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# **From Classic to Modern Corporatism. Interest Group Representation in Danish Public Committees in 1975 and 2010**

Anne Skorkjær Binderkrantz and Peter Munk Christiansen

## **Abstract**

Involving interest groups in public committees is a crucial feature of policy making in many democratic systems. This article investigates how the composition of committees in Denmark has developed from 1975 to 2010 with specific focus on interest group seats. We argue that the committee system has been adapted in response to societal changes. We expect relatively better representation of citizen groups over time and a decline in the level of concentration in access. These expectations are tested in an analysis of the composition of all public committees in the two years. We find remarkable stability in the 35 year period, but also an adaptation of the committee system largely in the expected direction. This traditional corporatist institution appears less weakened than often assumed.

**Key words:** Corporatism, interest groups, modern corporatism, public committees, representation, Denmark

## **Introduction**

Corporatism was a prominent topic on the research agenda in the 1970s and 1980s, but in recent decades it has been supplanted by issues of seemingly higher relevance. Most scholars focus on decline in corporatist structures as a corollary of broad societal changes, e.g., the fading patterns of class politics, changing political agendas and the media's increasing political importance (Blom-Hansen 2001; Crepaz 1994; Öberg et al. 2011; Schmitter 2008), and argue that corporatist arrangements are of less value for officials and interest groups than in the 1970s and 1980s. However, we posit that central corporatist institutions have in fact survived the potentially undermining effects of societal changes.

We draw on a small literature that points to the existence of corporative arrangements in unexpected situations and incorporation of a wider set of groups than traditionally assumed possible (Baccaro 2003; Feltenius 2007). While some aspects of corporatism have been severely affected by societal changes since the 1970s, other aspects may have survived (Molina and Rhodes 2002). According to recent studies, group involvement in public committees is still common (Catt 2005; Fraussen and Beyers 2014; Fraussen et al. 2014; Binderkrantz et al. 2015). This is one of the most institutionalized types of corporatist interaction (Öberg et al. 2011) and establishing committees with major economic interests was a crucial element of classic corporatism in many countries (Johansen and Kristensen 1982, 191; Christiansen et al. 2010: 28-29).

While public committees are still an important element in policy making and administration in many countries, we argue that the use of public committees and the composition of the involved interest groups have gradually adapted to new political realities. In the course of this development, we expect some interests – citizen groups, i.e. groups concerned with issues not related to society's economic production – to have systematically benefited at the expense of traditional corporatist partners, i.e. economic groups with relation

to society's production. While existing research has analyzed the composition of present day committees (Fraussen and Beyers 2014; Binderkrantz et al. 2015), we know little about how the composition of committees may have changed over time and whether some types of interests have benefited from such developments at the expense of others. The article investigates *the development over time of public committees in terms of degree of concentration and representation of different group types*.

We compare the composition of Danish public committees in 1975 and 2010. Corporatism was at its highest in 1975 (Öberg et al. 2011) and choosing this year allows us to compare the committee structure before and after the alleged decline in corporatism. A time series covering the intermediate years would have been ideal for analyzing the development over time, but it is not possible to establish adequate data on the composition of public committees several decades back in time. Fortunately, we have access to a unique dataset collected by researchers in 1975, which we can compare with a new dataset in 2010. Furthermore, we draw on data from surveys conducted among interest groups in 1976 and 2011.

The next section discusses factors that affect the development of the committee system and presents our expectation about a development from classic corporatism to a modern corporatist system incorporating a more diverse set of interests. After discussing the research design in detail, the article compares the composition of committees in the two years.

## **Decades of change: How corporatist institutions adapt to societal change**

### *Corporatist institutions under pressure*

The core of corporatism – which we define as the institutionalized integration of organized interests in policy making and implementation – is institutional arrangements that include interest groups in the policy making process (Kenworthy, 2003: 11; Molina & Rhodes, 2002:

307). The institutional integration of interest groups in public decision making grants certain groups particular privileged positions (Lembruch, 1984: 61; Öberg et al., 2011: 366) and excludes others (Maloney et al. 1994; Fraussen and Beyers 2014). Membership of public committees and boards is an important positional resource which gives groups opportunities to be heard, political information that is not available to other actors, and relations to other interest groups, bureaucrats and politicians. The Danish committees in focus in this paper are established by law or by ministries. Most committees are permanent, but some – a declining number in the period assessed – are formed to report on a specific topic and then dissolved (Christiansen et al. 2010).

Corporatism may be understood as a resource exchange between interest groups and governmental actors. The prime motive for groups is to influence politics; for government actors it is political and technical support to public decisions (Öberg et al., 2011: 365). Formation of public committees therefore reflects that groups value the access gained via committee positions as well as policy makers' need for policy advice and political support (Fraussen and Beyers 2014: 87). While corporatism was a prominent topic on the research agenda of the 1970s and 1980s, later decades have focused on the extent to which a corporatist framework still provides valid descriptions of the role of organized interests (Christiansen & Rommetvedt, 1999; Crepaz, 1994; Grant, 2001; Kenworthy, 2003: 11; Molina & Rhodes, 2002: 309).

