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The Lobbying Success of Citizen and Economic Groups in Denmark and the UK

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Abstract

The political influence of interest groups manifests in different ways. Interest groups may affect which political problems attract attention as well as the political decisions aimed at solving these problems. Crucially, different types of groups may be successful in respect to these different dimensions of influence. Economic groups have been described as engaging more in “insider” politics affecting public policy decisions whereas citizen groups engage more in “outsider” politics affecting agenda setting. This study investigates the multidimensional character of interest group influence and links it to group type as well as lobbying strategies. The study is based on original survey data collected among Danish and British interest groups in 2011–2014. We find two related but distinct dimensions associated with agenda-setting and decision-making lobbying success. The analyses show that citizen and economic groups influence politics in different ways due to their choice of strategies and their different types of resources. Thus, group type has a direct as well as an indirect effect on lobbying success. This relationship is present in both pluralist UK and corporatist Denmark.

Keywords

Interest groups, lobbying strategies, lobbying success, Denmark, United Kingdom

Introduction

Who is influential? Ever since the first publications on interest groups, this question has been a main *raison d'être* of interest group studies (Schattschneider, 1974 [1935]; Truman, 1951). Influence may entail different things. This is perhaps nowhere more amply expressed than in the works of E. E. Schattschneider. Schattschneider understood that politics is both about setting the agenda and about affecting decisions. This is clear from his studies of interest groups impressing their views on decision-makers in the tariff negotiations of the late 1920s as well as from his emphasis on how the outcome of any political conflict depends on the mobilization of opposing forces (Schattschneider, 1974 [1935]; Schattschneider, 1975 [1969]).

In accordance with this multifaceted conception of influence, interest groups have multiple goals ranging from drawing public attention to their issues to affecting political decisions of importance to their membership or cause. The literature often contrasts the strategic priorities of economic groups and citizen groups. Economic groups have been characterized as focused on affecting policy decisions of relevance to their members and as being highly engaged in strategies targeting key decision-makers. Citizen groups have been described as more focused on raising public awareness and more prone to use media-directed strategies and membership mobilization (Beyers, 2004; Binderkrantz, 2008; Dür and Mateo, 2014; Grant, 1978; Halpin et al., 2012; Junk, 2015; Salisbury, 1984).

While recent studies have enhanced our understanding of the factors that affect whether groups obtain their lobbying goals, these studies have focused exclusively on a single aspect of influence most often related to affecting policy decisions (Binderkrantz and Rasmussen, 2015; Dür et al., 2015; Klüver, 2013; McKay, 2011; Tallberg et al., 2015). Therefore, this study provides the first large-scale empirical investigation of different types of lobbying success across different countries. This constitutes a crucial contribution because

sound empirical and normative conclusions about group success depend on a nuanced conceptualization of the concept. To investigate variation in lobbying success, the study disentangles the relation between group type, lobbying strategies, and different kinds of lobbying success. We are particularly interested in whether economic groups are generally more successful in affecting policy decisions, while citizen groups have an advantage when it comes to attracting public attention—and to what degree differences are a result of different strategic priorities.

We argue that group type matters for lobbying success *indirectly* through choice of lobbying strategies but also *directly* due to the nature of resources controlled by the groups. To test our expectations, we use original survey data collected among Danish and British interest groups. The UK and Denmark differ in relation to crucial political institutions, e.g., electoral system, party system, and institutions of state-society interactions. By including two such different national contexts, we are able to examine whether relationships between group type, lobbying strategy, and lobbying success are the same across these political systems. Hence, our study is the first to combine the three crucial sources of variation—interest profiles, lobbying strategies, and lobbying success—in a country-comparative study and hereby disentangle the relationship between them in a unified theoretical and methodological framework.

First, our study shows that lobbying success comes in two separate yet related forms. Agenda setting and decision-making constitute two theoretically and empirically separate dimensions of lobbying success. Second, economic groups and citizen groups experience different levels of success. This effect is partly mediated by the use of different kinds of influence strategies. These main findings are similar for the two countries. The implication is that the impact of group type on lobbying success is not only a consequence of financial

resources or strategic decisions. Different group types represent fundamentally different types of interests, and this affects their role in and impact on the political process.

Contrasting Economic Groups and Citizen Groups

Our theoretical model links group type, lobbying strategies, and lobbying success. We contrast *economic* and *citizen* groups – two broad group categories who vary according to membership diffuseness, structural position, and political resources. With this distinction, our study contributes to the broader discussion about how the interest group system channels different viewpoints into the political process (Berry, 1999; Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2012). Central to this is whether groups representing diffuse citizen interests are able to gain political voice and influence or whether groups organized around economic matters dominate the group system (Schlozman, Verba & Brady, 2012: 230).

