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# Interest group framing in Denmark and the UK: Membership representation or public appeal?

Anne Skorkjær Binderkrantz

## **Abstract**

Appearing in the news media is crucial for interest groups. When making a media presence, groups carefully frame their messages to push political processes in their preferred direction and to maintain organisational support. This article provides the first cross-country comparison of the frames used by interest groups appearing in the news media. The article addresses the extent to which groups portray their demands as intended to further the interests of group members or other societal groups or to appeal to benefits to the economy or to the public at large. The analysis uses a dataset registering interest group appearances in the news media in Denmark and the UK. It includes 1,958 group appearances in two major UK newspapers and 3,284 appearances in two comparable Danish newspapers. Differences in frame use are demonstrated across the two countries; between different policy areas as well as between different types of interest groups.

Keywords: Framing, interest groups, news media, public interest

## Introduction<sup>i</sup>

The economic recovery of the UK would be impeded by a regulatory overhaul of the banking sector. This was the argument of the British Bankers' Association when they condemned the so-called 'banker bashing' in the aftermaths of the financial crisis. Rather than emphasising the detrimental consequences of regulation for their own members, the group sought to enlarge the issue by pointing to the effects on the national economy. Similarly, Danish school teachers fighting a proposed rise in the number of class hours taught per teacher argued that this would adversely affect the quality of children's education. Again, the group chose to frame its concerns not by referring to the teachers represented by the group but by referring to the benefits for children and the greater society.

As emphasised by Schattschneider (1975 [1969]: 27): '*A public discussion must be carried on in public terms*', and interest groups face incentives to point beyond their own membership when participating in public debates. At the same time, the groups represent constituencies, such as professions, industries, or individuals, and their political leverage is also related to their direct representation of their membership. Furthermore, group members will oftentimes expect their group to pursue membership interests in a direct way, and this 'logic of membership' may draw groups towards pointing to the effect of policies for their members (Berkhout 2013). The civilising effect of publicity when groups frame their concerns in public debates may therefore be counteracted by the internal group game based on representing members (Naurin 2007: 147).

This article investigates how interest groups frame their policy views in the news media: do they speak about the interests of their members, point to consequences for other societal groups, or appeal to broad societal concerns, such as the national economy? Frames can be seen

as strategic weapons used by interest groups to present their political views in the way that is most beneficial for realising group goals (Bruycker 2017: 6). Several studies have thus confirmed that the framing of policy questions not only structures political debates but also affects public opinion and may eventually lead to policy change (Baumgartner et al. 2008; Jerit, 2008; Klüver et al. 2015: 482). In addition, recent studies have found interest group framing and argumentation to affect their success (Dür, 2018; Junk & Rasmussen, 2018). While framing is a multifaceted concept, this study draws on previous analyses of interest group framing by focusing on one particular aspect – references to members, other groups or broad interests – of how interest groups present their arguments (Börang and Naurin 2015; Klüver et al. 2015).

There is a lack of large-scale studies of interest group framing in public policy debates at the national level and across different political arenas (for exceptions see: Baumgartner et al. 2009; Junk and Rasmussen 2018). This study contributes to closing this gap by focusing on policy debates in the news media in the UK and Denmark. The media is an important arena for interest groups trying to affect the public debate and policy makers (Bernhagen & Trani 2012; Binderkrantz 2012; Binderkrantz et al. 2017; Bruycker & Beyers 2015). The present article provides the first study of this crucial aspect of group framing across different national settings. By analysing variation across different group types and contexts, it enhances the understanding of the factors that lead groups to frame and legitimise their policy views in specific ways.

Specifically, the article asks: *Which factors affect the framing references – to group members, other societal groups, or broader interests – that interest groups use in the news media?* Three sets of factors are argued to affect the framing references used by groups. First, country-level factors with groups operating in corporatist countries more likely to legitimate their claims with references to group members, and groups in pluralist countries more prone to make

broad public appeals. Second, differences in the type of interests represented by groups are likely to lead to variation in the extent to which groups frame their statements in respect to member interests or more public concerns (Klüver et al. 2015: 485–86). Third, the policy area in question may affect framing because collective issue definitions vary across policy areas and may constrain the framing of individual groups (Baumgartner & Mahoney 2008). These expectations are tested in an analysis of Denmark and the UK. The UK is an example of a pluralist country, while Denmark is traditionally characterised as a corporatist country (Siaroff 1999). This choice of countries therefore allows an investigation of possible differences as well as similarities across these settings.

### **Interest group framing: definition and classification**

A so-called argumentative turn has been identified within social science research as scholars emphasise the importance of frames for understanding how individuals and collective entities perceive political issues (Bruycker 2017: 2; Dimitrova & Strömbäck 2012; Aaroe 2011). In the political science literature, Entman's definition of frames constitutes a broadly accepted point of departure:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (Entman 1993: 52).

