation within policy processes. This article compares the corporatist trajectories of the emancipation interests of women and gays/lesbians in the Netherlands to examine why women’s interests became excluded from and gay/lesbian interests remained included in corporatist policy processes. Existing studies have failed to explain why changes in corporatism differently affect incorporated organisations across policy arenas. This article examines the role of the level of formalisation of corporatist relations, and by extension the ability of incorporated organisations to combine top-down and bottom-up resources, in leading to exclusion from or continued inclusion in corporatist policy processes. The findings highlight the importance for incorporated emancipation interests of the ability to combine top-down and bottom-up resources to manoeuvre changes in corporatism and successfully maintain their inclusion in corporatist policy processes.

**Keywords** Civil society-government relations · Democratic corporatism · Emancipation interests · Gay/lesbian politics · Social movements · The Netherlands

## Introduction

Only some organised interests are able to participate in corporatist policy networks, and those that have become incorporated may not be able to maintain their corporatist arrangements as corporatism changes over time. This article examines why some organised interests become excluded from corporatist arrangements while other organised interests maintain their inclusion in corporatist arrangements. The article focuses on the factors contributing to corporatist inclusion and exclusion specifically

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in relation to ‘emancipation interests’, as the continued inclusion of emancipation interests in policy processes can strengthen democratic representation.

Emancipation interests are a subset of organised interests that are characterised by a history of social and political marginalisation. Emancipation interests are borne out of emancipation movements, which work to change, ‘the arrangements between strong and weak groups’ (Williamson 2008, p. 103). Emancipation movements strive to bring about changes that, ‘give more power to the weaker group than it had before and, at the same time, challenge both the forms and legitimacies of power in society’ (Williamson 2008, p. 103). The corporatist accommodation of emancipation interests is reflective of the quality of democracy, as corporatist accommodation can enable historically marginalised groups to be represented within policy processes.

The ways in which marginalised groups gain and maintain access to policy processes is a central concern of democratic theorists (Fisker 2015). Political scientists have often focused on the representative function of parliamentarians in potentially including marginalised voices, but Laurel Weldon has argued that, ‘The focus on representation by individual legislators has distracted scholars from examining other, more important avenues of representation for marginalised groups’ (2002, p. 1158). Political inclusion can also occur through nonelectoral forms of representation within government, which have been identified as means to potentially strengthen democracy (Bovenkamp and Vollaard 2018). Corporatism, as one nonelectoral form of political representation, can be an, ‘institutional mechanism for representing interests that are not well represented in territorial elections’ (Mansbridge 1992, p. 41). Examining the factors that influence incorporated emancipation interests’ ability to maintain corporatist arrangements contributes to understanding the depth and breadth of nonelectoral political representation in corporatist democracies.

In contrast to pluralist democratic systems, in which many organisations compete for access to policy arenas, in corporatist democracies, government actors select, or in some cases create, a limited number of organisations to participate in policy processes (Schmitter 1974; Streeck and Kenworthy 2005). The bulk of literature on corporatism has focused on ‘economic corporatism’ and has, from a political economy perspective, viewed corporatism as a variant of capitalism in which employer’s and employees’ organisations formulate economic policy together with, or mediated by, government actors (Munk Christiansen et al. 2010).<sup>1</sup> This article is concerned with what I term ‘democratic corporatism’, which takes interest group studies as its point of departure and understands corporatism as a variant of democratic inclusion (Munk Christiansen et al. 2010).

Democratic corporatism functions through the following six components, to (1) formalise (2) selected (3) extra-parliamentary (4) organised interests’ (5) direct participation within (6) policy processes. Formalisation refers to the ways in which relations are subjected to rules, regulations, and oversight by government actors. Interests are selected by government actors and limited in number. Corporatism

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the role government can play as mediator between employers’ and employees’ organisations, see Hemerijck and Visser (2000) and Woldendorp and Delsen (2008).



involves extra-parliamentary influence in that the issues addressed in corporatist policymaking transcend dominant political cleavages of class and religion (Oldersma et al. 1999) and are represented by organisations other than political parties. Interests are represented by an organisation or organisations, which are either pre-existing and become sanctioned by government actors or are created by government actors. Direct participation means that organised interests and government actors interact to form policy; government actors do not merely mediate between competing organised interests. Participation in policy processes involves the establishment of exchange relations between organised interests and government actors, generally within the executive branch of government, and, 'exchange between state and organised interests requires that one party is in control of resources in which the other is interested' (Öberg et al. 2011, p. 368). Those exchange relations typically involve organised interests providing policy expertise and advice and representing the interests of their constituents in exchange for policy influence and financial resources (Outshoorn 1995).

