

When Agricultural Interests go to Brussels

*Analysis of Domestic Interest Groups and
Their Endeavours for Influencing EU
Agricultural- and Food policy*

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Master's Thesis
Department of Political Science

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When Agricultural Interests go to Brussels

An analysis of German and Norwegian interest groups' endeavours in terms of influencing EU agricultural- and food policy-making processes.

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Abstract

Agriculture and food policy has been subject to extensive changes since the early 1990s. This study focus on Norwegian and German interest groups representing agriculture, food industry, and veterinarians, more precisely, their strategies for exerting influence on agriculture- and food policy decision-making. The basic question is whether changes in opportunity structures, first and foremost the ascending delegation of policy making authority to the EU level, also lead to changes in interest groups' strategic dispositions toward decision-makers.

The master's thesis is grounded on a qualitative multiple case study analysis, which in turn implies that research on the Norwegian and German network of interest groups has been conducted individually, and not by means of a traditional comparative design. The choice of design reflects the recognition of the apparent differences between the two countries, e.g. in terms of size. However, common, and diverse, features between the two systems nonetheless contribute to the selection of the two. First and foremost, state-society relations in Norway and Germany have traditionally been characterized by corporatism. In both countries, strong agricultural interest groups have enjoyed special access to domestic governing institutions. On the other hand, one apparent difference between the two is the formal attachment to the EU, with Germany being a full EU member, and Norway being attached by means of the EEA-agreement. Nevertheless, both countries, and consequently interest groups, are being affected by policy making processes at EU level.

The analysis is mainly grounded on data collected from semi-structured interviews with key informants from German and Norwegian interest groups, and, moreover, diplomats. What first is clarified is how interest groups operate in order to exert influence on processes. Emphasis is especially placed on their selection of influence channel(s), i.e. national government, European Associations, EU institutions. In order to explain why these activities are chosen, a liberal intergovernmentalism approach emphasizing the decisive position of the national state, and a historical institutionalism approach emphasizing the impact of critical junctures and increasing returns, are applied. Moreover, a multi-level governance perspective is included in the thesis. It is to be employed as an alternative approximation of framework conditions, i.e. structure in which interest groups operate, in order to assess whether findings in the analysis correspond to an LI or MLG description of interest group channelization of strategic efforts.

Preface

A long journey now seems to have come to an end. The endeavor of mine to analysis agricultural interest group's channelization of efforts aimed at influencing policy-making process has undeniably been an inspiring process. A lot of people deserve my upmost gratitude for their continuous support during the writing process.

A special thank to my supervisor, Frode Veggeland, who has given me excellent, and most necessary feed-back on numerous drafts. I am also very grateful for the scholarship and working environment which was offered me by the Norwegian Agricultural Economics Research Institute (NILF). It has constituted a pleasant and professional environment for writing.

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And last, but certainly not least, a special thank to my family who has supported me during the writing process.

Eventual shortcomings and incorrect information in the thesis are of course entirely my responsibility.

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Abbreviations

- BgVV – Bundesamt für gesundheitlichen Verbraucherschutz und Veterinärmedizin
- BMELV – Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz
- BML – Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten
- BRD – Bundesrepublik Deutschland
- CAP – the Common Agricultural Policy
- CIAA – Confederation of Food and Drink Industries of the EEC (since 2011, FoodDrinkEurope)
- CoAM – the Council of Agricultural Ministers
- COPA – Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations
- DBV – Deutscher Bauernverband
- DG – Directorates-General
- DG SANCO – DG Health and Consumers
- EC – the European Communities
- EEA – the European Economic Area
- EFSA – the European Food Safety Authority
- EP – the European Parliament
- EU – the European Union
- FVE – Federation of Veterinarian of Europe
- GFL – the General Food Law
- HI – Historical institutionalism
- LI – Liberal intergovernmentalism
- MLG – Multi-level governance
- SCFCAH – the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health
- SPS – the Single Payment Scheme

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1 Introduction

The EU's institutional framework for agricultural and food policy has been subject to extensive reform since the late 1980s, early 1990s. Price level support systems for farmers have been replaced by the income support systems of the Single Payment Scheme (SPS). Furthermore, the EU has acquired considerable competence in terms of decision making on food policy. What merely used to be an ad hoc approach, now amount to institutions and extensive legislation (Nugent 2010: 361, Lie and Veggeland 2010: 78). This study departs from the observation that food and agricultural policies at national and EU level have changed considerably since 1990. The research question is as follows,

How do agricultural interest groups in Norway and Germany adapt their activities to changing institutional structures at national and EU level? How to explain eventual changes in interest groups' strategies toward decision making authorities?

As indicated in the research question, focus in this thesis is the behaviour of agricultural interest groups, in terms of strategic activity. Particular emphasis is put on interest groups' selection of channel(s) of influence, whether strategic activities are channelized toward national authorities, or alternative channels, such as European associations of interest groups and EU institutions. With regard to the selection of cases and inherent observations, German and Norwegian agricultural interest groups have been chosen on the basis of an assumption that analysis should reveal insight on behavioural patterns by actors from an EFTA-country¹ and an EU-country. In other words, the study endeavours to establish greater knowledge of eventual differences, or similarities, in Norwegian and German actors' strategic activity toward EU policy-making. Moreover, a time perspective from 1990 up till present day is to be subjected for analysis. The reason for choosing this perspective is that processes of EU agricultural policy reform were initiated at that point of time. Developments in the EU's food policy became evident a few years later, in the mid 1990s.

The relation between agriculture and food policy is perceived of as follows. Food and agriculture used to a greater extent to be two separate policy areas. However, political developments in the 1990s and 2000s, at both European and national level, contributed to the enhanced interconnectedness between the two. One superficial indicator is the amendment of

¹ which is part of the EU's single market by means of the EEA-agreement.

the names of agricultural ministries in both Norway and Germany. Both ministries incorporated the expression food in the early 2000s. With regard to agricultural policy at EU level, more and more policy areas, including food policy, seem to be drawn into the processes of its formulation (Nugent 2010: 361). Put in a simplified manner, the CAP could be said to be moving from version 1.0 and onwards, with food policy to an increasing extent being attached to it.

Symptomatic of this development is the strengthened emphasis on consumer- and health protection (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 68). One implication of which is the enhanced public scrutiny on food, and consequently, agricultural policy-making processes. Put face to face with these developments, how do domestic interest groups with a direct attachment to farming and food production behave? Are efforts in terms of exerting influence on policy-making processes first and foremost channelized toward national authorities? Alternatively, are changes in policy-making structures reflected by amendments in interest groups' channelization of influence too? In other words, is a greater presence at EU level of farm, food industry and veterinarian interest groups possible to observe? Moreover, de facto selection of channels of influence notwithstanding, how to explain the interest groups' strategic behaviour?

These questions illustrate the approximation of this thesis. In the following, some clarifications are to be presented.

1.1 Clarifications

1.1.1 Agricultural interest groups

This thesis adopts a rather broad conception of agricultural interest groups by including German and Norwegian interest groups representing farmers, veterinarians and the food processing industry. The reason why I choose to do this is to be found in the EU's integrated approach to food policy², the “from farm to fork” approach, which stipulates that food policy legislation is applicable to the whole food production chain. Hence, the inclusion of farm, food industry and veterinary interests in order to cover a more extensive share of the

² EU's Food Law, adopted on 28th of January 2002, confirms the so called “from farm/fjord to fork” principle, implying that food policy regulations apply to actors across the whole production chain (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 70).

production chain. The ideal option of course would be to include all segments within the food production chain. However, in order to secure a realistic scope of analysis, one that was possible to undertake within a limited time perspective, the retail segment was left out. Moreover, it ought to be emphasised that when elaborating on institutions, my focus is the national authorities employed with the policy areas already highlighted, and the EU institutions which have the CAP and Food Policy within their portfolio of responsibilities.

Interest groups are the units which are to be analyzed in this essay. As noted by Eising (2008: 5), with regard to definitions, researchers on interest groups have not managed to agree on a common understanding. According to Eising (2008: 5) this apparent lack of clarity comes '*as a consequence of the variance within interest group systems*'. The understanding presented below is borrowed from Beyers, Eising and Maloney (2008: 1106), and arguably '*remains the most commonly used neologism*³ [...]'.

The three scholars' conception is grounded on three factors or qualities attached to actors conceived of as interest groups. The first of which is organization which refers to the nature of the group. In contrast to broad movements and waves of public opinion, which every now and then influence political outcomes, '*interest group politics concern aggregated individuals' and/or organized forms of political behavior*' (Beyers et al 2008: 1106). The second factor, political interest, '*refers to the attempts these organizations make to influence policy outcomes*' (ibid.). This aspect arguably comes close to what is being denoted political advocacy, encompassing '*all efforts to push public policy in a specific direction on the behalf of constituencies or a general political idea*' (ibid.). Beyers, Eising and Maloney's (2008: 1106) third factor is informality. By including this aspect Beyers et al emphasizes that '*interest groups do not normally seek public office or compete in elections*' (ibid.). They are rather expected to '*pursue their goals through frequent informal interactions with politicians and bureaucrats*' (ibid.). On the other hand, one should '*not rule out that important facets of state–group relations in capitalist democracies can be heavily institutionalized*' (Beyers et al 2008: 1107).

1.1.2 Strategy – the selection of channel(s) of influence

³ Neologism: a) "A word or phrase which is new to the language; one which is newly coined", b) "The coining or use of new words or phrases" (Oxford English Dictionary 2012).

The term strategy can be understood as '*a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim*' (Oxford Dictionaries 2013). A more comprehensive definition is developed by Andrews (1997: 52), who describes [Corporate] strategy [as]

'the pattern of decisions in a company that determines and reveals its objectives, purposes, or goals, produces the principal policies and plans for achieving those goals, and defines the range of business the company is to pursue, the kind of economic and human organization it is or intends to be, and the nature of the economic and noneconomic contribution it intends to make to its shareholders, employees, customers and communities'.

Whereas the definition made by Andrews seems to be rather extensive in capturing a larger scope of an organization's activities, this thesis adopts a rather narrow conception of strategy. As the study is to be focused on *interest groups' strategies for exerting influence on policy making processes*, I choose to apply a concept which understands strategy as *the interest group's selection of channel of influence*. A measurement of interest groups' de facto influence, in terms of achieving influence on policy-making processes, would have been difficult to undertake. Successful lobbying appears to be difficult to spot. Where successful lobbying occurs, processes tend to go on without conflict. Hence, the emphasis on the deliberate selection of influence channel(s), in order to avoid the difficulty related to the measurement of successful/unsuccessful influence.

The *selection of channel of influence* variable represents the dependent variable of this study. In accordance with the theoretical approaches applied, three values, i.e. alternatives, stand out as most likely to be used by domestic interest groups. Namely the channel toward national authorities, i.e. ministries and national agencies, and two European channels. The first of which being the European association of interest groups, and the second, direct contact with EU institutions, e.g. the Commission and European Parliament. What nevertheless should be emphasized is that values are not assumed to be mutually exclusive. On the one hand, one could assume that interest groups applied one influence channel exclusively, on the other, application of two or more influence channels cannot be ruled out.

1.2 Previous research

As indicated in the research question, I intend to direct my attention to eventual changes in agricultural interest groups' influence strategies, possibly triggered by developments at EU

level. The approach comes close to the scholarly literature which is being denoted Europeanization.

Although often employed and referred to, Europeanization has yet to be given a precise, unitary, definition (Featherstone 2003: 12). According to Radaelli (Featherstone 2003: 17),

'Europeanization [...] consists of processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ways of doing things, and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures, and public policies'.

Olsen in his elaboration refers to March (1981, referred to in Olsen 2002: 923) who argues *'that the dynamics of Europeanization can be understood in terms of a limited set of ordinary processes of change, well known from other institutionalized systems of governance'*. Further building on this assumption, Olsen (2002: 923-924) outlines five possible conceptions of *what* is changing, namely Europeanization as

'changes in external boundaries', 'developing institutions at the European level', 'central penetration of national systems of governance', 'exporting forms of political governance [...] beyond the European territory' and as 'a political unification project'.

