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A rise of citizen groups?

**The mobilization and representation of Danish interest groups from
1975-2010**

Abstract

Over the last decades, a number of societal changes can be expected to have led to increasing mobilization of interest groups representing citizen interests. For this mobilization to become effective, citizen groups need to win insider access to decision making processes as well as outsider representation in the news media. In this article we investigate the development in the Danish interest group system and the representation of these groups in political arenas. While we expect to replicate findings of increasing citizen mobilization from other countries, we argue that the development in their political representation depends on the dynamics of resource exchange in different political arenas. We test the argument on a unique dataset of Danish interest groups in 1975 and 2010 that includes data on group populations and group access to the administration and the media. The analysis demonstrates that citizen groups must overcome not only the trouble of organizing but also persistent logics guiding the inclusion of interest groups in different political arenas. Citizen groups have been more successful in increasing their representation in the media than in the administrative arena.

Keywords: interest groups, representation, diversity, citizen groups

Interest groups are central for channeling the interests of citizens into politics (Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2012: 3). In Scandinavia, interest groups have played a particularly central role in connecting citizens with the state apparatus. Major interest groups such as trade unions and employer organizations collaborated closely with politicians and public bureaucrats in shaping the contours of the Scandinavian welfare states (Öberg et al., 2011; Rokkan, 1966). Over the last decades, there is evidence of large-scale changes in the composition of civil society as well as in the role of interest groups in the political system (Amnå, 2006; Lundberg, 2012; Öberg & Svensson, 2012). New client groups representing for instance patients have proliferated (Amnå, 2006: 15; Fisker, 2013), corporatist institutions have been under rupture and mediatization of politics has contributed to changed patterns of interaction between interest groups and policy makers (Binderkrantz & Christiansen, 2014).

Despite their importance, systematic analysis of these developments is lacking. This paper provides the first large-scale analysis of the development in the composition of the interest group population and the representation of groups in public committees and the news media. The extent to which interest group systems represent different societal groups is of central democratic concern (Dahl, 1961; Olson, 1965; Schattschneider, 1975 [1969]; Schlozman, 1984). Over the last decades, there is reason to expect a shift in the pattern of group formation with groups representing citizen interests gaining ground in comparison to economic groups such as business and labor. Empirical studies of interest group systems in the US and UK have confirmed this expectation (Berry, 1999; Jordan et al., 2012; Schlozman et al., 2012). In Scandinavia, similar trends towards increasing mobilization of for example client groups have been identified (Amnå, 2006: 15; Opedal et al, 2012), but no previous studies have covered the whole interest group population.

To be efficient in linking citizens to the political system, citizen groups need not only to rise in numbers but also to access relevant political arenas. Therefore we ask: *Are citizen*

groups able to translate their mobilization into representation in relevant political arenas?

Here, we contrast insider access to administrative fora with outsider access to the news media. Access is defined as a situation, where an actor has entered a relevant political arena and is expected to be the product of a resource exchange between interest groups and arena gatekeepers such as reporters and bureaucrats (Bouwen, 2004; Binderkrantz et al. 2015). While all types of interest groups may have multiple goals and available resources, on balance, citizen groups have more to gain as well as more to offer in their interaction with reporters than when dealing with bureaucrats (Binderkrantz, Christiansen, & Pedersen, 2015; Halpin, Baxter, & MacLeod, 2012; Salisbury, 1984). Citizen groups are therefore expected to be less successful in challenging the dominance of economic groups in insider politics than in the media arena.

To evaluate this proposition we compare the access of Danish interest groups to administrative boards and committees with their access to the news media in 1975 and 2010. This study is the first to link the analysis of the development in an interest group population to the representation of groups in political arenas. Collecting reliable data on group existence and behavior over time is demanding and sometimes even impossible (Lowery, 2012). Here, we utilize data collected in the late 1970s about the set of Danish interest groups in existence in 1975. This gives us a unique opportunity to explore how changes in a group population feed into group representation. We have collected data on the Danish interest group population in 2010 and are, thus, able to compare two points in time between which Danish politics – like politics in other Western countries – changed in ways that are likely to influence the interest group system. While our empirical focus is on a single country, the theoretical argument about arena-specific exchange dynamics on interest group representation is generalizable to other countries.

We proceed with a discussion of how to identify interest group populations and highlight a set of societal factors that potentially changed the interest group population from

1975 to 2010. Second, we present the exchange-based model for explaining group representation in political arenas and our expectations about how population changes spill over into representation in two political arenas. Third, we describe the dataset before analyzing how the composition of interest groups has changed over time and the extent to which representation of groups in the administration and media arena have been affected.