This section discusses a set of interrelated factors, which are argued to affect the resource exchange between interest groups and state actors and consequently to have resulted in an adaptation of the committee system. We focus on developments that may have consequences for the overall value of corporatist arrangements as well as for the relative value of incorporating economic groups and citizen groups in institutionalized interaction

with state actors. While economic groups relate to private or public production, citizen groups are organized around for example demographic groups or environmental protection.

First, the weakened traditional linkages between voters, interest groups and political parties are a crucial factor (Christiansen et al., 2009: 36). While groups and parties in previous decades represented important social cleavages, voting today cross-cuts traditional patterns (Schmitter, 2008: 198). Increased electoral volatility has weakened the unions' capacity to deliver their members' votes to the social democratic parties (Öberg et al., 2011: 386). This development may weaken the ability of traditional corporatist partners to supply public decision makers with valuable resources (Allern et al. 2007).

Second, political conflicts related to economic and distributional issues play a relatively less prominent role compared to 'new politics' issues such as immigration, the environment, and law and order (Stubager, 2009). This reflects underlying socioeconomic developments and spurs changing interest group systems (Berry, 1999; Grant, 2004). More interest organizations mobilize to represent groups that are not related to industrial sectors, which means more public interest groups and more groups representing for example patients, the elderly, environmentalists, and consumers (Binderkrantz, 2008; Öberg et al., 2011). These groups push for access to decision making, and decision makers have an interest in catering to such groups in situations where voters find their issues important.

Third, due to mediatization of politics, all political actors, including interest groups, focus more on presence in the media (Kepplinger, 2002). This may push decision makers' relative attention away from what goes on in public committees and spur groups to make a relative substitution away from traditional insider strategies towards strategies aimed at the media (Binderkrantz, 2012). This may affect the corporatist exchange relation, because corporatist committees are less valuable for politicians and bureaucrats in need of quick responses to developments in media attention. When it comes to the composition of

committees, state actors have an interest in including groups with media appeal, i.e., publicly appealing causes, which make it easy to find a newsworthy angle, solve problems in a peaceful way and avoid conflicts.

Other factors have also been argued to affect corporatist institutions or the politics of organized interests more generally (Schmitter 2008). For example, external pressures from increasing globalization and Europeanisation may have undermined the capacity of domestic institutions. Moving decisions from national to inter- or supranational fora erodes the basis for national level exchanges (Compston 1998). In addition, corporatist arrangements have come under pressure as financial and demographic factors have placed welfare state retrenchment at the top of the political agenda. While it is not difficult to integrate groups in policy formation when programs are being expanded, they may have less value for state actors when the objective is retrenchment of well-established policy programs (Pierson 2001; Öberg et al. 2011). In short, a series of related factors may have negatively affected the value of corporatist institutions as well as the attractiveness of including different types of interest groups in institutionalized interaction with decision makers. Below we discuss the implications in terms of the types of groups represented.

### ***A model of corporatist adaptation***

In response to these developments, corporatist interaction through the committee system has been argued to be generally less valuable for political actors. Interest groups may utilize other channels to obtain influence (Binderkrantz, 2005) and decision makers may value committees less because groups are less capable of delivering their part of the exchange (Öberg et al., 2011). In effect, we expect *a pattern of adaptation to changed circumstances rather than the abolishment of the committee system*. While it is certainly true that corporatism today is not what it was 30-40 years ago, the rumors about its death with the vanishing of industrial

society may be exaggerated. Corporatism may not be as central as in the 1970s, but corporatist institutions such as public committees still serve to integrate interest groups into public policy making and administration (Fraussen et al. 2014; Binderkrantz et al. 2015). Also, corporatist institutions have been identified in unexpected empirical settings and with the involvement of a wider set of groups than usually expected (Baccaro 2003; Feltenius 2007). Table 1 provides an overview of hypothesized adaptation and specifies the elements that may have changed in response to broader societal developments.

Table 1

Corporatism is expected to be a constantly evolving phenomenon ((Molina & Rhodes, 2002: 322) and key corporatist institutions may be capable of adapting to changed societal and political circumstances. The basic rationale of a resource exchange between groups and decision makers is likely to remain, but societal changes may affect both the overall role and status of corporative structures and the types of groups that are best able to supply policy makers with relevant resources. Interest groups and decision makers still have incentives to interact. Groups can provide state actors with important information and political support, and access to public committees is still a crucial instrument in obtaining group goals (Binderkrantz et al. 2015; Bouwen 2004).