With a primary emphasis on processes of change at domestic level, my approach probably comes closest to the top-down perspective of Europeanization. Consequently, main focus is on the *'domestic adaptation to pressures emanating directly or indirectly from EU membership'* (Featherstone 2003: 7). However, interest group adaptation at domestic level does not necessarily exclude simultaneous alterations at European level. Interest groups' presence in Brussels might for instance be strengthened, and the ways of channelizing strategic efforts toward EU decision-makers altered. As pointed to by Olsen (2002: 942) *'no single dominant and deterministic causal relation'* appears to be prevalent. One could envisage agricultural interest groups adjusting their influence strategies at both national and supranational EU level. As processes of Europeanization tend to be complex, one cannot ignore the possibility for both top-down and bottom-up processes to be present.

This study emphasises the potential impact of developments at EU level on domestic interest group behaviour, it thus seems natural to link the approach to existing research on the Europeanization of interest groups. Eising's (2007: 168) introduction to core research questions illustrates the proximity of the thesis to previous research. Scholars such as Marks

and McAdam (1996, referred to in Eising 2007: 168) and Egeberg (2005, referred to in Eising 2007: 168) emphasise the changes to political opportunity structures to which European integration has contributed. The transfer of political decision making competences is accentuated to be important because *'political institutions [...] not only "organize some conflicts into politics and come conflicts out of it", but also channel how these conflicts are being resolved'* (Egeberg 2005: 105, referred to in Eising 2007: 168). Other scholars focus on the dual strategies of interest groups, by which influence is channelized toward both domestic and EU institutions. Research on this topic have been done by scholars such as Kohler-Koch (1997, referred to in Eising 2007: 169), Coen (1998 referred to in Eising 2007: 170) and Eising (2004, referred to in Eising 2007: 169).

Finally, the analysis made by Cowles (2001) ought to be highlighted. Cowles (2001: 159) in her research emphasises the Europeanization of business-government relationships. She points to the traditional strong position of national industry associations vis-à-vis national governments in France, Germany and the UK. However, with the introduction of the Transatlantic Business Dialogue, *'large companies have moved the locus of EU commercial policy lobbying activity from the domestic to the European level'* (Cowles 2001: 160-61). It should be interesting to observe whether Cowles observations can be applied to agricultural, food industry and veterinarian interest groups too.

1.3 Case selection

Two cases are to be subjected for in-depth analysis for the purpose of enhancing knowledge on the topic chosen for study. The first of which is *a system of Norwegian agricultural interest groups*, the second of which is *a system of German agricultural interest groups*. The reason why I am referring to systems of interest groups is mainly because I intend to compensate my small number of cases with multiple *observations* within each case. For further elaboration on the rationale behind the selection of these particular cases, see chapter two. However, I find it appropriate to reiterate that the selection is based on the assumption that research on German and Norwegian networks could yield insight on the working methods of interest groups from EU member states and EFTA member states.

The interest groups which are to be *observed* within each network of agricultural interest groups are listed below. As indicated by the list, some of the interest groups have been

selected on the basis of their participation in European associations of interests groups, the so-called "Euro-groups".

Segment	Norway	Germany	Euro-group
Farmers	Norwegian Farmers' Union	Deutscher Bauernverband	COPA
Veterinarians	Norwegian Veterinary Association	Bundestierärztekammer	Federation of Veterinarians of Europe
Food industry	Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industry	Forschungskreis der Ernährungsindustrie (FEI), Gemeinschaft zur Förderung der privaten deutschen Pflanzenzüchtung (GFP)	Food Drink Europe
Food industry	Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises	Bundesverband der Deutschen Süßwarenindustrie (BDSI)	(BDSI is member of two euro-groups; CAUBISCO and EUROGRAS)

1.4 Empirical background

In the following, the empirical context of the study is to be introduced. Due to the extensive focus on European level developments in the thesis, emphasis in this introductory chapter is confined to agriculture and food policy systems at EU level. Presentations of domestic developments are to be found in chapter three. What should be noticed is the impression of two policy fields in continuous development. This however should not be interpreted as if development within the agricultural- and food policy sector is unique when compared to general development trends in the EU system. The bearing in mind of developmental trends in the political systems is nevertheless important because it touches upon an essential point in this essay; whether developments in policy-making institutions are reflected by developments in domestic interest groups' strategic activities too.

1.4.1 The European Union

While simultaneously recognizing the importance of subsequent treaty revisions it might be argued that the basic framework of the European Union has existed in its present form since the European Council summit in Maastricht, December 1991 (Phinnemore 2007: 33). At the summit, European leaders agreed on the Treaty on European Union⁴, which formalized the merger of the three, previously separate, European Communities⁵ into one out of three pillars⁶ of the European Union (Nugent 2010: 28). The Treaty on European Union (TEU) simultaneously reaffirmed the institutional structure(s) of the European Communities. The first pillar, the European Community, consequently should be governed by four institutions; the Council of Ministers, the Commission, the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice (Nugent 2010). According to the EU's founding treaties⁷ the Commission is responsible for policy propositions, the Council for decisions and the Court of Justice for interpretations of decisions into Community Law. However, succeeding treaty revisions⁸ have pushed the dynamic between the institutions towards an increased sharing of power. The legislative processes are now said to be governed by the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament, the latter of which has been strengthened by the gradual extension of legislation by the co-decision/ordinary procedure⁹ (Nugent 2010: 29-30, 183).

1.4.2 The Common Agricultural Policy

If one were to look into policy literature for factors explaining the controversial nature of EU agricultural policy, one of the factors one almost by certainty would detect is institutional reform. As noted by Nugent (2010: 359), in the late 1980s and 1990s the European Community came under increasing pressure because of its Common Agricultural Policy. The pressure was both external, emanating to a large part from the United States which accused

⁴ Commonly known as the Maastricht Treaty.

⁵ The European Economic Community (EEC), the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom).

⁶ In addition to the first pillar, constituted by the European Communities, the European Union was to consist of a second pillar, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and a third pillar, Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) (Nugent 2010: 28).

⁷ The Treaty of Paris (signed in April 1951) and the two Treaties of Rome (signed on 25. March 1957).

⁸ First and foremost the Single European Act (signed on 17 and 28. February 1986) and the Treaty of Maastricht (signed on 7. February 1992).

⁹ According to the co-decision procedure, the European Parliament (EP) is a co-decision maker with the Council, and thus posit the power to veto and amend policy proposals (Nugent 2010: 181).

the CAP for being too protectionist, and internal, from camps which accused the CAP for being too expensive to finance (Nugent 2010: 359).

The EU's Common Agricultural Policy has been subject to four major rounds of reform since the 1980s; the 1988 reforms, the MacSharry reform in 1992, the Agenda 2000 reform package from 1999 and the Fischler reform in 2003 (Nugent 2010: 365). The reforms all have in common that they have been designed with the purpose of decreasing the expenditure on CAP, preparing the Union for enlargement and meeting external demands ¹⁰ for a dismantling of protectionist systems. A common denominator for the CAP reforms is the criticism they all have received for being insufficiently radical for targeted goals to be achieved (Nugent 2010: 359-360).

The Commission has been a key driver behind the endeavours to reform the CAP system. Whereas the Commission in most policy sectors are mainly concerned with creating policy frameworks, its emphasis in relation to the CAP has primarily been on efficiency improvement and movement towards a more market-based system (Nugent 2010: 364-365). The DG Agriculture within the Commission plays a central role in the management and implementation of EU agricultural policy (Grant and Stocker 2009: 233). Its – i.e. the EU Commission – activity level within agricultural policy is of a greater extent than what is being observed in most other policy sectors (Nugent 2010: 368). Nonetheless, when it comes to actual decision making on agricultural policy, the central institutions to be highlighted are the Agriculture Council and the European Parliament. The former institution is located within the Council of Ministers. It is constituted by the Ministers of Agriculture from the EU member states (Nugent 2010: 366). The latter institution saw its influence on agricultural policy being considerably strengthened by the Lisbon Treaty revision, which acknowledged the extension of the co-decision legislation procedure to agricultural matters (Nugent 2010 368). The implementation of policy proposals on agriculture is consequently reliant on the joint acceptance by the Agricultural Council and the European Parliament.

1.4.3 EU Food Policy

It has already been emphasised that food policy regulation at EU level is a rather new phenomenon. Food policy in the EC prior to the innovations in the late 80s and 90s was

¹⁰ First of all from the USA, but also from the GATT (later WTO) international trade negotiations.

primarily of an ad hoc nature (Vos and Wendler 2006: 65). Formulation and implementation of food [safety] regulation was a national affair, and legislation on food policy emanating from the EC was primarily designed to eliminate barriers to trade (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 92-93, Vos and Wendler 2006: 67). Since the mid-90s however, food policy in terms of securing safe food has been ‘moved up the ladder’ and is now regarded as one of the EU’s high priority areas (Mission of Norway to the EU 2010).

The majority of innovations on EU Food policy are being explained as products of the food scandals¹¹ which hit Europe in the mid-1990s. The outbreak of large scale animal diseases made the shortcomings of national governments’ approach to food policy evident. National governments¹² were criticized for commingling business- and consumer interests and for not making sufficiently clear divides between the political and scientific aspects in food policy processes (Rykkja 2005: 82, Vos and Wendler 2006: 69). The EU on the other hand came under criticism for its lack of a conceptual approach to food safety regulation.

The outbreak of the BSE¹³ disease in 1996 triggered the expansion and consolidation of EU Food Policy competences. The year 1996 was 'depicted as the ‘Year Zero’ of the EU Food Regime' (Vos and Wendler 2006: 69-70). Risks related to food were no longer to be considered primarily a matter of national interest, rather a European one (Vos and Wendler 2006: 69).

A series of subsequent institutional and political reforms at EU level were to contribute to the gradual transfer of decision making power from national to supranational level. EU decided upon the introduction of the General Food Law in 2002. The extensive law package has direct effect, which implies that its content is to be implemented without amendments in member state law (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 70). Furthermore, EU competence on food policy has been centralized into one single DG, the Directorate-General Health and Consumer Protection, within the Commission (Vos and Wendler 2006: 70, Lie and Veggeland 2010: 78). The recently established DG has a considerably strengthened “Food and Veterinary Office” placed under its authority. Whereas the Food and Veterinary Office primarily is concerned with risk management, a third recently established EU institution – the European Food Safety

¹¹ The most well-known of which was the BSE animal disease, famously known as the mad-cow disease.

¹² Especially the British government, whose domestic food production was severely hit by the outbreak of BSE, came under criticism because of its conduct of food policy.

¹³ The BSE disease (bovin spongiform encephalopati), commonly known as mad-cow disease, because of its damaging effect on the brain of cattle, among which it spreads.

Authority (EFSA) – has risk assessment as its main task. The EFSA has been given an independent status so as to safeguard it from external influence (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 78-81). A central motivation behind these institutional alterations has been the introduction of a clear division between the exercise of risk management and risk assessment.

1.4.4 Interest group activity at European level

Interest groups have been present at the European Community level since the founding years of the Community (Grant and Stocker 2009: 235-36). Their presence and involvement have apparently been very much supported and backed by the governing institutions at European level. One plausible reason is the alleged interdependent relation between the European Community, first and foremost the Commission, and private actors. Bouwen (2009: 20-22) argues that the Commission due to its under-resourced nature and consequent reliance on technical and political information, and, in addition, need to legitimize decisions, has sought close interaction with private actors (Bouwen 2009: 20, 22). Private actors have been granted access to decision making arenas in return.

The Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations (COPA) was established in 1958 after having been suggested by the Commission itself¹⁴ (Grant and Stocker 2009: 235). A federation uniting national farmer's organizations from the then six EC Member States, COPA constituted the first European representative organization for farmers (COPA-COGECA 2012, Grant and Stocker 2009: 236). COPA has been a core insider with benefits such as frequent access to high ranked officers, technical experts and Advisory groups within the Commission (especially DG Agriculture). Although still possessing these benefits, COPA's influence has declined over the last 20 years. Resistance to CAP reform programs, internal dissent and rising ineffectiveness, caused by e.g. enlargement, have seemingly contributed to this development (Grant and Stocker 2009: 236-237). The evolvement of the CAP framework, and the delegation of decision making power on Food policy to the EU, have furthermore contributed to an increase in private actors aiming to influence these policy making processes at European level. These processes are no longer, if ever, exclusively attracting farmers' interest. Also present are interest groups and companies representing e.g. veterinarians, the food industry, consumer interests, animal protection and green energy. The

¹⁴ Took place at the Stresa conference of 1958, at which EC level representative groups were permitted to participate (Grant and Stocker 2009: 235).

competition for access and influence among private actors with an interest in agriculture and food policy apparently has increased.

1.5 Theoretical approach

My thesis is based on three theoretical approaches. First, liberal intergovernmentalism (LI), which stipulates that national state preferences are shaped domestically on the basis of autonomous interests, championed by influential societal groups within a policy sector (Moravcsik 1993: 483). Domestic societal groups channelize their efforts toward national governments, who then bring national preferences to arenas for interstate bargaining. Second, historical institutionalism (HI) that directs attention to *how* and *why* institutional choices have long term effects (Rosamond 2007: 124). Pierson (2000), whose HI approach is to be employed in the analysis, emphasises the impact of critical junctures and increasing returns processes on the historical development of actor behaviour. And third, multi-level governance (MLG), which assumes political decision making authority to be spread across multiple territorial levels; i.e. the supranational, the national and the subnational level (Eising 2007: 169, Hooghe and Marks 2001: xi , referred to in Time 2011a).

It should be emphasised that only two of the three approaches, LI and HI, are to be dealt with as independent theories, in that expectations about interest group behaviour, i.e. selection of channel(s) of influence, are to be derived. The third approach, MLG, is grasped as an alternative to the LI's approximation of framework conditions, i.e. structure, in which actors operate. Whereas according to LI, domestic interest groups would channelize their strategic efforts toward national authorities, MLG presumes that efforts are channelized toward both national authorities and European decision making bodies.

1.6 Outline of the chapters

The following approach has been chosen in order to come up with a satisfactory answer to the research question.

In chapter two, the theoretical approach to the analysis is to be presented. Also included in the chapter is an outline of the methodological ponderations that underpin the thesis. What is to be presented in chapter three is a detailed outline of the agricultural- and food policy making systems at EU level and domestic, i.e. Norwegian and German, level. This is done in order to

highlight the extensive changes through which the systems have gone since 1990. Chapter four contains the analysis of this thesis. Two elements are in particular emphasised, namely *how* interest groups channelize their efforts aimed at influencing policy making processes. And *why*, or, put differently, how to explain interest group behaviour in terms of their employment of channels of influence. Finally, chapter five summarizes the main findings of the thesis.

2 Theory and method

Two theoretical approaches have been selected as basis for the analysis of the Norwegian and German interest groups' strategic behaviour, in terms of selection of channel(s) of influence, namely Moravcsik's (1993) Liberal intergovernmentalism (LI) and Pierson's (2000, 2004) Historical institutionalism (HI). Moreover, a third approach, Multi-level governance (MLG)¹⁵, is to be applied. In that regard it ought to be accentuated that MLG does not constitute a free-standing theoretical approach in this thesis, rather an alternative to Moravcsik's perception of the structural framework in which interest groups operate.

In what follows, the main characteristics of the theoretical approaches are to be presented. Furthermore, the variables and attached indicators, on the basis of which theoretical assumptions have been derived, are to be identified. The second section of this chapter is focused on the thesis' methodological foundation. Special emphasis is put on the selection of research design and methods, and the potential implications of these priorities on reliability and validity.

2.1 Liberal intergovernmentalism

According to Moravcsik (1993: 517)

'the net economic interests of producers and popular preferences for public goods [central aspects of LI] provide a solid foundation for explaining agricultural policy [...], as well as socio-economic public goods provision, within the EC'.

Thus, the application of LI in the analysis of farmer, food industry and veterinarian interest group behaviour ought to be convenient.

The basic claim of liberal intergovernmentalism is that the EU – or EC as it was denoted prior to the Maastricht Treaty, which established the European Union – *'can be analyzed as a successful intergovernmental regime designed to manage economic interdependence through negotiated policy co-ordination'* (Moravcsik 1993: 474, Nugent 2010: 56). Implicit in this claim is the assumption that the position of national governments is strengthened through the existence of EU institutions. The reasons why is that the institutions make interstate bargaining more efficient, and moreover *'strengthen the autonomy of national political*

¹⁵ I apply the version developed by Hooghe and Marks (2001).

leaders vis-à-vis particularistic social groups within their domestic polity' (Moravcsik 1993: 507). The latter argument, because of the increasing extent of decisions being made at a greater distance from domestic groups' scrutiny, i.e. in Brussels. One implication of Moravcsik's perception is that national governments control developments in Brussels. Consequently, if domestic social groups want to influence policy-making at EU level, they should persuade their national governments to bring forward their arguments in interstate bargaining processes.

Liberal intergovernmentalism rests on three core elements. Namely, the assumption of *rational state behavior*, an implication of which being that states are assumed to be directed by purpose '*toward the achievement of a set of consistently ordered goals or objectives*' (Moravcsik 1993: 480-81). The objectives, which represent alternative future states of the world¹⁶, are assumed to be subjected for evaluation on the extent to which they generate utilities. Put differently, a central motivation behind state behavior is to maximize utilities, in terms of supply from e.g. interstate bargaining. However, as the second core element illustrates, the state does not act on fixed preferences. Moravcsik (1993: 480) employs a *liberal theory of national preference formation* to show that national interests are being created through processes, in which domestic societal groups compete for gaining the upper hand in terms of influencing their national governments. Finally, *an intergovernmentalist analysis of interstate bargaining* lays down the premises for the examination of distributional conflicts among governments (Moravcsik 1993: 480-81).

Moravcsik perceives policy-making processes to be conducted in two successive stages. First, the formation of national preferences at domestic level, by means of state-society relations. This stage can be denoted *the demand side*, as national governments are presented with demands, in terms of desired outcomes, from societal groups. In the second stage, national governments bring their national preferences to interstate bargains at EU level, which ultimately '*defines the possible political responses of the [EU] political system to pressures from those governments*' (Moravcsik 1993: 481). Hence, the labeling of the second stage as *the supply side*.

With regard to the application of liberal intergovernmentalism, emphasis in this thesis is exclusively put on the demand side. The decision can be justified on the grounds that my

¹⁶ Such as higher levels of economic transactions or exchange rate stability (Moravcsik 1993: 481).

focus is the behavior of domestic interest groups – or, in line with Moravcsik's characterization, domestic societal groups. It is the channelization of efforts in terms of influencing decision making, and not the decision making per se that is focused on. Thus, it is the liberal element of LI, i.e. preference formation through state-society relations, which is assumed to constitute the main contribution to the analysis.

2.1.1 Theoretical expectations

Issue salience

Issue salience, understood to imply the interest group's anticipation of the distribution of net costs and/or benefits from specific political outcomes, constitutes the variable derived from LI. With the exception of the expectation of channelization, all other LI expectations presented here, constitute indicators of the issue salience variable. According to Moravcsik (1993: 487), the extent to which interest groups anticipate costs and/or benefits of policy-making to be certain, or, on the contrary, ambiguous, has implications for their incentives to mobilize politically. Moreover, the extent to which national governments are being put under pressure from societal groups, because of their mobilization, is believed to constitute a potential barrier to their freedom of manoeuvre. Consequently, on issues *'where societal pressure is ambiguous or divided, governments acquire a range of discretion'*, whereas in instances where pressure is strong and united, governments are assumed to act under greater constraint (Moravcsik 1993: 484). As national government behaviour is not the focus of this thesis, the latter assumption, i.e. constraints on governments' freedom of manoeuvre, is not to be tested in the analysis. It has nevertheless been emphasized in order to provide the reader with a better understanding of the "greater picture" in Moravcsik's theory.

The two main theoretical expectations derived from the 'issue salience' variable are as follows.

If the interest group on behalf of its members perceives the cost or benefit of EU policy to be 'certain, significant and risky', it is assumed to mobilize politically (Moravcsik 1993: 487).

If the interest group on behalf of its members perceives the cost or benefit of EU policy to be 'diffuse, ambiguous, insignificant, and with low risk', it is assumed not to mobilize politically (Moravcsik 1993: 488).

Determinant of interest groups' cost/benefit assumptions

Liberal intergovernmentalism assumes the existence of economic interdependence in society (Moravcsik 1993: 485). Interdependence can be understood as the presence of mutual dependence between actors. Its rise is assumed to be correlated with the rise in transnational flows across borders, in terms of e.g. goods and services (Jackson and Sørensen 2007: 103, Moravcsik 1993: 485). Ascending levels of transnational flow moreover are assumed to contribute to the emergence of international policy externalities. According to Moravcsik (1993: 485), '*such externalities arise where the policies of one government create costs and benefits for politically significant social groups outside its national jurisdiction*'. Here arguably lies the incentive for national governments to engage in international coordination, in that it ultimately may contribute to both the elimination of negative policy externalities¹⁷, and the enhanced control over domestic policy outcomes (Moravcsik 1993: 485).

However, the advancement of international coordination efforts, such as the EU's common agricultural policy and food policy, do necessarily affect domestic societal groups differently. Moreover, as is to be emphasized later on, EU policy makers tend to emphasize the further advancement of market liberalization in order to secure a proper functioning of the internal market. Whether or not domestic societal groups – first and foremost producers – perceive EU policy-making to be positive or negative, thus could be related to their robustness if confronted with the further liberalization of markets. Hence, the expectancy of import-competing producers to oppose free trade, and exporters and multinational investors to support it (Moravcsik 1993: 489). The expectation with regard to domestic societal groups' anticipation of the further liberalization of markets, including the EU's internal market, is as follows,

'the extent to which individual producers profit from commercial liberalization [i.e. the CAP] depends most fundamentally on their competitive position in domestic and international markets' (Moravcsik 1993: 489)

Mobilization

Moravcsik applies a categorization of EC policy areas, between which the extent of societal groups who mobilize politically is expected to vary.

¹⁷ 'occur where the policies of one nation imposes costs on the domestic nationals of another, thereby undermining the goals of the second government's policies (Moravcsik 1993: 485).

The first category, *commercial policy, market access and producer interests*, primarily concerns legislation on the internal market, including agricultural policy. According to Moravcsik (1993: 488), *'these [policies] are designed to liberalize or eliminate distortions in markets for private goods and services'*. In accordance with the expectation, *'that 'social groups with an intense interest in a given policy area are more likely to mobilize than those with a weak interest'*, LI foresees mobilization on commercial policy to be *'almost exclusively [confined] to domestic producers'* (Moravcsik 1993: 488). The apparent reason being the potential impact of commercial policy amendments on producers' framework conditions.

The second category, *socio-economic public goods provision*, could be perceived of as a bifurcated category, in that it is expected to affect both producer interests and the public in general (Moravcsik 1993: 493). The primary reason is that policy-making within this category provide public goods, such as health safety. At the same time, implications, in terms of e.g. guidelines for production, are added to producers' net-costs (Moravcsik 1993: 491). In other words, one foresees the coming into existence of a 'two-dimensional' issue, where *'governments must strike a balance between two independently valued policy targets: flows of economic transactions and levels of public goods provision'* (Moravcsik 1993: 492). EU food policy appears to fit nicely to this category. On the one hand, it is designed to provide health safety standards on food products. On the other, it relates to the internal market, in that the introduction of common safety standards simultaneously promote enhanced transborder flows of products.

Two theoretical expectations are developed on Moravcsik's categorization of policy areas.

The scope of mobilized interest groups is believed to be extensive on issues pertaining to EU food policy, due to its implications for both economic commerce and public goods standards.

The scope of mobilized interest groups on issues pertaining to agricultural policy is believed to be confined to producers, who altogether are most likely to be affected in terms of net costs/benefits.