A changing interest group population

Because we are interested in studying the process from group formation to political access, we adopt a broad definition of interest groups, encompassing all *associations of members or supporters who do not run for public office and who may potentially seek political influence* (Binderkrantz, 2012: 119; see also Jordan, Halpin, & Maloney, 2004).

To investigate patterns of group formation and representation, we distinguish between economic and citizen groups. The central difference is whether or not groups represent interests related to the vocation or profession of their members (Berry, 1999: 2). We make this division as we argue (see below) that these overall categories are important for group preferences regarding arena access. However, this overall dichotomy may mask different developments among subtypes of groups. Some studies have, for example, identified a relative decline in the representation of labor interests compared to business interests (Jordan et al., 2012: 151; Schlozman et al., 2012: 353). To address this, we divide *economic groups* into unions, business groups, institutional groups (organizing public authorities and institutions), and professional groups such as groups of history teachers or different types of doctors. *Citizen groups* include identity groups such as groups of patients, students or the elderly, public interest groups such as environmental or humanitarian groups, and leisure groups.

A prerequisite for having any political voice is organizing. This issue has attracted ample scholarly attention since Olson pointed out the collective action problems associated with organizing interests (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Olson, 1965; Schlozman et al., 2012). Both supply and demand factors may affect the formation of groups and thus shifting patterns of group mobilization over time (Leech, Baumgartner, La Pira, & Semanko, 2005; Lowery, Gray, & Monogan, 2008; Mahoney, 2004). While a supply perspective focuses on the supply of members in need of political representation, the demand perspective emphasizes factors originating from the top of the political system, such as the enactment of new policy programs. In line with findings in other countries, we expect a combination of supply and demand factors to cause a rise of citizen groups in the group population in the period from 1975 to 2010.

From a supply perspective socioeconomic developments are likely to spur changes in interest group systems (Berry, 1999; W. Grant, 2004). While groups and parties in previous decades represented social cleavages, today's voting and interest group membership crosscuts traditional patterns (Schmitter, 2008: 198). This modernization is also related to the increasing importance of: "new politics" issues such as immigration, the environment, and law and order (Stubager, 2009), which may not be covered by traditional interest groups. Citizens are thus increasingly joining groups based on new politics issues not directly related to the labor market (Morales, 2009: 59). Basic demographic changes also affect the interest group system. For example, the growing populations of senior citizens and immigrants may organize to voice their interests and thus add to the number of citizen groups (Binderkrantz, 2008; Öberg et al., 2011).

From a demand perspective, the expansion of the welfare state has changed the role of the state. Interest groups have themselves played a major role in pushing for welfare programs which may in turn spur the mobilization of new groups. As argued by Berry (1999: 29), the

extension of the state into areas of social regulation has helped citizen groups prosper.

Welfare state policies cover numerous aspects of citizens' lives, and when the state plays such a large role in everyday life, conflicts arise between state and citizens that are different from conflicts in earlier societal structures. This gives rise to new forms of citizen representation vis-à-vis the state regarding welfare policies, for instance as groups of patients or disgruntled taxpayers organize.

In sum, a number of societal changes point to an increasing number of citizen groups and thus an overall shift in balance between economic groups and citizen groups. *We therefore expect the share of citizen groups to increase from 1975 to 2010.* These factors are likely to be at work regardless of whether the interest group system is characterized by pluralism or corporatism. However, in corporatist systems the institutionalization of interest group involvement may enhance the survival rates among established insider groups – typically economic groups – because they win legitimacy and relevance from their involvement (Fisker, 2014). In a corporatist system, the shift towards citizen groups is thus likely to be less dramatic than pluralist countries such as the US and UK (Jordan et al., 2012: 150-1).

From group formation to political access

Group formation is not in itself sufficient to ensure political representation of interests. Here, we compare patterns of group formation with the extent to which groups gain insider access to decision making processes as well as outsider representation in the news media. In recent years, much progress has been made in studying group influence, but when it comes to comparing the political role of large numbers of groups over a time-span of several decades, the most reliable strategy is to focus on the level of access gained to crucial political arenas. While some authors focus exclusively on access to political decision makers (Bouwen, 2004;

Eising, 2007), we incorporate access to the media arena to provide a more encompassing view of the development in the political representation of citizen groups. Insider and outsider access may have different value and serve different purposes, but both are essential for the ability of interest groups to affect politics (A. S. Binderkrantz, Christiansen, & Pedersen, 2015; Bouwen, 2004).