When it comes to the extent and importance of group inclusion in corporatist committees we expect a weakening (Öberg et al. 2011). Interest groups are expected to place less emphasis on committee participation and relatively more on other channels such as contacts to MPs or reporters. State actors will benefit from a less committing involvement of groups in the policy making processes and thus make decisions more autonomous of organized interests (e.g. Blom-Hansen 2001; Christiansen and Klitgaard 2010). In short,



rather than playing a core role with *de facto* decision making power, the committee system is expected to play a partial role alongside other channels of interest group intermediation.

Power in the present-day committee system is also expected to be less concentrated. In the heyday of corporatism, power was concentrated on a not very diverse set of economic groups. Access to public committees continually privileges some groups at the expense of others, but a decline in access concentration can be expected over time. State actors have distanced themselves from traditionally powerful groups (Öberg et al. 2011) and new issues and group types have become more prominent. In effect, we expect a broader and more diverse set of groups to be incorporated in committees and, overall, a less concentrated pattern of committee access over time.

Resources such as finances and a professional secretariat are crucial in securing committee positions. Committee membership is time consuming, and resources may also be crucial for the ability to deliver valuable information to bureaucrats and politicians who decide the composition of committees. Other studies have confirmed that resources matter for group access to advisory committees (Fraussen and Beyers 2014; Binderkrantz et al. 2015). Over time, the importance of general resources such as money and staff is expected to decrease. While corporatist structures were traditionally closely linked to resources related to societal production, important resources today are less tangible. Interest groups may thus be incorporated into the system because of their representation of broad societal interests such as environmental causes. Despite declining importance of general resources, the relevance of resources is expected to be maintained over time.

The classic corporatist literature focused almost exclusively on economic groups. Groups addressing specific, well-defined and delimited segments of society typically related to the labor market and industry were more likely to interact with public authorities than groups promoting ideas, values, beliefs and ideologies (Buksti & Johansen, 1979: 197;

Johansen & Kristensen, 1982: 191). From an exchange perspective it can be argued that while the ability to deliver members' votes and assistance in securing policy compliance and enforcement (Cawson, 1985: 7) – have been in decline, resources possessed by other types of interest groups – e.g. causes related to new political questions – have become more important. Consequently, citizen groups such as environmental groups or patients' or parents' groups become more valuable partners for policy makers because voters increasingly care about these issues (Andersen 1999). These group types may also appeal to the media as they represent broad and often media-suited causes (Binderkrantz et al. 2015).

Economic groups can still assist government actors with politically and technically valuable information, and their support or resistance may still be valued resources. They are therefore still expected to play a prominent role in corporatist institutions, but over time their position is likely to have weakened relative to citizen groups. On the other hand, public interest groups and groups representing for example users of welfare services are expected to be new participants in corporatist institutions. They have become more numerous, they are often active in political debates associated with new politics and they may provide policy makers with information and support. In conclusion, and in line with Molina and Rhodes's argument (Molina & Rhodes, 2002: 231), we posit that corporatism has not withered away, but has adapted to new political circumstances. Corporatist structures are less central for public policy making, and access to committees is expected to be less concentrated – i.e. to be less skewed on a few groups – and more diverse – i.e. to include more groups. Also, we expect more seats to be occupied by citizen groups and fewer by economic groups. The empirical analyses investigate these expectations in a comparison of central corporatist institutions in 1975 and 2010.

## **Research design**

The paper compares public committees in Denmark in 1975 and 2010. Denmark has commonly been classified among the medium corporatized countries along with countries such as Germany and the Netherlands (Lijphart and Crepaz 1991; Siaroff 1999). The general decline in corporatism has also been identified in Denmark, especially in terms of involving interest groups in policy preparation (Blom-Hansen 2000; Christiansen et al. 2010). Corporatism was at its highest in the 1970s, and 1975 constitutes a well-suited comparison with 2010, which is well beyond the alleged decline (Christiansen et al. 2010).

Involving groups in public committees is a crucial indicator of institutionalized interaction between groups and public decision makers (Christiansen et al., 2009: 28-29). While the system of public committees in some countries is the result of a single reform (Fraussen et al. 2014), the Danish system has developed incrementally with no or little central coordination.

While committee membership gives groups insider access to public decision making, representation may be neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for influence (Blom-Hansen, 2000: 168). Notably, access to committees is a formalized tool of interaction between groups and government actors, and the most crucial interaction may in fact be informal. However, formal and informal corporatism tend to go together if they do not correlate perfectly (Christiansen et al., 2009: 29). It may thus be assumed that groups with membership in many committees are generally better equipped to affect political decisions than groups with no or a few seats in committees.

We are fortunate to have access to a unique data set covering all national public committees in existence in 1975 as well as their members collected by Buksti and Johansen and utilized in different research publications (Buksti & Johansen, 1979; Johansen & Kristensen, 1982). As displayed in Table 2 below, the total number of committees with group representation was 374.