Channelization of influence

As already indicated, liberal intergovernmentalism perceives national governments to be the decisive actors, both at domestic and international levels. At domestic level, they formulate national preferences on the basis of input from domestic societal groups. At international

level, they possess the right to participate and decide on issues in interstate bargaining. On these grounds, one might argue that liberal intergovernmentalism comes close to what Hooghe and Marks (2001: 1) denote a state-centric governance approach. Which implies that *'European integration [is not perceived to] challenge the autonomy of national states'* (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 1). A logical implication would be that domestic interest groups perceive their national government, i.e. authorities, to be the most important targets for influence. Their behavior ought to reflect this perception.

Hence, the theoretical expectation,

If the interest group in question is mobilized politically by the EU policy, it is assumed to regard its national government the most important target for influence.

Consequentially, the interest group in question is assumed to channel its strategic activities toward national authorities.

2.2 Historical institutionalism

'[Historical institutionalism is historical in the sense that it emphasizes] that political development must be understood as a process that unfolds over time' [, and] institutionalist because it stresses that many of the contemporary political implications of these temporal processes are embedded in institutions – whether formal rules, policy structures, or norms' (Pierson 2000: 264-65).

For the matter of clarity, it needs to be emphasised that Pierson's theoretical approach relies on North's (1990: 3, referred to in Pierson 1996: 126) definition of institutions, namely as

'the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, ... the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction.'

The application of HI rests on the assumption that interest group behaviour, whether corresponding to LI or MLG expectations in terms of influence channelization, could be explained by looking at historical developments. Central to the analysis in that regard is the examination of whether processes of path dependence can be identified. Pierson in his account makes use of Levi's (1997: 28, referred to in Pierson 2000: 252) definition of path dependence,

'Path dependence has to mean, [...] that once a country or region has started down a track, the costs of reversal are very high. There will be other choice points, but the entrenchments of certain institutional arrangements obstruct an easy reversal of the initial choice.'

Levi's approximation corresponds quite neatly with Pierson's employment of the concept 'increasing returns'. Accordingly, as the benefits of a given activity, relative to alternative activities, increase when more time and resources are invested in it – put differently, the more steps are taken down a distinct path – the more difficult it becomes to switch from that given activity (Pierson 2000: 252).

Pierson's account constitutes one of multiple contributions on historical institutionalism. His claim *'that actors may be in a strong initial position, seek to maximise their position'* to some extent indicate an orientation toward the fraction which assumes a rational-choice behaviour by actors (Pierson 1996: 126). HI however add yet another expectation, in that apparent rational decisions at a given point of time, might generate future outcomes that were not anticipated, or intended, from the outset (Pierson 1996: 126).

Pierson's account belongs to the fraction of HI that makes use of economic assumptions originally developed to explain why certain technologies achieve advantages over alternative technologies¹⁸ (Pierson 2000: 254, Thelen 1999: 384). One apparent implication of this employment is that political developments at some stage become 'locked in', thereby making the change of direction, i.e. change of path, nearly impossible. Thelen (1999: 385) has criticized this fraction of HI on these grounds. It arguably is too contingent, in the sense that political decisions very seldom are open decisions, where actors are free to decide in accordance with what maximizes their utility (Thelen 1999: 385). Hence, the questioning of the approximation of 'critical junctures' as open ended. Second, it is too deterministic, too mechanical, in the sense that actors, who do not make use of an activity characterized by increasing returns, apparently have to adapt, or, if not, disappear. According to Thelen (1999: 385) one does not necessarily see the disappearance of actors employing other activities. Rather their eventual adaption does not have to imply the reproduction of the activity subject to increasing returns.

¹⁸ Pierson makes use of Arthur's (1994: 112, referred to in Pierson 2000: 254) approach by which the success of the "QWERTY" typewriter keyboard is theorized.

Thelen's critique is worthy to keep in mind when interpreting the observations in this thesis. If there is evidence for an existence of increasing returns processes in interest group behavior, i.e. their selection of influence channel(s), this does not necessarily imply that interest groups, whose behavior is not in accordance, are expected to fully adapt, or alternatively, cease to exist. Pierson (2004: 72) addresses the critique brought forward by Thelen (1999) by pointing out that

'even if a particular environment is conducive to positive feedback, it obviously does not follow that any group will be able to exploit these opportunities [In other words,] events at the beginning of a path-dependent processes are not totally contingent' (Pierson 2004: 73).

2.2.1 Theoretical expectations

Critical juncture

Pierson (2000: 263) characterizes critical juncture as one of HI's '*crucial object[s] of study*'. Whether or not a critical juncture has occurred in interest group behaviour – in terms of channelization of influence – over the last 23 years, constitutes the first HI variable of this thesis.

According to Tilly (1984: 14, referred to in Pierson 2004: 54), '*When things happen within a sequence affects how they happen*'.¹⁹

Pierson's reference to Tilly illustrates his emphasis on interaction effects generated by '*the temporal intersection of distinctive trajectories of different, but connected, long-term processes*' (Aminzade 1992: 466-67, referred to in Pierson 2004: 55-56). Such intersections are assumed '*to have a crucial impact on outcomes*' (Pierson 2004: 55). One plausible illustration of intersecting trajectories, could be the entering into force of the EEA-agreement, whereby the Norwegian political system got formally attached to the political system of the EU. What is realized is that Pierson not merely finds questions concerning *what* happened to be interesting, but furthermore, *when* it happened. To find out *when* something happened, implies the analysis of whether a critical juncture has occurred. Pierson (2000: 263) refers to critical junctures as '*triggering events, which set development along a particular path*'.

¹⁹ Sequences in that regard are identified as '*cases where different temporal orderings of the same events or processes will produce different outcome*' (Pierson 2004: 68). Timing on the other hand relates to '*the timing of something relative to something else*' (Pierson 2004: 55).

Thus, the examination of the unfolding of processes since 1990 – whether changes in interest group priorities, in terms of selection of influence channels, are evident – and the identification of events, which presumably have contributed to changes in interest group priorities, become important to the analysis. In that regard, two events, i.e. processes, are identified as potential critical junctures. In both of which, different, but connected, long term processes seemingly have intersected. Substantial reform of the EU's food policies implied a greater connection between national and the EU's food regimes. Whereas EU agricultural reform imposed new, radical, policies, in comparison to traditional modes of agricultural policy prior to 1990. According to the theoretical expectation, these two events in the policy making structure, ought to have influenced interest group behaviour to the extent that established activities for exerting influence have been amended.

The point at which 1) national competences on agriculture and/or food policy area are delegated to institutions at EU level, or 2) major EU agricultural policy reforms are completed, constitutes a critical juncture, which ultimately has contributed to a strengthened presence of domestic interest groups at EU level.

The point at which 1) national competences on agriculture and/or food policy area are delegated to institutions at EU level, or 2) major EU agricultural policy reforms are completed, does not constitute a critical juncture, implying that domestic interest groups' channelize their strategic approaches primarily towards national authorities.

When reading the analysis, one needs to keep in mind the challenge which the deduction of general propositions on critical junctures constitutes. This is admittedly being pointed to by Pierson (2004: 58). A reservation with regard to the eventual generalization of findings is thus given.

Increasing returns

The second '*crucial object of study [...] [is] the mechanisms of reproduction of the current path*' (Pierson 2000: 263). This object is captured by the concept of increasing returns, which, as already touched upon, emphasizes positive feedback processes. In other words, as the benefits of a given activity, relative to alternative activities, increase over time, the more difficult it becomes to abandon that activity (Pierson 2000: 252). Thus, whether or not an increasing returns process is present constitutes the second HI variable of this thesis.

Two main theoretical expectations have been derived. Moreover, expectations have been developed from additional indicators in order to approach the variable from different positions.

The more positive feed-back is acquired from activities at a given level of governance, the higher the probability that the interest group continues to channelize strategic activities towards that level.

The less positive feed-back is acquired from activities at a given level of governance, the lower the probability that the interest group continues to channelize strategic activities towards that level.

Positive feed-back is expected to emerge as either the supply of material capabilities (e.g. new locations or units), economic income for the interest group or its' members, technological advancement, organizational capabilities (e.g. recruitment of new expertise) or ideational elements, in terms of learning effects and the gaining of experience.

Multiple equilibrium – inertia

If a given activity is subject to increasing returns processes, it ought to be perceived of by interest groups as the *single equilibrium*, i.e. option. If so, its behaviour corresponds to what Pierson (2000: 263) would denote as *inertia*. On the other hand, if the interest group perceives multiple options, in terms of strategic activity, to be possible, the situation is equivalent to a state of *multiple equilibria* (Pierson 2000: 263). Consequently, one either has no process of increasing returns, or, alternatively, the process is at an early stage. Hence, the theoretical expectations,

Where a process of increasing returns has been established, the interest group is expected to perceive the strategy which is subject to the process, as the only preferred option.

Where a process of increasing returns is absent or in an early sequence, the interest group is expected to perceive multiple strategies as possible options.

The costs of establishing a trajectory

Large set-up costs is assumed to 'create a high pay-off for further investments' in that trajectory, i.e. activity (Arthur 1994: 112, referred to in Pierson 2000: 254). One obvious

illustration is interest groups' decision to open an office in Brussels. Two theoretical expectations have been developed in that regard,

The higher the set-up costs related to the establishment of strategic activities at a given level of governance, the more likely the continuation of the activity by the interest group.

The lower the set-up costs related to the establishment of strategic activities at a given level of governance, the less likely the continuation of the activity by the interest group.

Institutional density – estimated costs of exit

As noted by Pierson (2000: 259),

'efforts to coordinate actors in the pursuit of public goods often require the construction of formal institutions. Once established, these institutional constraints can apply to all [...], and they are backed up, ultimately, by force. The exit option [...] is often unavailable (or prohibitively costly)[...]'.

Moreover, the longer the process of increasing returns, the greater the benefits acquired from the given activity. One would equally assume that the costs of exit from that given activity are perceived of as high too. The theoretical expectations are as follows.

The more positive feed-back is acquired from activities at a given level of governance, the higher the interest group's estimation of costs caused by it ending the activity.

The less positive feed-back is acquired from activities at a given level of governance, the lower the interest group's estimation of costs caused by it ending the activity.

2.3 Multi-level governance

Whereas Moravcsik's approach could be denoted a state-centric perspective, multi-level governance emphasises the sharing of policy-making competence across multiple levels of governance, i.e. the European, the national and the subnational level (Hooghe and Marks 2001:1-2). Again, it must be emphasised that MLG is not employed as an independent theory in this thesis, which in turn explains the absence of theoretical assumptions derived from it. Rather, it is viewed as an alternative approximation of key characteristics of the framework condition, in which all actors, both public authorities and private interests, operate.

Multi-level governance draws inspiration from several sources, including the likes of Schmitter (1992, referred to in Hooghe and Marks 2001: 3), Jachtenfuchs and Kohler-Koch (1995, referred to in Hooghe and Marks 2001: 3). The account which is made use of in this thesis is promoted by Hooghe and Marks (2001). In their presentation, references are being made to developments in the European Union the last two decades. Emphasis is put on the immense increase in *'the scope and depth of policy making at the EU level'* (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 1). Policy reforms contribute to the seemingly increasing influence of EU policies on European citizens' everyday life. Whereas, on the other hand, amendments of decision-making procedures, e.g. the introduction of the co-decision procedure and qualified majority voting, contribute to the enhancement of EU institutions' competencies (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 8). Yet another aspect, in apparent response to the greater presence of the EU, as e.g. the introduction of the Euro illustrates, *'EU decision making [furthermore] has come under greater public scrutiny'* (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 9).

All of these perceptions point to the core argument of the multi-level governance model, namely that *'European integration has weakened the state'* (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 3). The argument is derived into three basic elements. First, far from having become unimportant, the state still has lost its' monopoly in terms political authority and decision making competences (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 3). These are to an increasing extent shared by actors, including the state, across different levels of governance, i.e. the subnational, the national and the European level. Thus, whereas Moravcsik perceives EU institutions to be mere instruments for national governments' coordination of policies, Hooghe and Marks assign independent value to institutions such as the European Parliament and the EU Commission. Consequently, these institutions have a say in the coordination of policies too.