Previous studies have argued that differences between economic groups and citizen groups in terms of membership diffuseness and group resources lead to different strategic priorities and options (Grant, 1978; Junk, 2015; Salisbury, 1984). These studies have shown that economic groups are more likely to use “insider strategies” contacting decision-makers directly, while citizen groups rely more on “outsider strategies” targeting the public (Beyers, 2004; Binderkrantz, 2008; Kriesi et al., 2007; Dür and Mateo, 2016). Others have found divergent patterns of group access to the political venues that are most crucial for agenda setting and decision-making (Binderkrantz et al., 2015; Dür and Mateo, 2014; Halpin et al., 2012). We build on this literature in developing our argument about the direct and indirect effect of group type on lobbying success.

Economic groups are groups organizing businesses, institutions, or individuals on issues related to public and private production. Prominent examples are trade unions and business groups. The constituencies of economic groups—such as IT-companies, universities,

or teachers—are relatively easy to identify and approach. This makes it less troublesome for the organization to secure survival, and these groups may therefore spend fewer resources on attracting members (Dunleavy, 1991). Economic groups further share a prominent structural position since they organize interests directly related to the public or private production of society (Rokkan, 1966). Given this position, these groups hold significant *insider resources* (Binderkrantz et al. 2015) as they have information about the preferences of economically significant constituencies and the technical circumstances in given industries. Additionally, via control of their members, they are able to influence the implementation of policies (Beyers, 2002; Binderkrantz, 2008; Dür and Mateo, 2016).

Citizen groups organize individuals based on their non-vocational interests, for example patients, senior citizens, the environment, and human rights. Compared to economic groups, citizen groups organize constituencies that are more diffuse and thus more difficult to locate and mobilize (Dunleavy, 1991). Although some groups—such as groups of patients—appeal to well-defined constituencies, these are still harder to locate and recruit than for example firms operating in a specific business sector or members of a specific profession. Citizen groups do not represent interests directly related to the economic productivity of the country and thus do not enjoy the same structural position as economic groups. However, citizen groups hold significant *outsider resources* (Binderkrantz et al. 2015) due to their representation of broadly appealing causes and constituencies. By representing some of the most vulnerable citizens and species, many citizen groups obtain legitimacy as champions of the public good (Binderkrantz, 2008; Dür and Mateo, 2016: 25; Junk, 2015: 6).

With this distinction, we join different types of interest groups into two broad categories. Other studies have contrasted business groups with all other group types or used more fine-grained classifications. Dür and Mateo (2016) for example split groups into four types: business associations, professional groups, trade unions, and citizen groups. Given our

emphasis on the importance of the structural position for groups' choice of lobbying strategy and ability to succeed, we place professional groups and trade unions in the category of economic groups alongside business groups. However, we acknowledge that business groups may be in a particular privileged position and that especially trade unions may face a somewhat different challenge than business associations in terms of mobilizing members (Bernhagen, 2012; Lindblom, 1977). A more fine-grained distinction could potentially capture such variation, but by contrasting citizen groups with economic groups, we capture the main variation in the structural position of groups and speak to the crucial debate about the ability of non-economic interests to gain political representation. While we conduct robustness analyses including more group categories, our main analysis therefore contrasts economic groups and citizen groups.

Lobbying Strategies and Success

Interest groups apply a wide range of tactics in their attempts to affect politics. Lobbying strategies are the overall approach groups adopt to influence politics, and they can be observed empirically as combinations of specific tactics (Berry, 1977: 212). A common distinction is between *inside lobbying*, where relevant decision-makers are contacted directly, and *outside lobbying*, where members or citizens are mobilized for action and the media approached to attract attention (Beyers, 2004; Grant, 1978). Within both overall types of lobbying strategies, we further distinguish between two arena-specific sub-dimensions: Inside lobbying may target either parliamentary actors or administrative actors; outside lobbying may be divided into a mobilization strategy and a media strategy (Binderkrantz, 2005; Tresch and Fischer, 2015). This more nuanced specification allows us to take the lobbying target into account when investigating the use and effects of lobbying strategies.

Lobbying success reflects whether groups attain their goals pursued in lobbying. Thus, it is more specific than the broad notion of group influence, which implies an assessment of the power held by different groups (Dahl, 1961). Here, we contrast *decision-making success* with *agenda-setting success* to reflect the idea that political influence comes in different forms (Lowery, 2013). Decision-making success most closely resembles the *first face of power* where focus is on issues that are already subject to political debate and on the groups' ability to affect the outcome of decisions related to these issues (Dahl, 1961; Lukes, 2004). From this perspective, a group is successful when it has managed to change proposed regulation or perhaps prevented adoption of unfavorable policies.