Policy actors frame by selecting and highlighting some features of a reality and thus simultaneously call attention to particular aspects of an issue and direct attention away from other aspects (Boräng et al. 2014: 190; Entman 1993: 54). While a frame does not necessarily include all the functions included in Entman's definition, it is noticeable that frames tend to

make causal claims. By defining problems and identifying remedies for their solution, they present claims about reality and the relations between policy problems and solutions (Entman 1993: 52). When a group of school teachers point out that deteriorating the work conditions for teachers will affect the quality of the children's education, they define the problem as related to school quality rather than to the work situation of the teachers.

Frames can be seen as strategic weapons as they may help generate favourable opinions about the preferred policy alternative of an advocate. The strength of framing is thus that elite actors can emphasise the considerations that work to their advantage (Bruycker 2017: 6; Jerit 2008). These may relate to influencing a particular policy decision that is being debated or affecting the way an issue is collectively defined, which might in time turn into policy change. Within the interest group field, this is crucial because the groups target their use of influence strategies and their communication to optimise the likelihood of achieving group goals (Binderkrantz & Krøyer 2012).

Baumgartner and Mahoney (2008) distinguish between two faces of framing. Frames may be analysed at the individual level with a focus on the frames used by political actors, such as interest groups. They may also be studied at the aggregate level with a focus on how an issue is defined in collective policy debates. While the focus here is on the individual level, the aggregate level is relevant because the way a debate is collectively framed may constrain the room that individual advocates have for framing their messages (Baumgartner & Mahoney 2008: 441). Some interest groups may thus have less leeway in their use of frames; for example because different societal groups are viewed more or less positively in public debates.

A division between issue-specific and generic frames has been proposed for classifying frames (Bruycker 2017: 3-4). Studies of generic framing – such as the nature of interests

emphasised – allow for analysis across multiple interest groups, policy issues, and institutional settings. The framework proposed here captures the extent to which groups appeal beyond their own membership. In his seminal book, Schattschneider (1975 [1969]) argued that affecting the scope of conflict is a crucial element of interest group strategy. More recently, Rommetvedt has argued that increased ‘generalisation of politics’ characterises interest group communication in corporatist countries. Central to this thesis is that organised interests seek to enhance their legitimacy by pointing to the benefits for other groups as well as to more general interests (Rommetvedt 2002: 17; Rommetvedt 2005).

The analytical framework draws on Boräng and Naurin (2015) by distinguishing between: 1) member-regarding frames, where groups point to the benefits or costs of their own membership, 2) other-regarding frames, emphasising effects for other specific societal groups, 3) economy-regarding frames focusing on broad economic consequences of policy, and 4) public-regarding frames, where general societal consequences are addressed. Central to this is whether there is a link between group communication and group membership or another clearly identifiable societal group. The last two categories both relate to the public good but distinguish between references to the economy, which may, for example, be used heavily by business groups and references to public interests of a more idealistic character.

### **Factors affecting frame use: country context, group type, and policy area**

This section discusses the factors that may affect group framing in the news media. The premise is that frames are purposeful actions within the boundaries of contextual settings (Eising et al., 2015: 521). The participation of groups in public policy debates is mainly mediated by the news media. While others have focused on the overall framing of news stories utilising a ‘frame

building perspective' (Hängglic and Kriesi 2010: 142), the interest here is on the frames used by interest groups themselves when their viewpoints are quoted or referred to in news stories. Still, reporters play a crucial role in picking news sources and selecting quotes to include in their stories. Reporters are thus gatekeepers for any interest group access to the news media (Binderkrantz and Pedersen 2017).

Media studies have pointed to the importance of news values. For example, stories that appeal broadly, contain an element of conflict, or have a personal angle are more likely to become news (Galtung & Ruge 1965). In addition to the direct effect of journalistic norms and practices as reporters choose which sources and viewpoints to include in their stories, there is likely to be an indirect effect as groups seek to maximise their media access by carefully framing their messages. This may turn out differently depending on the group type in question, but in general terms, the groups may be expected to emphasise broad societal consequences to a higher degree when targeting the media than other political arenas (Binderkrantz et al. 2017).

### ***Interest group framing in corporatist versus pluralist settings***

Among Western European countries, much variation can be found in the nature and level of integration of interest groups into public decision-making. Typologies of state-society relations often contrast corporatist and pluralist systems (Schmitter 1974) although corporatist countries may have become increasingly pluralised (Binderkrantz & Christiansen 2015). In pluralist systems, the relation between interest groups and decision-makers is characterised by a relatively wide range of actors competing for political access and influence. Corporatist countries have institutionalised the interaction between groups and state actors to a higher degree by providing key groups with regular access to public decision-making processes (Eising 2008: 1170).

These different systems of state-group interaction may also affect interest group framing. In corporatist systems, interest groups are representatives of particular societal groups, and they are expected to advance the views of these groups. Therefore, the basic logic of corporatism is that the representatives of different interests are incorporated in public policy-making and political decisions made by concertation of interests (Lijphart & Markus 1991; Schmitter 1974). While groups may frame their demands in general terms even in a corporatist setting, the expectation is that groups will primarily focus on the consequences of policy for their membership.