Second, collective decision making at EU level weakens national governments' control over policy outcomes (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 4). The contradiction between MLG and LI becomes evident at this point too. Whereas Moravcsik (1993: 485) points to the enhanced control over domestic policy outcomes as an incentive for states to engage in international cooperation, Hooghe and Marks (2001: 5) points to the opposite. An important aspect in that regard is the increased usage of qualified majority voting in EU decision making.

The third line of argument states that *'political arenas are interconnected rather than nested'* (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 4). This latter point is of particular interest to the analysis, in that it rejects the notion that processes of national preference formation find place exclusively within

nation states. Thus, domestic societal groups are perceived not to channelize their interests exclusively towards national authorities and governments. Rather, on EU related issues, they are believed to channelize efforts towards multiple levels of governance, including the EU level. The intensive mobilization by numerous "Euro-groups", i.e. European associations composed of domestic interest groups, is being highlighted in that regard (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 15). So is alternative modes of transnational organization by domestic interests (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 9). What consequently is communicated is that *'[states] no longer provide the sole interface between supranational and subnational arenas'* (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 4).

2.4 Summary of theoretical expectations

According to *liberal intergovernmentalism*, societal interests²⁰ perception of profit from policies aimed at the further liberalization of markets, is dependent on their competitive ability on domestic and international markets. In other words, interest groups whose members' competitiveness is primarily confined to domestic markets, tend not to perceive such policy amendments as profitable for business. On the other hand, interest groups, whose members have ambitions toward both domestic and international markets, tend to support policy initiatives aimed at further liberalization. Consequently, in instances where suggested EU policies are perceived by the interest group to impose certain and significant costs or benefits on its members, it is expected to mobilize politically. Whereas, in instances where the interest group, on behalf of its members, perceives costs or benefits to be ambiguous and uncertain, it is assumed not to mobilize politically.

Moreover, the scope of domestic societal groups who mobilize politically, is expected to be greater on issues related to food policy than on issues related to agricultural policy. The reason why is that agricultural policy is ascribed to the category commercial policy, which due to its direct influence on framework conditions for production, tend first and foremost to mobilize producers. Food policy, on the other hand, is ascribed to the socio-economic public goods provision category. Thus, as food policy generates political outcomes which are of interest to society and citizens in general, the scope of politically mobilized interests is expected to be extensive. Last, but not least, domestic societal interest who are mobilized by suggested EU food and agriculture policies, channelize their efforts toward national

²⁰ in particular producer interests. such as farmers and food industry.

authorities. The reason why is that the state is gate keeper to decision making arenas at EU level.

Of critical importance to the analysis of expectations derived from *historical institutionalism* are two objects of study. First, the extent to which events in the historical development of interest groups under scrutiny qualify to the characteristic of a critical juncture. In other words, whether events that trigger subsequent developments of interest group behavior along a particular path, can be observed. Path is understood as interest groups' selection of channels of influence. If a critical juncture has occurred in an interest group's development since 1990, it is expected to have strengthened its presence at European level. Vice versa, in the absence of a critical juncture, it is expected to channelize its efforts toward national authorities.

Two events, or processes, stand out as plausible junctures. Namely, the transfer of competences on food policy-making from national to European level. And moreover, the consecutive rounds of CAP reform, which have introduced new modes of agricultural policy in EU member states. In both instances, distinctive trajectories – the former, in terms of political systems, the latter, in terms policies – seem to have been temporally intersected. According to Pierson (2004: 55) this ought '*to have crucial impact on outcomes*'.

The second crucial objective of study is the process of increasing returns. The gradual increase in benefits from a given activity, relative to alternative activities, contributes to the 'lock-in' of interest group behaviour to that given activity. Thus, in instances where a critical juncture sets an interest group on a distinctive trajectory in terms of behaviour, processes of increasing returns are expected to further entrench that trajectory. Regardless of the interest group's de facto selection of channel(s) of influence, a presence of increasing returns processes is expected to contribute to the continuation of that behaviour. Further indicators have been developed in order to analyse whether processes of increasing returns are present. If present, the interest groups is expected to perceive the activity which is subject to increasing returns, as the only preferred option. Moreover, if the costs associated with the establishment of given activity are looked upon as high by the interest group, it is expected to continue that activity. And finally, a gradual increase in benefits from an activity subject to increasing returns, makes the interest group perceive the costs generated by an exit from the activity as too high.

2.5 Underlying variables

In addition to the variables and indicators derived from theory, two more variables ought to be mentioned. These however are not included for the primary purpose of analyzing their implication on actor behaviour. Rather, they contribute to the selection and diversification of cases and observations. The two, identified as underlying variables, are as follows.

Formal attachment to the EU. Whether the country, to which the interest group belongs, is an EU member state, or EFTA member state²¹. The two cases, i.e. the German and the Norwegian systems of interest groups, are consequently divided on this variable.

The resource basis of the interest group. Whereas the selection of interest groups has not been guided by estimations of their resource basis, it nevertheless has been one objective of the analysis to get an impression of interest groups' resource bases. The variable is defined as the size of the interest group, in terms of personnel. Eventual observations on interest groups' resource base are to be commented upon toward the end of the analysis chapter.

2.6 Method

Ponderations and decisions in terms of the selection of research design and research methods are of decisive importance. As pointed to by Lund (2002: 89, 108, referred to in Time 2011b: 10-11) such ponderations have implications on the validity of research. In what follows, the design and method related decisions in this thesis are to be presented. Towards the end of the presentation follows an evaluation of the thesis' reliability and validity.

2.6.1 Research question

How do agricultural interest groups in Norway and Germany adapt their activities to changing institutional structures at national and EU level? How to explain eventual changes in interest groups' strategies toward decision making authorities?

King et al (1994: 15) propose two criteria against which the research question should be evaluated. Accordingly, '*all research projects in the social sciences should satisfy [these] two criteria*' (King et al 1994: 15).

²¹ which is member of the EEA-agreement.

First, *'a research question should pose a question that is "important" in the real world'* (King et al 1994: 15). In other words, it ought to have social relevance. This thesis' research question highlights interest group behaviour towards both national and European decision-making levels. With regard to the ongoing debate in Norway on implications of the EEA-agreement, and the general perception of a limited potential for influencing decision-making in Brussels, this thesis could potentially constitute a contribution. It ought at least to be of interest to the sectors which are dealt with in the thesis. Yet another aspect in this regard, is the inclusion of observations on German interest group behaviour, in terms of strategic activity towards decision making authorities. Consequently, an impression of EFTA- and EU-member state interest groups' modes of operation ought to be generated. This too could have social relevance.

Second, *'a research project should make a specific contribution to an identifiable scholarly literature by increasing our collective ability to construct verified scientific explanations of some aspect of the world'* (King et al 1994: 15). With reference to the theoretical approaches and the topic, this thesis appears to fit into the scholarly literature which emphasises *'the Europeanization of interest organizations and social movements'* (Eising 2007: 167). And in particular, the literature which focuses on the behaviour of interest groups within a perceived system characterized by multi-level governance (Eising 2007, 2008, Coen and Richardson 2009, Bouwen 2009, Greenwood 2003 so on etc.). In that regard, this thesis' employment of path dependency expectations could provide an additional dimension to the literature. The reason why being its emphasis on the temporal unfolding of processes as explanations of actor behaviour.

2.6.2 Research design

This thesis is carried out in accordance with what is denoted a case study. It follows that research is carried out *'as the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of cases (a population)'* (Gerring 2009: 20). Moreover, due to the incorporation of two cases – namely the German and the Norwegian systems of agricultural interest groups – the research design constitutes *a multiple case study* (Gerring 2009: 20). One implication of the employment of such a design is that research is confined to a limited number of observations, in other words, it constitutes a small-N research design (Gerring 2009: 21). This touches upon the structural ambiguity

which according to Gerring (2009: 78, referred to in Time 2011b: 3) characterizes the case study. On the one hand, it seeks to establish knowledge on what is particular to the case, on the other, what is general to it. Hence, the presence of both *particularizing* and *generalizing* ambitions (Gerring 2009: 78, 80).

An alternative, which perceivably could have further enhanced the validity of findings – if compared with the employment of the case study – is the usage of a comparative most similar systems design (MSSD). The primary reason being that one, through the inclusion of cases which have similar values on crucial variables, except for the dependent variable, establishes a control effect. Consequently, one is able to '*isolate and analyze the influence of other variables that might account for the differences [one] wishes to explain*' (Lijphart 1975: 164, referred to in Time 2011b: 8). However, there are compelling reasons for the decision not to employ a MSSD comparative design in this case study. First and foremost, the value on the dependent variable – whether German and Norwegian interest groups channelize their activities exclusively toward national authorities, or, alternatively, toward the European level too – is not known from the outset (Time 2011b: 8). Moreover, the countries to which the interest groups belong, is perceived as too different in order for strict guiding rules of a comparative design to be met. Similarities in national political systems notwithstanding²², differences such as e.g. country size and form of government – Germany is of course a federal state, whereas Norway is a constitutional monarchy – thus contribute to the preference of a multiple case study rather than a comparative one (Time 2011b: 8). Consequently, eventual findings that differ between the German and Norwegian cases, cannot with certainty be assigned to one isolated variable.

Selection of cases and observations

Although representing cases too dissimilar in order for research in accordance with a comparative design to be carried out, it still is the apparent similarities that make me select respectively a German system of interest groups, and a Norwegian system of interest groups. The term "system of interest groups" reflects the selection of interest groups, i.e. units, from within the German and Norwegian food production chain. Or more precisely, interest groups representing the agricultural, food industry or veterinarian segment. Each interest group from

²² in particular the corporatist traditions which feature in both Norway and Germany.

within these two systems, i.e. the cases, represents an observation²³. Thus, although the analysis in this thesis is constituted on merely two cases, the inclusion of multiple observations – four in the Norwegian case, and five in the German case – contributes to the increase in observed implications. And consequently the enhancement of information in the data material (King et al 1994: 31, referred to in Time 2011b: 12).

Returning to the introductory statement of this section, the case selection is based on the perceived similarities between Norway and Germany. What ought to be highlighted in that regard is the state-society structure, i.e. relations between national authorities and interest groups, with salient corporatist features in both Norway and Germany. And furthermore, the presence of farmers' unions which traditionally have held close relations with national authorities, and hence held a good position to influence their policy-making. These aspects are to be further emphasized in chapter three.

On the other hand, difference in formal attachment to the EU, ought to imply that both national authorities and private interests have different opportunities and incentives to access decision-making bodies at EU level. This conception has motivated the selection of an EU member and EEA member case too.

With regard to the method guiding the selection of observations, it ought to be emphasized that it follows the diverse-case method (Gerring 2009: 97-101). This method has as its core strength the possible enhancement of representativeness, when compared to the typical study of *one* case. The reason why is that it introduces variation on variables (Gerring 2009: 100). Usage of this method implies the selection of observations on one or more dimensions along which the chosen observations are to vary. As indicated above, my selection has been guided by one dimension, namely the *formal attachment to the EU* dichotomy. Hence, the division of observations into an EU member state and EEA member state category. Moreover, the specific selection of interest groups and informants has been guided partly by identifying which groups represent Norwegian and German sector interests in European associations. Then, after choosing the interest group, I endeavored on identifying informants with potential knowledge of interest, by looking into organizational charts at their web pages. This method has been extensively used in order to get German observations. With regard to the Norwegian observations, I, to a greater extent, have been given advice of whom I ought to talk to, by my

²³ According to Gerring (2009: 20) '*an observation is the most basic element of any empirical endeavour*'.

supervisor. In some instances, both Norwegian and German, additional advice of whom I ought to talk to has been supplied by informants.

2.6.3 Research methods

Semi-structured interviews

The 14 semi-structured interviews with informants from Norwegian and German interest groups, and diplomatic services, constitute the majority of data in my research. The volume of completed interviews has been necessary in order to establish an impression as absolute as possible of the two cases. Some interviews have been carried out in Oslo, some in Brussels and, moreover, some by phone. The latter solution clearly represents the least desirable one, as contact with the informant is limited to verbal communication without visual observation. However, the positives in terms of information generated from these interviews, clearly are superior to the disadvantage made up by the fact that they have been carried out by phone.

