



SGI

Sustainable
Governance
Indicators

2014 Parties and Interest Associations Report

Intra-party Democracy, Association Competence (Business),
Association Competence (Others)



Indicator

Intra-party Democracy

Question

How inclusive and open are the major parties in their internal decision-making processes?

41 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = The party allows all party members and supporters to participate in its decisions on the most important personnel and issues. Lists of candidates and agendas of issues are open.
- 8-6 = The party restricts decision-making to party members. In most cases, all party members have the opportunity to participate in decisions on the most important personnel and issues. Lists of candidates and agendas of issues are rather open.
- 5-3 = The party restricts decision-making to party members. In most cases, a number of elected delegates participate in decisions on the most important personnel and issues. Lists of candidates and agendas of issues are largely controlled by the party leadership.
- 2-1 = A number of party leaders participate in decisions on the most important personnel and issues. Lists of candidates and agendas of issues are fully controlled and drafted by the party leadership.

Denmark

Score 8

Four of the political parties represented in the Danish parliament, the Liberal Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Social Liberal Party and the Conservative Party have existed for more than 100 years and have all regularly taken part in governments. Since they are either in power or have the prospect of being in the next government, they have a strong interest in proposing plausible and coherent policies, and indeed it is fair to say that they do so. Newer parties, including the third biggest party currently in the People's Assembly, the Danish People's Party, may be more tempted to propose popular, even populist, policies. But parties that have ambitions of being included in a future government have to moderate their views. One could argue that such has been the case of the Socialist People's Party, which is now part of a government for the first time. In many ways it has moved closer to the Social Democratic Party in recent years. In the process, it has lost support from the Unity List on the left. The current government is blamed for continuing the policies of the former Liberal-Conservative government. So "blue" policies instead of "red" policies is the complaint from more socialist-oriented voters.

The interest in taking part in government forces parties to be sensitive to the opinions of the electorate, especially their active members. Therefore, the internal party structure has to be democratic. Parties have annual meetings

where policies are determined and leaders elected. They are open to the press and covered widely. The ongoing economic crisis is a strong structural determinant of current government policies, irrespective of political colors.

Citation:

Who's who in the Danish Parliament and the government, March 22nd 2013. http://www.thedanishparliament.dk/Publications/~media/Pdf_materiale/Pdf_publicationer/English/Whos_who_in_the_folketing_220313.pdf.ashx (accessed 24 April 2013).

Websites of the Danish political parties currently represented in the Folketing:

The Liberal Party: www.venstre.dk

The Conservative Party: www.konservative.dk

The Danish People's Party: www.danskfolkepart.dk

The Social Democratic Party: www.socialdemokratiet.dk

The Social Liberal Party: www.radikale.dk

The Socialist People's Party: www.sf.dk

The Unity List: www.enhedslisten.dk

The Liberal Alliance: <http://liberalalliance.dk>

Finland

Score 8

In 2012, four major parties hold seats in the Finnish parliament (Eduskunta). Although empirical research on intraparty democracy has focused on only one party (the Center Party, or Kesk), there is little doubt that the findings from this case study are more or less valid for the three other major parties as well. Generally, the internal decision-making system of parties concerned has developed structurally in two directions. While active party members operate party field organization, leadership and national policy functions are largely decided by people who have politics as an occupation and constitute the party's elite. This dualism has thus placed power in the hands of party elites, especially the chair and the closest followers of the party. At the same time, the distance has increased between party leaders and the party membership. As party meetings are the highest decision-making institutions in Finnish party life, and individual party members as a rule participate in party meetings through elected delegates only, the input of members remains indirect at best.

Citation:

Karina Jutila, "Yksillä säännöillä, kaksilla korteilla", Dissertation, University of Tampere, 2003; Rauli Mickelsson, "Suomen puolueet. Historia, muutos ja nykypäivä", Tampere: Vastapaino, 2007.

Iceland

Score 8

In the April 2013 parliamentary elections, four out of 15 parties gained more than 10% of the votes. These were the traditional parties that constitute Iceland's four-party system. The four main parties all hold their national conventions every second year. The conventions are the supreme decision-

making forums for the parties. The conventions issue resolutions on many major issues, tying the hands of politicians who are in many ways obliged to abide by these general directives. In all parties, representatives from all regional and local party units have the right to participate in these conventions. The number of representatives attending is proportional to the number of party members in each unit. The nomination processes vary slightly among parties. Today, all parties except the Progressives have primary elections in which only party members have the right to vote. In the case of the Social Democrats, party membership is not required, but a signed declaration of support is necessary. The Progressives have different rules, under which most constituencies have a constituency board (Kjördæmisráð) that nominates candidates to a constituency congress (Kjördæmisþing). Local-party units send representatives to these congresses in proportion to their number of members.

The 2012 constitutional bill proposed that the selection and ranking of party candidates in parliamentary elections be left to the voters on Election Day, by allowing voters to rank candidates on their preferred party lists, and even by voting for candidates across party lists. This would be more democratic in that it would significantly reduce the number of safe seats. At present, it is quite common for candidates with relatively minimal popular support in the form of internal party elections to win office as a result of their party's overall support.

Luxembourg

Score 8

The internal democratic practices of all political parties in Luxembourg is inclusive and functions well. Party members can participate in party matters without barriers and in the selection of candidates if they so desire. Annual party conferences are well-attended and are often characterized by intense debates. An indicator to support the health of intra-party democracy is the fact that not infrequently proposals made by party leadership regarding candidates especially are often overturned by the rank and file.

Citation:
<http://www.land.lu/2011/05/19/der-linke-flugel-der-lsap/>

Norway

Score 8

All political parties give special preference to their members in terms of internal decision-making. Party manifestos are approved at annual meetings, while regional party meetings nominate candidates for elections. Non-party members can be nominated as electoral candidates, but this is rare. In most

parties, attempts are made to anchor major policy issues among party members and party representatives. As of the time of writing, seven parties were represented in parliament, of which only three received more than 10% of the vote: the Labor Party (a traditional Scandinavian social-democratic party), the Conservative Party (Høyre, a moderate conservative party) and the Progress Party (a populist right-wing party). Two fringe parties, the Socialist Left Party, which is to the left of Labor, and the Progress Party, to the right of Høyre, have drawn more criticism than other parties for “irresponsibility.” The Progress Party in particular has been criticized for fiscal recklessness and for engaging in some anti-immigration rhetoric, although this has recently been moderated. However, the Socialist Left Party proved eminently responsible when it joined Labor and the Center Party in a coalition government in 2005 and its chairwoman became finance minister. Similarly, the Progress Party has worked hard in recent years to make itself “responsible” with a view to becoming a credible coalition partner with Høyre in a future government formation. None of the parties individually entertain policies that are systematically implausible.

Sweden

Score 8

All the major parties have developed extensive party organizations, in part supported by state subsidies. Party membership has historically been high but has declined over the last couple of decades. Elected delegates from all constituencies make decisions on party policy and programs at national conferences. These meetings are increasingly public events, used not only as forums to make decisions, but also to market the party politically.

Candidate selection, too, is an internal party matter. Voters do have the opportunity to indicate support for specific candidates, however.

Over the past years, the Internet has played a role in making the decision-making process within the major parties more open. The Social Democratic Party, for instance, discussed some issues of the party’s platform in blogs and on its homepage. In such instances, even those who are not members of the party can join in the formulation of the party’s platform.

United States

Score 8

There are two major parties, the Democratic and Republican Parties, operating at the local, state, and federal levels in nearly all areas of the country. Unlike in parties in parliamentary systems, individual office holders (for example, members of Congress) decide their own positions on policy issues, subject to informal influence from party leaders. Thus, party programs

or platforms, amounting to collective statements of party policies, do not exist. A national party platform is written every fourth year at each party's presidential nominating convention, but it is mostly a campaign document of the presidential candidate, albeit with some features designed to rally the support of influential interest groups. The occasion for intra-party democracy is, therefore, the nomination of party candidates for office. Party nominations are determined mostly in primary elections, conducted by the states.

The presidential primaries and caucuses run from January to June of the election year in every state, leading to the formal selection of the winning candidate in July or August. Primary elections are very open. Any candidate can enter a primary contest in either party for any office – on the basis of collecting signatures and filing papers. Party organizations have no formal role in the selection, and may or may not have influence through endorsements, recommendations to financial contributors, and the like. Any citizen can vote – with differences between states in whether registration as a party supporter is required.

Canada

Score 7

There are three major political parties at the federal level in Canada: the Conservatives, the Liberals and the New Democrats.

The Conservative Party is tightly controlled by party leader Stephen Harper. Decisions on policy and electoral strategy are made by a small number of senior officials close to him. Grassroots views and resolutions passed at party conventions provide input into the decisions of the elite, but are not binding. For example, many Conservative party members would like measures taken to restrict abortion, but Stephen Harper refuses to act on this because of fear of alienating the general public, which is content with the status quo on the issue.

In April 2013, the Liberal Party of Canada elected a new leader, Justin Trudeau, through a very open voting process that allowed non-members to vote. The party's policy formulation process for the 2015 federal election was just beginning as of the time of writing, but appeared to be quite open.

The New Democrat Party (NDP) elected a new leader, Thomas Mulcair, in March 2012 after the death of Jack Layton. Under Layton, the party had made major gains in the 2011 federal election, becoming the official opposition. The most recent NDP policy conference saw diverse views expressed on many issues, but any resolutions passed were not binding on the leadership in its development of a policy program.

Germany

Score 7

In the period under review, the German political-party establishment came under pressure from various social movements supporting civil rights, direct democracy and greater grassroots participation. The success of the Pirate Party, which managed to win seats in a number of state elections, prompted established parties to begin enhancing their own procedures of intraparty democracy. For example, FDP leader Philip Rösler initiated a member survey on the appropriate future course of action regarding the euro rescue measures. The proposal submitted by the FDP executive gained a slight majority. In November 2012, members of the Alliance '90/Greens party had the opportunity to elect their party's top two candidates for the upcoming general elections. The ballot drew 61.73% of registered party members. In 2011, SPD party leader Sigmar Gabriel failed to open candidate elections to non-members, while the Christian Democrats have retained traditional hierarchical decision-making practices and candidate-election procedures. In parties' day-to-day business, party members generally play little decision-making role.

Israel

Score 7

During the Israeli legislative elections in 2013, the 12 parties that won seats in the Knesset demonstrated varying levels of intra-party democracy. Three of the major four elected parties exhibited a high level of inclusiveness and openness in their internal decision-making processes.

A week before the elections, the Israel Democracy Institute unveiled its 2013 Party Democracy Index, a mechanism that allows voters to evaluate the degree of internal democracy practiced by the country's political parties. In this assessment, the Likud party and the Israel Labor Party (Havoda) were ranked at the top of the index, the Ha'Bayit Ha'Yehudi party was ranked fourth, and the Yesh Atid party, which placed second in the general elections, was ranked 10th out of 18 parties.

The Likud, Labor and Ha'Bayit Ha'Yehudi parties all chose their candidates through primary elections. In this internal election process, registered party members were given the right to choose the parties' Knesset candidates. However, the parties that use this method limit primary participation to those who have been party members for a certain amount of time.

The Labor, Likud and Ha'Bayit Ha'Yehudi parties also have elected representative institutions that take part in selecting the parties'

representatives in the government, decide whether their parties will join or leave a governing coalition, and conduct debates over policy matters.

The Yesh Atid party restricts decision-making to party members, but important decisions are centralized. According to the party's regulations, the party's leader and founder, Yair Lapid, will remain leader until the end of the 20th Knesset. Moreover, the regulations authorize the party's leader to decide on most important personnel issues, such as the list of electoral candidates. In addition, the leader has considerable power within the party's institutions, and thus significant influence on its policy.

Citation:

"The Party Democracy Index," Israel Democracy Institute, 2013.

Kenig, Ofer&Assaf Shapira, "Primary Season in Israel," Israel Democracy Institute, 2012.

"The Party's Institutions," Labor website (Hebrew).

"Likud's Constitution," Likud Website (Hebrew).

"Yesh Atid Party's Regulation," Yesh Atid Website (Hebrew).

The Party Democracy Index, IDI (English)

<http://en.idi.org.il/projects/government-structure/political-reform/the-party-democracy-index/>

Lithuania

Score 7

Lithuanian parties usually restrict decision-making to party members. Although in many cases, all party members can participate in important decisions, their capacity to influence the most critical party decisions is insufficient. Some political parties are more democratically structured than others: in 2007, the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, the Lithuanian Christian Democrats and the Homeland Union were found to be the most democratic in terms of internal decision-making. The latter two parties have since merged to form a single party, whose leader is directly elected by all party members. By contrast, some other political parties are primarily used as a platform for their leaders to express their own political interests.

Citation:

G. Žvaliauskas, Ar partijos Lietuvoje yra demokratiškos? Technologija, Kaunas, 2007.

Poland

Score 7

For a decade political parties have worked under legislation which strictly defines the role of a political party and how parties are financed. Since most funding is public, the government strongly stipulates that parties themselves are governed by democratic principles. The reality however is mixed, with some parties meeting democratic standards while others falls short. Charismatic party leaders such as Janusz Palikot of Palikot's Movement hold strong positions within their party, as does Jarosław Kaczyński, president of

the conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party since 2003. By contrast, the Civic Platform (PO) has often experienced intra-party controversies. In 2012 and 2013, a conservative faction around Justice Minister Jarosław Gowin increasingly challenged Prime Minister Tusk, also party leader – a clash that led to Gowin’s dismissal in May 2013 and later culminated in an intra-party election by direct vote in August 2013. With the Polish People’s Party (PSL), its long-time leader Władimir Pawak was unexpectedly voted out of office at a party convention in November 2012.

Cyprus

Score 6

In the years since 2000, political parties have introduced procedures giving all party members (and in some cases their friends) the right to elect party governing bodies and high officials, and to nominate or be nominated as candidates for public office. The rules are more restrictive for nominating national presidential candidates or candidates associated with party alliances. In practice, leadership groups tend to try to reach consensus in such a way as to avoid elections, while other procedures tend to undermine the power of grassroots party organizations.