In pluralist countries, the interest group system is less structured, and different groups compete to represent the same societal subgroups. The number of relevant participants in political processes is often high, and power less concentrated than in corporatist settings. Interest groups operating in pluralist countries can therefore not expect to be involved in public policy-making based on a representative monopoly but need to argue convincingly that their viewpoints are worth supporting (Rommetvedt 2005: 757). In this setting, it is expected that groups will be more likely to make general appeals and point to broad societal benefits rather than to the self-interests of their membership.

The differences in state-society relations are closely associated with different types of media systems. Pluralist countries are thus typically characterised by liberal media systems with a relatively high degree of commercialisation, high journalistic professionalism, and a moderate level of political parallelism. The democratic corporatist media model – characteristic of corporatist countries – is, on the other hand, related to higher levels of political parallelism and a tradition of more state intervention in the media (Binderkrantz et al. 2017: 6; Hallin & Mancini 2004). These differences reinforce expectations: groups operating in democratic corporatist

media systems with relatively high levels of parallelism will be more likely to represent their membership interests directly as these are constitutive for the political parallelism in the system.

The expectation is therefore as follows:

*H1a: Interest groups in corporatist countries will use member-regarding frames more often.*

*H1b: Interest groups in pluralist countries will use other-, economy-, and public-regarding frames more often.*

### ***The linkage between group type and framing***

At the most basic level, interest group behaviour may be understood as balancing a ‘logic of influence’ and a ‘logic of membership’ (Berkhout 2013). Groups choose their actions not only to maximise their political impact but also to survive as organisations, and as argued by Klüver et al. (2015), frame choice can be seen as a function of how these dual logics work for different types of groups. A crucial distinction is between sectional groups that represent a specific segment of society and cause – or public interest – groups appealing to anyone who supports group goals (Klüver et al. 2015: 485). For sectional groups, it is relatively straightforward to identify potential members, such as chemical corporations or workers in a specific sector. In contrast, membership of a typical public interest group is not restricted, and these groups need to raise awareness among potential supporters (Binderkrantz et al. 2017; Klüver et al. 2015).

Klüver et al. (2015) argue that: ‘As cause groups constantly suffer from collective action problems to gain new members and ensure the flow of resources, their frame choice will reflect the public goods for which cause groups are fighting’ (Klüver et al. 2015: 485). In effect, these groups are expected to have less flexibility in their frame use, and predominantly use public-regarding frames. Sectional groups will rely more on economic frames, but they will also have

more flexibility in their frame choice (Klüver et al. 2015: 486). Findings from this and other studies demonstrate differences between group types. Boräng and Naurin, for example, find that business groups predominantly use self-regarding frames, whereas civil society groups use ideal-regarding frames to a larger extent (Boräng & Naurin 2015: 508-9).

The use of frames is not only a strategic choice, it is also constrained by the interests represented by the groups. This is why Bruycker (2017) recommends not to focus on the so-called emphasis frames. He argues that: ‘farmers voice an “agricultural” frame and environmental groups an “environmental” frame, not because of strategic purposes, but because of the interests they represent’ (Bruycker 2017: 9). Still, there is ample room for variation in group framing. A farmers’ group may use environmental frames to strengthen their message, and an environmental group may argue that environmental benefits do not come at the expense of the business opportunities of farmers. Although the use of member-regarding frames is less relevant for public interest groups for whom membership representation is not the underlying logic, there is thus still room for variation.

Groups may also face limits to the frames they can credibly adopt. Depending on, for example, the type of interests that the groups represent, the macro-frames in political debates, and the general image of the group, some groups may find it very difficult to adopt public-regarding frames. While associations of tobacco companies may fantasise about framing tobacco as a harmless product, this would hardly go down well with the general public or the decision-makers. From this perspective, sectional groups face more constraints than cause groups because the audience may view their communication as little more than a fig-leaf for the special interests represented by groups.

Based on these arguments, variation is expected in the frames used by different group types. Economic groups and other sectional groups – representing specific groups not associated with the labour market or societal production – are expected to focus more on their members, whereas public interest groups are expected to use other- and public-regarding frames more:

*H2a: Economic groups and other sectional groups will use member-regarding frames more often.*

*H2b: Public interest groups will use other- and public-regarding frames more often.*

### ***The effect of the policy context***

In general, interest groups are expected to adjust their activities to the context and audience in question (Binderkrantz et al. 2015). In addition to the importance of the media logics discussed above, the issue context may also affect frame use. More specifically, the collective issue definition – framing – is expected to affect frame use by individual advocates.

While our insights into the relation between framing at the aggregate level and the framing efforts of individual actors is limited (Baumgartner & Mahoney 2008), the overall framing of policies clearly acts as a constraint on the frame use by interest groups operating in different areas. The collective issue definitions vary across policy areas and even across specific policy issues. Here, drawing on Wilson's (1980) work, business regulation, general regulation, and public service production can be contrasted. In the first class of policy areas, the focus is mainly on *regulating the business sector*. These areas are likely to attract much emphasis on the concentrated costs for businesses often associated with regulation. *General regulation* concerns issues of broad societal relevance, such as immigration, income taxes, or justice. Here, costs and benefits are often diffuse, and the debate is likely to contrast different conceptions of the public

good. Last, *public sector production* accrues benefits to specific groups while the costs are borne by the public at large. Here, emphasis on frames pointing to the benefits for specific groups other than members can be expected.