Bryman (2004: 113) refers to semi-structured interviews as,

'a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of questions. [...] Also, the interviewer usually has some latitude to ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies'

This conception of the semi-structured interview corresponds quite neatly with the procedure applied in this thesis. Prior to the interviews, an interview guide²⁴ with questions derived from the theoretical expectations, was developed. It was used as a guideline throughout the interviews. However, the completion of interviews was not dictated rigidly by the guide. Thus, although endeavouring on getting information on all aspects as described in the interview guide, some flexibility was introduced. In particular in terms of asking spontaneous questions, or leaving out follow-up questions in instances where the informant did not have the requested information. The interview situation moreover came close to what Andersen (2006: 280) denotes an active and conversation based method of interviewing informants. Which implies that I actively – which by no means ought to be interpreted as continuously – utilized the situation in order to develop and get answers to my research questions (Andersen 2006: 281).

²⁴ See appendix for a view of interview guides.

An active approach to the interview actualizes the potential danger of errors generated throughout the situation. One needs to take into consideration that instances such as *'misunderstanding[s or memory problems] on the part of the interviewee'* might emerge (Bryman 2004: 110). Furthermore, there is the difference between the supply of subjective and objective²⁵ comprehensions of reality (Andersen 2006: 283). Aspects such as these, might weaken the *validity* of interview data, in other words, the extent to which the relevant inferences are recognized as being valid (Lund 2002: 85). On the other hand, as pointed out by Andersen (2006: 282) in instances where the informant is resourceful, which indeed has been the case in this research, the interviewer ought to take on an active approach. Thereby one might enhance the extensiveness of information supplied by the informant, and moreover challenge the concern's eventual intent to hold back information.

In order to maximize the quality of data subjected for analysis, I made use of a digital recorder while undertaking the interviews. The certainty that I was to get everything on tape, helped me focus my attention on the conversation, and not on making notes. Put differently, it made the active approach to the situation possible. After having completed the majority of interviews – the first was undertaken end of October 2012, and the last, mid February 2013 – I transcribed all interviews in detail. The recordings lasted by average from one to two hours each. Needless to say, this process was time consuming. Nevertheless it generated an extensive amount of precisely reproduced interview data, which quality ought to be satisfactory.

This thesis' research by means of interviews has been registered and approved by the Privacy Ombudsman for Research at the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). Research has been conducted in line with the Norwegian personal data protection law.

The use of documents

Whereas data collected through interviews constitute the majority of this thesis' basis for analysis, official documents have been studied in detail too. The inclusion of official documents is justified on two points. First, to add greater empirical debt to information supplied by the interviewees. Important in that regard is the possibility to control the exactness of verbal statements, and thereby enhance the validity of observations and

²⁵ to the extent that there are any.

inferences. Second, access to official documents has been critical to the analysis of temporal processes. As is to be emphasized in chapter four, natural obstacles, first and foremost geographic distance, have made it difficult to access German official documents that were not on the internet. Hence, the greater reliability of findings on the Norwegian observations, when it comes to temporal processes.

Nevertheless, to state that a thorough document analysis has been undertaken in this research process, would be an exaggeration. Thus, similarly as Johannessen (2010: 27) points to in his masters' thesis, rather than referring to an employment of the method, document analysis, it seems more appropriate to denote the inclusion of official document as 'the use of documents'. The official documents which have been subjected for usage in the analysis constitute, respectively, annual reviews by interest groups, press releases and consultative statements. They are all public, non-confidential, documents. However, since the analysis was intended to cover the period from 1990, up till present day, some documents had to be acquired from interest groups' own archives.

With reference to Kjeldstadli's (1992: 163) categorization of written sources, the documents selected for analysis constitute communicative, or symbolic sources. They were made to represent circumstances out over themselves. Some of the documents, in particular press releases and consultative statements, could be characterized as normative, and future oriented, in that they signalize what ought to be done. Others, in particular the annual reviews, are regarded to be descriptive and oriented toward the past. They describe what the interest group in question did the previous year (Kjelstadli 1992: 163). The analysis of historical developments has been undertaken on the basis of annual reviews, precisely because of their descriptive character. In order to get an impression of development, whether amendments in strategic activities have occurred, the annual reviews have been examined from the oldest to the most recent document.

2.6.4 The reliability and validity of research

'Reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions' (Hammersley 1992: 67, referred to in Silverman 2005: 210).

What reliability implies is the extent to which research is trustworthy, whether the findings could be verified by others employing exactly the same methods and theoretical approaches.

Consequently, in order to secure a satisfactory level of reliability, research needs to be undertaken with high levels of accuracy. In terms of reliability, this research has been undertaken in accordance with a carefully considered plan. First, a thorough study of the theoretical approaches culminated in the identification of theoretical variables and expectations. These constituted the foundation, on which the interview guide was developed. Then, after having completed the interviews and transcriptions, each interview was carefully analyzed on the basis of the theoretical expectations presented in this chapter.

With regard to the data material, depersonalization and deletion of interview data, in accordance with data protection legislation, necessarily make the exact verification of some of this thesis' findings difficult. Where possible, written sources have been supplemented in order to enhance the reliability of findings. Nevertheless, a considerable extent of the observations would arguably not have been possible to attain without the employment of interviews. This aspect ought to be taken into consideration when evaluating the reliability of this research.

'By validity, I mean truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers' (Hammersley 1992: 67, referred to in Silverman 2005: 210).

Cook and Campbell (1979, referred to in Lund 2002: 104-105) have developed a general system for evaluating validity in a causal analysis. It is most widely used in quantitative research. However, as the objective, '*identification of a specific mechanism – causal pathway* –' appears to be present in both quantitative and qualitative research, Cook and Campbell's system ought to be applicable²⁶ on qualitative analysis too (Gerring 2009: 5).

Internal validity concerns the extent to which a correlation can be interpreted as the effect of an independent variable on the dependent variable (Lund 2002: 106). Alternatively, as understood by Gerring (2009: 43), the validity of the sample under study. Internal validity is the main virtue of the case study (Gerring 2009: 43). With reference to this study, the undertake of analysis by means of a multiple case study, has allowed the detailed examination of interest groups' placement on the independent variables. Simultaneously, the interest groups' placement on the dependent variable have been observed. Thereby, a process of

²⁶ Statistical validity, whether a correlation or tendency is significant, is not touched upon. The reason why of course is that statistical analysis is not included in this study.

identifying plausible causal mechanisms²⁷ has been possible to undertake. The internal validity of findings arguably constitutes one of the strengths of this study.

Construct validity concerns the extent to which the operationalized variables measure the relevant concepts (Lund 2002: 107). With regard to the independent variables and indicators employed in the analysis, these have been sought developed as similar as possible to the theoretical expectations promoted by Moravcsik (1993) and Pierson (2000, 2004). They consequently ought to measure the terms promoted by the two theorists. The dependent variable, interest groups' selection of channel(s) of influence, equally ought to measure the correct term. The reason why is that it captures one apparent prominent indicator of interest group behaviour.

External validity refers to the potential for *generalizing* causal correlations *to* or *over* relevant individual, situations or periods of time (Lund 2002: 107). In this study it seems more appropriate to speak of an endeavour for *over-generalization*, in that one could envisage the applicability of findings to equal interest groups in other European countries too (Lund 2002: 106). In particular the ones whose country traditionally have been characterized by corporatist state-society relations. However, given the inclusion of two cases and thirteen observations – in terms of interest groups and diplomats – one must admit that the representativeness²⁸ of the sample constitutes a challenge. The units have not been selected in accordance with a random selection technique, hence the potential danger of skewness. One illustration is the identification of German interest groups on the basis of their participation in European associations. However, while acknowledging the potential bias generated by such methods for selection, it was recognized as a "necessary evil" in order to gain insight on interest groups from the outset. Moreover, the informants, and consequently their information, might have been biased by e.g. their specific work locations. In other words, this study's, as case studies in general, external validity is not perceived of as too extensive (Gerring 2009: 43). Nevertheless, measures, such as the employment of the diverse case selection method, and the inclusion of official documents in the analysis, have been employed, in order to accommodate this as best as possible.

²⁷ "X must be connected with Y in a plausible fashion; otherwise, it is unclear whether a pattern of covariation is truly causal in nature, or what the causal interaction might be" (Gerring 2009: 44).

²⁸ the extent to which the units in a sample are representative of the variation in the population (Lund 2002: 122, referred to in Time 2011b: 13).

3 Agriculture and food policy in the EU, Norway and Germany

The intention behind this chapter is to sketch the evolution of agriculture- and food policy in the European Union, Norway and Germany. Of major significance is the relation between decision making authorities and interest groups representing the agricultural, food industry and veterinarian sectors. By focusing on the evolution of the European and domestic decision making arrangements I present the reader with insight on the *policy-making system*, against which domestic interest groups have channelized their efforts of excitation. This chapter is mainly based on contributions by other scholars, however, where found appropriate, information from interviews with representatives of Norwegian and German interest groups, and diplomats, is to be supplemented.

My approach is a historical one, focusing on perceived key developments in Norway and Germany, as well as the supranational entity – the EU – from 1945 and onwards. The outline is structured thematically. It is divided in three. What first is about to be presented is the developments in EU agriculture- and food policy. Of special interest are the changes that have occurred since the late 1980s. In the second section, attention is directed toward the key features of the decision-making system that constitute Norwegian agricultural policy and food policy. Emphasis is furthermore put on the apparent influence by the EU on the Norwegian political system. The third section examines the decision making systems of food- and agricultural policy in Germany. Here too, emphasis is put on the EU's influence on the German political system. With regard to the presentations of Germany prior to the reunification in 1990, what needs to be accentuated is the exclusive focus on developments in the Federal Republic of Germany – West Germany.

Three concepts which capture different dimensions of politics are to be used as theoretical guidelines in this chapter. The *policy* dimension denotes the content within a given policy sector, the *polity* dimension equals the – institutional – structure in which policy is made, whereas the *politics* dimension denotes political practice, processes and acting (Rykkja 2008: 5).

3.1 Agricultural and food policy at the EU level

The Common Agricultural Policy has held a central position in the portfolio of European Union policy competences ever since the ratification of the Treaty of Rome in 1958. Moreover, agricultural policy is one of the sectors within the EU with highest institutional presence and level of activity (Nugent 2010: 353). Food policy, on the other hand, was for a long time handled primarily within the confines of the member states, only to be dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis at EU level (Vos and Wendler 2006: 65, Lie and Veggeland 2010: 66). Since the mid 1990s however, a more conceptual approach, involving considerable institutional and policy build up, has been developed. In the following, the major developments of EU Agriculture- and Food policy after 1990 are to be elaborated.

3.1.1 The Common Agricultural Policy

Continuity has been characteristic to the evolution of the Common Agricultural Policy. Its objectives are *exactly* the same, as when agreed upon prior to the ratification of the 1957 EEC Treaty – The Treaty of Rome. According to Article 39 (1) of the TFEU²⁹, the CAP is to promote:

- (a) *the increase of agricultural productivity [...]*
- (b) *the ensuring of a fair standard of living for the agricultural community [...]*
- (c) *the stabilization of markets*
- (d) *the assurance of the availability of supplies*
- (e) *ensure that supplies reach consumer at reasonable prizes*

(Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 39 (1), referred to in Nugent 2010: 358)

Policy

According to Daugbjerg and Swinbank (2007: 8, Daugbjerg 2009: 406) the very basic of the policy framework, on which the EU's agricultural policy rests, has been, and apparently still is, the state assisted paradigm. In fact, about 40-60 percent of the income of farmers in the EU, including Germany, comes from the direct payments of the CAP first pillar (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012, DBV 2011: 44). It follows from the state assisted paradigm that *'the agricultural sector contributes to national policy goals and therefore merits special attention,*

²⁹ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

and, [moreover], the price mechanism is a suboptimal means of achieving an efficient and productive agricultural sector' (Coleman et al. 1997: 275, referred to in Daugbjerg and Swinbank 2007: 8). Four guiding principles have been derived from the paradigm in order to meet the objectives as set out in the Treaty.