We have established a comparable data set for 2010. A list of membership of all national public committees operative on December 31, 2010 has been compiled from a variety of sources. The Ministry of Finance has a homepage on public committees, but it only counts committees with their own budget on the financial bill. This makes for a very fragmentary list, so we also used other ministries' homepages, newspapers, interest groups' homepages etc. All committee members have been coded and their affiliation with interest groups registered. Only members who could clearly be identified as representatives of a specific national interest group are included in the analyses. In 2010 we identified 273 committees with interest group representation. In order to ensure comparability over time, we have used the same definition of what a public committee is and the same definition of interest groups in 2010 compared to 1975. In both years a wide range of data sources have been used. It is impossible to fully know whether the two datasets are fully comparable. However, we are quite sure that they are to a large extent and that we have only missed very few if any public committees in 2010. We also believe our results to be robust in the sense that choosing to compare 2010 with 1975 will affect our results only marginally. Existing studies of the Danish committee system point to continuity and gradual change rather than large fluctuations and abrupt changes over time (Christiansen and Nørgaard 2003).

Investigating the representation of different types of interest groups requires comparison with the set of groups that might possibly be included in committees (Binderkrantz et al. 2015; Fraussen and Beyers 2014). Notably, the composition of the interest group population is likely to change over time. The pattern of representation in committees is therefore compared with estimates of the composition of the interest group population based on surveys carried out in 1976 and 2011. Again we rely on Buksti's and Johansen's extensive data collection from the mid-1970s. The 1976 survey was administered to all national Danish interest groups with an impressive response rate of 85

percent. 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. In 2011, we conducted a survey among all national Danish interest groups. For this survey, a list of groups was compiled from various sources including group registers, groups appearing in parliament, newspapers and groups identified in public committees. We also believe the list of groups to be very close to the true interest group population. At least we are sure that no important and politically active group has been omitted. The response rate was 65 percent. To facilitate comparison with the 1975 data as resource measure we use the total number of employees. In 1975 the average number of employees was 10.5 and the median was 1.0. 42.4 percent reported no employees. For 2010 the corresponding figures were an average of 12.9, median 1.1, and 29.8 percent without employees.

Most central for investigating bias and diversity in group representation is the distribution of seats across different types of groups (Schlozman 2012). Group type of all groups responding to the surveys and/or represented in committees has been coded based on group name and available information. A reliability coding of 100 groups resulted in a Cohen's Kappa of .906. In the analyses, we distinguish between different types of groups. With respect to economic groups we distinguish between: 1) trade unions, 2) business groups and 3) institutional groups representing public authorities and institutions.

Citizen groups are rather diverse. A central distinction relates to whether groups represent a specific delimited constituency such as patients or the elderly or whether they work for broader causes such as the environment or humanitarian issues. We distinguish between: 1) professional groups organizing specific job or education related groups, 2) identity groups organizing specific groups not related to the labor market, 3) leisure groups such as sports associations and 4) public interest groups whose members do not have a selective interest in group goals.

## **Analyzing corporatist adaptation**

From 1975 to 2010, the number of committees with interest group representation dropped by 27 percent from 374 to 273 (see Table 2). Most remarkably, while policy preparation was a significant task for many committees in the 1970s, in 2010 only three committees were assigned to drafting specific policies. Instead, the lion's share of committees advised the government or had functions related to implementation. This confirms previous findings of significant changes in the committee structure from 1975/1980 until today and may be interpreted as a move towards a less committing involvement of organized interests in policy making processes (Christiansen et al. 2010). In addition, a series of qualitative studies have documented that corporatist arrangements are not as central to policy making as in previous decades, and that unions in particular play a less privileged role (Blom-Hansen 2001; Christiansen and Klitgaard 2009; Klitgaard and Nørgaard 2014).

[Table 2]

Despite the drop in the number of committees, there has been an overall rise in the number of groups represented in these committees and most markedly in the number of positions held by groups. 378 groups occupied 1,748 committee seats in 1975, while 417 groups occupied 1,964 seats in 2010 – corresponding to a 12 percent rise in number of seats held by groups. This may be interpreted as an accommodation to the changed circumstances discussed above. While the number of committees has declined, each committee now has a higher number of group representatives possibly providing for broader representation of societal interests. The level of exclusiveness in committee representation seems to have declined. The value

associated with having a seat at the table can also be assumed to be lower in a situation where more interests are represented in a committee.

Is the lion's share of seats occupied by a few core groups or are seats distributed relatively evenly among the represented groups? And can we identify the expected decrease in concentration over time? While having at least one committee position indicates some degree of access, there may be considerable variation in the 'level of insidersness' across the represented groups (Fraussen and Beyers 2014). Table 2 shows that committee positions were highly unequally distributed across groups in both years. While the median group occupied two seats in both years, the maximum number of positions – in both years held by the association of local authorities, Local Government Denmark – was 101 in 1976 and 126 in 2010.

In 1975, 46.3 percent of the groups occupied only one seat, and 15.9 percent occupied two seats. At the other end of the spectrum, 18.8 percent had 4-9 seats, and 8.5 percent had more than ten seats. In 2010, even higher percentages of groups had one or two seats (49.9 and 18.2 percent respectively), while the percentage of groups with 4-9 seats and more than ten seats was somewhat lower (12.0 and 8.2 percent). In 2010, more groups were thus represented in committees, but this did not mean that more groups became core players.