Crucially, the role of the policy area is expected to go beyond the differences between the group types hypothesised above. Economic groups are for example generally expected to frame their policy concerns with references to their membership, but this will be particularly prominent when they operate in policy areas related to business regulation. On the other hand, they are more likely to appeal to broader consequences when participating in debates about general regulation where debates are often phrased in general terms. In this sense, the collective issue definition is expected to reinforce the frame differences associated with group type logics:

*H3a: In policy areas characterised as business regulation, member-regarding frames are likely to dominate.*

*H3b: In policy areas characterised as general regulation, economy- and public-regarding frames are likely to dominate.*

*H3c: In policy areas characterised as public sector production, other-regarding frames are likely to dominate.*

## **Research design**

The analysis draws on coding of news stories in the UK and Denmark – two countries with very different traditions for the integration of groups into public policy-making as well as different media systems. While the UK is classified as a pluralist system, Denmark has traditionally been regarded among the most corporatist countries in Western Europe (Siaroff 1999). Corporatist institutions have been under pressure in recent decades, but the Danish system is still characterised by significant institutional integration of privileged groups; for example in public

boards and committees (Binderkrantz & Christiansen 2015). In addition, the two countries differ in their media systems. The UK can be characterised as a liberal media system with a relatively high degree of commercialisation, high journalistic professionalism, and a moderate level of political parallelism. Denmark exemplifies the democratic corporatist model with higher levels of political parallelism and a tradition of more state intervention in the media (Binderkrantz et al. 2017: 6; Hallin & Mancini 2004).

While the comparison of Denmark and the UK is well suited to testing the overall expectation about country differences, it is not suited to arriving at definite conclusions about the specific cause of differences in framing. Notably, Denmark and the UK also differ in other respects; for example in their electoral system and party system. As noted by Lijphart and Crepaz, corporatism is thus systematically linked with other democratic institutions and processes (Lijphart and Crepaz 1991: 245-46). On the other hand, with respect to the differences across group types and policy areas, the research design has more leverage because these expectations are tested across two different countries. Therefore, if similar patterns are found, there is reason to expect that these are generalisable to a wider range of Western European democracies.

Previous research has found variation in interest group coverage across newspapers of different political leaning (Binderkrantz et al. 2017), and the study therefore includes two newspapers in each country: a right-leaning and a left-leaning. Specifically, for the UK, The Daily Telegraph and The Guardian are analysed, and for Denmark, it is Jyllands-Posten and Politiken. To identify the interest groups, all articles in the first section and the business section were read, and the articles mentioning interest group sources were recorded. Articles that were clearly non-political were left out of the analysis. The coding periods were chosen to include a

full year in which no parliamentary election took place. In this period, all front pages and half of all the editions from the four newspapers were coded. For Denmark the period covers 2009–10 while the period for the UK covers 2010–11. Different issues may potentially dominate the news in these two years. There is, however, much variety in the set of policy areas covered in the data, and no single area accounts for more than seventeen percent of the media appearances.

### ***Dependent variable***

In contrast to much work in media research, the focus here is not on the framing of the news story as such but on the specific arguments made by groups appearing in the news items. The analysis draws on manual content coding of the parts of the news stories quoting or referring to group views. All interest group appearances were scrutinised, and if a framing could be identified, this was given one of the codes below:

- 1) Frames referring to the interests of group members (member-regarding).
- 2) Frames referring to the interests of other specific groups in society (other-regarding).
- 3) Frames referring to the economy at large (economy-regarding).
- 4) Frames referring to other public interests (public-regarding).
- 5) Other types of frames.

As an example, the argument of a group of school teachers opposing cuts in the salary of teachers would thus be coded: 1) if focusing on the harm to teachers, 2) if arguing that school children would have poorer education because of the cuts, 3) if pointing to the negative consequences for the societal economy, and 4) if pointing out that the national culture would be harmed by placing less value on teachers.

Although the groups in principle may make references to multiple categories, in most instances only one of the different types of references was used. In cases where more than one reference was made, interest group statements were coded according to the most dominant frame. Overall, in fifteen percent of the cases, it was not possible to identify a frame, and in three percent of the cases, the identified frame was categorised as ‘other’ and omitted from the analysis. The analysis includes 1,958 group frames in the UK and 3,284 in Denmark. To test the reliability of the coding, two student coders coded the same 100 articles, resulting in a satisfying level of Krippendorffs Alpha (0.95).

### *Independent variables*

Besides country, a number of other independent variables are included in the analysis. For group types, we draw on the INTERARENA scheme for classifying interest groups and then collapse the groups into three general categories:

- 1) Economic groups: trade unions, business groups, institutional groups, and professional groups.
- 2) Sectional groups: identity groups and leisure groups.
- 3) Public interest groups.

The policy area of each news story was coded based on a coding scheme inspired by the policy agendas project, and the full set of policy areas was subsequently reduced to three main types of policy:

- 1) Business regulation: agriculture, labour market, environment, energy, and business and consumer regulation.

