**Networks in the Executive Arena 1975-2010: Change or Continuity?**

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**1. Introduction**

Organized interests are active participants in policy-making. Not only do they advocate their interests and positions by contacting MPs, bureaucrats and reporters, they are often also active insiders in decision-making processes. Notably, interest groups are invited to participate in a wide variety of boards and committees where they can have their say in preparing policy, advising decision makers and sometimes administering policies. This aspect of the political role of interest groups have been emphasized in different literatures and examples of the practice of involving groups in decision making are found in traditionally corporatist countries as well as in more pluralist countries such as the US or Great Britain (Buksti & Johansen, 1979; Blom-Hansen 2001; Christiansen & Nørgaard, 2003; Öberg et al. 2011; Siaroff, 1999: Pallesen, 2006).

The existence of boards and committees with interest group representation is crucial for the political role of groups. Here groups are provided with privileged access to public decision making and presumably also with the opportunity to influence politics. The institutionalization of group access through boards and committees has been described as the prime institution of corporatism (Öberg et al. 2011). This raises the important question of which groups are included in such arrangements? Is participation in boards and committees only for the privileged few or is it possible for a wider range of groups to obtain representation? And how has the composition of boards and committees evolved over time? Has the decline of corporatism led to more diversity in committee membership and have some types of groups lost ground while others have gained from political developments within the last decades?

In addressing these questions, the paper draws on a unique dataset of interest group membership of public boards and committees in Denmark in 1975 and 2010. Every member of a committee in these years have been registered and when possible assigned to a specific interest groups. These data have been linked to survey data on organizational resources enabling an analysis of the role of group resources in gaining a strong foothold in the committee system. The analysis focuses on the positions held by interest groups. Membership of a public committee is seen as a political resource and groups with more memberships are thus regarded as more central participants in the corporative system. Further, committee membership provides groups with relations to other groups – relations which may be of further advantage to the group. These relations constitute a network of corporative influence. Groups with many relations are central players in this network and if these relations are to other groups with many relations the position of a group is further strengthened.

The paper’s research question is how the structure of group participation in boards and committees has changed in the period between 1975 and 2010. Denmark has repeatedly been described as among the highly corporatized political systems and 1975 constitutes a high-point of Danish corporatism (Siaroff, 1999; Christiansen et al. 2010). In the following decades corporatism has been under pressure and even though the extent of the corporatist decline is a matter of discussion, there is no doubt that significant changes have taken place in the period: Boards and committees play a less central role in particular in regard to decision preparation, the balance between different group types in the group population has changed with more groups representing for example patients and public interests and parliament and the media have gained in importance possibly altering the functioning of corporatist institutions (Binderkrantz, 2011; cf. Christiansen *et al.*, 2010). These changes are expected to lead to more diversity in the composition of boards and committees. In 1975 privileged integration can be expected to be concentrated on the usual suspects of corporatist systems: employer and employee interests in regard to the private and public sector. In 2010, it is expected that other types of groups have acquired a more central position. Further, the resource assumed to be most important in 1975 is the classic corporative resource of controlling resources relevant to the functioning of the economy (Rokkan, 1966), while more general financial resources and manpower are expected to be more central in 2010.

 **2. Theory**

***2.1 Networks of Corporatism***

A crucial feature of many political systems is the privileged integration of organized interests into public decision making. This can be described as the corporatization of the policy process. Corporatism may be understood as a mutually beneficial exchange between interest groups and government. For interest groups the prime motive is influencing public policy; for government actors the value in corporatism lies in technical and political support of public decisions (Öberg et al. 2011: 365). In line with the Scandinavian literature we define corporatism as the institutionalized and privileged integration of organized interests in the preparation and/or implementation of public policies (Christiansen *et al.* 2010).

By institutionalized integration we mean that interest groups are integrated in the policy process through formal or informal norms and rules. The creation of committees, boards, councils etc. – hereafter just committees – is perhaps the best example of a formal institutionalization of the policy process. In Denmark committees has been a way of organizing policy preparation, policy advice, and policy implementation for more than 100 years (Christiansen & Nørgaard, 2003: ch. 3). By privileged integration we mean that some groups are preferred as partners at the cost of other groups, even when the groups represent similar interests and members. When we look at public committees, some kind of privileging is unavoidable: Public committees have a limited number of members and the composition of committees has to satisfy a number of considerations. Consequently the government officials who put together the committees have to prioritize some interests and some groups at the cost of others. And it is rarely accidental which groups are represented: Very often the same groups are represented when a certain type of issue is at stake. Previous research has underlined the importance of privileged integration. For example, occupying a privileged position vis-à-vis decision makers positively affects the use of different influence strategies – even controlling for general resources (Binderkrantz 2005).