We define agenda-setting success as drawing attention to an issue. This type of success relates to the *second face of power* where influence is seen as shaping the contours of political debates (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962; Lukes, 2004; Schattschneider, 1975 [1969]). However, in contrast to how Bachrach and Baratz were concerned with the more narrow political agenda specifying the menu of potential decisions (Lowery, 2009: 9), we focus on success in drawing broader public and political attention towards the group or the cause of the group. This is crucial for organizational maintenance and constitutes an important element in shaping the contours of political debates and thus gaining policy concessions in the long run. Specifically, our focus is on whether groups are able to attract the attention of other relevant political actors, such as the news media, as well as affect public opinion.

Analytically, it is beneficial to distinguish between the two types of lobbying success. Empirically, it also makes sense that groups have multiple goals and thus multiple scales of success. However, in policy processes, the different types of success may be related (Junk, 2015: 4)¹. In the short run, groups may seek to affect public opinion and raise public awareness (Dür and Mateo, 2014; Kollman, 1998). However, in the long run, success in agenda setting may be crucial for the adoption of favorable political decisions (Baumgartner

and Jones, 1993; Schattschneider, 1975 [1969]). Still, we argue that while agenda setting and decision-making are related, they cannot be expected to be perfectly correlated. Increasing attention serves other purposes than influencing decisions, e.g., mobilizing members and maintaining the organization. Similarly, on some issues, influencing decisions is better achieved without raising attention.

Linking Interest Group Type, Lobbying Strategies, and Lobbying Success

Figure 1 outlines the expected relationship between group type, lobbying strategy, and lobbying success. The fundamental characteristics of interest groups are crucial to the way groups lobby, i.e., their choice of strategy, and to their lobbying success. In addition, we expect an interaction effect (indicated with a dotted line) with economic groups being more efficient in using insider-strategies and citizen groups more efficient in using outsider-strategies. Below, we will develop the specific hypotheses regarding these relationships.

FIGURE 1

We base our arguments on the assumption that interest groups are strategic actors with limited resources. Therefore, groups employ tactics carefully chosen to fit their resources and maximize the chances of achieving group goals (Binderkrantz, 2005; De Bruycker, 2015: 4). The balance between agenda setting and affecting decisions varies; some groups emphasize the ability to obtain policy concessions, and others emphasize the ability to attract public attention to their causes (Binderkrantz et al., 2015; Maloney et al., 1994).

Economic groups focus comparatively more on affecting policy decisions of immediate concern to their membership than on affecting the political agenda. To achieve this, they opt for insider lobbying strategies more often. Given their well-defined

constituencies, economic groups spend relatively fewer resources on outside lobbying to maintain the organization. This does not imply that economic groups refrain from using outside lobbying. Indeed, outside lobbying has generally become more crucial in response to increased mediatization of politics (Walker and Rea, 2014), and economic groups may also find themselves in situations of increased competition in which outside lobbying becomes crucial to retaining members (Hanegraff et al., 2016). Still, we expect that economic groups focus relatively more on inside lobbying and on obtaining decision-making success than citizen groups.

Citizen groups are relatively more concerned with agenda setting than with affecting policy decisions. Many citizen groups attract supporters among the public at large and therefore need visibility to survive as organizations (Dunleavy, 1991). Even for those groups who organize specific constituencies, such as patients or the elderly, it is often necessary to reach these potential members through media activity. Further, citizen groups often pursue broad causes that are not always directly linked to specific policies, for example raising awareness of a disease or a humanitarian cause. While citizen groups may obviously seek influence on bills or other decisions as well, we expect citizen groups to choose outside lobbying to a higher degree than economic groups and consequently be relatively more successful in calling attention to their cause. In effect, we expect the effect of group type on lobbying success to be *mediated* by strategy employment:

H1 *The mediated group effect hypothesis*: Economic groups are more successful with regard to decision-making because they use insider strategies, while citizen groups are more successful with regard to agenda setting because they use outsider strategies.

Group type is even more fundamental for the lobbying success of interest groups than just being consequential for lobbying strategies. Interest groups differ in their relative endowment with resources of relevance in order to achieve political goals. As discussed above, economic groups are well equipped with *insider resources* (Binderkrantz et al., 2015). These resources may push economic groups even more towards engagement in insider strategies, but they may also help groups achieve decision-making success independent of their own strategic efforts. In relation to affecting political decisions, the relevant actors—ministers, bureaucrats, or politicians—do not just sit around waiting for interest groups to notify them of potential shortcomings or political disapproval of a bill. These actors actively pursue input from groups they know hold valuable information or who could potentially influence the decision-making process at a later stage. When decision-makers decide whom to consult and include in policy deliberations, the insider resources held by economic groups are likely to be crucial. This advantage of groups representing economic interest in winning access to decision-makers has been documented in several studies (Binderkrantz and Christiansen, 2015; Bouwen, 2004; Chalmers, 2013; Eising, 2007). Therefore, we expect economic groups to be more successful in influencing decisions even after control for their lobbying strategies.