- 2) General regulation: macroeconomics, civil rights, immigration, justice, housing, foreign affairs, EU, local and regional politics, and other.
- 3) Public sector production: the state church, health, education, culture and sports, traffic, defence, and research.

The analysis also includes interaction between interest group type and country as well as between policy area and country.

### ***Methods***

The dependent variable has four different values, and the analysis is therefore conducted as a multinomial logistic regression. Because each individual interest group might appear several times in the material, standard errors are clustered with respect to groups. While the frame type ‘member-regarding’ is the base outcome in the main analysis, the online appendix reports the results of an analysis with a different base outcome.

### **Comparing interest group framing across groups and context**

How do groups frame their policy demands when appearing in the news media? Table 1 presents the results of a multivariate analysis testing the three hypotheses proposed. The model includes variables for country, group type, and policy area. In addition, interaction variables for country and group type as well as policy area, are included to confirm whether the findings are consistent across Denmark and the UK. As a further robustness check, the online appendix reports separate analyses for the two countries.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Figures 1, 2, and 3 present predicted probabilities based on the regression in Table 1. All figures include 0.95 percent confidence intervals. First, Figure 1 allows for comparison across the two countries for the three types of groups in order to test H1a and H1b. Consistent with expectations, Danish interest groups are more likely to appeal to their membership interests when appearing in the news media. This difference is particularly pronounced for sectional groups, but it is also noticeable that the predicted probability of this frame use is only 0.04 for the UK public interest groups but 0.14 for their Danish counterparts. For economic interest groups, Danish groups also have a higher predicted probability, but confidence intervals overlap.

#### FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

These differences are mirrored by the higher appeal to public interests in the UK. Economic groups and sectional groups are twice as likely to use this framing if appearing in the UK news media compared to the Danish. Public interest groups also appeal to the public interest more often in the UK, but here, the difference is less marked. In combination with the finding for membership appeals for economic groups, it appears that country differences are less pronounced with respect to the frames that correspond best with group type and more pronounced when groups seek to frame in other terms – as for example when groups representing economic interests seek to appeal to the general public.

The findings provide confirmation of H1a and H1b in regard to the use of member-regarding frames versus public-regarding frames. Country differences are, however, either non-present or non-consistent across group types when it comes to the other two frame types. The contrast between a logic of corporatism, where interest groups appear as representatives of specific societal groups, and a logic of pluralism, where groups use broad appeals, is therefore

partly confirmed by the analyses. Still, with data from only two countries, conclusions about the relation between interest group systems and news framing remain tentative.

Figure 2 is based on the same data as Figure 1 but allows for comparison between the three group types for each country to focus on H2a and H2b. The analyses clearly contrast the framing by economic groups and public interest groups. In both countries, economic groups appeal more to the interests of their members, and when looking for broader appeal, they point to the economy. Public interest groups are particularly likely to use public-regarding frames but also to frame their concerns in terms of the consequences for non-membership groups. These findings provide support for the group-based framing logic posited in H2a and H2b.

#### FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

The results with respect to sectional groups are less consistent across the two countries. Most notably, these groups have a comparatively low use of frames appealing to broad interest related to the economy as well as other public concerns. Sectional groups tend to frame in terms of group interests, with Danish groups focusing mostly on their own membership and UK groups appealing more to other groups. This difference possibly reflects differences in the underlying group system in the two countries. In the Danish context, many sectional groups have been established in response to the establishing of the welfare state, and group representation is typically about representing welfare users politically (Binderkrantz et al. 2016). In the UK, sectional groups are often partly political representatives of specific societal groups and partly engaged in providing services to own members or other societal groups.

Finally, Figure 3 shows how frame use differs across three types of policy areas – business regulation, general regulation, and public sector production. In correspondence with

H3a, member-regarding frames are clearly most prominent in news stories related to business regulation. These are – particularly in the UK – often contrasted with appeals to public interests, and business regulation can thus be seen as a field in which specific interests debate with representatives of broad, diffuse views.

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

On the other hand, when it comes to debates about public sector production, other-regarding frames are commonly used as expected in H3c. In Denmark, groups also tend to frame in terms of membership interests, whereas UK groups exhibit a more mixed use of different frames in these policy areas. Finally, expectations with respect to general regulation (H3b) are not confirmed. While there is some evidence for a high use of economy-related framing here, these policy debates exhibit the lowest use of public-regarding frames in contrast to what was expected. Also, other-regarding frames are commonly used in these areas.

Overall, the analysis provides much support to the expected relation between country context, issue context, group type, and frame use. Findings on the role of group type and policy area are robust across the two included countries, which exhibit large differences not only in interest group systems but also on many other related dimensions. Country differences in appeals to membership interests versus public interests are robust across the three group types in the analyses. While not all findings are exactly as hypothesised, there is ample support for the theoretical framework placing frame use in the context of both country characteristics, factors related to the policy area in question, and logics of group type.

## **Conclusion**

Interest groups and other policy actors carefully frame their messages in order to push political processes in their preferred direction. This article has presented the first systematic cross-country comparison of the type of frames used by interest groups appearing in the news media. In accordance with classic and recent literature, it focused on whether groups mainly point to the consequences for their own membership or try to generalise their concerns to other groups or to the public at large (Schattschneider 1975 [1969]; Boräng and Naurin 2015).