Committee membership can be seen as a positional resource. There are three relevant aspects of this. First, groups get access to a specific committee and thus to making their voice heard for example in the preparation of a bill or in the administration of a public policy scheme. Second, committee memberships entail access to political information that is not available for non-member actors. Here, multiple memberships are of particular importance because technical and strategic information may be of relevance across different committees. Third, being a member of a committee also provides a group with relations to other interest groups, bureaucrats and politicians.

From a network perspective, relations to other actors are of particular importance. The network perspective asserts that power is essential relational. Rather than being an asset of an individual or a group, power is seen as an aspect of actual or potential interactions between actors (Knoke 1990: 1). Even if network analysis is based on the measurement of individuals or groups holding positions, it is assumed that power is inherently relational (Pozo et al. 2011: 191). Power is not an asset; power is exercised in a relation between two or more actors; directly or indirectly.

The network approach to studying corporatist privileging allows us to look at not only individual groups and their immediate position but also to consider the overall structure of committee memberships and committee relations in order to determine which groups are core actors and which are more peripheral in terms of overlapping memberships (Heaney & McClurg 2009: 729). The underlying assumption is that the structural position of an actor in a social network might explain a number of aspects of the group’s social influence e.g. social prestige, bargaining power, coalition building capacity etc. Embeddedness in a larger network of interaction and ties to other actors in that network determine the group’s role and influence (Haunss & Kohlmorgen 2010: 246). The idea is to obtain indices to measure hypothetical or indirectly observable variables such as influence, opportunity exploitation etc.

It is important to note that government actors are in control of the allocation of seats. In the long run groups may seek access to committees but whether this access is granted is a consequence of what groups have to offer to those who guard the access to committees. Groups get access to decision-makers by virtue of their ability to convey credible and useful information to bureaucrats and ministers (Öberg, et al. 2011).

***2.2 Network Structures and Decline of Corporatism***

Networks may have a number of qualities: In the study of policy networks a central issue has been the distribution of power. This concerns whether power is distributed in the hands of one dominant or a few actors or more evenly shared across different actors (Kriesi et al. 2006: 342). This means that some are highly hierarchical and centralized whereas others may be more informal and polycentric (Baldasarri & Diani 2007: 739). In hierarchical structures, core actors’ attitudes and behavior may strongly affect the outcome of the collective effort, because their control, influence, and potential for large-scale mobilization is high. In non-hierarchical or decentralized network structures no single actor is dominant, and the outcome will be more unpredictable. To some extent the degree of hierarchy and power concentration resembles the policy network distinction between policy communities and issue networks (Rhodes, 1990: 295, 304).

Another quality is the relation between different networks. To what extent are networks interrelated and to what extents are they isolated vis-à-vis each other (Rhodes, 1990: 304). A common unit of analysis is policy sectors, often defined by the division of labor between ministries that may determine the degree of isolation from each other. Some sectors – such as defense/military – may have relatively few interrelations to other sectors whereas others – such as the environment – may be cross cut by many relations to actors from each sector.

A third quality is the type of actors enrolled in the network. From the literature on corporatism, in many respect the predecessor of and mother to the policy network literature, we would recon groups based on society’s functional line of conflicts (cf. Schmitter, 1974). Groups relevant for corporatist interest mediation are often groups whose basis is society’s material division of labor: Labor union groups, business groups, institutional groups related to the public sector and some other groups. These groups are in control of corporative resources, and therefore particularly interesting for policy makers (Binderkrantz, 2005; 2008). At the high point of corporatism we therefore expect these groups to be dominant in the corporative institutions.

Over the last decades several important changes in the political role of interest groups have taken place. In several countries a trend of decline in corporatism has been identified (Siaroff, 1999; Regini, 2000). Across the Scandinavian countries the high-point of corporatism seems to have occurred around 1980 while the latter decades have seen less integration of groups in particular in the preparation of decisions (Öberg et al. 2011: 373) where as the decline of corporatist structures is less significant in relation to policy implementation.

As regards the Danish case we get some more information in Table 1. In 1975 there were all together 667 national, public committees distributed almost evenly between policy preparation and other tasks. In 2010 there were significantly less committees, altogether 433, but now unevenly distributed on policy preparation and other tasks: Only 42 committees had policy preparation as their main task in 2010, where as the reduction is much less significant regarding other tasks. Note that in 1975 there was a sum of 1,771 group positions and in 2010 1,599 group positions (note that we still miss a few data)

**Table 1: Number of committees and number of interest group representatives and interest representation, 1975-2010. Numbers.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | 1975 | 2010 |
| **All committees**  |  |  |
| Number of committees | 667 | 433 |
| Number with interest group representatives | 376 | 321 |
| Number of interest group positions | 1,771 | 1,599\* |
| **Policy preparing committees**  |  |  |
| Number of committees |  | 311 |  42 |
| Number with interest group representatives | 163 |  25 |
| Number of interest group representatives | 723 |  -\* |
| **Other committees** |  |  |  |
| Number of committees |  |  346 | 391 |
| Number with interest group representatives | 213 | 296 |
| Number of interest group representatives | 1,048 |  -\* |

\* Data collection not yet quite finished.