The Democratic Rally (Δημοκρατικός Συναγερμός, DISY) was the first party to offer all party members (and later members’ friends) voting rights in electing high officials and governing bodies, as well as a voice in nominating candidates to elected public offices. Non-party members can be nominated as candidates or chosen by the chairperson of the party.

In both the 2010 and 2013 DISY intraparty elections, and its nomination of candidates to the 2011 parliamentary and municipal and mayoral elections, efforts to find consensus candidates dominated the procedures, limiting the importance of member voting. The DISY’s 2013 presidential candidate was selected by the approximately 1,000 members of the party’s Supreme Council.

DISY electoral programs are drafted and approved by the party’s governing bodies. Opinion polls and advice provided by communications consultants shape the choices made.

The Progressive Party of the Working People (Ανορθωτικό Κόμμα Εργαζομένου Λαού, AKEL) has also opened its nomination decisions to members and their friends, while adhering to the principle of democratic centralism. Lists of candidates proposed at party-cell level or higher, depending on the kind of elections, are collected and ranked by selection committees in advance of final decisions by the Central Committee (CC). Thus, the CC finalizes lists of candidates to elected public

offices, while the party congress, made of 1,200 to 1,400 party cadres nominated by party cells, elects the 105 members of the CC itself. The members of the CC elect their own secretary general. AKEL's presidential candidate is selected first through a party-cell vote, and then by the vote of a special electoral congress. Electoral programs are approved by the party's governing bodies.

The Democratic Party (ΔημοκρατικόΚόμμα, DIKO) established the direct election of its leadership by party members after 2000. However, all party candidates including the presidential candidate are selected by the central committee (made up of 150 members). The central committee also approves the electoral program.

Thus, even though Cyprus' parties differ in their internal practices, important issues in each are usually decided in a centralist manner.

Czech Republic

Score 6

Four parties have dominated Czech politics in the period under review. The Civic Democratic Party (Občanská demokratická strana, ODS) and TOP09 (Tradice Odpovědnost Prosperita 09, TOP09) stand on the right and have been the main forces in the coalition government. The Czech Social Democratic Party (Česká strana sociálně demokratická, ČSSD) and the Communist Party (Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy, KSČM) have been the main opposition forces. Their internal structures, both formally and in practice, are remarkably similar. Each has a structure of local and regional committees with supreme authority in a congress, organized at regular intervals or when demanded by representatives of a set proportion of the membership. A member has the right to stand for any position and to vote for delegates to the next level in the hierarchy. The national congress elects the party leaders. That is the practical means for expression of political differences. Other debates show little controversy and are dominated by figures from party leaderships. Ordinary members can raise their voice by commenting on party blogs, and leaderships usually establish some advisory committees with wider membership, but direct involvement from ordinary members is, in practical terms, limited.

Italy

Score 6

With regard to intra-party democracy, the major Italian parties differ very significantly. At one extreme, the People of Freedom Party's (Popolo della Libertà) decision-making and leadership selection remain fundamentally dominated by its leader Berlusconi. An attempt to adopt primaries to

designate the candidate for the position of coalition leader and (potentially) prime minister before the last elections was abruptly stopped when Berlusconi decided to run again as leader. The situation is rather different in the main center-left party, where the position of coalition leader was decided through primaries open not only to party members but to any one willing to subscribe a declaration of support for the center-left coalition.

A similar procedure was adopted for the selection of parliamentary candidates. Primaries however have not fully displaced the power of the party apparatus and elites when it comes to crucial choices. The Five Star Movement (Movimento Cinque Stelle) of Beppe Grillo has also introduced new mechanisms of online direct consultations for decisions and for candidate selection. At the same time, behind the scene (and sometimes openly), the leader of the movement has maintained for himself a strong steering role. Unfortunately with the rare exception of the center-left party Democratic Party (Partito Democratico) there is little intra-party democracy in Italy's political system. Personalization determines the lack of democracy and inclusion inside parties and is the reason for the lack of confidence and credibility Italians feel for politics and their political parties.

Mexico

Score 6

In terms of candidate selection, it is normal for the presidential candidate for each of the three major parties to have some kind of primary election. Unusually, in 2012, the PRD agreed to choose its candidate according to the contender with the most support in the polls. Surprisingly, this seems to have worked. Because Mexico has a federal system, nomination practices vary from state to state and from municipality to municipality. As far as policy issues are concerned, practice varies according to the party. The PRI, currently the governing party, tends to be rather secretive and hierarchical, while the PRD, which is the Left-wing opposition, tends to be fractious and chaotic. The PAN is much more of a members' party with a degree of democracy within the party but an exclusionary attitude to non-party members. It also matters which party is in government. Incumbent parties tend to be more internally authoritarian because of their greater patronage resources.

Abstracting from a lot of detail, the PRI is probably the most controlled and authoritarian of the major parties.

Switzerland

Score 6

Party decisions and party lists are formally produced at conventions of party members. In a 1999 analysis of local party organizations, Ladner and Brändle found that Swiss parties – with the exception of the Green party – prioritized party leaders' strategic capabilities over membership participation. This tendency has increased in recent years.

However, these oligarchic tendencies are arguably not the primary problem with regard to inclusion in Swiss parties. The decline in party membership and party identification – particularly in the case of the Radical and Christian Democratic parties – along with the low level of party resources may be even greater problems, since party decisions are being made by an increasingly shrinking active party membership base.

Austria

Score 5

The Austrian party system is in an ongoing process of deconcentration. The traditionally dominant parties – the Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs, SPÖ) and the conservative, Christian-democratic Austrian People's Party (Österreichische Volkspartei, ÖVP) have experienced an almost uninterrupted decline since 1980. In 1979, the two parties were able to win a combined total of more than 90% of votes; in 2008, they were down to a combined total of about 50%. The other half of voters either preferred another party or failed to turn out.

As voters have looked elsewhere, the right-wing Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ), the center-left Greens and a variety of newer parties, sometimes with very short political life expectancies, have been the beneficiaries. In general, all parties have spent little time developing intraparty democracy, and have focused instead on appealing to specific groups considered necessary to win elections. The younger generations have proved critical in this regard, as they are significantly less predictable in their political behavior. However, the younger generations are also much less inclined to go to the polls at all. Electoral turnout is in decline, but is still quite high compared with other European democracies.

Age, education and to a lesser extent gender are critical in explaining electoral behavior in Austria. The SPÖ and ÖVP are the parties still preferred by older voters. The FPÖ is disproportionately supported by younger (especially male) voters without higher education, while the Greens are supported by younger voters with higher education.

Belgium

Score 5

Belgium maintains a multiparty political system, with more than a dozen parties that hold regular parliamentary representation. Party organizations also come in a broad variety of forms. Three parties obtained more than 10% of the national vote in 2010: the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) obtained 17.4% of the vote. Its president, Bart De Wever, is probably the most charismatic political figure in Belgium, but his refusal to strike a consensual agreement with other parties has pushed the party into the opposition. French Socialists obtained 13.7% of the vote in 2010. The party's then-leader, Elio Di Rupo, is now prime minister. The Flemish Christian Democrats obtained 10.85% of the vote, and are in the governing coalition.

All the other parties obtained less than 10% of the vote at the national level, but one should be aware that each party only runs in its own districts, in Flanders for Flemish parties and in Wallonia for French parties, together with Brussels and some surrounding districts. Other parties obtaining more than 10% of the vote in their relevant districts were the French Liberals (Reform Movement, 9.28%), Flemish Socialists (Social Progressive Alternative, 9.24%), the Flemish Liberals (Flemish Liberals and Democrats, 8.64%), the Flemish far-right (Vlaams Belang, 7.76%), the French Christian Democrats (Humanist and Democratic Center, 5.52%) and the French Greens (Ecolo, 4.80%).

Concerning internal selection procedures, Bram Wauters (2013) writes in *Political Studies* that "...all Belgian parties represented in Parliament give their members a direct say in the appointment of the party leader, be it at a party conference in which all members can participate and vote or via internal elections granting each member one vote (either by postal or electronic voting, or by arranging polling booths in local party sections). The exception is the Flemish extreme right party Vlaams Belang."

The actual competitiveness of these internal elections varies widely on a case-by-case basis. In most internal elections, the winner is elected by a crushing majority, suggesting that challengers are simply acting figures destined to give an appearance of internal democracy. But it does happen that some internal elections are highly competitive, and lead to surprising results. One case was with the French Christian Democratic party (at the time, the Parti Social Chrétien, PSC). One of its main figures was Gérard Deprez, who tried to push Joëlle Milquet as his successor in 1995. This attempt was however quashed by other groups inside the party. In 1998, Deprez decided to create a splinter party, the Mouvement des Citoyens pour le Changement (MCC), which was subsequently merged with the liberals and another party into the Mouvement Réformateur, the now French Liberal

party. That party also experienced a competitive internal election in 2011, when the party's internal tension became public. The outcome was again the election of a candidate who hailed from another group than the departing incumbent.

There is some formal level of participation of party members in the selection of candidates for elections through polls or similar systems, but local party leaders largely control the process and often present "closed lists" to party members. Overall, the process is mostly controlled by intermediate party elites, with the exception of the Greens (who maintain a stronger grassroots and democratic activist base).

Citation:

Wauters, Bram (2013). "Democratising Party Leadership Selection in Belgium: Motivations and Decision Makers". *Political Studies*, forthcoming.

Chile

Score 5

Chile has a presidential government system and thus the president determines the policy guidelines, so the presidential elections are much more relevant than the congressional ones. Therefore, in campaigns for the presidency, government programs are presented by the presidential candidates and not by their coalitions or by their parties. These global program proposals tend to be limited to descriptions of their effect on the public rather than technical details and profound discussion of content. The next presidential and the congressional elections will be held simultaneously in November 2013 and thus the decision-making process regarding the electoral program is still a work in progress.

Estonia

Score 5

The decision-making process in different parties is similar. Formally, each party member can propose issues, but in reality inner circles of 15-20 party elites make most important decisions. All parties have their annual congress, where delegates elect the party leader and other governing bodies. One of the latter is the board, which votes on political decisions, issues statements and submits proposals to the party's parliamentary group and to the party's members in the government. The board also nominates candidates of the ministers in case the party is sitting in the coalition government. Another important decision-making body is the council that manages the party when the general assembly is not in session. The council is comprised of board members and elected representatives from regions. The council negotiates agreements with other parties in the parliament, including the decision

whether to enter into government coalition. Like the board, the council can also submit proposals to the party's parliamentary group and the party's members in the government. As a rule, it is in the competency of the council to compose and agree upon the list of the candidates in general elections and European Parliament elections. Local organizations of political parties compose electoral lists for municipal elections.

France

Score 5

Parties are usually both centralized and organized hierarchically. There are few registered political activists. These are all serious limitations to the inclusiveness of citizens in the selection of leaders and of policy options. However, there are some countervailing forces. One traditional point is the practice of accumulating elective mandates. Many politicians are not selected by a party; they are individuals who have made their breakthrough locally and impose themselves on the party apparatus. This means that national politicians have a concrete and ground-based knowledge of people's aspirations and claims. Another factor is the popular election of the president. A candidate's programs are inclusive; no policy sector is forgotten in their long to-do list. A third factor lies in recent changes in the selection of candidates for presidential elections and communal elections. Primaries have taken place, first within the Socialist party, then in the neo-Gaullist conservative Union for Popular Movement (UMP).

However, the importance given to party activists in writing the party program may create difficulties for leaders once elected, when problems may call for answers not in line with activists' preferences.

Greece

Score 5

In the 2000s, major Greek parties such as the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Party (PASOK) and the conservative New Democracy party were characterized by familism, in the sense that party leadership was in the hands of progeny of the founders of parties. Indeed, this was the case of George Papandreou, the son of PASOK's founder, Andreas Papandreou, and Kostas Karamanlis, nephew of New Democracy's founder, Konstantinos Karamanlis. However, as the decade ended, both those leaders fell from power, either through electoral defeat (in the case of Karamanlis) or because of failure to manage the economic crisis (in the case of Papandreou). In 2011 – 2013, the radical left party SYRIZA (Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás or Coalition of the Radical Left, SYRIZA), competed with New Democracy in elections and became the main party of opposition to the New Democracy-led coalition

government. Compared to the two aforementioned parties, SYRIZA is a much less nepotistic party, as its leader, Alexis Tsipras, does not come from an old political family. In PASOK, the fact that a new leader, Evangelos Venizelos, replaced George Papandreou in the party's presidency in 2012 offered an opportunity for reshuffling. A similar, but less pronounced trend occurred in New Democracy when Antonis Samaras replaced Kostas Karamanlis after the latter's 2009 electoral defeat.

Yet both PASOK and New Democracy as well as the SYRIZA party continue to suffer from two organizational defects: these defects are intense factionalism and heavy-handed control of lists of candidates and agendas of issues by the party leadership.

Indeed, major parties in Greece are characterized by intense factionalism, namely by the existence of officially recognized or informal groups of party cadres who compete during intra-party elections for posts in the top party organs, such as the executive or political bureau of a party and its central committee.

Moreover, a small circle around the party leader have the final word over who is going to be included in the party lists, even though, compared to the past, local and regional party organizations in 2011 – 2013 had their own voice and proposed different candidates and different issues to party leaderships. One cannot speak of party autocracy in Greek parties, as strong leaders faded away in the 2000s. Yet on most occasions, the extent of control exercised by the party leader over the party indicates that decision-making is restricted to the leader's entourage.

Ireland

Score 5

A candidate for the presidential office must be nominated by at least 20 members of the parliament or by at least four local authorities. A former or retiring president is eligible for re-election and may nominate him/herself. The prime minister is elected by the lower house of the parliament and is usually the leader of the biggest party in parliament. The position of party leader is therefore of great significance.