Our core argument is that the extent to which increased citizen mobilization will be reflected in increased political representation depends on the arena in question. The argument draws on the exchange-based logic that has been the point of departure for many recent studies of interest group politics. According to this, group access to political arenas can generally be seen as the result of a political exchange between groups and gatekeepers such as bureaucrats, politicians, or reporters (Beyers & Kerremans, 2007; Bouwen, 2004; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Salisbury, 1984). Access is defined as a situation where an interest group has entered a relevant political arena by successfully passing its gate-keepers. An important implication of this definition is that access is controlled by the gate-keepers. It is not sufficient that groups seek access; they also have to provide input that is relevant to the gate-keepers (A. S. Binderkrantz et al., 2015). Crucially, this is not an argument that any interaction between groups and gate-keepers will involve an explicit exchange, but rather that overall patterns of interaction may be understood by focusing on the relevance of different access goods.

All interest groups seek multiple political goals and often target multiple arenas to achieve these goals (Binderkrantz, 2005; Opedal et al., 2012). We assume, however, that different groups prioritize goals in systematically different ways. Citizen groups put *relatively more emphasis on agenda setting* because they need to call broad attention to their causes, appeal to their diffuse constituency, and more often seek to challenge the status quo. Economic groups are assumed to *put relatively more emphasis on affecting public decision-making* because they want to safeguard the interest of their members and influence often

technical details in the legislative process. Some empirical evidence exists to support the reasonableness of these assumptions (Binderkrantz & Krøyer, 2012). These differences in group priorities are taken to influence their strategies, so that citizen groups are more likely to seek to accomplish their agenda-setting goals through public arenas such as the media, whereas economic groups are more likely to seek influence on political decisions through less public arenas such as the administration. The expected differences in strategic behavior have been found in empirical studies of Danish interest groups (Binderkrantz, 2008) and among European interest associations (Beyers, 2004).

Turning to the inputs, groups possess resources of varying relevance to different arenas (De Bruycker 2015; Junk 2015). We distinguish between insider and outsider resources (A. S. Binderkrantz et al., 2015). *Insider resources* consist of information and expertise of relevance to the policy process on the one hand, and control over members or production units relevant to the political fate of policies on the other. *Outsider resources* consist of the ability to mobilize and campaign on broadly appealing issues and to provide reporters with stories of news value. Both types of resources are of relevance to all gatekeepers, but outsider resources are *relatively* more in demand in the media arena, and insider resources *relatively* more in demand in decision-making arenas.

Most groups possess outsider as well as insider resources to some degree. However, we argue that economic groups are generally better endowed with insider resources such as control over specific member groups and policy relevant information. Many citizen groups are on their side in control of outsider resources due to their representation of broad causes and/or groups such as patients or elderly citizens who may attract public sympathy. The combination of a different balance between group goals – affecting the agenda vs. decision making – and endowment with insider vs. outsider resources leads us to expect citizen groups to be more

successful in increasing their representation in the media than in the administration (for similar arguments see: (Binderkrantz et al., 2015; Halpin et al., 2012; Salisbury, 1984).

At least two developments in the Danish political system from 1975 to 2010 may affect the premises of the discussed resource exchange. First, as in other political systems the media have become a more central political arena. The rising medialization has fundamentally changed the processes of influence-seeking leading groups to focus increasingly on a prominent media presence (Lundberg, 2012: 352; Kepplinger, 2002; Mazzoleni & Schultz, 1999). In consequence, all groups should be more occupied with seeking media access in 2010 than in 1975. However, even though the absolute pressure for media access may have increased, the relative emphasis across group type is not necessarily influenced.

Second, and especially important for Scandinavian countries, corporatism seems to play a less prominent role in politics than in the 1970s (Binderkrantz & Christiansen, 2014). The corporatist structures of the Danish system may not only stifle the rise of citizen groups in the population, it may also make it even more difficult to enter the administration where old acquaintances between economic groups and civil servants or ministries are not easily broken down. The ability of changes in interest group populations to translate into patterns of access is thus perhaps weaker in corporatist systems than in more pluralist systems.

While the relative attractiveness of different arenas has changed, the overall argument about different patterns of resource exchange should affect the balance in the arenas in both 1975 and 2010. In light of the discussion above, economic groups play a crucial role in the administration and are expected to keep their dominant position even as more citizen groups mobilize. To prepare political decisions and secure their implementation, civil servants need expertise and information about the interests and opinions of actors – what we have termed insider resources – who are crucial for the enactment and implementation of policy (A. S. Binderkrantz et al., 2015; Bouwen, 2004; Culpepper, 2002). In addition, these groups are

relatively more likely than citizen groups to focus on affecting public policy of immediate concern to their members. As the economic groups have a strong focus on decision making, they will be interested in staying in close contact with the bureaucrats responsible for preparing and implementing political decisions.