How a state structures corporatism may change over time. Political scientists have debated the degree of corporatist accommodation in different national contexts (Wiarda 1997), and some scholars have argued that corporatism is in decline (Munk Christiansen et al. 2010; Rommetvedt et al. 2012). Cross-national comparisons of the state of corporatism have primarily focused on economic corporatism and have quantitatively evaluated which countries exhibit more or less economic corporatism over time (for example, see Siaroff 1999). Changes in democratic corporatism may affect nonelectoral interest representation and access to policy processes for some groups. Due to the quantitative focus of existing analyses, however, it is unclear how corporatism has qualitatively changed over time and how those changes have affected the political representation of emancipation interests. The focus of analyses on macro-level cross-country comparison has further resulted in a lack of knowledge regarding differences in how changes in corporatism may affect interest representation between policy arenas differently, as changes in a national corporatist structure may not affect all incorporated interests in the same way.

This study shifts the analysis to the meso-level to examine differences in corporatist accommodation between policy arenas within one national context, the Netherlands. The article addresses the question of why changes in Dutch corporatism resulted in exclusion from corporatist arrangements for some emancipation interests and continued inclusion for others. To answer the question, a most-similar case study design was used to compare the corporatist trajectories of the emancipation interests of women and gays/lesbians in the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup>

The accommodation of political minority groups has a long history in the Netherlands that was already present within the socio-political phenomenon of pillarization

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<sup>2</sup> In practice, some individuals, particularly lesbian women, bridged between both organised interests. The organised interests of both gays/lesbians and women are nonetheless treated separately in this article, as their incorporation was structured separately by government actors.



in which several strategies were adopted to accommodate the ‘big four’<sup>3</sup> minority groups in Dutch society and politics<sup>4</sup> (Lijphart 1968, 1989). In the wake of the social breakdown of pillarization and the politicisation of new issues in Dutch society and politics, the organised interests of several social groups other than the ‘big four’ were accommodated through corporatist structures that facilitated their participation in policy processes. From the 1970s onwards, the Dutch government extended corporatist arrangements to emancipation interests, including ethnic and religious minorities (Musch 2010), women (Celis et al. 2012; Outshoorn 1995), and gays/lesbians (Davidson 2015, 2018).

Women’s organised interests achieved highly formalised corporatist arrangements during the 1980s, which were thought to secure their continued participation in policy processes. Instead, Outshoorn and Oldersma (2007) referred to corporatist ‘decay’ regarding women’s organised interests in the Netherlands, and Celis et al. (2012) argued that the corporatist channel for women closed during the 1990s. In contrast, the corporatist arrangements of gays/lesbians were formalised to a much lower degree during the 1980s than those of women, which was perceived as a much more precarious position. Davidson (2020), Hekma and Duyvendak (2011), and Holzhaecker (2012), however, suggest that the organised interests of gays/lesbians did not experience corporatist decline during the 1990s but instead experienced an expansion of corporatist participation within policy processes.

## The relationship between formalisation of corporatist arrangements and resources

The corporatist arrangements of different organised interests can be formalised to different degrees. In the Netherlands, the most highly formalised model of corporatism is expressed through the legal installation of an advisory body that can be required to be consulted by the responsible minister in a given policy arena. Article 79 of the *Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands* (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations<sup>5</sup> 2008) provides the basis for the legal installation of advisory bodies. Jan Peter Balkenende explained that advisory bodies often combined expert advice and interest representation, writing, ‘Advisory bodies provide the government with information regarding facts and current opinions. Additionally, advisory bodies enable government policy to be influenced by insights from represented constituents’ (1992, p. 53). The most highly formalised corporatist arrangement, a legally installed advisory body, involves government-created organisations that are populated by members who are employed by and advise government actors. More informal corporatist arrangements take other forms, for instance through establishing subsidy relationships and structured dialogue between organised interests and government actors, in particular civil servants within the executive branch.

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<sup>3</sup> Protestants, Catholics, socialists, and liberals.

<sup>4</sup> For further reading on pillarization, see: Andeweg and Irwin (2002).

<sup>5</sup> Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties.



Resource exchange is an integral aspect of corporatist relations. Within corporatism, 'Groups supply decision makers with relevant resources and gain access and eventually political influence in return' (Binderkrantz et al. 2015, p. 98). Government actors control resources desired by organised interests, and organised interests control resources desired by government actors. Resources possessed or controlled by government actors and desired by organised interests can include access to policy processes, financial resources, and legitimacy. Resources possessed or controlled by organised interests and desired by government actors can include expertise, the ability to mobilise a constituency to support a policy, and the ability to efficiently implement projects.