In the 2011 general election the four leading parties in terms of share of the vote were: Fine Gael (36.1%), Labour (19.4%), Fianna Fáil (17.4%) and Sinn Féin (9.9%). Smaller parties and non-party candidates obtained 17.2% of the votes. The major parties use the following procedures to select their leaders and presidential candidates:

Fine Gael:

The party leader is selected by secret ballot of the members of the parliamentary party. The party selected its presidential candidate in 2011 at a special convention. Voting was by secret ballot, with an electoral college made up as follows: 70% member of the Fine Gael parliamentary party, 20% Fine Gael members of county and city councils and 10% by the 12-member Fine Gael executive council.

Labour:

The party's 2011 presidential candidate was chosen jointly by the party's national executive and the Labour Parliamentary Party at a special convention. When the party became the junior partner in the new coalition government, the party leader was automatically nominated as Tanaiste or deputy prime minister. The leader of the party is elected at the national conference by vote of the party members.

Fianna Fáil:

In the 2011 presidential campaign the party, for the first time ever, decided not to run a candidate and not to support the nomination of a candidate. The decision was made at a meeting of the parliamentary party and was in line with the recommendations of the six-person subcommittee formed by the party leader to consider the matter. When forming majority governments in the past, the party always adhered to the principle that the party leader became prime minister and the deputy leader became deputy prime minister.

Sinn Féin:

The party discussed the choice of candidate for the presidential election at its party meeting in June 2011 and referred the matter to its high council. The party's decision was announced after the council meeting in September. As the party did not have enough elected members of the parliament to nominate their preferred candidate, they relied on the support of three independent parliamentarians to effect the nomination. The party has not yet formed part of a government in the Republic of Ireland.

Latvia**Score 5**

The Law on Political Parties mandates that certain political-party decisions be made in the context of full-membership meetings or by elected officials of the parties. These include party-officer elections, as well as decisions on party governing statutes and party programs. Other decisions must be taken in accordance with party statutes, but are not subject to regulation.

Harmony Party (Saskanas centrs, SC) is an alliance of a number of parties. Decision-making processes are different for national and municipal (Riga)

policies. Candidates for national or municipal elections are selected by the party leadership. Decision-making at both the national and municipal levels is opaque. The balance of power within the SC alliance parties appears to vary between the Saeima and municipal governments.

Decision-making within the Unity Party (Vienotība, V) centers in the organization's board of directors, which engages closely with its parliamentary faction leadership, and with its government representatives. There is active internal debate on policy issues, as evidenced by press leaks detailing internal party correspondence. Local chapters have considerable autonomy in personnel choices and in taking positions on local issues.

The Greens and Farmers Union (Zaļo un Zemnieku Savienība, ZZS) is an alliance of two major parties and one minor one. The alliance parties operate together at the national level, but can pursue separate activities and agendas at the municipal level. Party decision-making resides with the board. ZZS is perceived to be beholden to one of Latvia's oligarchs, and decisions on candidates and issues often reflect this.

The Reform Party (Reformu partija, RP) was established in 2011, directly prior to the parliamentary elections. Decision-making rests with the board of directors, although the party encourages member participation. Many policy decisions are decided in an informal group known as the "core" of the party. The existence of the "core" has created friction among party members.

Two previously independent parties merged to form the National Union (Nacionālā Apvienība, NA). While decision-making resides with elected party officials, an internal diversity of opinion on important issues is visible to the public. The Union's parliamentary faction plays the role of agenda-setter, and parliamentarians sometimes pursue individual policy agendas despite the official views of the party.

Malta

Score 5

Political parties restrict decision-making over important personnel and other issues mainly to elected delegates, although general party members may be consulted on some issues. The election of party leadership and administration heads is restricted to elected delegates, as is the drawing up of candidate lists and agenda issues; one example of this was the election of the leader and deputy leaders of the Nationalist Party on 8 May 2013. While the idea of including all party members in decision-making has been floated, neither political party has yet to embrace the idea.

Spain

Score 5

Only two parties – the Popular Party (Partido Popular, PP) and the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE) – can be considered major parties in Spain, having gained more than 10% of the popular vote in the last general elections.

The PP, in office since December 2011, is characterized by quite opaque internal decision-making processes. It is a heavily centralized party, although some of its regional branches enjoy significant independence – at least regarding decisions on personnel. The PP, in any case, seeks to speak with one voice (the voice of its president) and this can be illustrated with the last process for nominating Mariano Rajoy in 2011 as the candidate for prime minister without direct participation of party members, and despite some relevant internal resistance to his candidature. The decisions on how to fill the rest of the electoral lists and which position will be represented by the party in most issues are restricted to a small core leadership.

The PSOE, which was in office until December 2011, is not an example of inclusiveness or openness either, but is somewhat more participative than the PP. It is a less presidentialized organization in which internal debate on electoral programs is common and even public, frequently involving some of the regional branches (specially the powerful Andalusian section or the Catalan one, which is formally an independent party). The manner in which the PSOE selects its leader and main candidates is also somewhat more open, with participation of regional elected delegates and, in some cases, with primary elections for card-holders. For the next elections, the PSOE is considering following the French example and organizing primary elections open to all party supporters.

Citation:

Elodie Fabre. 2011. "Measuring party organization: The vertical dimension of the multi-level organization of state-wide parties in Spain and the UK" *Party Politics*, 17: 343-363.

United Kingdom

Score 5

A distinction needs to be made for all major parties between the election of the leader (for which party members do have a say) and the selection of other personnel or decisions over major issues, for which there are generally much more restrictive procedures. The selection of candidates for parliaments and local councils usually involves local party members. Annual party conferences notionally have a major role in settling policy positions, but in practice it is party leaders that play the biggest role.

The Conservative Party restricts decision-making to party members. In most cases, a number of selected delegates participate in the most important personnel and issue decisions. Central party influence over local candidate selection – and all candidates are local candidates in Britain – has varied in recent years. David Cameron introduced a “priority list” with at least 50% women and significant representation from ethnic minorities, from which all target seats and Conservative-held seats were supposed to be selected. In the run-up to the 2010 election and in the wake of the parliamentary expenses scandal, necessity dictated a loosening of the rules. After the election, selection rules reverted to the post-2005 procedure.

The party leader is elected by a poll of all party members, who have to choose from a shortlist of two which has been decided by the parliamentary Conservative Party – that is, all Conservative MPs.

The Labour Party restricts decision-making to party members. In most cases, a number of selected delegates participate in the most important personnel and issue decisions. Central party influence over local candidate selection has varied over time – since 1988 there has had to be at least one woman on every shortlist. Since 2001, candidates require approval by party HQ before they can be selected by constituency Labour parties.

The selection of the party leader has also undergone changes in recent years. There is an electoral college which consists of three elements, namely the parliamentary Labour Party, the constituency Labour Party, and the trade unions and affiliated organizations. Each of the elements is balloted individually using the “one member, one vote” system; the results for each element make up a third of the final vote. Since 2007, the winning candidate has been required to have the support of 50% of the vote, so the election process takes several rounds as the candidates with the fewest votes drop out and have their second preferences redistributed until the winning candidate has reached the required quorum.

The Liberal Democrats restrict decision-making to party members. In most cases, all party members have the opportunity to participate in the most important decisions and choice of personnel. Lists of candidates and agendas of issues are fairly open.

Australia

Score 4

Elected members and senators, but no other party members, are responsible for decision-making in both the major parties. Decisions regarding who should hold positions within the party, such as ministerial positions for the party in government, have largely been at the discretion of the elected leader

in Coalition governments. Labor prime ministers cannot choose their ministers freely, but instead have to allocate portfolios among a set of candidates selected by the factions.

The Coalition has a more open and inclusive process for determining leadership than the Labor Party, which is dominated by factions to which most members are beholden. The factions of the Labor Party are regularly criticized for making opaque decisions and for contributing to a lack of transparency of decision-making processes.

On matters of developing policy agendas, both parties have inclusive forums for developing policy platforms. However, in practice, a small leadership group in the party tightly controls decisions on major policies.

Bulgaria

Score 4

Three parties have obtained more than 10% of the popular vote in the last two general elections (2009 and 2013) in Bulgaria: GERB (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria), the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), which is effectively the party of the ethnic Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Of the three, the most democratic is the BSP, a party with more than a century of tradition. The party program is adopted at a congress of delegates elected by the party members. Electoral platforms and candidate lists are prepared in a relatively centralized manner, but local party organizations do have an input. The other two parties are leader dominated. Regardless of the internal democratic mechanisms envisaged in their statutes, most decisions are concentrated in the hands of the leader and a few members of his circle. While in the GERB, which has a larger support and membership, the influence of different groups and constituencies can be effective, the specific characteristics of MRF make its decision-making process very opaque and highly concentrated. In early 2013, the founder of the MRF and its leader for 23 years stepped down; it remains to be seen if he will continue to exercise a dominant influence behind the scenes.

Croatia

Score 4

Croatian parties are characterized by a rigid structure. Intra-party democracy is generally low, as participation of members is limited and selection procedures and debates are largely controlled by party leadership (Čular 2005). In the HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union), no elections take place, and even the vice president is excluded from decision-making because he does not belong to the dominant clique within the party. The SDP (Social

Democratic Party is more open. Party members had the chance to vote on the party leadership in 2013. However, Zoran Milanović was the only candidate on the list. Moreover, the SDP does not tolerate the existence of open political factions. In 2013, Aleksandra Kolaric, a prominent critic of Milanović, was expelled from the party.

Citation:

Čular, Goran (2005) Organizational Development of Parties and Internal Party Democracy in Croatia, *Croatian Political Science Review*, 41(5):28-51.

Hungary

Score
value_6

Hungary's former party system collapsed during the 2010 elections. Only three parties received more than 10% of the votes. Fidesz, the party of Prime Minister Orbán, is officially democratically organized, but is in fact completely controlled by the party leadership. The same applies to Jobbik, an extreme-right political party. The Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) has a more inclusive system, which is based on political platforms.

New Zealand

Score 4

During the review period, there are three political parties that were supported by more than 10% of voters in the last general election. The Labour Party and the National Party are traditionally the largest parties, but the Green Party, for the first time, was able to achieve a share of the vote above 10%.

The organizational structure of the Labour Party is complex, as it mainly consists of affiliated corporate members (for example, a (decreasing) number of trade unions). Decisions with regard to personnel and policy are therefore not restricted to individual party members. However, at the same time, the Labour Party uses a system of delegates. The selection process for candidates for parliamentary seats is based on a heavily formalized moderating procedure that takes criteria such as ethnic background, gender and region into regard. Following pressure from grassroots members to have a say in the selection of the party leader, in 2011 the party took away the party caucus's sole responsibility for choosing a party leader, replacing it with a combination of party membership, the parliamentary caucus and trade unions.

The National Party considerably increased the central leadership's influence in an organizational reform in 2003. The newly created National Management Board, including the parliamentary leader, plays an especially influential role in pre-selecting parliamentary candidates for electorate seats (to a so-called

Candidate's Club), although these are still required to compete with other nominees, using the existing decentralized electorate selection process. The selection of candidates for list seats has equally been centralized at the expense of regional party organizations. The party leader is chosen by the members of the parliamentary caucus.

The Green Party's organizational structure is much more decentralized when compared with those of the traditional larger parties. Decisions on policy and the selection of parliamentary candidates are made with less control by the parliamentary caucus.

Citation:

Constitution and Rule of the New Zealand National Party (Wellington: New Zealand National Party 2007).

Green Party: <http://www.greens.org.nz/> (accessed May 12, 2013).

Labour Party: Constitution and Rules 2013 (Wellington: New Zealand Labour Party 2013).

Stephens, Gregory R. und John Leslie: Parties, organizational capacities and external change:

New Zealand's National and Labour parties, candidate selection and the advent of MMP, *Political Science* 2011 (63): 205-218.

Slovenia

Score 4

Slovenian party law leaves political parties with some organizational autonomy. Political parties are very heterogeneously organized, with some of them being organized on the micro level – i.e., in each of the 211 municipalities – and others being organized only on the macro level. Access to decision-making processes is normally restricted to party members. Whereas party members have the formal right to participate in decisions, the party leadership controls the list of candidates and the policy agendas. Internal party decision-making is not very well known to the public, as most decisions are taken behind doors that are firmly shut.

Japan

Score 3

Generally speaking, parties in Japan are fairly insider-oriented, with policy and personnel decisions driven by leading politicians and their clientelistic networks. One symptom of this is the high number of “hereditary seats” in parliament, which have been held by members of the same family for generations. The current LDP prime minister, Shinzo Abe, is among those who “inherited” his seat, in his case from his deceased father Shintaro Abe, who was also a leading LDP-politician.

Major parties currently include the LDP, the DPJ and the Restoration Party (Ishin no Kai, JRP). The LDP has traditionally revolved around individual politicians, their personal local-support organizations and the intraparty factions that divide lawmakers (although the importance of factionalism has

declined since the 1990s). Ordinary party-member involvement is usually limited to membership in a local support organization and is based on mutual material interests: While members want political and hopefully tangible support for their communities, the politician at the group's head wants public support for his or her (re-) election. Even party congresses offer little real opportunity for policy input by delegates. However, delegates from regional party branches have taken part in selecting party leaders since the early 2000s, with some branches basing their eventual choice on the outcome of local primaries. While the LDP has also paid some lip service to increased intraparty democracy, it has shied away from major internal reforms aimed at making the party more open and inclusive.

The DPJ is somewhat less institutionalized in terms of internal groupings and support organizations, but basically follows a similar pattern. It has experimented with open calls for recruiting parliamentary candidates (with the LDP having recently followed suit in cases where there is no incumbent or designated candidate). The DPJ has also allowed party members and other registered supporters to take part in a few leadership elections over the years. In its 2009 election manifesto, the DPJ called for the abolition of hereditary seats, but the party's programmatic and personnel decisions are still controlled by insider circles.

The Restoration Party entered national politics only in September 2012, but did well in the 2012 general election thanks to voters dissatisfied with the established parties. The party has been very much driven by its founder Toru Hashimoto, the mayor of Osaka. At the parliamentary level, former governor of Tokyo, Shintaro Ishihara, has been very influential. Thus, the JRP remains a loosely coupled, leader-centered party.