Citizen groups are likely to be strong in terms of *outsider resources*, which are relevant for gaining media attention (Binderkrantz et al., 2015). Citizen groups are able to appeal to central news values by emphasizing their work with vulnerable children, humanitarian disasters, or perhaps senior citizens (Galtung and Ruge, 1965). While the media also tend to pay attention to actors who are part of insider politics (Bennett, 1990; Thrall, 2006), we still expect the newsworthiness and outsider resources of citizen groups to help them gain reporters' attention even if they do not lobby directly to get such attention (Cook, 1998; Galtung and Ruge, 1965).

H2 *The direct group effect hypothesis:* Economic groups are more successful with regard to decision-making independently of their use of insider strategies, while citizen groups are more successful with regard to agenda setting independently of their use of outsider strategies.

In addition to the direct and indirect effect of group type on success, we expect interaction effects to be at play. We expect outsider strategies to be more effective in lobbying for attention when used by citizen groups. Likewise, we expect insider strategies to be more effective in lobbying to change decisions when used by economic groups. Due to differences in resources, we expect groups to get less value for money when they use strategies that are less compatible with their resource endowment. Since agenda-setting actors are expected to be more attentive to citizen groups, these groups will be more successful when using outsider strategies. They hold the relevant resources and are better equipped to make outsider strategies effective. Similarly, since economic groups possess relevant resources and benefit from the positive attention of decision-makers, they are more effective when using insider strategies.

H3 *The moderated group effect hypothesis:* The impact of insider strategies on decision-making success is larger for economic groups whereas the impact of outsider strategies on agenda-setting success is larger for citizen groups.

Research Design

We test our hypotheses using data on Danish and British interest groups. We have established a database of interest group populations in the two countries, including basic information

about the name and interests of the groups. These data are integrated with original surveys sent out to the identified groups.

Case selection

Our selection of Denmark and the UK is based on a most-different-system design to determine whether the relationship between group type, strategy, and success is similar within contexts that differ in patterns of state-society interaction. Differences in state-society interaction are often highlighted as important (Molina and Rhodes, 2002; Schmitter, 1974; Siaroff, 1999). A central distinction is between corporatist and pluralist patterns of interest group representation. Corporatism is characterized by privileged integration of—particularly economic—groups in the preparation and implementation of public policy (Öberg et al., 2011). In pluralist societies, groups operate more at a distance from the state and in more open competition to affect public policies (Baumgartner and Leech, 1998). The UK is among the most pluralist European countries; Denmark is considered relatively corporatist (Siaroff, 1999).

Despite the emphasis on country differences, our knowledge of how this affects interest group strategies and influence is scant. In recent years, a few studies have included multiple countries in analyses of group strategies. Dür and Mateo (2013: 668) focus mainly on general patterns of strategy use, but they also document minor differences in lobbying tactics across countries. Weiler and Brändli (2015) show that public interest groups are better integrated into the policy-making process in countries where direct democratic instruments are regularly used. When it comes to group influence, Mahoney (2007) finds cross-Atlantic differences in a comparison of lobbying success in the US and the EU, while others have

concluded that relations between group type, resources, and perceived influence are similar across different national contexts (Binderkrantz and Rasmussen, 2015).

The level of corporatism/pluralism co-varies with other institutional characteristics (Lijphart and Markus, 1991). For instance, the UK relies heavily on majoritarian political institutions, while Denmark is characterized by a proportional political system and a multiparty system (Huber and Powell, 1994). Comparing these two countries does not allow us to identify the potential mediating effects of each of these differences individually. Rather, we use this most-different-system design to investigate to what extent the relationship between group type, strategy, and success is the same within these two different contexts.

Identifying relevant and comparable interest group populations across countries is challenging. We restricted the study to associations, i.e., groups with members or supporters, and identified politically active groups in a wide range of sources: The UK: written and oral evidence to parliament, meetings with ministers, appearance in national newspapers (the Guardian and the Telegraph), and responses to selected government consultations. Denmark: letters to parliament, membership of government committees, appearance in national newspapers (*Politiken* and *Jyllands-Posten*), and responses to consultations on bills. All groups appearing at least once in any of these sources were included. We ended up with 1,835 active groups in UK and 884 active groups in Denmark. The difference in numbers is not surprising given the larger country size and pluralist system of the UK.

We conducted the surveys as web surveys with paper questionnaires mailed to groups who did not respond to the email request. In Denmark, the survey was conducted in 2011–12 and in the UK in 2013–14. The response rates were 26% for the UK and 69% for Denmark.² The lower response rate among British groups means that we need to be particularly cautious about the possibilities for generalizing to the broader set of UK groups.