Government actors possess and control resources desired by organised interests based on their position within government. Civil servants within the executive branch are gatekeepers who hold the keys to policy processes and access to an allotted budget for policy development and implementation. Organised interests must generate the resources necessary to make their inclusion in policy processes worthwhile for government actors. The generation and mobilisation of resources has been a central concern of social movement studies, and, 'two longstanding debates about resources centre on whether social movements obtain their support primarily from indigenous or external sources' (Edwards and McCarthy 2004, p. 135). According to Fetner and King, the source of an organisation's resources is, 'an important determinant of a movement's trajectory and outcomes' (2016, p. 46). They continue that, 'Movements that build their resources from the bottom-up face different challenges and opportunities than those that are injected with resources from the top-down' (2016, p. 46).

High levels of formalisation within government institutions have been associated with stability and organisational longevity (Meyer and Rowan 1977). In contrast, I argue that emancipation interests that have established corporatist arrangements with a low level of formalisation are best able to maintain corporatist access to policy networks. I expect organisations with a high level of formalisation of corporatist arrangements to be primarily, if not exclusively, able to generate top-down resources and organisations with a low level of formalisation of corporatist arrangements to be able to generate both top-down and bottom-up resources. I argue that incorporated organisations that can generate both top-down and bottom-up resources retain more institutional manoeuvrability than organisations that are only able to generate top-down resources. If that is the case, organisations with a low level of formalisation of corporatist arrangements will be better able to manoeuvre changes in corporatism and successfully maintain their participation in policy processes than organisations with more highly formalised corporatist arrangements.

I expect three scales of resources ranging from top-down to bottom-up to affect incorporated organisations' ability to manoeuvre changes in corporatism and thereby maintain their corporatist arrangements. The first scale measures the extent to which organisations are formed by government actors (top-down) or by civil society actors (bottom-up). The origins of an organisation are related to its strategic scope and pursuit of strictly policy objectives or a broader agenda. The second scale measures the extent to which organisations are populated by those appointed and/or employed by government actors (top-down) or by volunteers (bottom-up). The



population of an organisation ranges from its being firmly embedded in a network of government contacts (top-down) to having a constituency that can potentially be mobilised in the streets (bottom-up). The third scale measures the financial independence of an organisation, or extent to which it relies on subsidies (top-down) or generates its own funds (bottom-up). Organisations may be able to generate both top-down and bottom-up resources, and the differences between top-down and bottom-up resources are matters of degree. The scales are interrelated, as, for instance, organisations populated by members may collect dues and thereby generate financial resources from their population resources.

## Research design, data collection, and coding strategy

This article utilised a most-similar comparative case study design to examine why changes in Dutch corporatism affected the corporatist arrangements of different emancipation interests differently. The corporatist trajectory of the emancipation interests of women was compared with the corporatist trajectory of the emancipation interests of gays/lesbians. The two cases were selected because they, 'are similar in a large number of important characteristics, but dissimilar with regard to the variables between which a relationship is hypothesised' (Lijphart 1975, p. 159).

The cases are similar in three ways. First, in the Netherlands both women and gays/lesbians organised as social movements and engaged in a second wave of activism manifested as a new cycle of protest in the 1960s and 1970s. The most dominant social movement organisation of each emancipation interest, *Man-Vrouw-Maatschappij* (Man-Woman-Society, MVM) for women and the *Nederlandse Vereniging tot Integratie van Homoseksualiteit COC* (Dutch Association for the Integration of Homosexuality, COC,<sup>6</sup> referred to as COC in this article) for gays/lesbians, pursued public policy objectives and demanded the government develop emancipation policy for the social group they represented. Second, corporatist access to government institutions was achieved, at least in part, as a result of advocacy by each movement's most dominant social movement organisation, MVM and the COC. Third, although the policy arenas within which the emancipation interests were incorporated were separate, both addressed emancipation policy and fell under the responsibility of the same ministry at some points in time.