With respect to variation across group type, the results support previous findings where economic groups – such as business groups – rely more on member-regarding frames, and public interest groups rely more on public-regarding frames (Boräng & Naurin 2015; Klüver et al. 2015). Importantly, even within group types, variation in frame use is present. This indicates that frame use is not simply a function of the type of group – e.g. with public interest groups appealing solely to broad societal concerns – but also a strategic choice in which a group may adapt the framing according to the circumstances at play. This is also reflected in the variation of frame use across policy areas. Controlling for group type and country, debates regarding business regulations were thus found to be more dominated by member-regarding frames, whereas other issues – and in particular those related to public sector production – were more likely to be framed in terms of public benefits and concerns for other groups than the membership.

A notable finding is also the variation between Danish and UK groups. The groups operating in the Danish setting focused more on membership interests, whereas the UK groups used public-regarding frames more often. This indicates that the representational logics associated with corporatism and pluralism as well as the variation in media systems have

implications for the nature of public debates. While these differences are robust across different types of groups and policy areas, the causal logic behind cannot be confirmed by an aggregate analysis of frame use. Further studies could therefore provide more detailed analysis of the dynamics at play in specific policy debates. Also, this would allow more attention to the interaction between the policy context and the options that groups have for framing their messages.

An additional avenue of future research would be to systematically compare the frames used by interest groups when appearing in the media, approaching parliament, and talking to bureaucrats. Overall, there is reason to expect lobbyists to adjust their framing of political issues to the audience in question (Baumgartner & Mahoney 2008: 441). On the other hand, too large discrepancies will probably harm the image and effectiveness of the groups. In a survey of EU lobbyists, two-thirds of the respondents reported that they stick to the same framing regardless of the venue they approach, but a substantial share of groups did manipulate their argumentation depending on the target at hand (Baumgartner & Mahoney 2008: 437-8).

At a more general level, the analysis has illustrated how public debates are indeed not always carried out in purely public terms. More narrow concerns – references to members of groups – are also very prominent; especially when economic groups appear in the news media. This corresponds with previous findings that there is not necessarily a ‘civilising effect’ when debates are carried out in public fora (Naurin 2007: 144). Theoretically, the pattern of frame use may be seen as the result of how groups balance the ‘logic of influence’ and the ‘logic of membership’ (Berkhout 2013). It is notable how these concerns work in tandem in some instances. In the Danish corporatist setting, it appears that economic groups may legitimately point to the consequences for their own members when presenting their viewpoints. In other

situations, the groups need to balance competing pressures when choosing their arguments. These patterns, in turn, affect the role of interest groups in public debates and the degree to which the debate is shaped by references to public or private goods (Naurin 2007).