Measures of group success

Identifying influence has been termed the holy grail of interest group studies (Leech, 2010), reflecting the importance of studying influence as well as the challenges associated with finding good measures of group success (Dür, 2008; Leech, 2010). Despite these challenges, recent studies have begun to tackle the issue of group influence empirically, and while each study may be criticized, the cumulated effect is a significantly enhanced insight in the factors shaping group influence (Baumgartner et al., 2009; Binderkrantz and Rasmussen, 2015; Klüver, 2009; Mahoney, 2009).

Here, we focus on self-assessed *lobbying success* as reported by the politically active groups included in the survey. Specifically, we asked the groups: “We would like you to indicate how often within the last year your organization’s work has led to various outcomes. Please indicate how often your organization’s work was significant in the following ways.” In accordance with our understanding of agenda-setting success as the successful attempt to draw political attention toward an issue, we designed four items to tap into this dimension, including changing the public opinion as well as making the media, political parties, or other interest groups take up an issue. In accordance with our understanding of decision-making success as the successful attempt to initiate or change political decisions, we designed five items to tap into decision-making success, including making government propose a bill, changing a bill in the ministry or in parliament, or changing orders or decisions in the administration. The response options were “very often,” “fairly often,” “occasionally,” or “never.”³ The specific wording of the item is included in the note to Figure 2.

The benefit of using self-assessed measures of lobbying success is that it enables large-scale investigations across multiple countries, groups, and issues. However, there are also risks associated with using these measures. First, groups may over- or underestimate

their own level of success for strategic reasons. Associations may have an incentive to exaggerate their success to stress the relevance of their work to members. They may also downplay their role in order to deter counteractive lobbying or to avoid exposing a privileged position (Dür, 2008). These concerns are more pressing in studies reporting the influence of specific groups than in survey-based studies where groups appear anonymously and questions are related to general patterns rather than specific issues. A subconscious tendency to overestimate the role of the groups' actions may also affect reported success. This is especially critical for studies of absolute levels of success. However, this tendency is less critical for comparisons of different aspects of success where we do not expect potentially biased evaluations to be systematically different across types of success.

Second, groups may not have reliable information about their success. Evaluating lobbying success is difficult for scholars and may also be complicated for policy participants (Pedersen, 2013). While this is a concern, a comparison of group estimates of different types of success is likely to be more valid than groups' evaluations of their absolute level of success. Third, survey measures of success may be inflated by the survey design. In this survey, groups are asked about their activities (lobbying strategies) as well as the outcome of their activities (lobbying success). Thus, respondents may be directed towards linking strategies and success, indicating for example that they often contact journalists and often manage to make the media take up an issue. Accordingly, strategies and success may be linked by design rather than by actual empirical correlation. First, we handled this risk by distancing the questions related to strategies and success in the survey outline. Second, we ensured that there was no direct match in the phrasing of questions (questions regarding success are provided in Figure 2, and questions regarding strategies are provided in Appendix A).

To validate the presence of two dimensions of perceived success, we perform a principal component factor analysis of the nine items designed to capture different aspects of success. We conduct the analyses on the full dataset as well as separately for each country to confirm equivalent data structures across the countries (Freitag and Bauer, 2013). A first element in testing whether the relations between group type, strategy use, and lobbying success are similar across countries is thus to establish empirically that the same measures can meaningfully be used. The response categories are on an ordinal scale, and the factor analyses are based on the matrix of polychoric correlations. The analyses support a two-dimensional structure showing the expected dimensions of agenda setting and decision-making. This is a crucial finding and important for the further analyses of this paper. Figure 2 displays the two-dimensional loading plot for the full dataset (after rotation of the factors).

FIGURE 2

Eigenvalues are higher than 1 for two factors (5.16 and 1.49 for the full dataset, 5.03 and 1.50 for Denmark, and 5.44 and 1.44 for the UK). The questions about agenda-setting success—being successful in persuading different actors to take up issues and affecting public opinion—load highest on one dimension, while items intended to tap decision-making success load highest on the other dimension. The items about making politicians and parties take up an issue also load relatively high on the first dimension, and the country analyses illustrate that this is more prevalent in the UK than in Denmark. Apart from this, factor loadings are very similar in the two country analyses.⁴ As expected, the two dimensions are related, but the correlation is not overwhelmingly strong ($r=0.51$). Hence, lobbying success does seem to come in two different yet related forms.

Based on this result, two scales of group success are constructed imputing missing data by means of index items if the group had less than two missing items. Combining this set of ordinal-scaled variables creates so many categories that we use the measures as interval-scaled variables in the following analyses. To facilitate comparisons across analyses using the two dependent variables, we rescale both indexes to range from zero to 100. Figure 3 shows the distribution of group scores on the two measures of group success.