The two organised interests differ in the outcomes of their corporatist trajectories, with existing literature suggesting exclusion from policy processes for women's organised interests and continued, if not expanded, access to and influence within, policy processes for the organised interests of gays/lesbians. The two cases differ in outcomes and in the level of formalisation of corporatist relations, which provides the opportunity to examine the role formalisation played in the organised

<sup>6</sup> 'COC' is an acronym that originally stood for 'Cultuur en Ontspanningscentrum' or 'Centre for Culture and Relaxation' in English. That name was in use from 1948 and was the official name of the organisation from 1949 until 1964 (Warmerdam and Koenders 1987). Homosexuality was deliberately absent from the name, which was reflective of the organisation's initially closeted orientation.



interests' ability to manoeuvre changes in Dutch corporatism and remain included in or become excluded from corporatist policy networks. The period analysed ranges from 1970 to 2000, which enabled an examination of how the organised interests were incorporated, which changes occurred in Dutch corporatism in the early 1990s, and how those changes affected their corporatist arrangements.

Primary data were collected from seven different archives: The International Institute for Social History (IISG<sup>7</sup>), IHLIA LGBT Heritage (IHLIA), Staten-Generaal Digitaal (SGD, Archives of the Dutch Parliament 1814–1995), Overheid.nl (Archives of the Dutch Government 1995–present), the internal archive of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS<sup>8</sup>), the Dutch National Archive (Nationaal Archief), and Atria (Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History). Data collected included policy documents, minutes of meetings between government actors and incorporated organisations, correspondence, and publications by government actors and incorporated organisations.

The data were inductively coded (Elo and Kyngäs 2008) using Atlas.ti. Inductive codes were grouped into thematic code families, of which two central themes were 'resources' and 'relations between incorporated organisations and government actors'. Data were cross-referenced between sources. I translated the citations from the original Dutch into English.

## Analysis

### Incorporation of the COC

The COC has been the largest Dutch gay/lesbian organisation in terms of membership and annual budget since it was founded in 1946. The COC has a federated structure with local branches and a national office. The local branches of the COC mobilise members to push for social and policy change locally, and the national office pushes for social and policy change nationally and internationally.

After a gay/lesbian protest event in the city of Amersfoort in 1982 was met with a violent counter-protest, the COC sent a policy brief to the Lubbers I Cabinet,<sup>9</sup> led by the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA<sup>10</sup>), in which it demanded that the national government implement progressive public policy on homosexuality (Davidson 2020). The COC's policy demands centred around protection from violence and increased social acceptance of gays/lesbians. The CDA's coalition partner, the Liberal Party (VVD<sup>11</sup>), favoured introducing the policy. The CDA, however, resisted, as it was simultaneously actively opposing anti-discrimination legislation that included homosexuality as a protected category. Several actors, including the VVD and the

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<sup>7</sup> Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis.

<sup>8</sup> Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport.

<sup>9</sup> The Lubbers I Cabinet governed from 4 November 1982 to 14 July 1986.

<sup>10</sup> Christen-Democratisch Appèl.

<sup>11</sup> Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie.





COC, collaborated to successfully pressure the cabinet into introducing the policy, which was presented in the white paper *Overheidsbeleid en homoseksualiteit* (hereafter referred to as: *Government Policy and Homosexuality*) (TK 1985–1986) in 1986. The policy was in the portfolio of, first, the Ministry of Justice, and later, the Ministry of Welfare, Public Health, and Culture (WVC<sup>12</sup>).

The COC was incorporated through the exchange relations it developed with those ministries in assisting in the formulation and execution of *Government Policy and Homosexuality* (Davidson 2018). The COC participated in agenda-setting and formulating policy proposals for the relevant minister. The responsible ministry granted the COC structural subsidies to pay for a portion of its operating costs and ensure the continuity of the organisation and its continued ability to function as a policy advisor. The COC was the central representative of gay/lesbian emancipation interests in the formulation of the policy, and it was one of the central organisations that received project-based subsidies to implement the policy. Some other groups, which focused on a specific subset of the gay/lesbian population or a specific service, were incorporated for policy implementation.

The CDA's hesitance meant that organised gay/lesbian interests were not extended highly formalised corporatist arrangements such as a legally installed advisory body. As such, the responsible state secretary<sup>13</sup> could consult the COC on policy pertaining to gays/lesbians but was not required to do so. The CDA's begrudging acceptance of the introduction of public policy on gays/lesbians during the Lubbers I Cabinet resulted in the cabinet's formalisation of the COC's corporatist arrangements at a low level, which continued during the Lubbers II<sup>14</sup> and Lubbers III<sup>15</sup> Cabinets.