Netherlands

Score 3

Intra-party democracy in the Netherlands does not exist. In all recent major political parties, political professionals dominate decision-making on lists of candidates, agendas and selection of party leaders. Briefly characterized, the list runs like this:

People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie, VVD) (27%): typical professional politicians' and administrators' party; party leader not elected but self-nominated after internal elite struggle.

Labor Party (Partij van de Arbeid, PvdA) (25%): typical professional administrators' party; party leader elected through elite struggle and formally confirmed by members' vote.

Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid, PVV) (10%): leadership or dictatorial party; charismatic party leader (Geert Wilders) self-nominated and the only formal member.

Socialist Party (Socialistische Partij, SP) (9.6%): charismatic leadership, tolerated by professional politicians and administrators.

Christian Democratic Appeal (Christen-Democratisch Appèl, CDA) (8.5%): traditional professional politicians' and administrators' party; leaders "appear" following elite struggle.

Democrats 66 (Politieke Partij Democraten, D66) (8%): only party with formal intra-party democracy; firm charismatic leadership.

In other words, only D66 and the PvdA somewhat resemble parties with intra-party democracy; VVD, CDA and SP are "keeping up some appearances" and PVV is outright anti-democratic.

Portugal

Score 3

Three parties met the 10% criteria in the 2011 legislative elections: Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Democrata, PSD), Socialist Party (Partido Socialista, PS) and Democratic and Social Center People's Party (Centro Democrático e Social – Partido Popular, CDS-PP). In all three parties, national-level decision-making is highly centralized around a small number of party leaders. In the case of the PS and PSD, both hold direct elections of their party leadership by party members and have congresses with delegates also elected by party members. However, with regard to policy issues and candidates other than the party leader, the rank-and-file members have little say. Instead, decisions are largely made by the party leadership, which – depending on the internal balance of power – may have to negotiate with the leaders of opposing internal factions.

In the case of the CDS-PP, this degree of centralization is if anything stronger. It abandoned the direct elections of the party leader in 2011, has a smaller rank-and-file base and weaker internal factions. This means that virtually all decisions are placed in the hands of the party leader. Indeed, the current party leader has led the party for 13 of the last 15 years.

While only these three parties met the 10% criteria in the past legislative elections, one could also identify two other relevant parties in Portugal, the Portuguese Communist Party (Partido Comunista Português, PCP) and the Left Bloc (Bloco de Esquerda, BE). These are also marked by a high degree of centralization of national-level internal decision-making.

Romania

Score 3

The three most important parties on the Romanian political scene – the Social Democratic Party (Partidul Social Democrat, PSD), the National Liberal Party (Partidul Național Liberal, PNL) and the Democratic Liberal Party (Partidul Democrat-Liberal, PD-L) – have similar intra-party procedures that limit the influence of rank-and-file party members and exclude non-party members from the party decision-making process. The selection of leaders in all three parties is based on delegates elected from the territorially based party organizations (based on quotas decided by the party leaderships) in national party congresses that meet every four years unless emergency congresses are convened. Beyond this, however, most important personnel and issues are decided by a small group of party leaders. Beyond these institutional similarities, the de facto degree of intra-party democracy depends on the relative political power of different party leaders and factions and tends to be inversely proportional with the party's electoral success. Thus, after the resounding Social Liberal Union (USL) victory in the December 2012 elections, both Victor Ponta (PSD) and Crin Antonescu (PNL) ran unopposed for their respective parties' presidencies. By contrast, the PD-L, which had been dominated since 2001 by Traian Băsescu, saw a much more competitive election at the most recent party congress following its abysmal performance in the December parliamentary elections. Nonetheless, the main competition was between two insiders – Vasile Blaga (who had been PD-L president since the PD-L's local election defeat in June 2012) and Elena Udrea (a protégé of President Băsescu). To make matters worse, after narrowly losing in the first round, Udrea contested the outcome of the elections, thereby casting further doubts on the quality of intra-party democracy.

Citation:

Chiru, Mihail, and Sergiu Gherghina, 2012: "Keeping the Doors Closed: Leadership Selection in Post-Communist Romania." *East European Politics & Societies* 26(3): 510-537.

Slovakia

Score 3

All Slovak parties are elite projects that are dominated by a few party leaders. The only party that gained more than 10% of the votes in the 2012 parliamentary election is Prime Minister Fico's Smer-SD. It is strongly centered around Fico, who has led the party since its founding in 1999. The inner circle of the party and the number of party representatives with influence are rather limited. Rank-and-file members have little influence on decision-making.

South Korea

Score 3

There is almost universal agreement among political scientists, political observers, politicians and the general public that Korean political parties are one of the weakest links in Korean democracy. In addition to their inchoate nature and lack of internal democracy, political parties have little ability to produce meaningful party manifestos, political programs or alternative policy proposals. Party positions and candidacies for parliamentary seats are decided by powerful party bigwigs. For the presidential race, parties have experimented with a primary system that uses text message and online polls, but the experiences have been rather mixed.

The election platforms of individual candidates tend to be more important than party programs, but often avoid proposing coherent policies in favor of promises to achieve certain goals and secure certain benefits for the candidate's electoral district. Strong regionalism further undermines the ability to form platforms based on political goals.

Turkey

Score 2

Commonly used indicators for intra-party democracy include a party leader's power and control, the party nomination process, policy preferences, membership recruitment and membership rights.

According to a published academic study on major political parties in Turkey, the Political Parties Law (Siyasi Partiler Kanunu, SPK) does not encourage more intra-party democracy in such issues as the election of delegates, the determination of member of parliament (MP) candidates or election of chairmen. Also, the political party by-laws of the major parties do not provide any incentives to pursue intra-party democracy. Even though the Justice and Development Party (AKP), the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) do not discriminate along the lines of ethnicity or religious orientation for membership, contestation within the parties is limited, at best. Dissenting voices are not able to find an institutional path to encourage debate, competition usually revolves around the ability of party members to create local power centers through which they compete for the attention and goodwill of the party leader.

Citation:

Mehmet Akinici / Özgür Önder / Bile Kagan Sakaci: Is Intra-Party Democracy possible in Turkey? An Analysis of Political Parties Act and Party By-Law, *European Scientific Journal*, Vol. 9, No.11, April 2013.
 Pelin Ayan, *Authoritarian Party Structures and Democratic Political Setting in Turkey*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Indicator

Association Competence (Business)

Question

To what extent are economic interest associations capable of formulating relevant policies?

41 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = Most interest associations are highly capable of formulating relevant policies.
- 8-6 = Many interest associations are highly capable of formulating relevant policies.
- 5-3 = Few interest associations are highly capable of formulating relevant policies.
- 2-1 = Most interest associations are not capable of formulating relevant policies.

Australia

Score 9

The major interest associations, which are run by the employers and business groups and the trade unions, have a history of proposing practical, plausible policies. The main explanation for this is that the government has a long history of involvement and policy consultation with most of the groups (for example, business groups are closely allied with the Liberal Party, farmers' and rural groups are allied with the National Party, and trade unions are allied with the Labor Party). Many elected representatives have, at some point in their career, been a member of one of these groups, further cementing relations with the interest groups. There are also considerable formal and informal networks linking the various groups to the major political parties, further consolidating the development of practical and coherent policies.

Denmark

Score 9

Interest organizations play an important role in Danish politics. Policies proposed by the major interest organizations are of course important for the group they represent. They may not be quite as important, however, for society at large, or for the collective interest. That is why the government must aggregate the views of various interest organizations.

Given the corporatist tradition in Denmark, the major interest organizations are regularly involved in policymaking. This tends to educate them to moderate their policy proposals. Interest groups know they will lose influence if they propose policies that are seen as unreasonable; they realize that they have an interest in getting things to work. The trade unions also learned at

some point that demanding very high raises in salaries will produce inflation and be counterproductive. They too have a tradition of being quite responsible and negotiating in good faith.

Citation:

Peter Munk Christiansen og Lise Tøgeby, *Magten i Danmark*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2005.

Norway

Score 9

The major interest associations all propose practical, plausible policies. Many interest organizations have competent and skilled staffs, enabling them to formulate policies and proposals. The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions and the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise have for years been engaged in very close tripartite cooperation with the government. Through this process, these organizations – in combination with the government – have been able to prevent strikes, secure a moderate salary policy and ensure moderate inflation and interest rates.

This cooperation has also been regarded as important in promoting gradual governmental reforms in areas such as health insurance and pension plans. In their work, these interest organizations rely to a large extent on scholarly knowledge, and typically take a long-term perspective.

Similar patterns of organized cooperation are evident in many other policy fields. Employers' association groups have traditionally been allied with the conservative parties, farmers' groups with the Center Party, and trade unions with the Labor Party. These ties are most explicit between the Labor Party and the labor unions, with the head of the labor union confederation sitting on the party's executive committee. The union confederation and the employers' association both have academics as advisers, and their proposals normally aim at consensus rather than at social confrontation.

Sweden

Score 9

Sweden has a long corporatist tradition. Economic interest associations are more or less perennial players in the policy process. The major business interest organizations and unions are certainly very capable of analyzing the economic situation and presenting policy proposals. As organized interests, they obviously pursue their respective agendas, but overall, the expertise and policy capacity of the major interest organizations is impressive. During the global economic crisis, for example, the interest associations showed a high degree of responsibility by not counteracting the crisis management of the government.

United States

Score 9

A vast number of business associations are active in the United States, which has come about because of the size and complexity of the American economy and a political culture that fosters participation, but also because of the opportunities for lobbying influence in a decentralized political system. The associations themselves range from peak associations, such as the Business Roundtable and the National Federation of Independent Business; to trade associations of major industries like the American Trucking Association or the Grocery Manufacturers Association; to groups representing narrow segments of industries, such as the Flexible Packaging Institute. The larger, wealthier associations have sizable professional staffs and can produce not only credible policy proposals, but also substantial supporting documentation. Given the large numbers of very small associations, it is not true that “most” business associations can present credible proposals. There are certainly several hundred business associations, however, that can draft bills or amendments and present articulate, sophisticated arguments for their positions.

Austria

Score 8

The role of economic interest groups is still very strong in Austria: Significant associations include the Austrian Economic Chambers (Wirtschaftskammern) and the Federation of Austrian Industry (Die Industriellenvereinigung) for business and employers; the Austrian Trade Union Federation (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund) and the Austrian Federal Chamber of Labor (Arbeiterkammern) for employees; and the Chamber of Agriculture (Landwirtschaftskammern) for farmers. These groups’ ability to shape politics may have been reduced as a result of Austria’s integration into the European Union, but within domestic politics, their influence remains very strong. Though formally independent of political parties, the groups have various individual links to the parties, especially to the Social Democratic Party and the Austrian People’s Party. Moreover, their influence is enhanced by their practice of acting in a coordinated, neocorporatist way through the social-partnership network.

Belgium

Score 8

Belgium has a high level of trade union membership and a strong tradition of social consensus, through strong and well-organized trade unions and employers’ organizations. For instance, most proposals on wage regulation

and employee protection are the result of routine negotiations between employers' associations and trade unions. Proposals are validated by the government and translated into law. This continuous mechanism of cooperation forces these actors to present realistic and well-argued demands (budgeted and framed in legal terms), even if some bargaining (and bluffing) occurs. Both trade unions and employers' organizations have their own well-developed study services with highly technical (legal, budgetary and so on) expertise. It should be noted that, in contrast to political parties, employers' associations and trade unions are still structured at the national level. However, there are some elements of Belgian social organization that appear not to be open to debate, given general conservatism and a need to protect the institution.

Canada

Score 8

Many business associations, employers groups and trade unions develop policy proposals that identify the causes of problems, make use of scholarly research to support their analysis, propose technically feasible measures to attain policy objectives, take account of long-term interests and anticipate policy effects. Among the most competent associations in this respect are the Council of Chief Canadian Executives, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association, the Canadian Labour Congress and the Canadian Auto Workers. Many of these associations have realized that they must identify their policy proposals with the overall societal interest rather than solely with the narrower interests of their members if they are to gain traction with the public and policymakers. The most successful associations are those that have mastered this art.

Finland

Score 8

The large market-sector organizations that represent labor and management became involved in a series of comprehensive income policy agreements in 1968. These concerned not only wages and working conditions but also social welfare programs and corresponding legislation. While this institutional arrangement for cooperation between government and associations has since eroded to a large extent, it created a framework for advancing responsible, considered and expert-based policy proposals on the part of large economic interest associations. Other mechanisms, not least the participation of associations as members and experts in the committee system, have worked in the same direction. As a consequence, this corporatist setting and the consensus style of policymaking have lead to reasonable policies.

Germany

Score 8

Intermediary organizations such as interest groups and NGOs play a pivotal role on several levels throughout the policy cycle, but their impact depends heavily on their individual material and organizational resources. Since interests are sometimes mediated through institutionalized corporatist structures, employers' associations and unions play a privileged role. There is in some cases significant overlap between party members and association staff. But today, political priorities seem to be of greater importance than traditional affiliations when it comes to the formation of alliances between interest organizations and parties. Every German government, no matter which coalition is in charge, is strongly responsive organized interest representation. Indeed, interest groups play a key role providing the in-depth information the ministerial officials must rely on in developing policies. Ministerial hearings are the main conduit for this influence. Lobbyists sometimes work in ministries. According to the World Economic Forum's most recent Global Competitiveness Report, those strong personal and financial ties between ministries and interest groups can be seen as a threat to the efficient functioning of the system and to the fair representation of interests. Germany was ranked 19th worldwide in this report, with a rather low score of 4.3 (1.5 points behind Sweden) in the area of favoritism shown to well-connected firms and individuals in the course of government decisions (Global Competitiveness Report 2011 – 2012: 396). This high level of integration, despite the disadvantages noted, ensures that associations are both aware of the complexities of policymaking and the positions of their political adversaries.

Iceland

Score 8

The main interest organizations in Iceland have had and still have considerable influence on public policy, and a long history of involvement with the political parties. Their judgment is uneven, however. In March 2008, shortly before the crash, the Chamber of Commerce made the following pronouncement: "The Chamber of Commerce recommends that Iceland stop comparing itself with other Nordic countries, because we are superior to them in most respects."