While economic groups are expected to maintain their prominent position vis-à-vis the administration this arena will not be unaffected by the rise of citizen groups. As new citizen groups organize in reaction to the increasing role of the state in citizens' lives, they are likely to seek access to the state apparatus at least to some extent. And, in response to this pressure as well as changes in the political agenda over time, the administration is expected to consider the interests of citizen groups to a somewhat greater extent than previously. A modest increase in citizen group representation is therefore expected: *the share of citizen group access to the administration increases less than the share of citizen groups in the population does.*

More change is likely to be found in the media arena. Citizen groups have traditionally been expected to approach the media to promote their causes, maintain their membership and recruit new members – and to compensate for lack of access to more closed arenas such as the administration (Beyers, 2004; A. Binderkrantz, 2008). To the extent that new citizen groups mobilize they are also expected to spend much effort in affecting the media agenda. In the competition for media coverage particularly newsworthy groups may be those lobbying for broadly appealing causes such as environmental developments, humanitarian disasters or causes with personalized angles such as treatment of the elderly or patients – that is groups in possession of outsider resources (Tiffen et al., 2013: 374-5). Following our argument above, this will work to the advantage of many citizen groups. In addition, citizen groups will benefit from increasing media attention to many of the issue areas related to 'new politics' that they mobilize around (Binderkrantz, 2012).

However, according to Bennett's (1990) "indexing" hypothesis, the news also tends to reflect the range of views expressed in mainstream government debate. The effect is a systematic bias towards reporting on public officials (Bennett, 1990: 106; Cook, 1998; Thrall, 2006: 408). A parallel argument can be made for interest groups, as journalists pay special attention to those interest groups – often economic groups – that are seen as legitimate actors in the policymaking process (Thrall, 2006: 408). This effect is likely to dampen the rise in citizen group representation and while it is difficult to estimate the precise effect of these countervailing factors our expectation is therefore that *the share of citizen group access to the media reflects the increased share of citizen groups in the population*.

To summarize, we expect the share of citizen groups in the interest group population to increase, but this change in the population does not translate automatically into changes in patterns of access. Rather, the change is moderated by the exchange logic regulating access in specific political arenas. In the administration, we expect only a slight increase in the share of citizen group access. In contrast, in the media, we expect the spillover effect to reflect the changes in the population.

Research design

In establishing measures of the interest group population and groups' representation in insider and outsider arenas over time we are fortunate to have access to a unique Danish dataset on interest groups from 1975. Since then class structures and corporatism have weakened in Denmark, and welfare state policies have expanded radically¹ (Allern & Blach-Ørsten, 2011; F. J. Christiansen, 2012; Öberg et al., 2011). We can therefore compare two different situations by collecting data on the interest group population in 2010. We have mapped the group population, conducted a survey among groups, registered group representation in the

¹ Although the welfare state was established over an extended period, public expenditure as a percentage of the gross national product rose dramatically from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s (P. M. Christiansen, 2014:66).

administration and the media in 2010 and complemented the 1975 dataset with data on group representation in the media. This allows us to study interest group formation and representation in two political arenas in two points of time. The data does not allow for time-series analysis, but we are able to investigate how changes in the interest group population from 1975 to 2010 match changes in access.²

Identifying the population

In identifying the relevant populations of interest groups in 1975 and 2010 we combine a top-down approach identifying groups as they appear in politically relevant settings and a bottom-up approach, where groups are located for example in registers of interest groups (Buksti & Johansen, 1977). By combining these approaches we are able to establish a more comprehensive list of interest group populations than if we rely on only top-down sources or registers. Also, we are able to establish a population of interest groups including not only those who have obtained representation for example in the administrative arena, but also groups who unsuccessfully seek political access and influence.

For 1975, we largely rely on the extensive data collection conducted in the 1970s by Buksti and Johansen (Buksti & Johansen, 1979; Johansen & Kristensen, 1982). This data collection included some top-down sources – most prominently a data set of interest groups represented in public committees – and a thorough examination of registers of different types of interest groups as well as listings of members of umbrella groups. To facilitate the comparison of interest group populations across years we have supplemented the 1975 population with interest groups appearing in two national newspapers (see below for a further

² It should be noted that national elections took place in 1975 and 2011, but the data collection refers to either a period well in advance or after the election and the effect on results is therefore likely to be marginal.

specification) and groups sending letters to parliamentary committees in the parliamentary year 1975/76.