### The Dutch national machinery for the advancement of women

Man-Woman-Society (MVM) was a central organisation of the Dutch second-wave feminist movement and was founded in 1968 by Joke Kool-Smit and Hedy d'Ancona. In 1973 the board of MVM arranged for its members to send hundreds of postcards asking Prime Minister Joop Den Uyl to develop progressive public policy on women (Kool-Smit 1984). As a result of several factors, including the letter campaign, the Den Uyl Cabinet,<sup>16</sup> led by the Labour Party,<sup>17</sup> responded one month later by announcing that it would charge a minister (from the Ministry of Culture, Recreation, and Social Welfare, CRM<sup>18</sup>) to coordinate public policy on women (Outshoorn 1995; Ribberink 1998).

<sup>12</sup> Ministerie van Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Cultuur.

<sup>13</sup> In line with Outshoorn, 'staatssecretaris' was translated as, 'state secretary, the Dutch equivalent of a junior minister' (1995, p. 169).

<sup>14</sup> The Lubbers II Cabinet governed from 14 July 1986 to 7 November 1989.

<sup>15</sup> The Lubbers III Cabinet governed from 7 November 1989 to 22 August 1994.

<sup>16</sup> The Den Uyl Cabinet governed from 11 May 1973 until 18 December 1977.

<sup>17</sup> Partij van de Arbeid.

<sup>18</sup> Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk.



Between 1974 and 1981 a national machinery for the advancement of women, ‘a central policy coordinating unit inside government’ tasked with supporting ‘government wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas’ (United Nations 1995, p. 84) was developed and expanded in the Netherlands.<sup>19</sup> In 1974, the Den Uyl Cabinet installed the Nationale Adviescommissie Emancipatie (National Advisory Committee Emancipation), which became referred to as the Emancipatiecommissie (Emancipation Committee, EK) (Tweede Kamer<sup>20</sup> 1984–1985, p. 8). The EK was involved in setting the women’s policy agenda, provided policy proposals to the relevant minister, and was meant to function as a bridge between civil society and the government (Ribberink 1998).

The government-created EK was populated by experts who were also representatives of different factions of the women’s movement. MVM as such was not incorporated as an organisation, but MVM was well-represented within the EK. Seven members of the EK were also members of MVM, including the chair (MVM 1976). Kool-Smit, co-founder of MVM, was vice chair (EK 1981), and the secretary, not an official member of the EK, was a member of MVM (MVM 1976). MVM was, as an organisation, incidentally consulted and involved in policy implementation through project subsidies (TK 1973–1974).

The EK heavily influenced the content of the first white paper on women’s emancipation policy, which was introduced by the Den Uyl Cabinet in 1977 (TK 1976–1977). The EK also ‘engineered the blueprint for’ the Directie Coördinatie Emancipatiebeleid (Department for the Coordination of Equality Policy, DCE), which was installed in 1978 and fell under the responsibility of a state secretary (Outshoorn 1995, p. 172). DCE functioned as the Dutch women’s policy agency and, ‘both gendered policy debates and advocated movement goals’ (Oldersma 2005, p. 163).

The Van Agt I Cabinet<sup>21</sup> made a proposal that resulted in the EK being replaced by a legislated advisory body in 1981 with the installation of the Emancipatieraad (Emancipation Council, ER) (TK 1979–1980a). The ER had a different role in the policy process than the EK. It lost the ability to set the agenda and provide initial policy proposals to the relevant state secretary. As a highly formalised, legislated advisory body, however, the ER was required to be consulted by the government on policy issues related to women (TK 1979–1980b, p. 25), and, ‘all ministers were required to present their policy plans, insofar as they were related to [women’s] emancipation, to the ER for consultation’ (Ribberink 1998, p. 246). With the installation of the Van Agt II Cabinet,<sup>22</sup> d’Ancona, co-founder of MVM, became state secretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW<sup>23</sup>), which included emancipation policy in its portfolio. The ER and DCE were each involved

<sup>19</sup> For further reading see: Outshoorn and Swiebel (1998).

<sup>20</sup> The Tweede Kamer is the Second House of the Dutch Parliament and will subsequently be referred to as ‘TK’.

<sup>21</sup> The Van Agt I Cabinet governed from 19 December 1977 until 11 September 1981.

<sup>22</sup> The Van Agt II Cabinet governed from 11 September 1981 to 29 May 1982.

<sup>23</sup> Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid.



in the policy process that resulted in the presentation of the white paper *Beleidsplan Emancipatie* [*Policy Plan Emancipation*] by the Lubbers I Cabinet in 1985 (TK 1984–1985).

While advising on women's policy issues became highly formalised within the government, the women's movement began to bifurcate. Regarding the women's movement, Henriët van Rossum argued, 'The one half withdrew into the subculture, and the other half was absorbed by the government' (1992, p. 163). Some organisations from the women's movement supported the government's establishment of organisations to facilitate women's involvement in policy processes. They lent their members and leadership to the newly-established national machinery for the advancement of women and left emancipation in the hands of the government. Other women distanced themselves from conventional political institutions and instead focused on the personal as political by devoting their energies to subcultural activities for women.