The Confederation of Icelandic Employers (Samtök atvinnulífsins, SA) has in modern times been closely, albeit not formally, associated with the right-wing Independence Party. Likewise, the Icelandic Confederation of Labor (Alþýðusamband Íslands, ASI) has a long history of close links to the parties on the left, although its formal ties to the Social Democratic Party were severed in 1942. Until its breakup in the 1990s, the cooperative movement,

with its strong ties to the agricultural sector, was closely linked to the Progressive Party (Framsókn), which has its origins in the farmers' movement.

All major interest organizations in Iceland have long maintained a staff of skilled employees, and create research-based policy proposals that are usually well grounded, coherent and in line with the organizations' goals.

After the 2008 economic collapse, both the employers' organization and the employees' organizations signed an agreement with the government and the Federation of Municipalities aimed at securing economic stability (Stöðugleikasáttmáli). The agreement dealt with the restructuring of the economy by keeping wages and prices down, among other issues.

During the 2009 – 2013 mandate period, the Federation of Icelandic Fishing Vessel Owners demonstrated its political strength through heavy resistance to government plans to change laws on the fishing-catch quota system. However, it was unable to block a considerable increase in the fishing fees paid by the vessel owners to the state. Nonetheless, the group was strong enough to help defeat the broader overhaul of the system promised by the government. A former editor of Morgunblaðið has written that "it means political suicide to rise against the quota holders in rural areas."

The left-wing government of 2009 – 2013 left power without accomplishing its fisheries-management goals, even though it managed to raise fishing fees significantly. One of the first actions of the new government (taking office in May 2013) was to propose a lowering of fishing fees, triggering a petition against the move that over the course of a few days attracted 35,000 signatures, or 15% of the electorate. The president ratified the law even though it was virtually certain to have been soundly rejected if it was put to referendum.

Citation:

Gunnarsson, Styrmir (2009), Umsátrid (The Siege), Veröld, Reykjavík.

Israel

Score 8

Israel has a vibrant business community that often interacts with government departments and Knesset representatives in order to advance its agenda. At least three major business groups – the Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce, the Manufacturers Association of Israel and the chamber for coordination between financial organizations – actively pursue policy goals, whether legal, regulatory or project-focused. All three take part in conferences, issue independent research and publish their agendas. Recent publications include a plan to induce business growth and create more jobs,

an analysis of annual Israeli industry trends, recommendations for government financial policy, and more. Business organizations also work with academics to produce research, and some business-oriented think tanks exist. In general, Israeli businesses are well represented in the political sphere, and most economic interest associations are highly capable of formulating relevant policy proposals.

Citation:

Bassok, Moti, "Heads of business sector presented Fisher with a plan to up product by 3%," TheMarker website, 18.2.2013 (Hebrew)

Magar, Oren, "The small business sector to the Minister of the economy: These are the solution we need," TheMarker website 10.4.2013 (Hebrew)

"The chamber for coordination between financial organizations," Maot website (Hebrew)

The Chamber of Commerce website

The Manufacturers Association of Israel website

"Israeli industry status report, trends and predictions 2012-2013," The Manufacturers Association of Israel website, March 2013 (Hebrew)

Latvia

Score 8

The Tripartite Council of Latvia (Nacionālā trīspusējās sadarbības padome, NTSP), which links employers' associations, business associations and trade unions, provides a good example of effective association involvement in policy formulation. The members of the NTSP are all capable of proposing concrete measures, and work with academic figures in order to ensure quality inputs into the policy dialogue.

Employers' associations and business associations are continually engaged with the policy process on specific issues such as energy policy, formulation of the national development plan, and tax policy.

The Foreign Investors' Council (FICIL) has strong capacity to presenting well-formulated proposals for concrete policy measures. FICIL conducts an annual high-level structured dialogue at the prime ministerial level, resulting in action items whose implementation is then monitored by government. The 2012 High Council presented proposals in the areas of macroeconomic policy, tax policy and tax administration, efficiency of justice, improvement of the insolvency process, and the competitiveness of state-owned enterprises.

Citation:

1. The Foreign Investors' Council in Latvia, Information available: <http://www.ficil.lv/index.php/home/>, Last assessed: 21.05.2013.

2. The Tripartite Council of Latvia, Agenda available at (in Latvian): <http://www.mk.gov.lv/lv/mp/vaditaspadomes/ntsp/NTSPsedes/>, Last assessed: 21.05.2013.

Luxembourg

Score 8

Given Luxembourg's specific social partnership model, the government must consult with unions and employers' organizations over each draft bill. They are asked to produce an opinion on the bill, and all opinions as well as the modified draft bills are published on parliament's website. The two employers' organizations (the Chambre de Commerce and the Chambre des Métiers) as well as the Luxembourg business union (Union des entreprises Luxembourgeoises, UEL) support a research unit, enabling them to produce opinions on draft bills, to organize conferences and to draft future government bills. Trade unions share this approach. Mainly through the Parliamentary Act of 15 May 2008 ("statut unique"), the impact of trade unions increased as there is just one employee union (Chambre des salaires) instead of the previous two (one for manual workers and one for white-collar workers). All citizens working in Luxembourg have to become members and contribute to this organization – a keystone of Luxembourg's neo-corporatist policy tradition. Both social partners commission expert advice and policy briefings either abroad or in Luxembourg, and each respectively prepares position papers on the basis of their own capacities.

Citation:

UEL (2010), *Annuaire de la compétitivité 2010*.

UEL (2010), *Comment sortir ensemble de la crise*.

<http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/projets/archives/2007/2007P0225.html>

<http://www.cc.lu/actualites/detail/conference-chambre-de-commerce-chambre-des-metiers-et-lasti-1/>

Act of 15 May 2008: <http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/a/archives/2008/0060/2008A0790A.html>

<http://www.csl.lu/>

Netherlands

Score 8

There is no lobbying culture in the Netherlands in the usual sense. Instead, prominent members of labor unions and business associations are regular members of high-level informal networks, also comprising high-level civil servants and politicians, on labor and other important socioeconomic policy issues. These processes have become institutionalized. For instance, there are tripartite negotiations in which employers, employees and the Crown are fixed discussion partners in the early stages of decision-making regarding labor issues. The same takes place for regular negotiations with economic interest associations. Analytic capacities of both business and labor associations are well-developed due to the institutionalized character of poldering.

Citation:

NRC Handelsblad 16 April 2011, *De trouwe hulptroepen van Mark Rutte*

Spain

Score 8

As the economic situation in Spain has worsened, the main trade unions in Spain (UGT and CCOO) called for two general strikes in March and November 2012 against the labor reform and the austerity measures of the Popular Party (Partido Popular, PP). However, this does not mean that Spanish trade unions are radicalized and incapable of formulating relevant policies. They and the largest employers' association (CEOE) have improved their substantive competence in recent years through specialized research, contacts with scholars, and their own training centers and foundations, which may help them to identify the causes of problems and analyze policy effects while taking long-term interests into account.

UGT is associated with the Fundación Francisco Largo Caballero, and CCOO with Fundación 1 de Mayo, while employers, apart from the training centers linked to the CEOE, have the Círculo de Empresarios and the Círculo de Economía think tanks. Other economic private groups include some farmer's associations (such as COAG and ASAJA), the National Federation of Fishermen's Association, some consumer associations (CEACCU and UCE) and the Spanish Confederation of Cooperative Business. All are capable of proposing relevant policy measures for their sectors.

Citation:

www.eleconomista.es/economia/noticias/4917149/06/13/CEOE-critica-las-bajas-de-cuatro-dias-por-muerte-de-un-familiar-Los-viajes-no-son-en-diligencia.html

Czech Republic

Score 7

The main employers' unions and the main trade unions both have considerable resources and expertise with which to develop coherent policies. Trade unions have considerable competence with regard to labor relations and economic policy more generally. They have a small research unit, but no substantial think tank and limited links with outside academic personnel. Employers have a central body with expert employees but no research unit. The two have found much common ground on economic policy but have slightly different agendas, employers favoring less regulation and lower taxes on business. In the period under study, trade unions, interest groups and students organized an unprecedented number of public protests against the government reforms and corruption in public procurement, bringing unions into contact with a slightly wider range of expertise.

Ireland

Score 7

The ongoing economic crisis has weakened the capacity of the trade unions and the employers' and farmers' associations to influence policy. While these associations are staffed by economists and other experts who conduct detailed background research and make detailed – if selective – cases to support their favored policies, their capacity to influence policy was undermined by the collapse of broad-based “national understandings” after the crisis of 2008. Their role was further marginalized by the fact that many budget parameters are now set out in the Troika agreement. Nevertheless, the Troika and the government consult with interest groups when preparing the annual budget and these discussions have some influence on policy. However there is no prospect of an early return to the pre-2008 situation where interest associations had a very significant role in framing social and economic policy.

Citation:
<http://www.publicpolicy.ie/>

Italy

Score 7

The big interest associations (employers associations and trade unions) have developed research units which regularly use experts and rely upon scholarly knowledge. Their proposals are often detailed and based upon substantive policy know-how. However, it must be noted that trade unions generally have a rather conservative outlook, and are reluctant to adopt innovative policies in the areas of labor relations or pensions.

Employers associations in general adopt a more innovative perspective, and are less defensive of the status quo. Their policies are more prudent on issues associated with increasing competitiveness or reducing government subsidies. In recent years, two of the largest trade unions (CISL and UIL) have shown a somewhat greater willingness to negotiate with the government and employers associations over measures designed to increase the flexibility of labor relations.

Japan

Score 7

Japan's leading business and labor organizations regularly prepare topical policy proposals aimed at stirring public debate and influencing government policymaking. The three umbrella business federations – Keidanren (formerly Nippon Keidanren), the Japan Association of Corporate Executives

(Doyukai), and the Japanese Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Nissho) – as well as Rengo, the leading trade-union federation, make their impact felt not only by publishing policy papers, but also through their membership in government advisory committees. As the business sector's financial support of political parties has declined, politicians may have become less willing to accommodate the views of these interest groups. While there is an obvious scramble for influence between Rengo and the business organizations, there is also growing competition among the business organizations themselves. For instance, Keidanren is dominated by large enterprise groups, and has been somewhat slow in demanding a further opening of the economy. The Doyukai is more characterized by strong independent companies, and has been outspoken in demanding a more open business environment. In December 2011, Seidanren, a new business federation comprised of retailers, household-goods makers, consumer associations and various consumer-oriented firms held its first meeting in Tokyo, with a particular focus on consumer issues.

Malta

Score 7

Economic interest associations have a long history in Malta and have evolved structures capable of formulating relevant public policies. Employers' and business associations command more resources than do trade unions, and this allows them to employ qualified personnel and to source qualified academics to assist according to the policy issue/s involved. By contrast, trade unions rarely use their own robust research departments, opting to use existing studies or seek assistance from academics and/or other specialists in the policy area under review.

New Zealand

Score 7

There are few well-organized and well-staffed interest groups in New Zealand. The only large ones are the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions and Business New Zealand. Both generally propose reasonable policies. However, there is an underlying asymmetry. Business interests additionally rely on the work of the New Zealand Business Roundtable, an organization of chief executives of major business firms, which in 2012 merged with the New Zealand Institute to form a new libertarian think-tank to lobby for pro-market economic and social policies.

Citation: Business New Zealand – Submissions: <http://www.businessnz.org.nz/submissions> (accessed May 10, 2013).

New Zealand Council of Trade Unions – Campaign Main: <http://union.org.nz/campaigns/summary> (accessed May 10, 2013).

The National Business Review: Roundtable and NZ Institute Morph Into New Libertarian Think Tank: <http://www.nbr.co.nz/article/roundtable-and-nz-institute-morph-nz-initiative-ck-115751> (accessed May 10, 2013)

Slovenia

Score 7

In Slovenia, with its strong corporatist tradition, economic interest associations are very well organized and possess relatively high analytical capacities. Most economic and social policies are discussed in detail in the Economic and Social Council, a tripartite body. Trade union and employers associations do not have their own research institutes, but cooperate with universities and think tanks. The analytical capacity of trade unions has suffered from the fragmentation associated with the co-existence of seven separate union confederations.

South Korea

Score 7

The business associations (the Korean Employers Federation and the Federation of Korean Industries) and labor-union umbrella groups (the Federation of Korean Trade Unions and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions) have some expertise in developing policy proposals. They are supported by think tanks that provide scholarly advice. However, all these groups are relatively weak compared to the influence of individual businesses and company-level trade unions. Some individual businesses – such as Samsung, LG and Hyundai – have their own think tanks that produce high-quality research and are able to analyze and provide alternatives to government policies. Under the Lee government, business organizations, individual companies and businessmen were in an advantageous position to articulate their interests.

Switzerland

Score 7

Employers' organizations and trade unions in Switzerland are pragmatic and avoid rigidly ideological stances. Of course the major interest organizations do have their ideologies, but this does not prevent them from entering rational discussions with other organizations and political parties. Furthermore, interest organizations in general have access to more substantial professional resources and often have a better-informed view of problems than do political parties. Thus, despite the defense of their own interests, associations often provide better policy proposals than do parties.

The influence of employers' organizations has declined as single firms or small groups have elected to engage in their own lobbying activities. Internal differences have also split these organizations.

Turkey

Score 7

The landscape of associations in Turkey is underdeveloped. The most influential associations in Turkey are employers' associations, trade unions and some business associations. The pro-Western, Istanbul-centric Turkish Industrialists' and Entrepreneurs' Association (TÜSİAD) and the Anatolian-centric, religiously conservative Independent Industrialists' and Entrepreneurs' Association (MÜSİAD) both support privatization, the development of the market economy and the integration of Turkey into the global economy. Beyond that, these groups advocate political reforms to strengthen human rights and the rule of law, as well as support reforms of the Turkish ethnic-nationalist concept of citizenship. These groups often issue reports, proposals or positions on certain issues such as education, health care, security or constitutional reform. The direct impact of such proposals and amendments on legislation is unknown, but the government regularly says that it takes such reports under consideration. Both associations have established a common dialogue and cooperation platform. When it comes to social and labor rights, both organizations present a more skeptical front, but they do not oppose unionism as such. While these associations have represented the secular-religious divide in Turkish society since the 1990s, TUSKON, a group close to both the governing party and the network of Fethullah Gülen, has become more prominent in promoting Muslim business interests.