On the basis of this hint of particularly declining corporatism in policy preparation, the next sections will discuss expectations for the development from 1975 to 2010 in terms of network relations.

***2.3 Increased diversity and gains of business***

For a number of reasons we expect more diversity in the type of actors in 2010 compared to 1975: 1975 is close in time to the peak of Danish corporatism, for which reason we believe actors typically to command corporative resources. A number of “new politics” issues, such as the environment, health care ethics, immigration etc., have come to play a much more prominent political role in that period (Stubager, 2006; Green-Pedersen, 2006). This development has mobilized a number of new groups that are not believed to control corporative assets. Christiansen et al. (2004) show that in environmental policy environmental groups were few and played only a marginal role in mid 1970s where as they were many and core players in the formation of environmental policy by the late 1980s. We assume that the greater political emphasis on new political topics to some extent is also mirrored in the committee structure. Consequently we expect more diversity as regards the type of group actors represented in committees. In particular we expect groups not possessing corporative resources to play a more prominent role.

Corporatist structures were first, i.e. in early 20th Century, established in relation to industrial policies and labor market policies (Christiansen & Nørgaard, 2003: ch. 2). At least in labor market policies representation was almost always joint: If the employers became member of a committee, the committee also got union representation, and vice versa. Joint representation was an integrated part of labor market corporatism. Labor market corporatism is, however not what it used to be. Since the 1970s the traditional inclusion of the social partners in the preparation of almost all important policies has been replaced by a much more case-by-case inclusion. When the social partners were thought to contribute positively to the government’s policy they were includes, else not (Klitgaard & Nørgaard, 2010). By the end of 2010 – the time for our second observation – relations between the Liberal/Conservative government and the unions were directly hostile. In industrial policies a principle of joint representation has not been practiced to the same extent. Sometimes unions have been invited to participate in committee work, sometimes not. Often the representative is the think tank *Economic Council of the Labour Movement* ([www.ae.dk](http://www.ae.dk)), which does not otherwise play a central role among union groups. Based mainly on the decline of labor market corporatism we hypothesize that labor has been weakened relatively compared to business in the public committee network structure. It should be mentioned that such a weakening has taken place in Sweden (Hermansson et al. 1999) – which even have had a much stronger Social Democratic Party compared to Denmark for the biggest part of the period after 1975 (cf. Öberg et al. 2011: 382).

***2.4 Hierarchy and resources***

In 1975 – close in time to the peak of Danish corporatism – network structures are supposed to be hierarchical in the sense that networks were dominated by a few central groups – in most cases groups with access to corporative resources. With the advent of new groups and more diversity in the type of groups represented in committees we expect the 2010 networks to be less hierarchical compared to 1975. Power is thus assumed to be more concentrated at the high point of corporatism than today.

There are large differences between the resources available for different groups. The major business groups, the large trade unions, and the most important institutional groups have access to a wide variety of resources – and many of them: They have many members or powerful members, they control large sums of money derived from membership fees, and they control large and professional administrative staffs. Such groups of course have a much, much larger capacity to engage in a number of committees compared to the many groups with very few resources. And they are in most cases more interesting for bureaucrats and ministers to engage with compared to groups without substantial resources. This basic resource logic will not have changed between 1975 and 2010. We therefore hypothesize resources to be important for the position in networks in both years. However, in 1975 corporative resources – that is playing a central role in regard to societal production – are expected to be more dominant than in 2010. Contrary, general financial and professional resources such as the number of staff are expected to be more crucial in 2010.

***2.5 Cross sectoral networks***

Corporative institutions exist across different policy area raising the issue of a potential overlap between participation in different areas. In neo-corporatist theory the large economic interest groups, and in particular the large employers’ and employees’ groups, play a dominant role, not only in the labor market sector, but also in other sectors with corporatist structures. This cross cutting structure follows from the coordinating role of these groups. Due to decorporatization we expect these groups to play a less significant role in 2010 compared to 1975 in sectors that are related to the core corporatist sectors of labor market policy; e.g. education and environment. In this sense we expect less overlap between sectors.