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of seats for each of the two years. The sharp rise demonstrates that the best-represented groups occupied a very high percentage of all positions. In 1976, 27 groups had half of all positions, and in 2010 only 20 groups accounted for half of the positions. The two lines cross around 80 percent of seats occupied by about 123 different groups. While the 2010 line exhibits a sharper rise in the beginning – indicating a higher level of concentration – than the 1975 line, it eventually flattens out as more groups are represented with one or two committee seats in 2010.

[Figure 1]

With regard to the level of concentration in group access, the analyses clearly confirm that committee access is highly concentrated. The evidence is more mixed with respect to the development over time. On the one hand, more groups are represented in committees, and the number of seats has risen. On the other hand, the concentration of seats on a core set of groups is even higher in 2010 than in 1975. The difference in access between groups included in the committee system is thus higher in 2010.

The next question is how the representation of group types have developed. Can we identify the expected development towards more representation of citizen groups? In line with Fraussen and Beyers (2014), we distinguish between peripheral groups holding only one seat, regular players holding between two and nine seats and core players occupying ten or more seats. In both years, the peripheral groups controlled about 10 percent of seats. In 1975, the regular players occupied 37 percent, and the 32 core players held 53 percent. In 2010, 30 percent of seats were occupied by regular players, and 34 core players controlled an impressive 60 percent of all committee positions.

There is remarkable stability among the core players. Almost two-thirds (20 groups) of the groups holding ten or more seats in 2010 were also on the list of core players in 1975. At the very top the overlap is even higher. In 2010, 12 groups occupied 25 or more positions and all 12 were also among the core players in 1975. Among them are the main industrial and labor market organizations, the two organizations of local and regional governments and – as the only public interests group – the Danish Consumers' Council.

Figure 2 illustrates the development in the share of citizen groups (vs. economic groups) within the group population and among the peripheral players, regular players and core players in the committees. The figure provides clear evidence of the dynamics of the



committee system. In both years, citizen groups are more numerous in the group population than in the committees – and their underrepresentation is particularly evident among the core players. The other side of the coin is by implication that economic groups are very strongly represented in public committees – in 1975 87.5 and in 2010 79.4 percent of the core players were economic groups. Over time, citizen groups raised their share of the group population and became more numerous at all levels of the committee system.

[Figure 2]

While the overall pattern supports our expectation, we also note that the developments are not parallel for all group types. Figure 3 illustrates the development for four group types – trade unions, business groups, identity groups and public interest groups. For each year and group type the figure compares the share of the population and the share of all committee positions. The figures confirm the strong representation of economic groups and the weak representation of citizen groups. In all cases, the share of committee positions is higher than the population share for economic groups and lower for citizen groups.

As regards development over time, the figures illustrate interesting differences among group types. Trade unions have experienced a small drop in population share and a somewhat larger drop in the share of positions. The population share of business groups has dropped from 37.5 in 1975 to 25.5 in 2010, while the share of committee seats has increased from 38.8 to 40.9. While this is not a large increase in absolute terms, business groups have clearly gained relative to trade unions.

[Figure 3 here]

It is also interesting to note the developments for identity groups and public interest groups. Their share in the population has increased – most markedly, the share of public interest groups in 2010 was three times higher than the share in 1975. However, they have not been equally successful in entering the committee system. Identity groups occupied a higher share of positions in 1975 than in 2010, whereas public interest groups increased their seat share from 4.8 to 15.6 percent. As seen above, a few of these groups have even made it to the core of the committee system.

The analyses clearly confirm the expected strong representation of economic groups, which have a higher share of committee seats than their numbers would suggest in both years. In particular, the core players are very likely to be economic groups. In 1975, only one out of every ten groups and in 2010 only two out of every ten groups in the core was a citizen group. Over time, citizen groups have generally seen a higher level of representation, but this development has been most evident for public interest groups, while a lower share of seats are occupied by identity groups such as students or patients. Also, compared with their presence in the interest group population, public interest groups are in fact more underrepresented in committees today than they were in 1975. Even though societal changes seem to have affected the pattern of group representation, the effect on group mobilization is higher than on access to committees.

Our final expectation concerns the role of group resources in explaining group access to committees. We investigate this in two negative binomial regressions with the number of committee positions as dependent variable, cf. Table 3. A measure of the number of group employees is included to test the effect of group resources. This has been logarithmically transformed and recoded to range from 0 to 1. Along with resources we include dummy variables for different group types to test the effect of group type on access when controlling for resources possession.