Among labor unions, the ideological split between secularist unions such as the Confederation of Public Workers' Unions (KESK) and the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK) and the more Islamic conservative Confederation of Turkish Real Trade Unions (Hak-İş) tends to prevent common case or action. Turkish unions tend to concentrate on symbolic struggles instead of social and economic policies that hold the potential for direct benefit for their members. In this context, in January 2012 the Confederation of Public Servants' Trade Unions (Memur-Sen) has launched a campaign and a petition to lift a ban on wearing headscarves in government offices.

United Kingdom

Score 7

Major business associations propose practical policy solutions which are rooted in a realistic assessment of the circumstances in which they will be carried out. Since the polarization between the major parties has been reduced substantially over the last two decades (especially in the field of socioeconomic policy matters), there is little incentive for business associations to engage in wishful thinking if they want to be taken seriously in

the national policy discourse. However, some economic interests do propose somewhat more provocative ideas.

The crisis and the ongoing economic decline have sharpened the tone in some interest associations' publications. The main issue here is not so much whether economic interest associations are capable of formulating viable policies, but that even when they do, they have limited influence on the policy process.

Bulgaria

Score 6

The policy proposal-making capacity of the three major employers' and business associations in Bulgaria is relatively well developed. They can influence and propose policies in at least three ways. Firstly, through their participation in the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation. Secondly, through various projects within the framework of EU structural funds aimed at changes in competitiveness and the business environment. Thirdly, through their own capacity to perform research and formulate and initiate public debates, which they have used relatively actively throughout the period in review. This includes a growing tradition of cooperating with academic institutions and personnel, think tanks and other interest groups. The three associations do not always find it easy, however, to work together and to develop policy analysis, evaluation and proposals on a systematic, rather than case by case, basis. The same is true for the trade unions, which in Bulgaria are represented by two confederations and are also represented in the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation. In contrast to the employers' associations, the unions rely more on their internal expertise in drafting and promoting proposals, and cooperate less with academia.. The range of topics on which trade unions take active positions and make proposals goes way beyond the issues of the labor market – in effect, they behave like political parties. Like the employers' associations, but perhaps to an even greater extent, the two confederations sometimes face problems in working together. They have also found it difficult to make innovative proposals for managing the economic crisis.

Mexico

Score 6

There are few voluntary associations and social movements in Mexico in comparison with other countries. However, the organizations' range of activities and interests is wide, and they are usually autonomous and independent from government. With regard to economic interest organizations, there is a clear asymmetry here. Trade unions are not

sophisticated organizations in Mexico but employers' associations mostly are. It is partly a matter of money and partly of education.

Poland

Score 6

Poland has a relatively developed sector of interest associations. Business associations and trade unions have become more professional over time. However, the unions have largely taken an obstructive approach toward government reforms, most notably in the case of pension reform. In contrast, the leading business associations, such as Lewiatan (PKPP) or the Business Center Club (BCC), have the expertise and the resources for research and formulate elaborate reform proposals.

Slovakia

Score 6

In Slovakia, business associations and unions alike have some policy competence. Business associations are in a better position to provide full-blown policy proposals as they have more resources and some of them run or support think tanks. Trade unions are less well equipped and have suffered from fragmentation. However, some trade unions, including those representing medical doctors, nurses and teachers, are able to analyze the impact of decisions and to formulate relevant policies. KOZ SR, the main Trade Union Confederation, which represents almost 30 sectoral unions, focuses mostly on uncontroversial issues such as workplace security.

Lithuania

Score value_6

Most Lithuanian interest associations, including employers' associations and trade unions, have a rather limited ability to formulate well-crafted policies. They typically lack skilled research staff, and do not engage in cooperation with academic bodies or individual experts. However, some economic interest organizations, including the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists (which is represented on the Tripartite Council) and the European Economic and Social Committee, have developed stronger capacities to formulate policies. Some business associations and even individual businesses support think tanks. In 2012, the University of Pennsylvania recognized the Lithuanian Free Market Institute as being among the most influential public-policy centers in Central and Eastern Europe, rating it at 11th place within the region. The European Union provides support earmarked for strengthening the capacities of social partners, including trade unions.

Citation:
University of Pennsylvania. "2012 Global Go To Think Tanks."

Portugal

Score 5

A few business-related organizations are capable of formulating relevant policies – notably employers' associations and trade unions. However, their proposals tend to be reactive to government measures rather than being proactive in setting policy debate. This pattern of reactivity has if anything been reinforced in the current period. While both employers and trade unions have increasingly expressed dissatisfaction with the austerity measures, there are few substantive alternatives presented other than reactions to specific government measures.

Chile

Score 4

Policy proposals by economic interest groups do address relevant topics and are not always short-sighted or untenable, but they tend to be partial and largely guided by their narrow interests. Exceptions to this rule of thumb do occur.

Cyprus

Score 4

Cyprus has very strong trade unions, with a very high rate of membership, as well as well-organized employers' associations. Their relations have been characterized by a will to find consensual solutions and avoid industrial action. These associations in some cases have internal research or study divisions, which typically produce proposals defending or promoting sectoral interests. In rare cases, associations have commissioned and made public special studies by academics or experts. Associations propose no comprehensive measures or policies that take a long-term perspective. They mostly focus on specific short-term issues rather than structural change. The Pancyprian Labor Union (Παγκύπρια Εργατική Ομοσπονδία, ΠΕΟ) has created a research institute on labor issues, which largely focuses on producing studies and monitoring developments in the economy and the labor market.

As an example of typical behavior, during the period under review the current price-indexed system of adjusting salaries to reflect cost-of-living increases became a central issue of controversy. Employers unilaterally suggested ending the policy, while trade unions reacted strongly in opposition. Neither side offered a policy proposal for addressing the matter on a long-term basis.

Estonia

Score 4

The Estonian Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is comprised of 20 branch unions. In comparison to many Western European countries, its policy formulating capacity is very weak. The head office includes the secretariat (eight people) that prepares all kind of documents, including the draft law proposals, and organizes cooperation between the members of the confederation; there is no special research or analysis unit responsible for preparing concrete policy proposals. Thus, trade unions are typically invited to contribute to the policymaking process, initiated by the government.

The Estonian Employers' Union has been more active (and even aggressive) in making policy proposals, especially in tax policy and industrial policy. Yet, their institutional and analytic capacity is not significantly higher than that of trade unions.

Other interest groups, beyond social partners, have a similarly low level of capacity in formulating policies.

France

Score 4

Business associations, mainly the largest employer's union (Mouvement des Entreprises de France, MEDEF) but also agricultural associations, are able to formulate policy proposals and contribute to agenda setting. They have their own research and study capabilities, and can successfully lobby government and parliamentarians. Weaker organizations such as the association of small and medium companies complain that their specific interests are marginalized by larger international groups and by the government. Trade unions are usually more reactive, mainly because their membership is low, at less than 8% of the workforce, the lowest percentage within the OECD, and split into several rival organizations. Government tries to stimulate social negotiations by extending social partnership agreements to the whole sector. In areas where interest groups are united and strong, as in agriculture and education, they may have substantial influence, amounting to co-decisions together with government. In other areas, the weakness of organized interests results in marginal involvement in decision-making, which may lead to friction at the implementation level.

Greece

Score 4

Associations of employers and employees do not really engage in a constructive dialogue during the period of formulation of any relevant policies. There are multiple reasons for this: labor relations in Greece are usually tense; there is a lack of policy expertise outside the boundaries of ministries and universities; and because interest associations have adapted to functioning in a volatile domestic institutional environment in which there is almost no tradition of planning and programming. Nevertheless, interest associations make relevant policy proposals in a few policy areas, such as macroeconomic policy, incomes and pensions, and labor relations. Leading businesses do not have their own associations, but some leading private banks produce policy papers and reports through their economic research departments.

Employers' associations and trade unions have their own think tanks, which are staffed by researchers and also employ the services of Greek academics producing research reports and policy papers. Think tanks linked to interest associations hardly ever engage in common projects, let alone policy-oriented research. The think tank of the association of Greek industrialists (SEV) is the Institute of Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE). Depending on the policy issue, this think tank may retain some autonomy from the leadership of SEV and promote the policy views of its own staff. The corresponding think tank representing the views of labor is a joint institution of the two largest confederations of workers (GSEE for private sector workers and workers of state-owned enterprises, ADEDY for civil servants). This is called the Institute of Labor (INE-GSEE/ADEDY). Recently, in the wake of the economic crisis, the INE has attracted the collaboration of some Greek and foreign academics who have made its profile more sophisticated and more respectable than in the past. The rest of the interest associations, such as the national association of merchants (ESEE) and the association of artisans, craftsmen and owners of small enterprises (GSEVE), have relatively less well-resourced and smaller think tanks.

Notably, in 2011 – 2013 the role of think tanks was constrained. In the period under consideration, policy formulation was to a large extent confined to the results of negotiations between successive Greek governments seeking to avert sovereign default, on the one hand, and representatives of Greece's creditors (and particularly of the EC–ECB–IMF Troika), on the other. There was little space and time for interest associations to formulate policy proposals, except of course for the obvious and predictable reaction of the INE think tank, which rejected all policy measures introduced by the Troika. Such measures were not warmly received by the opponents of labor either. In the context of Greece's deep economic depression in 2009 – 2013, some

policy guidelines, such as the Troika's insistence on lowering monthly wages in the private sector, received only lukewarm responses from policy experts and representatives of associations of employers.

Citation:

The opinions of the think tank of the labor unions, i.e., the INE think tank, are available at its website <http://www.inegsee.gr/> (no foreign language version of this website's contents). For opinions mostly reflecting the views of Greek industrialists, see the website of the think tank IOBE at http://www.iobe.gr/index.asp?a_id=122 (english version of the website).

K Featherstone & D Papadimitriou, *The Limits of Europeanization: Reform Capacity and Policy Conflict in Modern Greece*; London, Routledge, 2008

Hungary

Score 4

The analytical capacity of economic interest associations in Hungary has differed. The main business associations have been loyal to the central government. They have confined themselves to criticizing policy details and have largely refrained from formulating policy alternatives. This applies to the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Magyar Kereskedelmiés Iparkamara), the reorganized Hungarian Agrarian Chamber, the National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers (VSOZ) and the Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists (GYOSZ). The trade unions have adopted a more critical position toward the Orbán government. However, their analytical capacity has suffered from the strong fragmentation of the unions. The merger of three of Hungary's six trade union federations, announced on 1 May 2013, is likely to raise their capacity to formulate relevant policy suggestions.

The three federations – the National Federation of Hungarian Trade Unions (MSZOSZ), the Alliance of Autonomous Trade Unions (Autonómok) and the Cooperation Forum of Trade Unions (SZEF) – represent the majority of trade union members, and some trade unions from other federations have also joined them.

Croatia

Score 3

Trade unions have traditionally played a significant role in Croatia. Union membership is relatively high and unions have been quite powerful in organizing protest against the government's austerity measures. Like other economic interest associations such as the Croatian Employers' Association, however, the unions have focused on opposing government proposals and have lacked the will – and the capacity – to develop their own proposals. In 2012, for instance, economic interest associations did not launch a single positive policy initiative.

Romania

Score 3

While policymaking in Romania is often influenced in a particularistic fashion by individual business interests, business associations are rather weak and have played a minor role in proposing concrete policy measures, much less offering cost–benefit analyses of the likely effects of such policies. The potential for such engagement is further reduced by the fact that Romania does not have a coherent regulatory framework for lobbying. The Romanian Lobbying Registry Association (RLRA), a weak non-profit, non-governmental private organization, has unsuccessfully petitioned in favor of regulations in the area.

Even though union density is fairly high in Romania, union structure is fragmented and weakly developed and rank-and-file members are increasingly alienated from a self-serving leadership. While strike activity has picked up in response to the 2010 austerity measures, unions have not played an active role in policy formulation and this situation is unlikely to change despite the closer ties of unions with the Social Democratic Party (Partidul Social Democrat, PSD) – the party of the current Prime Minister, Victor Ponta.

Indicator

Association Competence (Others)

Question

To what extent are non-economic interest associations capable of formulating relevant policies?

41 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = Most interest associations are highly capable of formulating relevant policies.
- 8-6 = Many interest associations are highly capable of formulating relevant policies.
- 5-3 = Few interest associations are highly capable of formulating relevant policies.
- 2-1 = Most interest associations are not capable of formulating relevant policies.

Iceland

Score 9

Iceland has many active noneconomic interest organizations, working in various fields. Although many have a reasonable level of prominence, only a few have the capacity and competence to exert significant influence on public policy. The largest two are the Organization of Disabled in Iceland (Öryrkjabandalagið), with 35 member associations and a staff of 11, and the Consumers' Association of Iceland (Neytendasamtökin), with a staff of seven and 9,200 members. The Nature and Wildlife Conservation Organization (Náttúruverndarsamtök Íslands), with a staff of just one, is influential despite its size. This group has managed to feature prominently in public debates about power plants, both on issues of hydropower and geothermal power, and has expressed reservations about further construction of aluminum smelters around the country. The Constitutional Society (Stjórnarskrárfélagið) which has no paid staff, has also made its voice heard in the debate over Iceland's proposed new constitution.

Norway

Score 9

The government and the opposition parties listen carefully to the opinions expressed by business, farm-sector and union leaders. Intellectuals and academics also receive attention. Environmental groups have a substantial influence on environmental policy. The large organizations are professional in communicating their messages to politicians and to the public, and are sometimes able to set the political agenda.

In addition, there are numerous formal arenas for routine consultation between governments and various kinds of interest organizations. In many areas, such consultations are formalized and have become a routine mode of policy formulation.

Sweden

Score 9

For non-economic interest associations, their capacity to conduct analysis and produce relevant policy proposals varies significantly depending on their size.