In another understanding of overlap we expect more overlap. In the mid 1970s there was agreement that to some extent the state apparatus was “segmented” in the sense that in some sectors parliamentarians, bureaucrats and interest groups had a much more intimate relationship with each other than with the same groups in other sectors (Damgaard & Eliassen 1978). Policy making in one sector was to some extent isolated from policy making in other sectors. This idea was imported from the Norwegian Power and Democracy study in which the concept of “the segmented state” played an important role (Egeberg et al., 1978). This also implied that networks to a large extent are sectoral which again implies a relatively small overlap between sectors. Some of the new tasks and new political issues which have risen after 1975 are cross-sectoral in their nature. Even if Denmark has a Ministry of the environment, many environmental tasks are performed in other sectors than that of the environment, and often in cross sectoral structures. A new and big issue, integration of immigrants, is organized as part of the Ministry of Social Affairs, but the assignment to improve the integration of immigrants in the Danish Society demands strong coordination between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Employment, the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education, etc. We expect this development to be mirrored in the committee structure, and consequently we expect there to be more overlap between policy sectors in 2010 compared to 1975 for the “new politics” sectors where as we do not expect changes in overlap between “old politics” sectors.

In sum we expect less overlap between sectors as regards the coordinating role, and consequently the presence of the large union groups and business groups and more overlap in terms of inter-sectoral relations in policy sectors with cross cutting functions.

**3. Design and Methods**

The paper compares corporatist committees in 1975 and 2010. The first year lies well before the decline in corporatist structures and is therefore well-suited for a comparison with today. 2010 is the last year for which it has been possible to collect data on public committees.

For 1975 we use the data collected by Buksti and Johansen (cf. ref.). They collected data for all members of public boards and committees (hereafter committees) in 1946, 1965, and 1975. Data on the level of individual members of committees have as far as we can see never been used before. In this data-set we have identified all national interest groups and the positions of these groups constitute the basis of the analyses.

For 2010 a list of membership of all committees still operative on December 31, 2010 has been collected. As in 1975 there is no official list of public committees. The list has been compiled from a number of sources: the Ministry of Finance has a homepage on all public committees, [[1]](#footnote-1) but the homepage is extremely incomplete, since it only counts committees with its own budget on the financial bill. We have therefore used many different sources to compile the 2010 list, inclusive the different ministries’ homepages, newspapers, the homepages of interest groups etc. The weekly internet magazine *A4* (No. 4, 2010) – published by the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) – in 2010 established a list of committees that we have used as control of our own. In a number of cases we have asked the ministry whether a committee was still operative. In a few cases the ministries have answered that after some scrutiny they are not able to say whether a committee is still operative! All members of committees have been coded and their possible affiliation with interest groups registered. For a number of committee members representing interest groups it has been impossible to detect exactly which group the member represents. In the following analysis we only include persons with a clear and explicit relation to a specific group.

A highly debated issue within the network literature is how to measure centrality in networks. In a classical text Freeman (1979) distinguished between degree centrality, closeness centrality and betweenness centrality. The analyses in this paper involve different measures of actors’ positions in committees. First, the *position* measure simply registers the number of unique committee memberships. Second, the *degree* measure registers the number of relations to other groups. Here, dyads – e.g. co-memberships of committees – are the basic unit of analysis. Finally, the *eigen* measure calculates the centrality of actors based on their eigenvector centrality incorporating the links to other central actors.

Survey data are used to obtain a measure of group resources. Again we rely on the extensive data collection carried out in the mid 1970s by Buksti and Johansen. In 1976 a survey: “Interest Groups in Denmark 1976” was administered to all national Danish interest groups. The survey had a response rate of an impressive 85 per cent. From this survey we have retrieved information about the total number of group employees, which is used as the measure of group resources in 1975. Unfortunately, there was a high number of missing answers regarding this question. In effect, it was possible to match survey data on employees with information about group positions for 237 groups (out of 376).

In 2011 a survey has also been carried out among all national Danish interest groups. For this survey a list of groups has been compiled from various sources. The point of departure was a list originally used in a survey in 2004 (Binderkrantz 2005), which was updated with available information from the internet. To this list all groups represented in public committees, appearing in two national news papers and contacting parliamentary committees in the year 2009/2010 were added. Finally, several registers of specific group types found on the internet were checked for further groups. The survey was sent out by e-mail in October 2011 and at present there is a response rate of about 40 per cent. From this survey information about the number of group employees working with political issues have been matched with the data about committee membership. The survey is still on-going so we have only been able to find the data for 106 of the 309 groups included in the 2010 analyses.

**4. Analysis**

***4.1. A system of corporatist integration***

A first question of interest concerns the contours of the institutionalized integration of groups into public decision making. Previously, it has been assumed that the corporatist system involved the privileging of an interest group elite dominated by the major groups related to the labor market. In table 2 we provide a first picture of the composition of boards and committees in 1975 and 2010. The table displays the distribution of positions across groups. In 1975 a total of 1,771 positions were held by 396 groups, whereas 309 groups had 1,599 positions in 2010. It is difficult to provide accurate estimates of group populations (Berkhout & Lowery, 2008), but based on other sources a good estimate is that around 2,000 groups are politically active in Denmark. In this light, the groups participating in boards and committees constitute a minority, but it should also be emphasized that many groups are only sporadically politically active and are therefore not potential participants in corporative arrangements on a more permanent basis.