The first principle concerns the *internal market – the core of the CAP*. It stipulates that

'agricultural goods are supposed to be able to flow freely across internal EU borders, unhindered by barriers to trade and unhampered by devices such as subsidies or administrative regulations that might distort or limit competition' (Nugent 2010: 359)

What seemingly appears to be a market based on pure liberal market principles, is however a thoroughly regulated one, primarily based on support mechanisms for production. *'Europe [apparently] has not fully embraced the new paradigm of market liberalism'* (Garzon 2006, referred to in Nugent 2010: 361). Prior to the initiation of reform processes in the early 1990s, the internal market was comprised of multiple 'common organisations of the market' (COMs). Thus, while constituting a coherent market, the agricultural market in reality was a *conglomerate* of different regimes, with different measures for protection and support built into them. What the regimes had in common though, was the considerable burden of their financing being held by the EU. Approximately 70 percent of all products generated by agriculture in the EU benefitted from some kind of support mechanism – up to the initiation of reform in the early 1990s, primarily price support mechanisms. Besides constituting the largest post of expenditure on the EU budget – about 60 percent in the late 1980s – CAP policy instruments in effect subsidized the generation of vast surpluses of food products. These circumstances contributed to the initiation of reform in the early 1990s (Nugent 2010: 359).

The three other principles are closely linked to the *internal market*. Prices on agricultural products have invariably – except for a brief period in the 1970s – been higher within the internal market than on the world market. Thus, in order to prevent the unlimited inflow of cheap products from outside the EU, protectionist measures have been adopted (Nugent 2010: 359, 361). According to the second principle, the access of non-EU products onto the internal market is dependent on the concession of a *Community preference* by the EU. It should be noted that the usage of Community preference has decreased since the early 1990s (Nugent 2010: 362). A third principle states that the CAP is to be *financed jointly* by the EU member states. Also contributing to the CAP post of expenditure on the EU budget are institutions

such as the European Investment Bank (EIB) (Nugent 2010: 362). Whereas the three principles already mentioned are official ones, the fourth principle is unofficial in nature. Nevertheless, the *allowance for national variations* is valid (Nugent 2010: 362). What seems to be a considerable, and increasing, difference in agricultural economies and structures across the EU – not least caused by the enlargements of the EU – appears to have made the ‘cut slack’ of national activities a necessity.

Polity

The majority of expertise required for formulating new CAP policies is located within the Directorates General Agriculture (DG Agriculture), the most prominent agenda-setter of CAP policies (Nugent 2010: 366). A function of it being a constituent unit of the European Commission, the DG Agriculture is responsible for the preparation and submitting of EU policy (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 75). It furthermore is responsible for the monitoring of the CAP system, including the follow-up of domestic agencies – national Ministries of Agriculture etc. – responsible for implementing jurisdiction in national law (Nugent 2010: 368).

Over the years, the DG Agriculture has stood out as a proactive actor with regard to the promotion of fundamental CAP reform (Nugent 2010: 364). According to Daugbjerg (2009: 399) this can be seen in light of two fields of responsibility attached to the Commission, namely the administering of the EU budget and the conduct of trade negotiations. The successful handling of these responsibilities appears to be essential if an impression of the Commission – correspondingly the EU – as a trustworthy partner in international trade relations is to be maintained (Daugbjerg 2009: 399). Acknowledging the challenges related to the fact that the CAP occupies a considerable share of the EU budget, the Commission thus has opted for efficiency enhancing measures in order to reduce the spending on agriculture.

Nevertheless, the DG Agriculture often have found its initiatives for further CAP reform being watered-down by the Council of Ministers (Nugent 2010: 365). The Council, or more precisely, the Council of Agricultural Ministers (CoAM), is constituted by the Ministers of Agriculture of the 27 EU member states. Although its decision-making is based on the Qualified Majority Vote³⁰ principle, the diversity of interests – which obviously has increased

³⁰ The present principles for Qualified Majority Voting, entered into force with the Nice Treaty, valid until 2014, imply that decisions upon Commission proposals require a double majority in order to be sanctioned.

with the Enlargements of 2004 and 2007 – generated by 27 member states has tended to make decision making difficult. Hence, the frequent watering-down of Commission proposals in order to achieve consensus. Moreover, or possibly due to diversity,

‘within the [Agricultural Council], it is the norm that the Commissioner’s proposal forms the basis of the discussions [...]. After the Commissioner’s proposal has been formally presented to the Council, farm ministers seldom put forward alternative proposals’ (Daugbjerg 2009: 399).

Set aside its different approach to reform, in that it has tended to be status-quo oriented, the Council of Agriculture nonetheless is an integral part of the highly specialised area of EU agricultural policy. The preparatory work prior to Council meetings is handled by a Special Committee of Agriculture (SCA), not as in the other policy sector specific Councils, by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER). As is the case in the DG Agriculture, the SCA is constituted by actors specialized on agricultural issues. But whereas the officers in the DG work in the best interest of the EU as a whole, officers in the SCA, coming from member states’ Permanent Representations and national Ministries of Agriculture, *promote national interests* (Nugent 2010: 367, 146).

The latter of the central institutions at EU level, the popular elected European Parliament (EP), has only recently been assigned with de facto influence on the CAP. The introduction of the co-decision procedure on the CAP in December 2009, coincides with an already advanced process through which the EP has gained more competences in EU decision-making (Nugent 2010: 205-6).

Politics

The management of EU agricultural policy was for a long time handled in accordance with the consultation procedure, implying that the supranational EU Commission – the ‘executive’ authority of the EU – submitted policy proposals, upon which the Council of Ministers – constituted by each member state’s minister of agriculture – decided, after first having consulted the European Parliament (Claes and Fjørland 2004: 171, Nugent 2010: 366). The entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty, December 2009, brought substantial change to this decision making dynamic, by introducing the *co-decision* procedure (Nugent 2010: 77, 366).

Consequently, 'a minimum of 255 of the 345 weighted votes', which moreover 'represents the majority of the member states' is required (Nugent 2010: 154).

First introduced with the entering into force of the Maastricht Treaty in November 1993, and now representing the ‘ordinary’ legislative procedure, co-decision implies that policy proposals forwarded by the Commission have to be decided upon by *both* the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament (Claes and Førlund 2004: 171, Nugent 2010: 366). The popular elected Parliament thus has strengthened its influence on a policy area, which has been regarded as somewhat special and isolated from other policy areas (Nugent 2010: 367).

Both the Commission and the EP thus have considerable influence with regard to formulation, the former institution, and decision making, the latter, of EU agricultural policies. Part of both institutions’ way of dealing with these responsibilities is to maintain close contacts with private interest groups, first and foremost interests from within the food chain. This practice was initially encouraged by the first commissioner of DG Agriculture, Sicco Mansholt, who invited agricultural private interests to participate in the 1958 negotiations that established the CAP (Grant and Stocker 2009: 235-6). Partly due to Mansholt’s initiative, European farm interests agreed upon the establishment of a Farmers’ Association at European Community level, the COPA, in 1958 (COPA-COGECA 2012). According to Grant and Stocker (2009: 236-7) COPA became a ‘core insider’ within the Commission’s DG Agriculture. However, due to its firm opposition against the Commission’s reform proposals, COPA appears to have lost some of its influence on EU policy processes (Grant and Stocker 2009: 237, Nugent 2010: 356).

Nonetheless, COPA and other interest groups, such as the CIAA (FoodDrinkEurope) continue to hold frequent contacts with the Commission. What furthermore appears to be the incidence, is the increased emphasis by interest groups on getting to talk with members of the EP (MEPs) (Interview BDSI 2012, Interview by phone DBV 2012). Both interest group actors and officials of the Commission and the EP seem to profit from these contacts. The former through access and thus the possibility to influence policy-making, and the latter through a greater influx of knowledge, experience, and legitimacy, thereby strengthening the basis for making policies (Nugent 2010: 357, Bouwen 2009: 22).

CAP reform

As noted by Daugbjerg (2009: 400),

‘prior to 1992, the CAP had changed little from its original design. Basically, the CAP was a high price policy in which consumers paid a significant share of the costs of subsidizing farmers through artificially high consumer prices’.

Pressure for reform was ascending at the time. It came from both within the EU and outside of Europe. Within the EU, DG Agriculture, representing the Commission and the EU as a whole, was in favour of amendments designed to decrease the CAP spending and handle the surpluses of agricultural products. Outside of Europe, international trade negotiations within the GATT³¹ framework – later to be renamed the World Trade Organization (WTO) – revived the calls for further liberalization of world farm trade (Daugbjerg 2009: 400).

It was against this context that the EU agreed upon the first round of substantial CAP reform in May 1992. According to Daugbjerg (2009: 400), *The MacSharry reform* – named after the then Farm Commissioner Raymond MacSharry – *‘changed the architecture of the CAP’*, while simultaneously *‘preserving the core of the policy’*. Included in the reform was *‘a partial shift from price support mechanisms to direct payments’* (Daugbjerg 2009: 400). Moreover, one sought a bearing down of prices on agricultural products (Nugent 2010: 359).

Compensatory measures were adopted in order to accompany farmers’ loss of revenue. A new agri-environmental programme postulated the direction of subsidies toward the afforestation of agricultural land, the reservation of a minimum of 15 percent of the farmer’s arable land and the providence of an early retirement scheme for farmers (Daugbjerg 2009: 400). Despite ‘outright’ opposition from actors representing the policy takers – first and foremost the European Farmers’ Association (COPA), but also national ones such as the German Farmers’ Association (DBV) – the reform package was agreed upon by the Council of Agricultural Ministers (Daugbjerg 2009: 401-402). The MacSharry reform was regarded as a necessary step in order to reach an agreement of the Uruguay Round³², the negotiations on which had broken down in December 1990 (Daugbjerg 2009: 9).

Five years later, in July 1997, the Commission set out a new programme for CAP reform, the *Agenda 2000*. What the MacSharry reform did was arguably not to solve, but to alleviate the challenges caused by the CAP (Nugent 2010: 359-360). Internal and external pressures – elaborated on above – were still very much present. European decision makers furthermore had the forthcoming enlargements of the EU to Central East European Countries (the CEECs)

³¹ General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

³² the 8th round of multilateral trade negotiations conducted within the GATT framework, 1986-1994 (Daugbjerg and Swinbank 2007: 2).

in mind. The content of the Agenda 2000 reform represented ‘a deepening’ of what was decided upon in the MacSharry reform (Daugbjerg and Swinbank 2007: 8). Further steps were taken with regard to the removal and reduction of support prices, and, moreover, the expansion of direct compensatory support to farmers (Nugent 2010: 360). Yet another, more inventory step, was the establishment of a second pillar – the first one being the price- and income support mechanisms – to the CAP; rural development (Daugbjerg and Swinbank 2007: 8). However, as the establishment reflected partly a strengthening and partly a reorganization of existing rural development programmes, the actual change caused by the pillar structure should not be exaggerated (Daugbjerg and Swinbank 2007: 8). The Agenda 2000 reform proposal was supported by a qualified majority of the CoAM in March 1999, only to be *watered down* by the heads of state at the Berlin summit of the European Council some weeks later (Daugbjerg and Swinbank 2007: 14-15).

The Fischler reform constitutes the latest of the major CAP reforms. It was put forward by the then DG Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler in July 2002, and presented as a mid-term review of the 1999 agreements (Daugbjerg 2009: 405). Whereas the reform package agreed upon in 1999 appeared to be a ‘deepening’ of the MacSharry reform, what Commissioner Fischler presented ‘*involved a change of policy instruments*’ (Daugbjerg and Swinbank 2007: 8). With reference to the growing complexities caused by the introduction of direct payment mechanisms, Fischler recommended the de-coupling of direct aid payments and its transformation into a Single Payment Scheme (SPS) (Daugbjerg and Swinbank 2007: 8, Daugbjerg 2009: 403-405). De-coupling is understood as the separation of financial support from agricultural production. According to the Single Payment Scheme, one single payment is to be issued. Moreover, a system of ‘cross-compliance’ makes the payment conditional on farmers fulfilling multiple farming practice standards, such as e.g. food safety and animal welfare (Nugent 2010: 360).