In establishing the 2010 population we identified interest groups in top-down sources including representation in public committees, replies to administrative hearings, letters to parliament and appearances in newspapers. Further, we went through registers of groups including an updated version of the list of groups identified in 1975 (ref. Christiansen), online registers of specific types of groups – for example associations of patients or business groups and lists of umbrella group members. Because our aim was to establish an encompassing list of Danish interest groups we also added groups identified by a snowball approach e.g. as they were referred to by other groups in list of contacts.

Even though we have used comparable methods to identify groups, we cannot be certain that the two population lists are fully comparable. For both years, it is highly likely that the lists include all major interest groups, while some smaller groups who are not (yet) seeking political influence may not appear in any of the sources included. This means that we may underestimate the number of potentially active groups, but it is difficult to say whether this problem is relatively more pronounced in either year. On the one hand, the internet facilitates internal interest group communication and may therefore have led to a proliferation of groups where the primary channel of communication is the internet and few traces of the groups may be found in other sources. On the other hand, the internet has also made it easier for us to identify groups, even though we may not find all groups that are active online.

To validate our conclusions, we compare not only the full populations but also smaller subsets of groups identified in the top-down sources that are most comparable across the two years: committee positions, letters to parliament and newspaper appearances. In 1975 our encompassing population list includes 2,127 national interest groups, while 519 groups appeared in the comparable top-down sources. In 2010 we identified 2,543 groups whereof

737 appeared in the smaller top-down population. This equals, respectively, an increase of 20 and 42 percent. The difference may reflect that a larger share of groups is politically active, for example by sending letters to parliament. While we cannot be certain about the exact magnitude of the increase in the group population, we are confident about the direction of change. A rise of between 20 and 40 percent is far below the alleged “explosion” in the number of US interest groups, but significantly higher than the 4 percent rise in UK groups (Jordan et al., 2012). In the analysis we will rely on the full population lists, but will also report findings from analyses of the more confined top-down population to confirm the robustness of the results.

We divide our two broad categories, economic groups and citizen groups, into subcategories as discussed above. We used the INTERARENA framework (<http://interarena.dk/pages/page.asp?pid=314&l=eng>) to categorize the individual organization. The authors as well as another senior project member jointly coded the groups into one of the seven relevant group types based on information on group web pages or on printed descriptions for old organizations that do not appear in the new population. To estimate the level of coding reliability, a sample of 100 groups was coded by two coders, resulting in Cohen’s Kappa of 0.9.

Counting access points

Administrative access is measured by seats in public committees. These committees have continually played a central role in the Danish administration and provide a highly valuable access point to the administrative preparation and administration of political decisions (P. M. Christiansen et al., 2009). Lists of committees are not systematically archived, but fortunately these data were collected by the research team in the 1970s and our research team has established a database of all committees active on December 31, 2010. In 1975, a total of 374

committees and 1,748 group seats were registered, compared to 273 committees and 1,964 seats in 2010. Hence we find an increase of 12 percent in administrative access points.

Media access is measured as appearance in a news story, and here we collected new data for both years. We selected two large national newspapers with opposite political leanings (*Jyllands-Posten* and *Politiken*) and registered all interest groups appearing in news stories on the front page in a full year (July 1 1975 to June 30 1976 and July 1 2010 to June 30 2011). We only included politically relevant articles and omitted negative mentioning of groups, such as stories about declining membership or fraud, as they cannot meaningfully be seen as constituting group access to the media arena. 545 media appearances in 1975 and 800 in 2010 were registered, i.e., an increase of 47 percent. This is remarkable given that our coding only includes front-page appearances where the format is relatively constant over time.

While the measures of access are comparable across the two years, the significance of having a seat in a public committee or appearing in the news media may differ. With regard to the administrative arena, participation in boards and committees may be less important today than in the heyday of corporatism (Binderkrantz & Christiansen, 2015), while media appearances – especially on the front-page – may be more valued due to increased mediatization of politics (Strömbäck & Esser, 2014).

Control variable: Group resources

Since access is not only a product of a group's interest but also of organizational resources such as staff and money (A. Binderkrantz, 2005; A. S. Binderkrantz et al., 2015), we take the impact of group resources into account when evaluating the extent to which changes in the interest group population spill over to arena access. It is difficult to obtain historical data on organizational resources, but fortunately we can use information from a 1976 survey among all Danish national interest groups (response rate 85 percent). However, this also means that

we need to settle for the measures provided by this study. The survey included questions about group employees, which can be used as a proxy for organizational resources. We conducted another survey among Danish interest groups in 2011 (response rate 65 percent) where we also asked about the total number of employees, matching the measure from 1976. The variable measures the total number of employees and is logarithmically transformed to obtain linearity and further recoded to range from 0 to 1 in both years.