In both years about half of the groups had only one single position. In contrast 5-6 percent of groups – corresponding to around 15 (2010) and around 25 (1975) groups in absolute numbers – had more than 15 positions. These groups can be seen as the heavyweights of the committee system. In fact, these groups were in possession of more than half of all positions in both years. The distribution of positions is thus highly skewed. Quite many groups participate in the system but hold only one position, while a small elite controls the lion’s share of all seats. This pattern is found in both years demonstrating that remarkably little change has taken place in the overall composition of the system. There is thus no sign that the committee system is less hierarchical or power less concentrated after two decades of corporatist rupture.

***Table 2: Distribution of positions, 1975 and 2010***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Number of positions** | **Percentage of groups** |
|  | **1975** | **2010** |
| 1 | 52 | 48 |
| 2 | 18 | 16 |
| 3-4 | 12 | 16 |
| 5-14 | 12 | 15 |
| 15- | 6 | 5 |
| Total number of positions | 1,771 | 1,599 |
| Total number of groups | 396 | 309 |

This pattern raises the interesting question of who this group elite is and what factors may explain the elite status of groups. Table 3 lists the 10 individual groups with most positions in both years. It also reports the degree of groups, i.e. the number of relations to other interest groups through committees. The assumption here is that all committee positions are not equally important. While every membership provides a group with access to decision making processes, some committees add to this relations to many other interest groups. Finally, we also report the Eigen vector centrality, which incorporates the importance of group relations. This is the best measure of a group’s position in the overall network structure and thus provides information about who the most central players in the system are.

The three different measures of network positions are highly correlated (numbers not reported). Groups with many positions tend – naturally – to have many relations to other groups (degree) and there is also a strong correlation between degree and eigenvector centrality. It is, however, interesting to note that in both years the top scorer in terms of positions is not the group with the most central position. In 1975, ‘Local Government Denmark’ had 101 positions, but ‘The Industrial Council’ had the most central position according to the Eigen measure. In 2010 ‘Agriculture and Food’ were in possession of 126 committee seats, but now Local Government Denmark had a more central position. These differences probably indicate that some parts of the committee system are more segmented than others and that some groups are involved across several policy areas, while others concentrate their work in one or a few areas. The issue of area overlap will be discussed below.

***Table 3: Individual groups and positions, degree and centrality, 1975 and 2010***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Name** | **Number of positions** | **Degree** | **Eigen vector centrality** |
|  |  | ***1975*** |
| 1 | Kommunernes Landsforening | 101 | 102 | .014 |
| 2 | Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening | 95 | 98 | .017 |
| 3 | Amtsrådsforeningen i Danmark | 93 | 94 | .011 |
| 4 | Landsorganisationen i Danmark | 83 | 100 | .018 |
| 5 | Industrirådet | 69 | 112 | .020 |
| 6 | De Samvirkende Danske Landboforeninger | 36 | 85 | .016 |
| 7 | Landbrugsrådet | 32 | 71 | .014 |
| 8 | Danmarks Rederiforening | 29 | 45 | .008 |
| 9 | Handels- og Kontorfunktionærernes Forbund i Danmark | 26 | 68 | .015 |
| 10 | De Samvirkende Danske Husmandsforeninger | 25 | 53 | .011 |
|  |  | ***2010*** |
| 1 | Landbrug og Fødevarer | 126 | 137 | .020 |
| 2 | Forbrugerrådet | 93 | 98 | .015 |
| 3 | Kommunernes Landsforening | 92 | 152 | .021 |
| 4 | Dansk Industri | 87 | 136 | .021 |
| 5 | Landsorganisationen i Danmark | 87 | 80 | .016 |
| 6 | Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening | 65 | 64 | .014 |
| 7 | Danmarks Naturfredningsforening | 58 | 63 | .011 |
| 8 | Danske Regioner | 50 | 135 | .020 |
| 9 | Forsikring og Pension | 47 | 46 | .012 |
| 10 | Dansk Erhverv | 33 | 70 | .013 |

The list of groups illustrate that most groups in the committee elite are indeed the usual suspects of corporatism. By far most of the groups control corporative resources. The major associations of employers and employees in regard to the public and private sector are present in both years and both industrial and agricultural interests are well-represented. In this sense, there is much continuity in the findings. On the other hand two public interest groups have made it to the 2010 list – the Consumer Council and the Danish Society for Nature Conservation (not represented in 1975). This provides some indication of more diversity in the 2010 system compared to 1975 where only groups with corporative resources were in the top ten.

***4.2 More diversity in the system?***

A more overall picture of the role played by different types of groups can be gained by looking at table 4. Here, groups have been divided into different categories: trade unions, business groups, institutional groups, public interest groups and other groups. As discussed in the theoretical section we expect more diversity in 2010; that is we expect groups not possessing corporative resources to play a more central role in the present day system. This expectation is supported by the findings in table 4.