FIGURE 3

Measures of group type and lobbying strategies

In line with previous studies (Binderkrantz, 2005; Dür and Mateo, 2013; Kriesi et al., 2007), measures of lobbying strategies are based on a list of activities that groups engage in to gain political success. We asked the groups: “How often within the past year has your organization performed these activities.” The response options were “very often,” “fairly often,” “occasionally,” or “never” (see Appendix A for a list of items and tactics conventionally considered part of insider strategies (e.g., contacting civil servants or MPs) and outsider strategies (e.g., organized demonstrations/happenings or sending out press releases)) (Beyers, 2004; Binderkrantz, 2005). Principal component factor analysis of the activities confirms the division into four distinct strategies: a mobilization strategy, a media strategy, a parliamentary strategy, and an administrative strategy. The analysis based on the full dataset results in Eigenvalues of 7.36, 2.07, 1.04, and 0.90, and separate analyses for each country illustrate that a four-dimensional solution provides the best measurement equivalence across countries.

In parallel with the success measures, missing data were imputed by means of remaining items, and the four indexes were recoded to range from zero to 100 to facilitate

interpretations of the relative effect of each of the strategies. All dimensions are positively correlated, demonstrating that groups do use multiple lobbying strategies. The most distinct dimensions are the mobilization strategy and the administrative strategy, which only correlate by 0.07. This confirms the previous findings that tactics associated with the mobilization strategy are hard to combine with insider access to bureaucratic decision-making (Binderkrantz, 2005; Tresch and Fischer, 2015).

All groups in the survey population have been categorized into group types following the INTERARENA coding scheme, including several subtypes of economic as well as citizen groups. The coding was based on information from websites describing main purpose and interests of groups. A research group member recoded a sample of 100 groups of each country population. We compared the sub-codes for these 100 groups and obtained satisfactory kappa scores of 0.91 for the Danish groups and 0.76 for the British groups. We ascribe the lower score for British groups to the pluralist system, which compared to the Danish corporatist system fosters groups with a greater variety of aims. However, distinguishing only between economic groups and citizen groups increases the reliability of the coding. Economic groups include trade unions, business associations, professional groups, and institutional groups (e.g., of hospitals, universities, or schools). Citizen groups include identity groups (e.g., groups of students, senior citizens, or women), public interest groups (e.g., environmental or humanitarian organizations), and leisure groups (e.g., sports or hobby organizations). Among the responding British interest groups, we find 210 citizen groups and 267 economic groups; in Denmark, the numbers are 239 and 371, respectively.⁵

Control variables: staff, engagement, and interest group system

We include two group-level control variables. First, policy engagement may affect the level of lobbying success. Some groups focus on one or a few closely related issues whereas others

have a broad policy engagement encompassing many different issue areas (Halpin and Binderkrantz, 2011). More broadly engaged groups may therefore have a higher level of success simply because their policy engagement opens for more opportunities to affect political decisions or agendas. The measure of policy engagement is based on a question about group activity in nineteen different policy areas (very = 3 points; somewhat = 2 points; a little = 1 point). These scores were added and recoded to range from zero to 100.

Second, groups with many resources are better able to monitor the political process and engage in relevant lobbying strategies. To measure resources, we include the number of full-time staff employed by the organization to work on politically relevant tasks such as monitoring politics as well as contacting civil servants, MPs, or journalists. The measure has been log-transformed and recoded on a scale from zero to 100.

Different interest group systems present different opportunities and challenges when groups seek political influence, and we therefore include a country dummy to control for the potential impact of groups lobbying in different political contexts. We also include the interaction between country and group type as well as material resources. Due to the corporative tradition of involving economic groups in institutionalized interaction with key decision-makers, these groups may be more successful in corporatist settings, and material resources may matter more in a pluralist system where group competition for influence is particularly fierce.⁶

Model specification

We use a seemingly unrelated regression model. This allows us to estimate the direct as well as the indirect effect of group type while taking the possible correlation between errors across regression equations into account (Cameron and Trivedi, 2010: 163). The analyses are

bootstrapped to handle violations of the assumption of normally distributed sampling distribution of the indirect effects (Hayes et al., 2011).

Group type, influence strategies, and perceived success

Table 1 shows regression results for perceived agenda-setting success, and Table 2 shows the results for perceived decision-making success. The *direct group effect hypothesis* (H2) is confirmed. Citizen groups report to be more successful in affecting the political agenda than economic groups (Table 1, column 1), while they are less successful in changing political decisions (Table 2, column 1). These effects are almost equally strong. Citizen groups are 3% more successful in gaining attention, while they are 2% less successful in affecting political decisions. The effects are statistically significant even after controlling for lobbying strategies. This means that group type not only affects lobbying success through different strategic priorities; it also affects lobbying success through specific characteristics of the interests represented by the different groups.