In the analysis using survey-based data on group resources, the population is restricted to politically active groups (because the information about resources is only available for those groups). In 2010 it includes all groups in the survey (1,109 groups) because only groups engaged in a minimum level of political activity were asked to complete the survey. In 1976 it includes all groups reporting any contact with public authorities (965 groups). These two criteria are quite similar, and analyses of the distribution of the groups in the total population and the distribution of politically active groups show that these are not very different in 1976 and 2011. To test whether the more restricted population affects the results, we also conducted the regression analysis without the resource measure for both the full population of potentially active groups and the more limited population of active groups. The analyses show similar results.

For each group, we combine information obtained from the survey with data about representation through unique ID numbers. For each arena, groups are given an appearance score that tallies how many times the group appeared. The maximum number of appearances in 1975 was 101 for the administrative arena and 52 for the media arena. The corresponding numbers in 2010 were 126 and 254.

Changing group population and representation from 1975 to 2010

The combination of data on the population and group access at two different points in time gives us the opportunity to investigate how the balance between citizen groups and economic groups has developed in the population and whether there are spillover effects from changes in population to changes in access.

Table 1 shows the distribution of group types in the population and the two political arenas in 1975 and 2010 as well as the change in percentage points for each type of group. As expected, the share of citizen groups has increased from 29 percent of all groups in the population in 1975 to 42 percent in 2010. The 13 percentage point increase may not seem very impressive given the significant societal developments in the intervening period. However, this is not a result of low formation of citizen groups but rather a result of persistence in the number of economic groups. The absolute number of citizen groups increased from 614 to 1,060, which corresponds to an increase of 58 percent. The number of economic groups only decreased by the absolute number of 30 (from 1,513 groups in 1975 to 1,483 in 2010), corresponding to 2 percent, in the same period³. This decrease is – at least partially – a result of mergers among trade unions and business groups.

Compared to the US and UK group populations, the Danish development seems less extreme. In the United States, growth rates of more than 100 percent between 1975 and 2005 were found in many sectors, and in the United Kingdom, some types of groups – with labor groups as the most notable – were less than half as numerous in 2006 as in 1970 (Jordan et al., 2012: 150-151). As argued above, the relatively high level of corporatism in Denmark may partly explain the stability of the group system, as inclusion in corporatist institutions has been found to enhance groups' survival chances (Fisker, 2014). Despite the comparatively stable nature of the Danish group system, there is no doubt that economic groups have encountered more competition from citizen groups of various kinds over recent decades.

³ For the smaller subsets of groups identified in comparable sources, a similar development can be identified with the share of citizens rising from 22 to 37 percent of groups.

TABLE 1

Population changes do indeed spill over to political arenas. Over the last decades, citizen groups have gained increased representation in government board and committees and also appear more frequently in the news media. This important finding indicates that changes in formation patterns influence interest representation in the decision-making process. We also find that the spillover differs across the arenas. As expected, the increase of citizen group access was smallest in the administration, where the citizen group share only increased by 5 percentage points compared to the 13 percent increase in the population. In the media, the change in citizen group access was a little above the population change. This supports the exchange logic of access, where the pressure from the interest group population is moderated by the different logics of exchange in each arena. In 1975, citizen groups were already relatively well represented in the media compared to the administration, and with their rise in numbers, citizen groups now account for a third of all media appearances – although still falling short of their population share of 42 percent. In contrast, citizen groups have been much less successful in translating their formation into access to the administration, where economic groups still dominate to a very large extent.

An effect of differences in patterns of arena access is that many more groups have at least some appearance in politics. In 1975 only 19 percent of groups with arena access appeared in both arenas and in 2010 the corresponding percentage was 17. When it comes to the key players there is, however, much more overlap. Among the ten interest groups who occupied the highest number of seats in administrative boards and committees in 1975 as well as in 2010, 5 (50 percent) also appear on the list of the ten groups getting the most media attention.

Turning to the different subcategories, unions are the main losers and public interest groups the main winners. This is clearly illustrated in Figure 1, which shows changes in representation. The figure illustrates the information displayed in table 1 but to reduce complexity it only presents the development for four selected subcategories where the most important changes are found. Business groups and unions both lost about 6 percentage points in the population, but business actually improved its access to the administration whereas unions experienced the greatest loss compared to the other economic groups. In contrast, the share of public interest groups increased by 8 percentage points, and they are the only citizen group type that has been able to translate this into increased access in both arenas. Identity groups also increased their representation in the population but have been less successful in turning this into access particularly in the administrative arena. This more nuanced picture shows an overall development away from class mobilization and representation in unions towards cause mobilization and representation by various public interest groups (Schlozman et al., 2012).