[Table 3]

We use business groups as reference group. Positive – and significant – coefficients for other group types therefore indicate that it is easier for that group type to be represented than business groups, and vice versa for negative coefficients. In 1975, trade unions were more likely than business groups to gain seats in committees, while professional groups and leisure groups were both significantly less well represented in the committee system than business groups. This confirms the pattern of representation illustrated in Figure 2. In 2010, the relative gain of business discussed above is also supported by the analysis controlling for resources. Now, the coefficients for trade unions and institutional groups are negative although not significant. Identity groups, leisure groups and public interest groups are significantly less likely to gain many seats than business groups. As discussed above, identity groups and public interest groups are more numerous in the 2010 population than in the 1975 population and even though public interest groups are also much better represented in committees, the regression analysis demonstrates that they have in fact lost ground relative to their presence in the population.

The effect of resources is positive and significant in both years, confirming previous findings of the importance of resources for access to the state apparatus through committees (Fraussen and Beyers 2014). The coefficient in 2010 is lower than in 1975, indicating that resources have become somewhat less important for gaining a strong foothold in the committee system. While this result should not be over-interpreted, it supports the expectation that resources of a less tangible nature may matter more for inclusion in the present-day committee system.

## Conclusion

Corporatist institutions have come under pressure as a range of societal developments have affected the resource exchange between interest groups and state actors underlying corporatism. We have argued that corporatist institutions have systematically adapted rather than withered away over the last 35 years. In this development from classic to a more modern corporatist system, committees with interest group participation play a more partial role in the decision making process. In 2010 there were fewer committees with group representation than in 1975 and the role of committees had changed as notably fewer committees were tasked with drafting political decisions.

Despite fewer committees, more groups are invited to join committees and more seats are occupied by interest groups. This may indicate that the value of a committee seat has dropped – it is presumably more interesting to be invited as one of a few select groups. A larger question is whether access to committees in general equals influence to the same degree today as previously. While we cannot address the question adequately with the present data, we assume that the committee system – and thus committee access – is less central for policy making than previously. The inclusion of more groups through the committee system also means that access is less concentrated as a broader range of groups are represented in committees. Still, the pattern of access is highly unequal. A select set of groups occupy the lion's share of seats and the concentration at the top is even more pronounced in 2010 than in 1975. With more groups represented in at least one committee and a higher level of concentration at the core of the system, the effect is more variation in the 'level of insidersness' (Fraussen and Beyers 2014).

Economic groups such as trade unions and business groups were very strongly represented in 1975 and they have kept their relative advantage vis-à-vis citizen groups in 2010. The balance in the system nevertheless moved towards the inclusion of more citizen

groups. They are more numerous in the 2010 population of national interest groups and they have also gained a higher share of seats in committees. Interestingly, the development has not been similar for all subtypes of economic and citizen groups. The fact that business groups have gained relative to trade unions may be the cause of the weakened political position of labor in general; at least the two phenomena are correlated (Klitgaard and Nørgaard 2014). Among citizen groups, the main winners have been public interest groups, while identity groups have gained less ground.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that the basic exchange logic of interest group involvement in public committees remains a good interpretation of what goes on between interest groups and state actors (Fraussen and Beyers 2014; Binderkrantz et al. 2015). Even though some change is evident, the patterns of access have remained remarkably stable over the 35 years analyzed here. This is evidence of the continued relevance of interest group resources for public decision makers. The system clearly privileges major societal interests related to production in the private and public sector. Still, the identified changes indicate that the important resources gradually change over time – while traditional resources are still important, citizen groups have become more attractive for state actors in response to societal developments such as increased mediatization, the decline of class-politics, and the advent of new political issues.

While central corporatist institutions have adapted to changed political circumstances rather than withered away, it is not timely to talk about yet another century of corporatism. Corporatism is a multifaceted phenomenon, and the committee structure analyzed here constitutes a type of corporatist arrangement that can be compatible with both classic corporatist patterns of interest intermediation and more pluralist interest group systems. Also in the Danish system do interest groups have other ways of affecting decision makers – such as communication via the media and informal lobbying of the administration and MPs (cf.

Binderkrantz et al. 2015) – and these channels of influence have probably become more frequently exploited in the period we are studying.

Our results thus correspond with other studies that illustrate that some aspects of corporatism may be very much alive, while others may be dead (Baccaro 2003; Molina and Rhodes 2002). Notably, corporatist institutions have been adapted to meet new political circumstances and now operate alongside other channels of interaction between societal interests and public decision makers (Binderkrantz et al. 2015).