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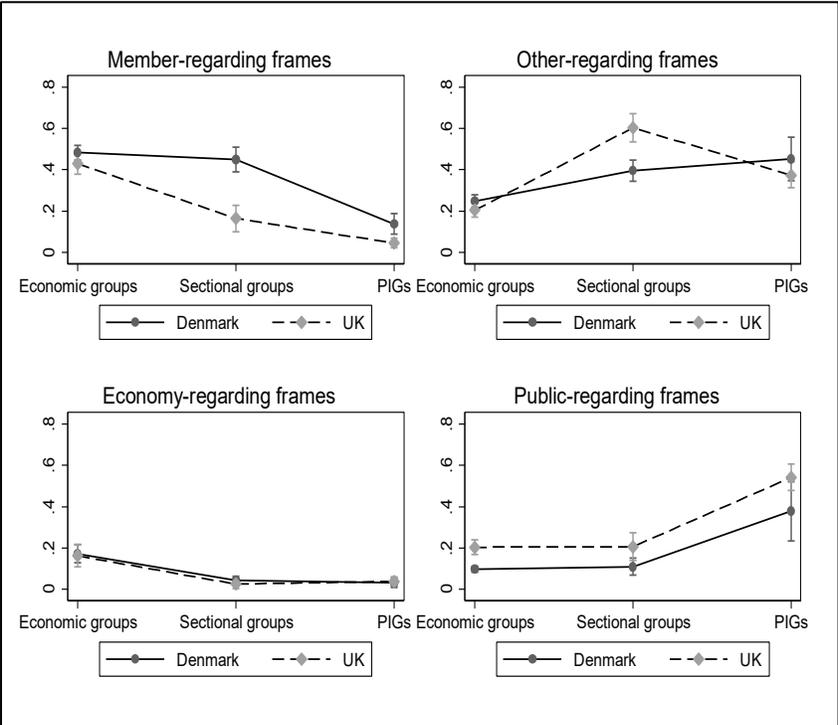
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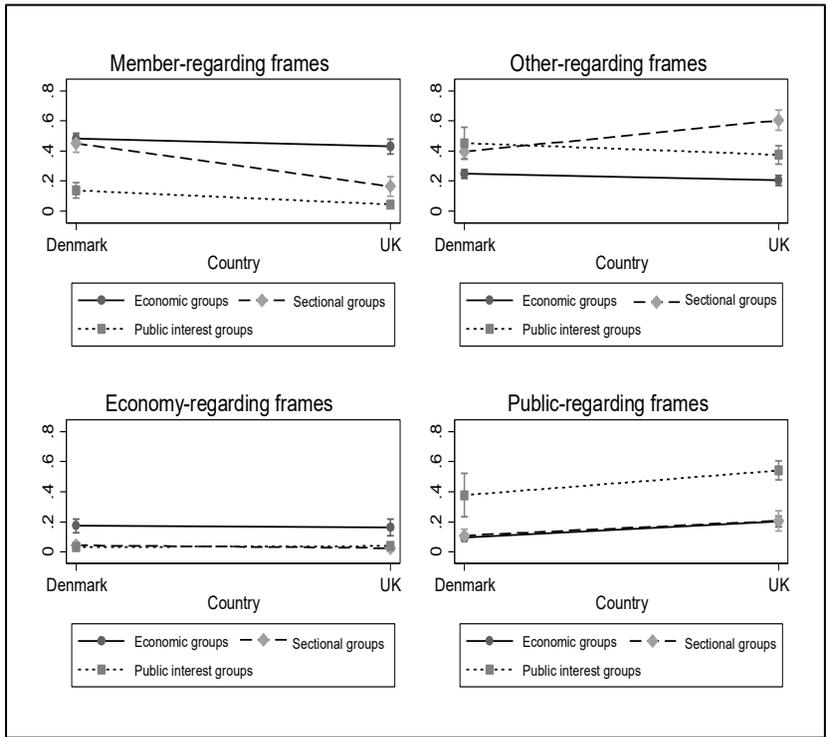
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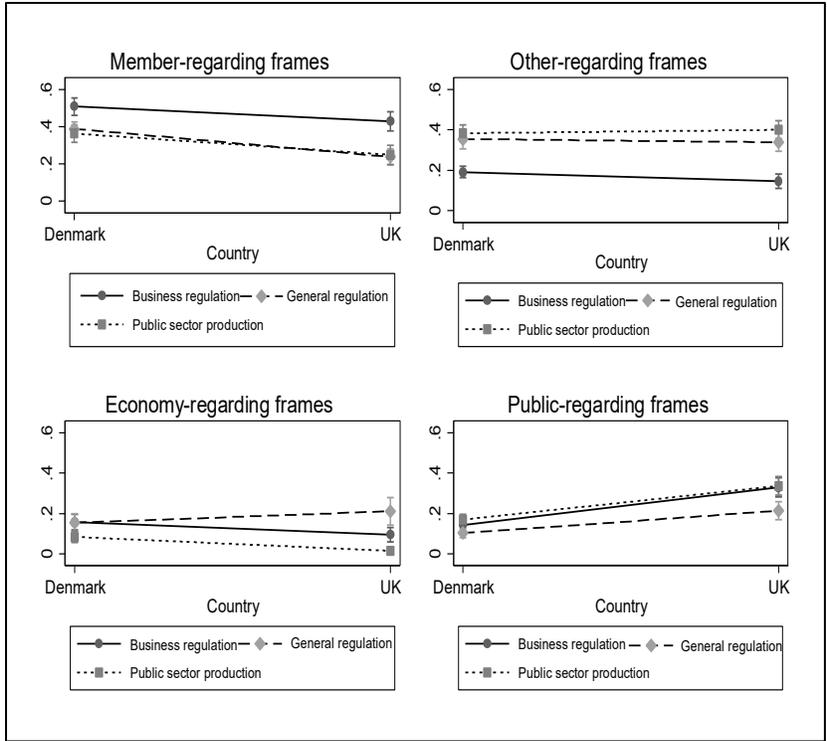
**Figures and tables**



**Figure 1.** Frame use across countries. Predicted probabilities with 0.95 percent confidence intervals, based on Table 1.



**Figure 2.** Frame use across group types. Predicted probabilities with 0.95 percent confidence intervals, based on Table 1.



**Figure 3.** Frame use across policy areas. Predicted probabilities with 0.95 percent confidence intervals, based on Table 1.