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

An interesting question is whether the increase of citizen group representation in the administration and the news media is caused by new groups being formed or older groups increasingly being represented. Figure 2 illustrates the representation of newer and older groups in each arena. First, the figure shows that the increase in the share of citizen groups is highly driven by the entrance of newer groups. Over 74 percent of the citizen groups in the 2010 population are newer groups that did not exist in 1975. Interestingly, a substantial part – 64 percent – of the economic groups is also newcomers. This demonstrates that while stability

may be present at the aggregate level, interest group systems are in fact highly volatile. Second, the figure shows that these newer groups are only partly successful in gaining access. The administrative arena is the most conservative arena, where about 75 percent of the seats that citizen groups held in 2010 were occupied by groups that were already organized in 1975. Newer economic groups have an equally hard time obtaining representation on administrative committees and boards.

In the media, new groups and new citizen groups in particular have more success. Overall, 25 percent of the 2010 media appearances were by groups established after 1975 and for citizen groups almost 40 percent of all appearances were made by new groups. Overall, these patterns thus confirm the moderating effect of arena-specific dynamics in shaping the political representation of interest groups. The administrative arena is much less susceptible to change than the media.

Finally, in order to test the statistical significance of these findings, we conduct separate regression analyses for each year⁴. We also estimate a model including both years and an interaction variable between year and group type. In all models we control for the impact of groups' organizational resources. The results are shown in Table 3. The dependent variable is the count of access points for each group in the relevant arena in each year. As the dependent variable is a count variable and the distribution is over-dispersed (variance larger than the mean), we use the negative binominal regression model.

The combined model includes a group dummy separating economic groups from citizen groups, a year dummy separating 1975 from 2010, and an interaction term between group type and year that shows whether the effect of being an economic group has changed over time. A significant interaction term thus implies that the logic of exchange has changed over time – in contrast to our argument about rather persistent exchange relations – either due

⁴ Robustness analyses with the group populations restricted to only groups identified in comparable sources confirmed the findings.

to different demands from the gatekeepers or the groups. Finally, the model includes group employees as a control variable. Because the multivariate analysis is conducted in order to test if arena specific dynamics are constant over time, we do not focus on the magnitude of the effects of for example the number of employees.

TABLE 2

The most important result is that differences in the groups' abilities to access the three arenas persist over time. Economic groups are more likely than citizen groups to have high levels of access to the administration, while group differences are not significant in the media arena. The persistence is also supported by the insignificant interaction terms in all analyses. While non-significant, the direction of the effects signals that if anything, arena-specific patterns of access have become more pronounced over time – the coefficient is positive in the administration and negative in the media.

This means that despite the very long time period – 35 years – and despite the changes in the interest group population, the logics of exchange seem to persist. Citizen groups are less able to overcome the barriers to representation in the administration and more likely to gain access to the media. The set of citizen groups that were active in 2010 thus face the same general opportunities and challenges as the set of groups that were active in 1975. The result is largely diverging access patterns across political arenas – as citizen groups form, their access to arenas is moderated by persisting exchange dynamics in these arenas.

Conclusion

This article investigates the shifting contours of interest group populations and the development in the representation of groups in political arenas. A comparison of the interest

group population in 1975 and 2010 showed that the share of citizen groups in the group population increased by almost 13 percentage points. This finding mirrors evidence from other countries – different types of interest groups tend to experience different rates of growth (Jordan et al., 2012).

It is not enough for a citizen group to overcome the trouble of mobilizing and organizing interests; it also needs to overcome persistent logics guiding the inclusion of interest groups in different arenas. Over the 35 year period, citizen groups increased their access to the media proportional to their rise in the population, while economic groups remained largely dominant in the administration. The obstacles for increased citizen group representation are thus particularly large when it comes to obtaining insider access to administrative fora. A very remarkable finding is thus the high level of stability of group representation in the administrative arena. Besides the underlying exchange mechanisms this may also reflect a high level of conservatism in corporatist structures – once groups have assumed central positions in the system, this may be used to keep competitors from entering getting access.