***Table 4: Group type and network position, 1975 and 2010***

|  |
| --- |
| **1975** |
|  | Groups(total) | Positions (total) | Degree (total) | Positions (mean) | Degree (mean) | Eigenvector centrality (mean) |
| Trade unions | 120 | 553 | 1524 | 4.61 | 13.14 | 0.0027 |
| Business groups | 154 | 722 | 2162 | 4.69 | 14.71 | 0.0033 |
| Institutional groups | 21 | 248 | 341 | 11.81 | 17.05 | 0.0021 |
| Public interest groups | 17 | 50 | 141 | 2.94 | 10.07 | 0.0019 |
| Other groups | 84 | 198 | 678 | 2.36 | 8.58 | 0.0017 |
| All groups | 396 | 1,771 | 4,846  | 4.47 | 16.96 | 0.0027 |
| **2010** |
| Trade unions | 81 | 353 | 1135 | 4.36 | 14.01 | 0.0026 |
| Business groups | 132 | 738 | 2183 | 5.59 | 16.54 | 0.0036 |
| Institutional groups | 20 | 174 | 548 | 8.70 | 27.40 | 0.0051 |
| Public interest groups | 23 | 198 | 392 | 8.61 | 17.04 | 0.0037 |
| Other groups | 53 | 136 | 620 | 2.57 | 11.70 | 0.0021 |
| All groups | 309 | 1,599 | 4878 | 5.17 | 15.79 | 0.0032 |

Note: N for positions and means is lower than for groups and positions because a few groups are sole interest representatives in committees.

Trade unions and business groups are the most important groups in terms of the total number of positions and the number of relations to other groups (degree) in both years, and they had the highest mean of centrality in 1975 but no longer so in 2010. The number of trade unions and business groups with positions in the committee system went down in the period under scrutiny, the number of institutional groups is constant, and the number of public interest groups increased from 17 to 23. However, unions and business groups were surpassed in 2010 in terms of mean centrality by institutional groups as well as by public interest groups. The number of institutional groups and public interest groups is not large, but those who occupy positions in the committee system have significantly increased their mean centrality. The only evidence in Table 4 against our hypotheses is that the number of “other” organizations with a position has dropped. Since this is a truly heterogeneous group, it is difficult to interpret the drop.

It is also interesting to note the changed balanced between labor and business. As expected, the balance between business and labor has changed in the favor of business from 1975 to 2010. Compared to labor groups business groups have clearly improved their position. The number of labor groups represented in public committees has been reduced by one third. Business groups by less than a sixth. Business groups now have two positions for each labor position, in 1975 business had 1.3 positions for each labor position, and the mean eigenvector centrality for business groups has increased compared to the constant mean for labor groups. An explanation of the weakened position of labor could be the centralization that has characterized the unions in the period under observation. Union mergers have reduced the number of unions dramatically in the period under scrutiny. If the reduced number of unions should be the main explanation one should have expected the position mean, the degree mean and the eigenvector centrality mean to have increased. This is not the case. The conclusion is clear: Business has gained position in the network structures created by public committee membership relatively to labor.

***4.3 Which resources count?***

It is clear from the above, that groups with corporative resources are very well represented in the committee system of both 1975 and 2010. Nevertheless, we have speculated that these resources are of less importance in 2010 and that more general resources are on the other hand more important. Therefore, we have matched interest groups with committee positions with data from surveys conducted in 1976 and 2011. Table 5 reports the results of regression analysis with the different measures of network positions as dependent variables and the two types of resources as independent variable.

***Table 5: Group type, resources and network position, standardized coefficients (OLS)***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **1975** |
|  | ***Positions*** | ***Degree*** | ***Eigen Vector Centrality*** |
| Corporative resources | 0.082 | 0.106\* | 0.113\* |
| Employees | 0.435\*\*\* | 0.462\*\*\* | 0.426\*\*\* |
|  | 0.198 (N=237) | 0.228 (N=225) | 0.197 (225) |
|  | **2010** |
| Corporative resources | -0.225\*\* | -0.187\* | -0.159\* |
| Employees | 0.698\*\*\* | 0.718\*\*\* | 0.681\*\*\* |
|  | 0.428 (N=106) | 0.466 (N=106) | 0.421 (N=106) |

\*= 0.1 level; \*\*=0.05 level \*\*\* = 0.001 level.

Before interpreting the results it should be noted that these analyses merely explain the variation between groups represented in at least one committee. Rather than explaining whether or not groups take part in the corporative system it therefore seeks to explain which groups are the most central in the system. In 1975, there is a positive effect of being a group with corporative resources although the effect is significant only in regard to degree and centrality and only on the 0.1 level. The number of employees is clearly significant in all three analyses with standardized coefficients between 0.426 and 0.435.