### Changes in Dutch corporatism during the 1990s

By the 1990s, parliament was reasserting its position as the primary channel for Dutch political representation, and the role of extra-parliamentary influence had become an issue of political debate (Balkenende 1992). An investigative committee<sup>24</sup> was established by the government to evaluate the number and type of extra-parliamentary advisory bodies as well as their desired role in Dutch politics. The committee's report, *Raad op maat* (hereafter referred to as: *Tailor-Made Advice*), was presented to parliament in 1992 and advised a significant reduction in extra-parliamentary political influence (TK 1992–1993a).

The report advocated comprising advisory bodies of issue experts instead of interest representatives (TK 1992–1993b). Since the publication of *Tailor-Made Advice*, ' "Independent experts"... are selected by civil servants and/or politicians for their "expertise" and are not expected to represent an organisation. Independent experts do not automatically possess more actual expertise than "representative" members' (Oldersma et al. 1999, pp. 340–341).

Based on the findings from *Tailor-Made Advice*, a law was passed that came to be referred to as the *Desert Law*.<sup>25</sup> It removed the legal foundation and mandate of most advisory bodies (Staatsblad 1996) and left every department with, 'only one advisory body for strategic long-term planning, consisting of leading experts in the field' (Oldersma 2005, p. 167). Most advisory bodies did not suddenly cease to exist but were phased out of existence.

Those legal changes were coupled with large-scale cuts in government spending. Within that context of austerity measures, organisations that provided expert advice were increasingly required to finance themselves (Oldersma 1996, p. 29). An

<sup>24</sup> Commissie de Jong.

<sup>25</sup> *Woestijnwet*.



ideology of self-sufficiency for incorporated organisations increasingly replaced that of subsidisation.

Government actors achieved a consolidation of the voices engaged in policy advising through subsidy cuts and required mergers of incorporated organisations. The consolidation of corporatist voices was more efficient for government actors, as they then had to meet with fewer organisations and listen to fewer policy opinions. The changes in Dutch corporatism did not, however, affect incorporated organised interests across policy arenas in the same way.

## **Different effects of changes in corporatism on incorporated organisations**

### **Consolidating gay/lesbian voices within the homocluster**

The Lubbers III Cabinet began cutting the budgets of incorporated gay/lesbian organisations and consolidated advocacy and advising within a cluster of gay/lesbian organisations, called the ‘homocluster’. D’Ancona, who had become minister of WVC, announced that all organisations receiving subsidies from WVC, including gay/lesbian organisations, would be faced with a 25% cut in the financial resources provided by the government from 1992 (COC Conference 1991; National Board COC 1991). To remain eligible for the remaining financial resources, organisations were required to form thematic clusters that were located at one address and had one bank account. Refusal to participate in a cluster would result in complete exclusion from ministerial subsidies.

From 1 January 1993 the homocluster was formed by the COC and seven other gay/lesbian organisations that had been receiving funds from WVC. The cluster was housed at the COC’s national office and used the COC’s bank account, meaning that the subsidies for all gay/lesbian organisations participating in the homocluster were first transferred to the COC, which then distributed the funds amongst the organisations. After the cluster was formed, subsidies from WVC remained exclusively available for gay/lesbian organisations that were members of the homocluster. A second round of 25% budget cuts was introduced in 1996 (TK 1995–1996). Whereas the government had previously provided organisational subsidies to sustain the general costs of running and maintaining gay/lesbian organisations as well as project-based subsidies during the 1980s, during the 1990s self-sufficiency became the goal, with subsidisation shifting to a project-based model.

While the COC had functioned as the primary corporatist representative of gay/lesbian interests to the government from 1986, from 1993 the cluster partners together had a monopoly on influence within and funds from WVC (TK 1995–1996). The COC did not, however, lose influence in relation to the other cluster partners. As the other gay/lesbian organisations in the cluster were dependent on the COC for housing and the distribution of funds, the COC’s position was strengthened in relation to the other cluster partners.



The cluster was dissolved on 1 January 1999 during the Kok II Cabinet,<sup>26</sup> in which gay/lesbian affairs fell under State Secretary of VWS Margo Vliegthart (TK 1998–1999). The subsidy regulations also changed at that time. A small structural subsidy that had, until that point, remained intact to facilitate the cluster was converted into project-based subsidies. Vliegthart explained that the new subsidy policy, ‘in practice resulted in only the COC being eligible for subsidies. The small cluster partners... received a small, one-time subsidy to facilitate their transition to unsubsidised organisations’ (TK 2000–2001, p. 16).