This article also reveals other important insights. First, while citizen groups in general have become more prominent compared to economic groups, at a more nuanced level unions lose ground and public interest groups win. This indicates a change from class mobilization to cause mobilization and representation. In the recurrent debate about the position of business vis-à-vis other interests (Binderkrantz, Christiansen, & Pedersen, 2014; Culpepper, 2002; Culpepper, 2011; Smith, 2000), this means that business groups may increasingly face competition from, for example, environmental groups rather than unions in their struggles to influence public regulation. In some areas, such groups may serve as an effective counterbalance to business – capitalizing on their broad political appeal – but when it comes

to representing the economically disadvantaged, less clout may be gained from the current pattern of group formation and representation (Schlozman et al., 2012).

Second, it is worth noting that the number of group appearances has increased. While the increase is relatively modest in the administration, interest groups reached newspaper headlines 50 percent more often in 2010 as in 1975. This raises the important question about how this development affects dynamics of representation. While more concerns can be voiced, the value of each contact may have decreased. Further studies are needed to evaluate the importance of these access points in terms of actually engaging in political negotiations and decision making. Also, the issue of how access can be compared across different arenas is relevant for future research. Here, we have assumed that access to different arenas is of value to group, but the extent to which a prominent media position can counter-weight insider access is obviously crucial for evaluating the overall balance in the group system.

Finally, it should be noted that these results all refer to a specific case and new, similar data need to be collected and analyzed to determine whether equivalent trends are found in other countries. The Danish results are most immediately comparable to other Scandinavian countries traditionally characterized by corporatist integration of groups in decision making. Here, it is highly likely that similar developments may be identified with citizen groups gaining more ground in outsider arenas than in traditional corporative fora (Binderkrantz & Christiansen, 2014; Lundberg, 2012). However, while the extent of the dynamics may vary, the theoretical argument about arena-specific exchange dynamics is not specific to the Danish or Scandinavian setting. For researchers interested in the political representation of the increasing numbers of citizen groups in, for example, the United Kingdom and the United States (Jordan et al. 2012), our documentation of the mediating effects of arena dynamics should therefore also be of immediate relevance.

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Table 1. Overview of group types in the population and three political arenas

	Population (Groups)			Administration (Contacts)			Media (Contacts)		
	1975	2010	Change	1975	2010	Change	1975	2010	Change
Economic groups	71.1	58.3	-12.8	88.8	84.1	-4.7	80.7	67.0	-13.7
Trade unions	15.9	10.3	-5.6	30.3	25.2	-5.1	41.7	27.3	-14,4
Business groups	34.3	27.5	-6.8	39.1	40.9	1,8	26.8	17.6	-9,2
Institutional groups	4.6	4.4	-0.2	16.5	13.7	-2.8	10.6	18.8	8.2
Professional groups	16.3	16.0	-0.3	2.9	4.2	1.3	1.7	3.4	1.7
Citizen groups	28.8	41.7	12.8	11.2	15.9	4.7	19.3	33.0	13.7
Identity groups	10.7	14.3	3.6	6.7	4.3	-2.4	7.7	12.9	5.2
Leisure groups	12.9	14.4	1.5	1.8	3.0	1.2	3.1	1.9	-1.2
Public interest groups	5.2	13.0	7.8	2.7	8.6	5.9	8.4	18.3	9.9
Total	2,127	2,543		1,748	1,964		545	800	
	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	

Figure 1. Changes in the share of unions, business groups, identity groups and public interest groups in the population and in the share of access, percentage points

Figure 2. Share of new groups (groups not existing in 1975) in the population and in access, percentage points

Table 2. Testing whether the exchange logic has changed in three political arenas. Negative binomial regression

	Administration			Media		
	1975	2010	Both years	1975	2010	Both years
Economic groups	0.52 [*]	0.87 ^{***}	0.53 ^{**}	0.16	0.02	0.18
	(0.21)	(0.15)	(0.19)	(0.26)	(0.20)	(0.26)
Employees (transformed)	6.72 ^{***}	6.43 ^{***}	6.54 ^{***}	7.65 ^{***}	6.68 ^{***}	7.07 ^{***}
	(0.49)	(0.34)	(0.28)	(0.56)	(0.45)	(0.35)
Year 2010			-0.64 ^{**}			0.00
			(0.22)			(0.27)
Economic Group # Year 2010			0.33			-0.18
			(0.25)			(0.32)
Constant	-1.92 ^{***}	-2.51 ^{***}	-1.90 ^{***}	-3.13 ^{***}	-2.89 ^{***}	-3.00 ^{***}
	(0.20)	(0.16)	(0.18)	(0.25)	(0.19)	(0.23)
Number of observations	933	1,076	2,009	933	1,076	2,009
Pseudo R^2 (McFadden's)	0.11	0.15	0.13	0.17	0.14	0.15

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$