In 2010 the effect of employees – now measured as employees working with political issues – is even more pronounced. Here the coefficients are all about 0.7. Interestingly, corporative resources now have a negative effect on a group’s position in the system and the effect is significant at least at the 0.1 level in all three models. Controlling for general resources it is in fact not an advantage to be a group with corporative resources. Thus the analyses provide ample support for our expectations in regard to the effect of different types of resources.

***4.4 Networks in policy sectors***

For reasons mentioned above we expect the major unions and business groups to play a less prominent role outside of the core corporatist policy sectors. At the same time we expect there to be more cross sectoral overlap in 2010 compared to 1975 in some of the new or newly politicized sectors.

In Appendix A, Tables A1 and A2 we have listed the groups with the most frequent number of positions in four policy sectors: Labor market policy and business policy represents the traditional corporatist sectors. Education and health represent public service sectors that are not core core corporatist sectors, but still very relevant for the traditional corporatist partners.

If we look at each policy sector in isolation we find some interesting signs of continuity as well as change. In the labor market sector all groups represented are either private or public employers or unions in 1975 as well as in 2010. The 1975 labor market list is more hierarchical than the 2010 list. In 1975 the Danish Confederation of Employers (DA) and the LO occupied 61 per cent of the total number of positions among the top-10 holders of committee positions. In 2010 the corresponding figure was only 36 per cent. Business policy committees in 1975 were populated with representatives from the traditional major business groups, i.e agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing, and trade. Consumers were represented by the Danish Consumers Council, and labor by the Economic Council of the Labour Movement. Some changes are found 35 years later. Gone is agriculture and fisheries. The new members, insurance, finance, and telecommunication, mirror changes in the industrial structure. And Local Government Denmark and the Federation of Danish Investment Associations were new players in the sector. Note that the business policy sector has become more and not less hierarchical: The two most frequent groups in 1975 occupied 30 per cent of all positions in the top-10 group. In 2010 the two most frequent groups occupied 63 per cent of the positions. In 1975 education committees were populated by the major employers’ (private and public) and the major employees’ groups. In 2010 two new types of groups have been included in the top-10 group: The rectors of some educational institutions and Disabled Peoples Organisation. The dominating committee actors in 1975 in health policy were the Danish Association of County Councils – in control of the major part of the health sector - and the Danish Medical Association. Local Government Denmark, who had some health care assignments, came on a 3rd place. The rest were smaller players, but represented a variety of groups: Danish Industrial Council, LO, the Agricultural Council, and the Confederation of Professionals in Denmark. In 2010 the major players were the two owners of the public health care system; Danish Regions and Local Government Denmark. All the other organizations, except for the LO, had been replaced by medical societies and a single patient group: the Diabetics Association.

We find mixed evidence for our expectations: In relation to the role played by the major corporatist players outside of the core corporatist sectors we do not get support for our expectation in education. The large unions and the large employers’ groups played a core role in the educational committee system in 1975 as well as in 2010. In 2010 the LO and DA outnumbered all other groups much more significantly than in 1975. On the health policy sector we do find a less prominent role of the classic corporatist partners: They occupied 9 out of 62 positions in 1975, but only 3 out of 73 positions in 2010.

In relation to the degree of sectoral segmentation we also get mixed evidence: Our expectations were related to the non-core corporatist sectors where we expected more cross sectoral overlap. In education we mainly find the usual suspects to dominate in both years, but the appearance of Disabled Peoples Organisation hints increasing overlap between the education and social policy sectors. In health policy we find there to be less cross sectoral representation in 2010 compared to 1975: In 2010 we only find health sector representatives while in 1975 a number of other groups were also represented in the health care committee system.

In sum, our expectations of cross sectoral representation meet contradictory results in confrontation with data: Traditional corporatist players has a heavy representation in the educational committee system today compared to 35 years ago, while they have no longer any top-representation in the health sector. In education we find a chink of more overlap to the social policy sector while the health sector appears more segmented in 2010 than in 1975.

**5. Conclusion**

# Institutional integration of interest group has long been discussed as a crucial feature of policy making. Here, we have focused on the composition of boards and committees in Denmark in 1975 and 2010. Utilizing a unique data set registering every interest group represented in these committees we have been able to analyze the structure and composition of the networks of corporatism. The analyses paint a picture of both continuity and change.

# There is much continuity as regards the type of organizations dominating corporatist networks. Many of the same groups are central players in the two years and groups related to the labor market occupy the highest share of seats in both years. Also, resources are important throughout the period.

# On the other hand, institutional groups and in particular public interest groups have come to have a more central position in 2010. Also, labor unions have lost ground with business groups becoming even more dominant in 2010 than they were in 1975. Interestingly, there is a clear change in the role of resources. In 1975 there was a clear advantage in being a corporative group, but in 2010 the relation is actually negative. More general resources are on the other hand more crucial in the present day committee system than they were at the high-point of corporatism.