The *mediated group effect hypothesis* (H1) is also confirmed. Outsider strategies in the form of mobilization and media contacts are positively related to agenda-setting lobbying success (Table 1, column 1), *and* citizen groups use these strategies more intensively (Table 1, column 2 and 3). Similarly, insider strategies such as contacting MPs or bureaucrats are positively related to decision-making lobbying success (Table 2, column 1), *and* citizen groups use the administrative strategy less than economic groups (Table 2, column 5). However, the parliamentary strategy is positively related to agenda setting as well as decision-making. Parliament is used both as a channel for calling attention to an issue and as a channel for influencing decisions. Thus, while some groups may target MPs when specific bills are debated in parliament, others may use parliamentary contacts to raise awareness of their issues. This finding corresponds well with the dual role of parliament as an

arena for agenda setting as well as legislation (Andeweg and Nijzink, 1995). Citizen groups are especially active towards the parliament (Table 1 and 2, column 4).

TABLE 1 AND 2

The *moderated group effect hypothesis* (H3) is not supported by the data. To improve the readability of the tables, we have excluded the test in Table 1 and 2, but the results are reported in Appendix B. The coefficients point in the expected direction. The association between agenda-setting success and the use of mobilization and media strategies is stronger for citizen groups, while the association between decision-making success and the use of parliamentary and administrative strategies is weaker for citizen groups. However, the moderating effects are small and statistically insignificant.

When we enter our results into the original theoretical model, we end up with two empirical models illustrated in Figure 4 and 5. The model is revised since the moderated group effect hypothesis (H3) was not supported. However, the analyses confirmed the partially mediated impact of group type. In addition to the positive direct effect of being a citizen group on agenda-setting success, the more active use of the two indirect strategies as well as the parliamentary strategy increases the success level of citizen groups. In combination, this makes the average index score on agenda-setting lobbying success for citizen groups eight percentage points higher than that of economic groups (which should be compared to the overall mean of 42).

For decision-making success, the pattern is more complex. In line with expectations, the direct effect of being a citizen group is negative. In addition, citizen groups are less active towards the administration, which also decreases their level of decision-making success. However, by use of the parliamentary strategy, the mediated effect of group type works to the

benefit of citizen groups because these are more active towards parliament. In combination, citizen groups are therefore only three percentage points less successful than economic groups. Still, since the mean score is only 26 on this index, the difference is substantial.

FIGURE 4 AND 5

Regarding the control variables, groups with more political staff report to be more successful in influencing political decisions. They also report to use the media, parliamentary strategies, and administrative strategies more frequently. However, they do not report to be more successful in influencing the public agenda. The more policy areas the groups engage in, the more frequently they use all types of strategies. However, broader policy engagement in itself does not lead to higher levels of agenda-setting or decision-making success.

To test whether relations between group type, interest group strategies, and success are robust across the two countries, we have run models that interact country and group type as well as country and each of the four strategies. These models reported no significant interaction effects. We also conducted separate analyses for each country (Appendix C). These analyses document largely similar associations between group type, lobbying strategy, and lobbying success across these two highly different countries. Citizen groups engage more in the mobilization and the parliamentary strategy and less in the administrative strategy in both countries, while their higher level of activity towards the media is only significant in Denmark. Importantly, the factors affecting agenda-setting success and decision-making success are similar in the two countries with the notable exception that the negative effect of being a citizen group in the decision-making model is not significant in the UK. Since the interaction term was not statistically significant, the lack of significance in the separate

analysis of the British case may be owing to a smaller number of observations. As expected, the effect is still negative.⁷

Discussion

This study investigates the multidimensional character of interest group influence. We argue that lobbying success may entail raising awareness of specific issues as well as affecting political decisions. These two dimensions of political influence relate to different stages of the political influence process, and although associated, they constitute distinct dimensions of influence that may relate to different lobbying goals, strategies, and resources. Empirical analyses based on survey data collected among British and Danish interest groups confirm this two-dimensional structure of lobbying success.

Our theoretical framework integrates group type, strategic choices, and lobbying success. Here, we draw on the existing literature that characterizes economic groups as focusing on affecting policy decisions of relevance to their members and citizen groups as more focused on raising public awareness on issues or affecting the policy agenda (Beyers, 2004; Dür and Mateo, 2014; Grant, 1978; Halpin et al., 2012; Junk, 2015; Salisbury, 1984). We argue that characteristics of interest groups in terms of membership diffuseness, structural position, and resources influence lobbying success directly as well as indirectly through the use of lobbying strategies.