The subsidy cuts weakened the COC in relation to the government, but the way the cluster was structured strengthened the COC in relation to the rest of the organisations in the gay/lesbian advocacy field (Davidson 2018). The COC received less subsidies from VWS than it had done previously, but it nonetheless continued to receive a large share of its yearly budget from VWS. VWS and the COC continued to engage in a mutually beneficial exchange relationship (Platform Homo-emancipatiebeleid 2001), although VWS desired to decrease the subsidies further and pushed the COC to become increasingly financially self-sufficient.

The COC maintained its own organisational structure. It retained a membership base from which it could draw support, including financial support from membership fees. The COC operated several cafés, which also generated income for the organisation. As an independent organisation the COC could request subsidies from funders other than VWS and was able to obtain subsidies from a number of organisations, ranging from the AIDS Foundation<sup>27</sup> (National Board COC, 1994) to the European Commission (TK 2000–2001). The organisational form of the cluster had less of a negative impact on the COC’s advocacy than the two rounds of budget cuts. As an independent organisation the COC could, however, compensate for those financial losses by looking to other donors to provide subsidies and relying on the funds generated through its own organisational structure.

### Whittling away at the national machinery for the advancement of women

Based on the findings of *Tailor-Made Advice*, the government decided that the ER would only operate for one more term and would dissolve as of May 1997 (TK 1993–1994). Celis et al. concluded that, ‘With the disappearance of the ER, the women’s movement thus lost a major channel for influence’ (2012, p. 123). A focus was placed on the ability of organisations (partially) subsidised by the government to function as expertise centres that could be consulted by policymakers but would have no official role in policy advising (TK 1993–1994, 1997–1998).

In the wake of the dissolution of the ER, the Tijdelijke Expertise Commissie Emancipatie in het Nieuwe Adviesstelsel (Temporary Expert Commission Emancipation in the New Advisory System, TECENA) was installed by the government from 1998–2000 to promote gender mainstreaming in the remaining advisory

<sup>26</sup> The Kok II Cabinet governed from 3 August 1998 to 21 July 2002.

<sup>27</sup> Aidsfonds.



bodies (SZW 1997). After 2000 there remained a partially state-subsidised women's archive, the International Information Centre and Archive of the Women's Movement (IIAV<sup>28</sup>) (TK 1997–1998, 2003–2004), and an expertise centre without the status of an advisory body, E-quality (Oldersma 2005). Those organisations were later forced to merge due to a lack of subsidies.

The ER's formal legal status made it vulnerable to the legal change brought about by the *Desert Law*, which resulted in the dissolution of the ER. A temporary replacement of the ER to facilitate gender mainstreaming, TECENA, ceased to exist in 2000. An archive and an expertise centre remained, but government actors were not required to consult those organisations. DCE survived as an organisation but was not intended to function as a corporatist bridge between civil society and the government.

### **Discussion: a low level of formalisation and manoeuvrability**

Dutch corporatism changed in four ways during the 1990s. First, corporatist interest representation was distinguished and separated from providing policy expertise. Second, the voices of different incorporated organisations in each policy arena were, as much as possible, consolidated into one voice. Third, austerity measures were introduced, subsidies were decreased or withdrawn, and financial independence was increasingly required of previously subsidised organisations. Last, the legal basis for most advisory bodies was removed. Those four changes did not, however, affect the incorporated organised interests of women and gays/lesbians in the same way.

Successive Dutch governments thought they had protected women's involvement in policy processes by highly formalising a national machinery for the advancement of women, but high formalisation could not prevent the decay of the corporatist channel for women in the 1990s. In contrast, the Lubbers I Cabinet thought it could keep the policy influence of gay/lesbian organised interests to a minimum by incorporating the COC in a less formal way, but the COC managed to maintain its participation in policy processes during the 1990s and expand such participation throughout the 2000s. Both outcomes are a result of the respective levels of formalisation of corporatist arrangements, as the levels of formalisation affected the types of resources incorporated organisations could generate.

As a result of their high level of formalisation, organisations that comprised the national machinery for the advancement of women were dependent upon top-down resources on each of the three scales of resources. First, the organisations were formed by government actors for the primary purpose of engaging in policy processes, and they did not officially pursue a broader political agenda. Second, they were populated by individuals appointed by government actors, although several members of the EK were also members of MVM. Third, their financing was comprised exclusively of government funds.