**Table 1.** The use of different frames, multinomial logistic regression.

			Coefficient (Robust standard errors)	$P > z$
Member-regarding			Ref.	
Other-regarding	Country	Denmark	Ref.	
		UK	-0.54 (0.21)	0.009
	Group type	Economic groups	Ref.	
		Sectional groups	0.23 (0.15)	0.120
		Public interest groups	1.90 (0.20)	0.000
		Sectional groups#UK	1.54 (0.31)	0.000
		Public interest groups#UK	1.13 (0.38)	0.003
	Policy area	Business regulation	Ref.	
		General regulation	0.83 (0.15)	0.000
		Public sector production	1.12 (0.13)	0.000
		General regulation#UK	0.40 (0.25)	0.110
		Public sector production#UK	0.57 (0.26)	0.029
		Constant	-1.22 (0.09)	0.000
	Economy-regarding	Country	Denmark	Ref.
UK			-0.41 (0.30)	0.174
Group type		Economic groups	Ref.	
		Sectional groups	-1.30 (0.30)	0.000
		Public interest groups	-0.49 (0.34)	0.156
		Sectional groups#UK	0.11 (0.65)	0.866
		Public interest groups#UK	1.11(0.59)	0.060
Policy area		Business regulation	Ref.	
		General regulation	0.32 (0.13)	0.013
		Public sector production	-0.14 (0.21)	0.492
		General regulation#UK	1.12 (0.26)	0.000
		Public sector production#UK	-1.08 (0.42)	0.010
		Constant	-1.11 (0.17)	0.000
Public-regarding		Country	Denmark	Ref.
	UK		0.69 (0.22)	0.002
	Group type	Economic groups	Ref.	
		Sectional groups	-0.04 (0.27)	0.887
		Public interest groups	2.73 (0.37)	0.000
		Sectional groups#UK	0.91 (0.43)	0.035
		Public interest groups#UK	0.67 (0.48)	0.160
	Policy area	Business regulation	Ref.	
		General regulation	-0.12 (0.23)	0.605
		Public sector production	0.81 (0.19)	0.000
		General regulation#UK	0.20 (0.32)	0.543
		Public sector production#UK	0.13 (0.29)	0.651
		Constant	-1.78 (0.15)	0.000

Note:  $N = 5,242$ ; pseudo  $R^2 = 0.12$ .

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Word count: 7,108.

**Appendix A1: The use of different frames, multinomial logistic regression (with different reference outcome)**

			Coefficient (Robust standard errors)	P>z
Public-regarding			Ref.	
Member-regarding	Country	Denmark	Ref.	
		UK	-0.69 (.22)	0.002
	Group type	Economic groups	Ref.	
		Sectional groups	0.04 (.27)	0.887
		Public interest groups	-2.73 (.37)	0.000
		Sectional groups#UK	-0.91 (.43)	0.035
		Public interest groups#UK	-0.67 (.48)	0.160
	Policy area	Business regulation	Ref.	
		General regulation	0.12 (.23)	0.605
		Public sector production	-0.81 (.20)	0.000
		General regulation#UK	-0.20 (.32)	0.543
		Public sector production#UK	-0.13 (.29)	0.651
	Constant	1.78 (.15)	0.000	
Other-regarding	Country	Denmark	Ref.	
		UK	-1.24(.26)	0.000
	Group type	Economic groups	Ref.	
		Sectional groups	0.27(.25)	0.283
		Public interest groups	-0.83(.34)	0.014
		Sectional groups#UK	0.63(.35)	0.076
		Public interest groups#UK	0.46(.39)	0.247
	Policy area	Business regulation	Ref.	
		General regulation	0.95(.24)	0.000
		Public sector production	0.31(.20)	0.114
		General regulation#UK	0.21(.33)	0.539
		Public sector production#UK	0.43(.29)	0.133
	Constant	0.56(.15)	0.000	
Economy-regarding	Country	Denmark	Ref.	
		UK	-1.10(.28)	0.000
	Group type	Economic groups	Ref.	
		Sectional groups	-1.26(.39)	0.001
		Public interest groups	-3.22(.56)	0.000
		Sectional groups#UK	-0.80(.73)	0.274
		Public interest groups#UK	0.44(.70)	0.525
	Policy area	Business regulation	Ref.	
		General regulation	0.44(.23)	0.059
		Public sector production	-0.96(.22)	0.000
		General regulation#UK	0.92(.36)	0.010
		Public sector production#UK	-1.22(.43)	0.005
	Constant	0.68(.17)	0.000	

**Appendix A2: The use of different frames, multinomial logistic regression (for each country)**

		UK		Denmark	
		Coefficient	Robust standard error	Coefficient	Robust standard error
Member regarding		Reference			
Other regarding	Economic groups	Reference			
	Other sectional groups	1.77***	0.27	0.23	0.15
	Public interest groups	3.03***	0.32	1.90***	0.20
	Business regulation	Reference			
	General regulation	1.24***	0.20	0.83***	0.15
	Public sector production	1.69***	0.22	1.12***	0.13
	Constant	-1.77***	0.19	-1.22***	0.09
Economy regarding	Economic groups	Reference			
	Other sectional groups	-1.19*	0.58	-1.30***	0.30
	Public interest groups	0.63	0.48	-0.49	0.34
	Business regulation	Reference			
	General regulation	1.44***	0.23	0.32*	0.13
	Public sector production	-1.23***	0.37	-0.14	0.21
	Constant	-1.52***	0.25	-1.11***	0.17
Public regarding	Economic groups	Reference			
	Other sectional groups	0.87**	0.34	-0.04	0.27
	Public interest groups	3.40***	0.31	2.73***	0.37
	Business regulation	Reference			
	General regulation	0.08	0.23	-0.12	0.23
	Public sector production	0.94***	0.22	0.81***	0.19
	Constant	-1.09***	0.17	-1.78***	0.15
	N, Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	1,958	0.16	3,284	0.08

Note: \*\*\*=0.001; \*\*=0.01, \*=0.05

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