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**Appendix A. Policy area and most frequent interest group by number of positions**

***Table A1. Policy area and number of positions, 1975***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Labor market policy** | **Industrial policy** | **Education** | **Health policy** |
| **Name**  | **No** | **Name**  | **No** | **Name**  | **No** | **Name**  | **No** |
| **Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening** | 47 | ***Samvirkende Danske Landboforeninger*** | 23 | ***Kommunernes Landsforening*** | 101 | ***Amtsrådsforeningen i Danmark*** | 23 |
| **Landsorganisationen i Danmark** | 36 | ***Samvirkende Danske Husmandsforen.***  | 20 | ***Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening*** | 95 | Den Almindelige Danske Lægeforening | 14 |
| Specialarbejderforbundet i Danmark | 10 | **Industrirådet** | 19 | ***Amtsrådsforeningen i Danmark*** | 93 | ***Kommunernes Landsforening*** | 9 |
| FR-Hovedorganisation for arbejdsleder- og tekniske funktionær-foreninger i Danmark | 9 | ***Forbrugerrådet*** | 15 | **Landsorganisationen i Danmark** | 83 | **Industrirådet** | 4 |
| Sammenslutningen af Landbrugets Arbejdsgiverforeninger | 9 | Grosserersocietetet | 12 | **Industrirådet** | 69 | Foreningen af Yngre Læger | 3 |
| ***Danmarks Rederiforening*** | 8 | Dansk Fiskeriforening | 10 | ***De Samvirkende Danske Landboforeninger*** | 36 | ***Fællesrådet for Danske Tjeneste-mands- og Funk-tionærorganisationer*** | 2 |
| ***HK Danmark***  | 7 | **Landbrugsrådet** | 10 | **Landbrugsrådet** | 32 | Dansk Tandlægeforening | 2 |
| Foreningen af Arbejdsledere i Danmark | 6 | Danmarks Havfiskeriforening | 8 | ***Danmarks Rederiforening*** | 29 | **Landbrugsrådet** | 2 |
| ***Fællesrådet for Danske Tjenestemands- og Funktionærorganisationer*** | 5 | Håndværksrådet | 8 | ***Handels- og Kontor-funktionærernes Forbund i Danmark*** | 26 | ***Forbrugerrådet*** | 2 |
| Akademikernes Centralorganisation | 5 | Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd | 7 | ***De Samvirkende Danske Husmandsforeninger*** | 25 | **Landsorganisationen i Danmark** | 1 |

***Table A2: Policy area and number of positions, 2010***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Labor market policy** | **Industrial policy** | **Education** | **Health policy** |
| **Name**  | **No.** | **Name**  | **No.** | **Name**  | **No.** | **Name**  | **No.** |
| **Landsorganisationen i Danmark** | 37 | Forbrugerrådet | 65 | **Landsorganisationen i Danmark** | 30 | **Danske Regioner** | 19 |
| **Kommunernes Landsforening** | 30 | Forsikring og Pension | 44 | ***Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening*** | 24 | **Kommunernes Landsforening** | 14 |
| ***Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening*** | 29 | Finansrådet | 13 | **Kommunernes Landsforening** | 11 | Dansk Medicinsk Selskab | 12 |
| ***Dansk Industri*** | 21 | ***Dansk Industri*** | 10 | **Danske Regioner** | 9 | Dansk Sygepleje Selskab | 8 |
| ***Fagligt Fælles Forbund*** | 16 | Telekommunikations-industrien i Danmark | 6 | ***Funktionærernes og Tjenestemændenes Fællesråd*** | 8 | Dansk Selskab for Almen medicin | 5 |
| ***Akademikernes Centralorganisation*** | 14 | Realkreditrådet | 6 | ***Akademikernes Centralorganisation*** | 4 | **Landsorganisationen i Danmark** | 3 |
| Ledernes hovedorganisation | 11 | ***Fagligt Fælles Forbund*** | 5 | Danske Erhvervsskoler - Lederne | 4 | Dansk Cardiologisk Selskab | 3 |
| ***Dansk Erhverv*** | 9 | **Kommunernes Landsforening** | 5 | Sammenslutn. af Landbrugets Arbejdsgiverorg. R | 4 | Dansk Thoraxkirurgisk Selskab | 3 |
| ***Funktionærernes og Tjenestemændenes Fællesråd*** | 9 | Investeringsforenings-rådet | 5 | Professionshøjskolernes Rektorkollegium | 4 | Dansk selskab for Intern Medicin | 3 |
| **Danske Regioner** | 8 | ***Dansk Erhverv*** | 4 | Danske Handicaporganisationer | 3 | Diabetesforeningen  | 3 |

1. . <http://www.fm.dk/Arbejdsomraader/Offentlige%20udgifter/Raad%20og%20naevn.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)