<sup>28</sup> Internationaal Informatiecentrum en Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging.



Due to the high level of formalisation and resulting dependence on top-down resources, the national machinery for the advancement of women was affected by all four changes in Dutch corporatism that occurred during the 1990s. As those organisations were formed by the government, they could not rely on an independent organisational structure, membership, or external finances when their legal mandate was removed and their funding was cut. The consolidation of women's voices was achieved in part by the government's dissolution of many organisations, and those organisations that remained had little funds and were focused on producing expertise that Dutch ministers were no longer required to consult. When the legal mandate and resources were withdrawn from the national machinery for the advancement of women in the 1990s, most of its organisations disappeared, and there was little infrastructure left from the women's movement to replace it.

In contrast, the COC's incorporation occurred through the establishment of exchange relations with several ministries that were formalised through regulations on the receipt of structural and project-based subsidies instead of legal mandate. As a result of its lower level of formalisation, the COC could generate both bottom-up resources and top-down resources. Regarding the first scale of resources, the COC was formed by civil society actors, existed as an organisation long before its incorporation, and pursued a broader agenda than government policy goals alone. Second, the COC was populated primarily by volunteers who determined the course of the organisation. Third, the financial resources the COC received from government actors were an addition to the bottom-up resources the COC generated independently from the government.

The COC was affected by only two of the four changes in Dutch corporatism in the 1990s: the decrease in subsidies and the consolidation of voices. The COC was not affected by the exclusion of representation from corporatist arrangements, as it was able to position itself as an expert on gay/lesbian issues. Additionally, a legally installed gay/lesbian advisory body never existed in the Netherlands, and the COC was, as such, unaffected by the change that removed the legal basis for most advisory bodies.

The decrease in subsidy negatively affected the COC, but it could compensate for that loss by generating more bottom-up resources through its independent organisational structure. It relied on its membership base and found subsidies from sources other than the Dutch government. The COC was affected by its participation in the homocluster, but the homocluster ultimately served to strengthen its monopolistic position within the gay/lesbian advocacy field. When the homocluster was dissolved, the COC was the only organisation that had been a member of the homocluster to maintain its subsidy relationship with the ministry.

When the structure of corporatism changed, the corporatist channel of influence for women's organised interests in the Netherlands 'decayed' and closed (Outshoorn and Oldersma 2007; Celis et al. 2012). When faced with the changes in corporatism, the COC could fall back on its bottom-up resources, resources generated external to the government, and broader social movement repertoire. The COC maintained its inclusion in policy processes and participated in the formulation of *Homo-emancipatiebeleid* [*Gay Emancipation Policy*], which was introduced in 2000 (TK 1999–2000).



## **Conclusion: combining top-down and bottom-up resources to maintain corporatist inclusion**

One emancipation interest was able to manoeuvre changes in corporatism to successfully maintain its inclusion in corporatist policy networks while the other became excluded from corporatist arrangements. This article examined why changes in corporatism affected the different emancipation interests differently. The difference is explained by the emancipation interests' different levels of formalisation of their corporatist arrangements. The organisation with a low level of formalisation of corporatist arrangements could manoeuvre changes in corporatism to successfully maintain its inclusion in corporatist policy networks, because a low level of formalisation enabled the incorporated organisation to combine top-down and bottom-up resources. The organisation with a high level of formalisation of corporatist arrangements could only draw from top-down resources and could not fall back on bottom-up resources when top-down resources were withdrawn.

Some level of formalisation is necessary for organised interests within corporatism to access top-down resources from government, such as policy resources and financial resources. If an organisation's corporatist arrangements become so highly formalised that it can only generate top-down resources, however, it will be ill-equipped to manoeuvre changes in corporatism. By being able to draw from both top-down and bottom-up resources, an incorporated organisation can oscillate between relying on resources received from the government and resources it can independently generate and, in doing so, manoeuvre changes in corporatism to successfully maintain its inclusion in corporatist policy networks.

Changes in corporatism have not resulted in the end of the political accommodation of emancipation interests, but the accommodation of political minorities is, in most cases, no longer required by law. Dutch corporatism has changed to become overall less formally structured, making it is even more important for incorporated organisations to combine top-down and bottom-up resources to successfully maintain their corporatist arrangements. The cases compared were specific to Dutch corporatism, but the findings suggest that emancipation interests in other corporatist contexts increase their chances of successfully maintaining corporatist arrangements if they draw from top-down resources when possible while protecting their ability to generate bottom-up resources.

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