For instance, in the environmental policy field, the major interest organizations have an large staff that conducts high quality studies and presents highly relevant policy proposals. In other policy fields, small interest associations do not have the staff to produce high-quality policy proposals. Yet if we assess the quality of non-economic interest associations over the very broad range of all Swedish interest associations, most of them produce high quality policy proposals.

Australia

Score 8

A number of social interest groups, environmental groups and religious groups take responsible and well-considered positions and are, therefore, taken very seriously by government, although there are also groups that take extreme positions. The extent to which the proposals are well thought-out and feasible varies considerably. In general, the proposals from mainstream interest groups are of high quality in part because many elected representatives are drawn from these groups, or have had considerable contact with them prior to their election. The proposals also tend to be of high quality because of the expertise of the groups themselves and their narrow (often single-issue) interest, which means the groups can focus exclusively on a single problem and the ways in which it can be resolved.

Denmark

Score 8

There is a long corporatist tradition in Denmark. The major interest organizations are often members of committees and commissions preparing legislation. They provide information for the government and legitimacy for the policies adopted, thereby facilitating implementation.

In recent years, during the years of Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen's government, the relationship between the government and interest organizations changed somewhat. Some laws were passed without having been prepared through corporatist committees. Instead, interest organizations had to lobby more – by making direct contact with civil servants and politicians – so as to influence policies. The current cabinet of Helle Thorning-Schmidt also seems willing to challenge interest organizations, as evidenced by the lockout of teachers during the school labor conflict in the spring of 2013.

The fact remains that the administration needs input from outside when legislation is prepared. In other words, there is a common interest in continuous dialogue.

Citation:

Peter Munk Christiansen og Lise Togeby, *Magten i Danmark*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal.

Finland

Score 8

Policy-relevant positions of most associations are based on advanced know-how and feasibility analyses in the respective fields, and thus contribute to the quality of decision-making. Exaggeration and one-sided arguments are in the nature of interest organizations and of the negotiation process, but in corporatist-style policymaking, various interests gain access to government policymaking. No doubt the contribution of interest associations in terms of know-how in decision-making is a valuable asset which enhances the quality of policymaking. Also, interest associations have a high profile in public discourse and often shape public opinion. The fact remains, though, that the function of interest associations is to promote certain interests to the disadvantage of others.

Germany

Score 8

As of April 2013, the government's official list contained 2,144 registered associations, 56 more than in 2010. One-third of these can be considered noneconomic interest associations. Within the process of policy formulation, interest-group expertise plays a key role in providing ministerial officials with the in-depth information necessary to make decisions. Citizen groups, social movements and grassroots lobbying organizations are becoming increasingly influential, particularly on the local level. As the conflict over Stuttgart's main station showed, noneconomic interest associations are having an increasingly significant impact. Although the policy proposals produced by noneconomic interest groups can be described as reasonable, they tend to

be focused on a single issue, and often ignore economic constraints in such a way as to make their suggestions less realistic. Although they often put painful subjects on the policy agenda, their lack of political weight gives them limited influence.

Luxembourg

Score 8

Interest groups have and can have an important impact on policymaking. However, drawing on academic knowledge within Luxembourg is limited. Some larger non-governmental organizations maintain a small research department (e.g., Caritas) and express opinions through publications (the Caritas annual almanac) and conferences, or through offering comments on draft bills or proposing policies. Voluntary working groups that act essentially as think tanks have become more popular during the review period, and many have chosen the future of Luxembourg as their focus (La Société Luxembourgeoise de l'Evaluation et de la Prospective (SOLEP), Luxembourg 2030 and “5 vir 12”). These groups have considerable impact, given the government's built-in practice of consulting all social partners and the overall small size of Luxembourg. However, drawing on academic skills is limited.

Citation:

Caritas (2013), Almanach 2013: <http://www.wort.lu/fr/view/almanach-social-2013-de-caritas-a-l-etat-de-prendre-ses-responsabilites-51629aa1e4b0f5e96c0c817c>

Société luxembourgeoise de l'Evaluation et de la Prospective (SOLEP): www.solep.lu

5 vir 12 (five to twelve): <http://5minutes.rtl.lu/fr/actualite/luxembourg/415157.html>
<http://www.2030.lu/en/home/>

Netherlands

Score 8

Policymaking in the Netherlands has a strong neo-corporatist (poldering) tradition that systematically involves all kinds of interest associations – not just business and labor – in the early stages of the policymaking process. Owing to their well-established positions, e.g., the consumer association, all kinds of environmental NGOs, religious associations, municipal (Vereniging voor Nederlandse Gemeenten) and provincial interests (InterProvinciaal Overleg), medical and other professional associations (e.g. teachers, universities, legal professions) can influence policymaking through the existing consensus-seeking structures. Trade-offs are actively negotiated with ministries, other involved governments, stakeholder organizations and even NGOs. Furthermore, non-economic interest organizations react to policy proposals by ministries and have a role in amending and changing the proposals in the early stages of the policymaking process. They may also become involved later on with the implementation of policies.

New Zealand

Score 8

There is a rich tradition of consulting societal groups. The amount of consultation of groups and individuals and the way their proposals have been dealt with is reported in regulatory impact statements. In several cases, recent regulatory impact statements claim that consultation has had a substantive impact. Still, the size and shortage of resources prevent some interest associations from developing specialist policy know-how that would have a lasting impact in consultations.

Citation:

Regulatory Impact Statement Information Release:

<http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/informationreleases/ris> (accessed May 10, 2013).

Slovakia

Score 8

Slovakia has a vibrant third sector and many competent interest associations whose analyses and proposals have featured prominently in the media. Under the Radičová government, many representatives of NGOs – and think tanks associated with NGOs – moved into, or worked with, the government. For instance, Viktor Nižňanský, first director then President of MESA 10, an important think tank, and later on Director of the Municipal Research and Advisory Center, served as head of the Government Office. Under the Fico government, the relationship between the government and NGOs has become more tense. Following the change in government, experts from the Radičová government have become active in NGOs or have cooperated with them, thereby providing important policy knowledge.

Slovenia

Score 8

Slovenia still has a quite vibrant third sector. The latter was quite active in monitoring the activities of the Pahor and Janša governments and in organizing campaigns and protests against many controversial decisions – especially in the fields of economic, social, family and environmental policy. Most interest associations have considerable policy knowledge; many can rely on think tanks that involve various experts from the universities and research institutes in their work. Policy proposals developed by interest associations, although not numerous, have featured prominently in the media.

Spain

Score 8

Non-economic interest associations have always been relatively weak in Spain and it has been difficult for them to influence political decision-making with relevant policy proposals. Even the strong Catholic Church lacks a research unit capable of helping it formulate policies, although it is still influential on education and moral issues (particularly when the center-right Popular Party or Partido Popular, PP, is in office, as is being demonstrated in the change of legislation on abortion). Other minority religious communities are very tiny.

Leading environmental groups (e.g., Ecologistas en Acción or Greenpeace España), and some NGOs devoted to human rights (such as Amnesty International) or development aid (Intermon-Oxfam and other Spanish groups which benefited from the expanding public budget devoted to international cooperation in Spain during the late 2000s) have gained technical competence and rely increasingly on academic expertise and specialized publications to influence public opinion and policymakers on their areas of interest. Women's associations are weak as autonomous organizations but influential within the parties (especially in the Spanish Socialist Workers Party, Partido Socialista Obrero Español or PSOE) while the LGBT movement can be mentioned for its success defending homosexuals' rights and, particularly, same-sex marriage (a legal reform which was ruled as constitutional by the Constitution Court in December 2012).

Finally, and linked to the social protests derived from the crisis, some platforms or networks following the example of the 15-M Movement (the Indignants who "took the square" in demonstrations that began on 15 May 2011), have been able to gain the focus of the media and even shape public policy by asking for more transparency (for example, the group Democracia Real Ya) or better regulation of mortgages (for example, the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca or Mortgage Victims Association which won the 2013 European Citizen Prize granted by the European Parliament). Social movements promoting Catalonia's right to become an independent state, or promoting recommendations about the process-based on research undertaken by their own expert staff, can also be included in this recent trend of the revitalized civil society resulting from the crisis.

Citation:

www.eldiario.es/internacional/Parlamento-Europeo-PAH-Premio-Ciudadano_0_140336381.html

United Kingdom

Score 8

The United Kingdom has a tradition of close scrutiny of policy proposals. The quality and realism of policy proposals determines the degree to which any interest group is taken seriously in the country's national political discourse and there are many NGOs which have had a tangible impact on policy thinking. Green interest groups, in particular, have helped to shape the policies of successive governments. There are vocal campaigners for rural interests, while both sides of the migration debate have been nourished by interest groups.

There is an abundance of NGOs with often-narrow policy agendas which tend to be pushed forward without much account being taken of the wider ramifications of the pursuit of their issue. By the same token, the diversity of such bodies allows a wide range of proposals to obtain a hearing.

Austria

Score 7

Along with economic interest groups, organized religious communities, especially the officially recognized denominations, have a formalized role within the decision-making process. Like the economic interest groups, they are consulted before the Cabinet approves the draft of a law. This is a critical stage of the process, as most Cabinet-approved drafts are also approved by parliament.

A number of other groups occasionally exert notable influence, including the physicians' chamber, various environmental groups (such as Greenpeace) and some human rights organizations (such as Amnesty International).

Belgium

Score 7

There is a large range of opinion and proposal formulations in Europe, and Belgium is among a group of good performers in this regard. Several non-economic interest associations receive state funding, including environmental, cultural, religious/philosophical, sports/leisure and minority (such as individuals with handicaps) groups.

The largest groups are able to not only make proposals but also actually influence policy. Consociationalism also implies that some socially important decisions are made smoothly. The decision to legalize same-sex marriage in 2003 or euthanasia in 2002 followed intense but quite dispassionate

debating. The contrast with recent demonstrations in France over similar issues is all the more striking.

The main reason why this can happen is again related to the predominance of political parties. Several groups and associations that receive funding either initially have, or subsequently develop, preferential political relationships with political parties and/or government actors. This means that social groups, associations and (to some extent) publicly funded schools often have longstanding ties to a political group. It implies that there is a strong incentive for non-economic interest associations to propose policies, and to be reasonably documented with such proposals, as there is a high probability that they may see those proposals debated in Parliament.

Obviously, the negative aspect of this structure is a dependence on public funding, and therefore a possible lack of independence, which is sometimes criticized by more radical cadres and activists. On the positive side, some groups are able to coalesce in broader umbrella organizations (such as around environmental protections) that are then able to hire stable staff with policy expertise.

Canada

Score 7

Many social interest groups, environmental groups and religious communities develop policy proposals that identify problems' causes, make use of scholarly research to support their analysis, propose technically feasible measures to attain policy objectives, take account of long-term interests, and anticipate policy effects. However, as these groups have fewer resources than economic interest groups, they generally do a somewhat less competent job in proposing reasonable policies. A recent report prepared for the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) states that for many civil society organizations, broad policy ideas are not always translated into concrete proposals due to a lack of expertise. While some coalitions, such as the Americas Policy Group (APG); the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN); the Climate Action Network (CAN); the Policy Working Group on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health; and the Global Call Against Poverty/Making Poverty History, among others, have a strong record with respect to governmental relations (political and legislative), these are the minority.

Citation:

A Map of Canadian Civil Society Organization Coalitions' Governance, Capacity and Agendas: Common Challenges, Shortfalls and their Implications, report prepared for The Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC), 2011.

Czech Republic

Score 7

Interest associations have mushroomed in the Czech Republic since 1990. There are around 100,000 autonomous, self-organized groups, associations and organizations registered in the Czech Republic, not all of which are still active. Those concerned with social and environmental issues have benefited from some public support, particularly from the European Union and other international sources, and can claim some expertise and successes. A prominent example is the Environmental Legal Service, with about 30 specialist staff plus student volunteers, which has specialized in advice to protesters on environmental issues, but which has also drawn attention to the absence of a coherent government plan for the transport infrastructure. The Roman Catholic Church, the most active religious organization, has a limited political agenda and has largely focused on the highly contested restitution of church property, which was finally organized in 2012.

Israel

Score 7

Noneconomic associations and civic-sector organizations have become increasingly influential in recent years. These organizations, along with professional consultancy firms, are filling the gap left by a state whose privatization policies has led it to renounce previously held responsibilities, making interest-based organizations important actors in the decision-making process. These include:

- Social interest groups. Research has identified a number of ways in which social organizations have become more involved in shaping social policy. However, most studies have also emphasized that social-interest associations are still far from being an integral part of Israel's decision-making process.
- Environmental organizations. Though most environmental organizations in Israel enjoy considerable public and government support, they usually lack a say in the final stage of the policymaking. Their influence is manifested mainly through petitions filed to the High Court of Justice (usually after a policy has been issued).
- Religious organizations. Since Israel does not have a clear separation between church and state, religious groups in Israel are naturally much more powerful than the two other types of associations mentioned here with regard to agenda-setting. As a highly influential factor in shaping policy, the agenda they promote is often prioritized even over economic considerations.

Citation:

Nisan, Limor, "Civil society and the third sector in Israel," IDI paper for the 10th Caesarea conference (June 2010), Hebrew.

<http://www.idi.org.il/media/526545/%D7%97%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%94%20%D7%90%D7%96%D7%A8%D7%97%D7%99%D7%AA%20%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%92%D7%96%D7%A8%20%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%99%20%D7%91%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C.pdf>

Vigoda-Gadot, Eran and Chaim Cohen, "Privatization of policy making: One step too far?," Van Leer Institute (August 2011), Hebrew.

http://www.vanleer.org.il/sites/files/product-pdf/niir_emda_eitzob_mdiniot.pdf

United States

Score 7

Citizens' or public interest associations' competence in proposing reasonable policy initiatives is unusually high in the United States. This high level of competence is in part due to associations' ability to attract highly qualified professional staff, and part due to their media and communication skills. This holds true for groups such as the Environmental Defense Fund, Common Cause and the American Conservative Union. From the standpoint of developing credible policies, these associations have the advantage of focusing on broad interests, rather than self-interested ones, as their central mission. They are subject, however, to ideological biases and membership demands that tend to favor extreme views. An exception is the Tea Party. A populist conservative movement that rose to prominence in 2010 and influenced elections in 2010 and 2012, Tea Party groups have not demonstrated the ability to offer well-researched policy proposals. With respect to low-income people, recent studies have pointed out a severe shortage of organized representation for this group. The dwindling lobbying resources of American labor unions have resulted in significantly reduced capabilities to present credible proposals on their behalf.