Our empirical analyses support these relations. Citizen groups report a higher level of agenda-setting success and a lower level of decision-making influence than economic groups. This effect is partially mediated by groups customizing their strategies to their goals and resources. Thus, citizen groups are more active towards media and parliament and more active in mobilizing their members for political action, while economic groups are more

active in lobbying the administration. Our study shows that the impact of group type on lobbying success is not only a consequence of resources or strategic differences. Fundamental characteristics of the groups also influence their lobbying success directly. However, the differences are a matter of degree rather than a matter of kind. While political priorities and success differ, economic and citizen groups simultaneously pursue different goals and utilize different lobbying strategies. When it comes to perceived success, there is a positive correlation between agenda-setting and decision-making influence. Thus, our results are relative differences rather than directly opposing modes of operation.

We investigated the relationship between group type, lobbying strategies, and lobbying success in Denmark and the UK. Even though the groups operate in political systems that should be most different, the relationships prove to be largely similar. However, there are also some notable differences. Danish groups tend to be less active regarding mobilization, parliament, and administration but more successful in terms of affecting political decisions. This may suggest that the corporative interaction between interest groups and decision-makers in Denmark makes it less important to continuously seek access but more important to be part of the privileged corporatist network (Binderkrantz and Christiansen, 2015). In this study, we cannot further disentangle the relative importance of the different sources of variation across the UK and Denmark. Thus, there is still a strong need to investigate how political institutions may facilitate different kinds of interest group involvement and influence.

From a normative perspective, a crucial question arises from our results: What matters the most? Are economic groups gaining policy concessions in the halls of power, while citizen groups are gaining only “cheap talk”? For two reasons, we believe this would be a premature conclusion. First, agenda setting is clearly an important group priority, and this in itself should warn scholars against discounting this type of influence. Second, it may be

more important to shape the understanding of political issues gradually than to gain influence on specific regulations under consideration. While decision-making influence may thus be crucial in the short run, more long-term political changes may be associated with agenda-setting influence.

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Notes

¹ This is in line with Kollman's (1998) argument that outside lobbying is used to mobilize interests outside the policy-making community to put pressure on the decisions reached within this community. Still, we argue that this is a different route to influence, and interest groups may value mobilization and attention as an end in itself in the shorter term.

² For Denmark, the survey was also distributed to groups that were not identified in documentary sources. To facilitate comparison, these are not included in the analysis. The response rate reported here is for groups identified in documentary sources, and therefore it differs from the response rate reported in publications based on the full survey (Binderkrantz et al., 2015).

³ We ask groups to evaluate their success in general terms rather than to indicate the number of times they were successful. We do this in order to use a scale that is meaningful for all respondents and where respondents evaluate success according to their own judgment. This comes with the disadvantage that responses may depend on context. For a large business group that has attracted media attention ten times, this may be seen as "occasionally," while the same case may lead to the response "fairly often" from a small group of patients.

However, this is mainly a problem for estimates of absolute levels of lobbying success as opposed to comparing relative success with regard to different types of influence. We have no theoretical reason for suspecting systematic differences across different types of success and group types in this respect.

⁴ To test the fit of the two-dimensional solution to the data, we compared this solution with a one-dimensional solution in a confirmative factor analysis (structural equation model based on ordinal logistic regression). The BIC-score is lower for the two-dimensional solution, and the two-dimensional model provides a significantly better fit ($\text{Chi}^2=589.92, p<0.000$). Based on the analysis of factor loadings above and these additional tests, the two-dimensional solution must be seen as the best model for capturing the data structure.

⁵ To increase our confidence in the effects of group type, we also ran analyses splitting groups into three categories more similar to the groupings of Dür and Mateo (2016). Here, trade unions and professional groups were separated from economic groups placing them in a position between business and citizen groups with regard to insider resources, membership security, and structural power position. The analyses reveal that trade unions and professional groups are indeed more likely to use outsider strategies. However, when we control for strategy usage, these groups are not less successful than business groups in terms of influencing political decisions. Hence, the negative effect of trade unions and professional groups on decision-making success is fully mediated by strategic behavior and not caused by group specific differences across these different types of economic groups. This suggests that the structural position and insider resources are more important for decision-making influence than membership security.

⁶ Policy domain factors may influence lobbying strategies as well as lobbying success. One such factor is issue saliency. Since our measures of strategies and success are not policy specific, it is not possible to directly include policy domain factors. However, we have

performed a robustness analysis of the effect of saliency in the set of policy areas in which groups operate. Based on the Danish survey (these questions were not included in the UK survey), we created an additive index including items about the amount of media, public, political, and administrative attention reported by groups. The relationship between group type, lobbying strategy, and lobbying success remained intact after including this control.

⁷ A particularly crucial difference between corporatist and pluralist countries is the reliance on inclusion of key corporatist actors in committees. To test whether this affects the models in the two countries, we performed an analysis including a variable of how often groups report to be part of administrative boards. Groups that are very often part of administrative boards reported to be more successful in changing decisions as well as attracting attention in both countries, but the impact on decision-making success is actually larger in the UK than in Denmark.

TABLES AND FIGURES