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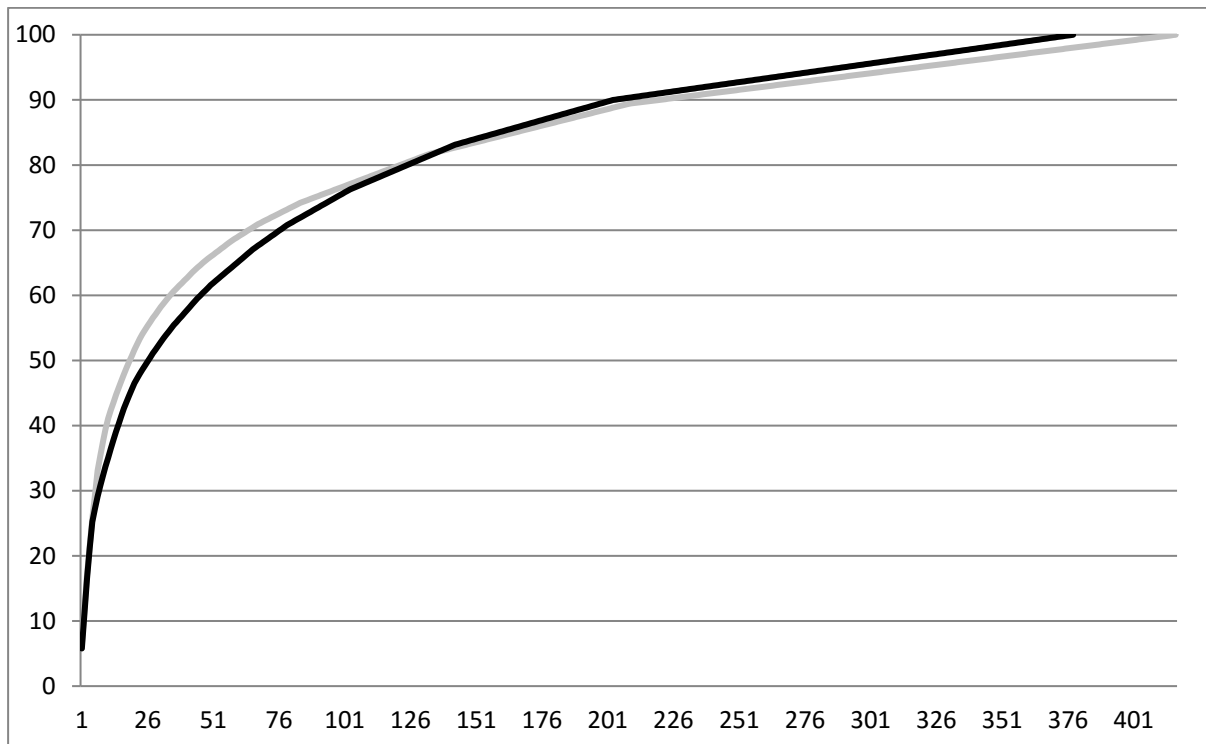
**Table 1: Adaptation of corporatism**

	<b>Classic corporatism</b>	<b>Modern corporatism</b>
Nature of intermediation	Encompassing	Partial
Degree of state autonomy	Low	High
Degree of concentration	High	Moderate
Degree of diversity	Low	Moderate
Role of general resources	High	Moderate
Type of resources supplied by groups	Compliance and enforcement of policies	Technical and political information
Type of interests represented	Clear overweight of economic groups	Better representation of citizen groups

**Table 2: Number of committee positions held by interest groups**

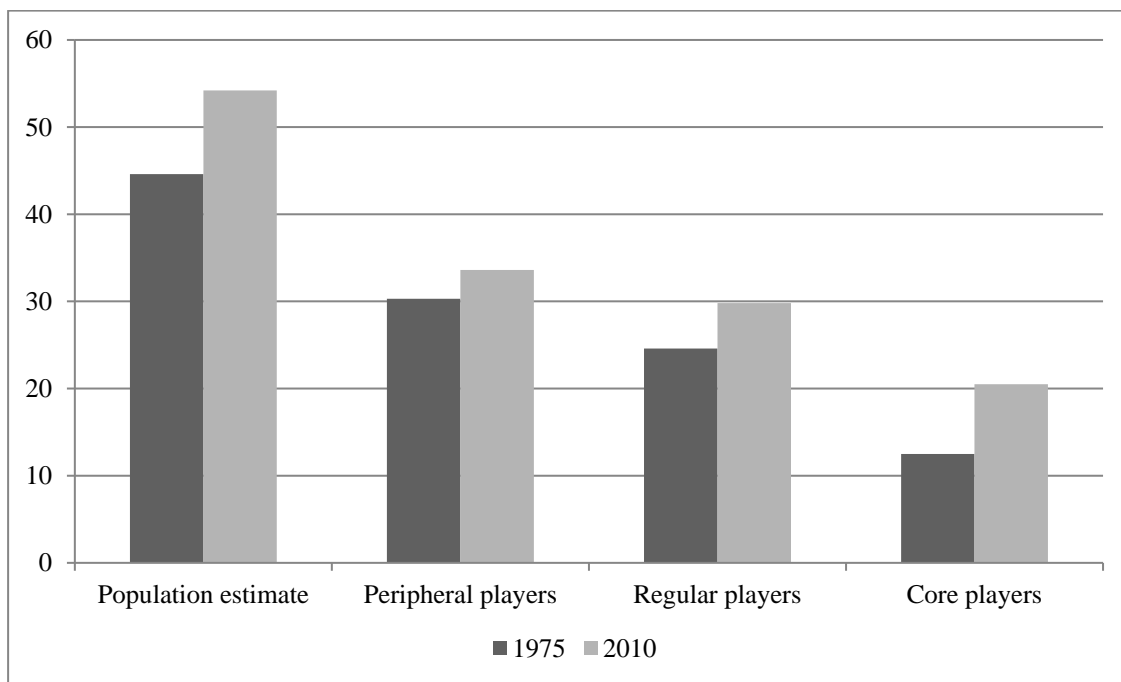
	<i>1975</i>	<i>2010</i>
Number of committees	374	273
Total no. of positions	1,748	1,964
No. of interest groups	378	417
Mean	4.6	4.7
Median	2.0	2.0
Maximum	101	126
One position	46.3	49.9
Two positions	15.9	18.2
Three positions	10.6	11.8
4-9 positions	18.8	12.0
10+ positions	8.5	8.2
Total	100.0	100.0