Chile

Score 6

A substantial number of autonomous, self-organized groups, associations and organizations exist in Chile. Civil society's organizational landscape has become increasingly differentiated since redemocratization. Religious, environmental and social organizations, as well as NGOs, academic groups and professional associations often present substantive policy reform proposals that contribute positively to policy discussions and government reforms, also taking into consideration long-term perspectives. Various political foundations or think tanks play a decisive role as formulators of relevant policies.

On the other hand, there are great disparities in the durability and the organizational strength of associations, mostly due to social inequalities.

Croatia

Score 6

Many social interest organizations in Croatia have the capacity to propose relevant policy proposals. For instance, experts from Citizens Organize to Oversee Voting (Građani organizirano nadgledaju glasanje, GONG), an association of various organizations for the protection and promotion of human rights originally formed in 1997. GONG has taken part in the drafting of various laws on lobbying and elections. Another example of a social interest organization with a strong analytical capacity, as well a capacity to promote its issues in the media, is Green Action (Zelena Akcija).

Estonia

Score 6

The policy formulation capacity of non-economic interest groups has substantially increased, and today some of them are able to propose concrete policy measures. The capability is varying across fields of interest and the scope of the intended impact. Most of the civil associations are small and possess limited financial and human resources. Therefore, their in-house capacity is very low and most analyses have been carried out as single projects on a contractual basis. The level of capacity depends also on the formal policy agenda, as it is easier to add some new proposal to the existing agenda than to set the agenda. Therefore, social interest groups lobbying on issue such as child protection, better socialization and care of disabled people, or same-sex marriage have been quite good at formulating relevant policies since relevant draft laws are pending. Environmental groups in Estonia act mainly at the local level and work to impact community policies. It is hard to provide any estimation of their policy formulation capacity, but there are several good examples in different municipalities. Religious groups typically are not active in domestic politics and policy.

France

Score 6

The number of, and membership in, non-business associations has been increasing. If the phenomenon of dependency on the financial support of public authorities exists, especially at the local level, there are non-economic associations that are combining pluralistic approaches, long-term perspectives and a public perspective. This can be seen in fields such as urban policy (where national programs and local public actors rely on the expertise and commitment of associations dealing with local issues), environmental policy or social policy (aid to people with different social problems or handicaps).

This being said, only a few associations are equipped with the capacity to make relevant and credible proposals. Some groups (such as environmental groups and social workers) have a real proactive strategy; most associations are reactive.

Ireland

Score 6

As has been the case with economic interest groups, the influence of non-economic groups has been diminished by the crisis. While a large variety of special interest and advocacy groups continue to operate, their impact has been reduced by the urgency of consolidating public finances. However, they continue to formulate proposals over a range of issues from environmental policy to the provision of health care, for example. Private funding has been provided since the crisis for some new policy groups that offer independent analysis of public policy.

Italy

Score 6

The landscape of non-economic interest organizations is increasingly rich and diversified. But only few of them are able to formulate articulated policy proposals and most operate in a reactive mode instead. Among the most professional associations, some religious (such as Caritas, which deals with immigration policies) and environmental groups (such as Legambiente, WWF, etc.) deserve special mention and are able to provide well-articulated or scholarly grounded analyses of significant breadth. An increasing number of single-issue movements are gaining ground in Italy and are contributing policy proposals.

There are also a series of foundations and think tanks in the field of international affairs, social and economic problems producing critical studies and conducting oversight activities. But their infrastructures, resources and personnel are in general limited.

Malta

Score 6

Malta has a large number of non-economic interest associations, and while a lack of resources prevent many from being able to formulate relevant policies individually, membership in international or regional federations does provide some help. Local associations have been able to improve their policy capacity thanks to funds from the European Union. Few organizations

employ full-time staff, but many have academics as part of their leadership structure, allowing them to make use of expert advice when discussing policies. In some cases organizations are able to attract research support on a voluntary basis from like-minded academics, giving them access to some of the most knowledgeable people relevant to policy and resulting in excellent reports.

Mexico

Score 6 There has been a considerable increase in both the quantity and the sophistication of non-economic interest groups. Many talented graduates have found positions in NGOs and they are working to influence policy in Mexico. Several institutes of tertiary education (e.g., ITAM, Colmex) both teach and conduct public policy research and some of them are highly influential in the political sphere. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the number of national and international advocacy NGOs that, depending on the sector and the government in place, are also relevant in the agenda setting process. And finally, the movement of personnel between NGOs, think tanks and government is high compared to other OECD countries.

Poland

Score 6 Poland has several interest associations other than business associations and trade unions. Compared to other countries, relatively few environmental groups exist. Most nongovernmental organizations are relatively small, and there are only a few interest associations that focus on, and are capable of, developing full-blown policy proposals. The Catholic Church, still the most-influential interest group in Poland, pursues relatively narrow interests and is largely preoccupied with stabilizing its influence within an increasingly secular society.

Romania

Score 6 In certain areas, such as environmental policy and social protection, NGOs and think tanks have taken on an increasingly active role in identifying policy problems and formulating policy alternatives. However, since in recent years the central government has not shown particular interest in incorporating such policy proposals into its policymaking, many NGOs have increasingly focused on subnational governments and agencies, whose lack of policymaking expertise makes them more receptive to the sometimes significant capabilities of NGOs in particular issue areas.

Switzerland

Score 6

Noneconomic interest groups are very heterogeneous in Switzerland. Some offer reasonable proposals.

Greece

Score value_6

Greek civil society is relatively underdeveloped in the sense that Greeks do not devote time or money to voluntary associations and particularly not to non-economic interest associations. A survey of the European Foundation for Working and Living Conditions, conducted in 2011, is telling enough: while on the average in the EU-27 over 20% of citizens participated in voluntary activities, Greece along with Portugal, Spain, Malta, Bulgaria and Romania, showed a much lower participation rate of between 10% and 15%. According to the Eurobarometer 2011 study, only 14% of Greeks participated regularly or occasionally in a voluntary activity. In this context, “voluntary activities” means unpaid work such as charity or communal work. Low participation is related to rather small or infrequent capability to formulate relevant policies, as non-economic interest associations do not have the resources to become involved in policy formulation and the Greek state does not invite them to do so.

Among all social non-economic interest associations, environmental associations are most developed in Greece. The World Wildlife Fund claims that there are more 300 environmental groups in Greece, but their impact remains small. This can be accounted for, firstly, by the fact that policymakers prioritize other policy targets over enhancing environmental protection; and, secondly, because narrow, political party-driven policy considerations, which are dense and dominant in policymaking, marginalize other causes.

On the other hand, religion and particularly the state-sanctioned religion – Greek Orthodox Christianity – plays a preponderant role in formulating policies, including policy on ecclesiastical matters and education policy for primary and tertiary education. For instance, religion is a compulsory subject in all grades of primary school and high school. The Greek Orthodox Church enjoys a tailor-made taxation regime which allows it to sustain a large landed property. The constitution of Greece does not exclude other religions or Christian dogmas, but officially recognizes the dominant status of the Greek Orthodox Church. In effect, state and church have not ever severed their ties and the Greek state pays for the budget of the Greek Orthodox Church to this day. In that respect the policy role of the religious community represented by that church is quite significant, while that of other religious communities remains negligible.

Citation:

Data from the survey of the European Foundation for Working and Living Conditions are available in the press release http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubd_ocs/2011/021/en/1/EF11021EN.pdf. Accessed on 04.06.2013. Data from the Eurobarometer survey are available in Figure QA15, page 7, available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2011/juillet/04_07/rapport_%20eb75_2_%20benevolat_en.pdf. Accessed on 04.06.2013.

Data on Greek environmental associations are available at WWF's Greek language website http://politics.wwf.gr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=476&Itemid=384. Accessed on 04.06.2013.

The provisions of the Constitution of Greece on the Greek Orthodox Church can be found in article 3 of the Constitution.

Lithuania

Score 5

The capacity of nonacademic interest associations to formulate well-crafted and relevant policy proposals varies by group. Most lack skilled staff members and do not engage in cooperation with academic bodies or individual experts. Moreover, the lawmaking and regulatory impact assessment processes do not sufficiently ensure the participation of relevant stakeholders. Business interest groups tend to have stronger abilities to formulate policies than do social or environmental groups. The Lithuanian Catholic Church is an important player in Lithuanian politics, with its influence typically focused on a small number of policy issues. The Non-Governmental Organizations' Information and Support Center facilitates cooperation between NGOs as they seek to represent their interests.

Portugal

Score 5

In the context of the economic crisis and of the bailout, there has been a reduction in the impact of other associations. On the one hand, the fact that Portugal has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the EC–ECB–IMF Troika, which specifies a very clear set of policy proposals, has seen civil society movements with policy platforms practically disappear from dialogue. Additionally, the overwhelming focus on economic issues means that other established groups' proposals now gain less visibility (e.g., the environmental group Quercus).

Turkey

Score 5

Despite the increase of non-economic interest groups, they have little influence over government policy, despite their ability to communicate with the government through various channels. There are several initiatives to promote the capacity of civil society in Turkey, yet due to financial and

human resources issues only a few leading, semi-professional associations are able to work and provide alternative proposals for social issues based on scholarly research. Several civil society initiatives have been established toward the further democratization of Turkey. However, these initiatives seem to be sourced from advocacy groups, and need to be reviewed for their long-term vision and competence. Examples of activities in the review period concern proposals from environmental pressure groups on sustainable and renewable energy that challenge nuclear power plant projects and urban development plans.

Bulgaria

Score 4

The non-economic interest groups that are most active in Bulgaria are largely engaged in four fields: education (especially parents' associations), health (patients' organizations), minorities and the environment. While there are many associations and they often act in accord, they seem more activist than analytical in their efforts. Their proposals are rarely accompanied by attempts to fully encompass the relevant issues and argue in favor or against specific proposals in rational grounds. However, on occasion they manage to inform the public debate, the most recent example being some environmental organizations' input into the public debates preceding the referendum on building a second nuclear plant in Bulgaria in January 2013. The religious communities in Bulgaria have their channels of political influence, but are less active in the public sphere. It is only on rare occasions, such as the introduction of religious classes at school, that the Bulgarian Orthodox Church takes a public position.

Cyprus

Score 4

The development of civil society is a very recent phenomenon in Cyprus. This process started with the mobilization of environmental groups in the late 1980s, initially for specific causes, and later on behalf of a comprehensive policy framework. With the help of European funding, new associations have been created, studies undertaken and proposals formulated on issues pertaining to good governance (e.g., access to information).

In the past two years, various groups have emerged with the aim of addressing the political crisis and its associated economic and social problems in a comprehensive manner. These groups are still young, and their proposals have thus far been of a general nature. The issues of hydrocarbon use, transparency in political finance, and the country's response to the economic crisis are at the top of these groups' agenda.

However, it is too early to assess the relevance, value and the likely impact of their work.

The Church of Cyprus is one of the country's strongest institutions, and continues to claim a role in education and other broader issues. This includes the problem of Cyprus' division, but also other political and economic topics such as the exploitation of hydrocarbons.

Japan

Score 4

Civil-society organizations with a public-policy focus are rare in Japan. Until 1998, it was very difficult to find such an organization and ensure a steady flow of membership contributions and/or donations. The Non-Profit Organization Law of 1998 made the incorporation of such bodies easier but many bureaucratic and financial challenges remain. With a few sectoral exceptions, the depth and breadth of such organizations in Japan thus remains limited. Japan also lacks a well-developed think-tank scene. It should also be noted that some non-profit organizations are used by the government bureaucracy as auxiliary mechanisms in areas where it cannot or does not want to become directly involved.

The incompetence of many state actors during the immediate aftermath of the 3/11 disasters has led to renewed calls for the development of civil-society mechanisms. Optimism on the part of dedicated activists notwithstanding, it will be difficult for such actors to create professionally operating, sustainable organizations.

Latvia

Score 4

A number of environmental interest groups have the capacity to propose concrete policy measures and provide capable analysis of policy effects, often in cooperation their international networks or academic bodies. Environmental organizations engage in structured policy dialogue with the relevant ministries; this process supports sustained involvement in policy decisions and has contributed to the further development of capacity.

Social-interest groups are very diverse; however, most lack the capacity to propose concrete policy measures or analyze likely policy outcomes. While the government consults regularly with some social-interest groups such as the Pensioners' Federation, these groups do not produce high-quality policy analysis. Groups representing patients' rights or reproductive health interests are skilled at producing policy proposals, but most lack the resources to engage in sustained advocacy or policy development.

Religious communities have not exhibited notable activity in the area of concrete policy proposal.

South Korea

Score 4

The rise of civil society organizations has been one of the most important political trends in Korea during the last decade. Some of the largest NGOs, such as the Korean Federation for Environmental Movement, the Citizen Coalition for Economic Justice and the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, have built up considerable competences in specialized fields such as environmental policies, election reform and human rights. They provide reasonable policy proposals and are supported by a large group of academics and professionals. The majority of smaller NGOs remain focused on service provision and do not develop policy proposals. However, civil society and NGOs – especially those on the left of the center – have found it difficult to have any influence on the political decision-making process under the Lee administration.

Hungary

Score 3

The analytical capacity of non-economic interest associations has suffered from the government's control of the sector. The National Civil Fund (NCA), a body in charge of monitoring and supporting civic organizations and NGOs, was taken over by the Orbán government and transformed into the National Cooperation Fund (NEA). As the latter has financed only associations loyal to the government, independent associations have struggled with a lack of funding. However, there have been some small, but very important NGOs with substantial policy expertise. One is the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (TASZ) that has documented and evaluated in detail the anti-democratic actions of the Orbán government.

This report is part of the Sustainable Governance Indicators 2014 project.

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