**Figure 1: Percentage of seats held by different numbers of groups**



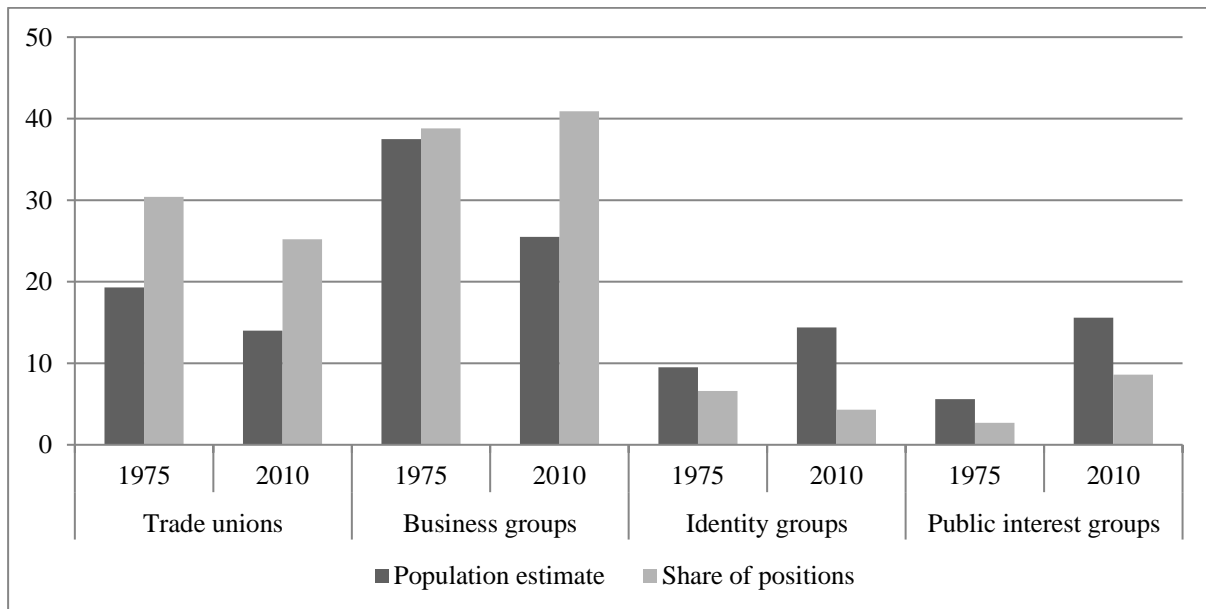
Note: Black line represents 1975; grey line 2010.

**Figure 2: Share of citizen groups, 1975 and 2010**



Note: Population estimates are based on group surveys. Only organisations involved in politics are included. Peripheral players occupy one committee position; regular players 2-9 positions and core players 10 or more positions.

**Figure 3. Group type and population and position share, 1975 and 2010**



Note: The population estimates are based on group surveys. Only organisations involved in politics are included.



**Table 3: Negative Binomial Regression with number of committee positions as dependent variables, 1975 and 2010.**

		1975	2010
		Coefficients (standard errors)	Coefficients (standard errors)
Group type	Business groups	Ref.	Ref.
	Trade unions	0.87** (0.23)	-0.34 (0.22)
	Institutional groups	1.02** (0.39)	-0.11 (0.29)
	Professional groups	-0.40 (0.33)	0.34 (0.28)
	Identity groups	0.28 (0.31)	-0.72** (0.25)
	Leisure groups	-0.92** (0.293)	-1.22*** (0.284)
	Public interest groups	-0.14 (0.41)	-0.92*** (0.24)
Resources	Employees	6.73*** (0.50)	6.79*** (0.39)
	Constant	-1.75*** (0.18)	-1.69*** (0.16)
	Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.12	0.15
	N	933	1,076

Note: Levels of significance: \* = 0.05, \*\* = 0.01, \*\*\* = 0.001.

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