The approach to reform brought forward by the Commission, was, just as the MacSharry reform, met with ‘fierce opposition’ by a majority of national ministers within the CoAM (Daugbjerg 2009: 406). Also present within the oppositional camp was the European Farmers’ Association (COPA). But, as noted by Daugbjerg (2009: 406), ‘*the power of COPA had declined dramatically over the past two decades*’. Hence, despite its critique especially against the introduction of ‘de-coupling’, COPA was not able to prevent the CoAM from eventually reaching an agreement – one more flexible than the original draft – on the Fischler

reform. The acceptance by EU member states seems to have been partly driven by the need to adjust the CAP to ongoing WTO negotiations on farm trade – the Doha round. By de-coupling, the EU was able to transfer its farm support mechanisms from ‘the blue box’ category – ‘under-production-limiting programmes’ – into ‘the green box’ category – ‘minimally trade distorting domestic support’ – of the WTO, the former category being subject to reductions (Daugbjerg and Swinbank 2007: 10, Daugbjerg 2009: 405).

According to Nugent (2010: 361), the three rounds of reform have brought about fundamental changes of the EU agricultural market, on which the CAP rests. Income support mechanisms have been introduced and intervention prices lowered, in an attempt to restore market imbalances and budget deficits. De-coupling of support mechanisms in accordance with the Single Payment Scheme (SPS), was adopted partly as a reaction to growing ‘*international dissatisfaction with the distorting effects of the CAP on world [...] trade*’ (Nugent 2010: 361). Finally, an increasing number of policy areas have been added to the CAP, thereby making the framework increasingly complex. Rural development now constitutes the second pillar of EU agricultural policy. Food policy, furthermore, has rapidly become a primary concern for the EU. The evolution of EU food policy is to be elaborated on in the forthcoming section.

3.1.2 EU Food policy

Food policy is in this thesis understood to be ‘*public measures designed with the purpose of securing safe food of good quality that is presented in a honest way*’ (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 18). With honest presentation of food is meant the guarantee for consumers that the food products they purchase in fact *is* what they are made to look like by the seller. Central characteristics associated with food policy are *food security*³³; the securing of sufficient amounts of food to all inhabitants, *food safety*; the securing of safe food free from disease and non-contagious, the promotion of *fine nourishment* and the satisfaction by food products to *environmental standards* (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 18). In this elaboration on the developments of EU Food policy, special emphasis is put on the food safety aspect. One prominent reason is the extensiveness of this policy, in terms of its applicability to multiple societal sectors. As stated in the Commission's White Paper,

³³ is provided for by the aims of the CAP (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 39 (1), referred to in Nugent 2010: 358).

The guiding principle throughout this White Paper is that food safety policy must be based on a comprehensive, integrated approach. This means throughout the food chain ('farm to table'); across all food sectors; between the Member States; at the EU external frontier and within the EU; in international and EU decision-making fora, and at all stages of the policy-making cycle [...](European Commission 2000: 8).

EU Food policy up to the 1990s

The institutions of the European Community were from the outset not meant to deal with food safety and consumer protection (Vos and Wendler 2006: 66). These policy concerns remained primarily under the jurisdiction of the member states (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 66, Uglund and Veggeland 2006: 612). According to Ansell and Vogel (2006: 6) *'food safety [as a matter of fact] is one of the oldest regulatory systems at the national level'*. Food safety policies were however made at European level too – the first EU directive on food coming into force as early as 1962 (Uglund and Veggeland 2006: 612). These however were strongly induced by the objectives set out in the Common Agricultural Policy. EU Food policy, first and foremost food safety, can be portrayed as a balancing act between the promotion of 'a true internal market' and the protection of consumer health and safety (Vos and Wendler 2006: 65). With regard to the EU policies on food up to the mid-1980s, emphasis was mainly put on the preposition of the free movement of agricultural goods, against which national regulatory systems were perceived of as potential barriers (Vos and Wendler 2006: 66-67, Uglund and Veggeland 2006: 612).

Meanwhile, an *ad hoc* institutional system employed with the protection of consumer's interests, including food safety, was developed at Community level from the 1960s and onwards. This however was a very complex structure with units dispersed across several DGs, including DG Industry, DG Social Affairs and DG Agriculture (Uglund and Veggeland 2006: 613). Moreover, the structure merely constituted a system of consultation. A number of committees composed of scientific experts, national representatives and representatives of interest groups, provided the Commission with scientific knowledge (Vos and Wendler 2006: 67). The Standing Committee on Foodstuffs – established in 1969 – on the other hand, provided an arena for discussion and consensus-making between national representatives and the Commission (Vos and Wendler 2006: 67). Despite these arrangements, food safety policies at EU level still remained disintegrated (Uglund and Veggeland 2006: 613).

The BSE-crisis as a window of opportunity

In March 1996 the United Kingdom government went public with the finding of a possible connection between the BSE-disease³⁴ found in cattle and the fatal Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease (vCJD) found in humans (Ugland and Veggeland 2006: 615, Ansell and Vogel 2006: 13). TV-images of the burning of possibly BSE-infected cattle in the UK, the ban on British beef imposed by the EU, so on so forth, triggered strong emotional reactions across Europe (Ansell and Vogel 2006: 4, 13). Both the British government and the EU, in particular the Commission, came under heavy criticism for their approach to food safety regulation, an approach which until the 1990s *'was widely accepted as functioning adequately'* (Vos and Wendler 2006: 68-69).

The BSE-crisis has been recognized as a damaging factor to the popular trust and legitimacy of the EU's 'ad hoc' food safety approach – and public authority food safety regulations in general (Ansell and Vogel 2006: 12, 20). With public attention and media scrutiny rising to intense levels, the pressure on both national and European decision makers 'to do something about it' equally was ascending. Thus, a window of opportunity for fundamental reform was emerging due to the *'shock to the institutional status quo'* caused by the BSE-crisis (Ansell and Vogel 2006: 12, Ugland and Veggeland 2006: 616).

What seems to have become apparent for decision makers in light of the BSE-disclosure was the need for a more coherent approach to food safety regulations. Furthermore, a new approach ought to be *'causally related and structurally connected around the public health objectives'* (Ugland and Veggeland 2006: 616). The balancing act between economic, internal market, oriented objectives and public health objectives, inherent in EU Food policy, was in need for a revisal. As noted by the then President of the Commission, Jacques Santer, in his remark on the EP's report on BSE – the 'Medina Ortega report – 19. February 1997:

Did the Commission put the market before public health? With the benefit of what we know today, the attitude adopted at the time is open to criticism. But it must also be admitted that the question was not put then in such straightforward terms: the market or health.[...] But I would also point out that a number of measures - at both national and Community level - to prevent any risk to health were taken from 1989 90 onwards. I would add in this connection that a number of Commission proposals designed to strengthen the health pillar of the single market were not adopted. The Member States rejected them. [...] It is my belief that

³⁴ Bovin spongiform encephalopati, commonly known as mad-cow disease, because of its damaging effect on the brain of cattle, among which the BSE-disease spreads.

the time has come to put health to the fore in Europe. (European Commission 1997, referred to in Uglund and Veggeland 2006: 615)

Policy reform

A series of amendments were set in motion in order to ‘put health to the fore in Europe’. At the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference in Amsterdam, member state Heads of State agreed upon the reformulation of some of the Articles of the EC Treaty. Henceforth, the Article 152 spelt out ‘*the requirement that all Community policies and actions should ‘ensure’ ([prior to the amendments, the spelling was] ‘contribute to’) a high level of health protection in general*’ (Vos 2000: 235, referred to in Uglund and Veggeland 2006: 616). In addition the Commission issued two papers – the Green Paper on the general principles of food law, 1997, and the White Paper on Food Safety, 2000 – in which the foundations of a new, comprehensive, food safety policy were developed (Vos and Wendler 2006: 70). Both the Commission papers and the amendments to the EC Treaty pointed forward to the entering into force of the General Food Law in 2002.

The General Food Law (GLF) reaffirmed the developments which had occurred since 1996 – ‘the ‘Year Zero’ of the EU food regime’ (Vos and Wendler 2006: 70). Inherent in the GFL is the common principles, procedures and responsibilities of EU Food policies (Vos and Wendler 2006: 72). Herewith is stated that:

consumer health protection placed at the fore of EU food policy, decisions based on sound science, transparency of scientific advice and regulative decisions, food safety objectives pursued in all food sectors (sector consistency) and throughout the whole chain of food production, all of which principles are to be ensured (Uglund and Veggeland 2006: 617).

The latter principle, pursuit of food safety objectives throughout the whole chain of food production, is a confirmation of the new, integrated approach to food safety – ‘from the farm to the fork’ (Vos and Wendler 2006: 65). Which, according to an informant from the Norwegian Mission in Brussels, even applies to activities ‘behind the farm’, with e.g. authorization of fertilizers being issued by the EU (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012a). Consequentially, an extensive scope of sectors and actors – including the farming sector, processing industry, veterinarians etc. – are subjected to EU Food Law. Yet another aspect contributing to the wide applicability of the GFL is its adoption in the form of a regulation – more precisely, Regulation 178/2002 (Vos and Wendler 2006: 72). EU

Regulations are transposed directly into member states' jurisdiction, whereas in case of EU Directives, member states enjoy a greater degree of freedom with regard to the exact introduction of law into national jurisdiction (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 70). From primarily issuing directives on food policy, the EU is moving in direction of a greater usage of regulations when issuing new food policies (Ugland and Veggeland 2006: 616). Consequently reflecting the considerably enhanced authority of the EU in member states' food policy jurisdictions.

Reform of the polity

Yet another amendment emerged in the form of an extensive reorganization of units responsible for food safety regulations. A new administrative department had been established within the Commission in 1995, DG Consumer Policy. In 1996/97, scientific committees that previously had been dispersed across several DGs, were moved to the new DG. Also subject for transfer to the new DG was the responsibility for food and veterinary inspections³⁵, which up to then had been governed by DG Agriculture (Ugland and Veggeland 2006: 615). The considerably enlarged DG Consumer was then renamed DG Consumer Policy and Health Protection (the present DG Health and Consumers, DG SANCO). By co-locating the majority of units employed with food safety regulation, the EU signalled its intent of creating a framework much more coherent. The selection of DG SANCO as main food safety location furthermore signalled an intent of distancing the policy sector from economic interests.

A key feature of the emerging EU food regime was its emphasis on risk analysis (Vos and Wendler 2006: 72). The organizational framework underpinning the regime in fact appeared to be built around the aspects of risk analysis; *risk assessment* and *risk management*.

With regard to risk assessment, the co-location of scientific committees into the DG SANCO appeared to be an insufficient measure for confidence in EU regulation to be restored. Hence, the creation of an independent agency, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), as stipulated in the GLF (Vos and Wendler 2006: 618). As noted by Ugland and Veggeland (2006: 618) *'EFSA can be seen as a response to the need for increased excellence, independence and transparency of scientific advice and to the necessity of separating*

³⁵ the EU had strengthened its presence within this domain since the early 1990, with the creation of the Office of Veterinary and Phytosanitary Inspection and Control (Ugland and Veggeland 2006: 614)

scientific advice from regulative activity'. The independence of EFSA is provided for by its location outside of the Commission's organizations. Although having no decision-making powers, its leading role in providing risk managers in the Commission, EP and Council of Ministers with scientific advice nevertheless constitutes a sound base for exerting influence on policy-making (Ugland and Veggeland 2006: 618). Also affiliated with the EFSA is an advisory forum, in which one representative from each member state, plus an observer from the Commission and the Executive director of the EFSA participates (Vos and Wendler 2006: 79). Norway, together with the EFTA-countries Switzerland and Iceland, is participating in the advisory forum as observers (Veggeland 2011: 13).

Reform of politics

According to the GFL the conduct of risk assessment and risk management is to be held 'strictly separated, both functionally and institutionally' (Vos and Wendler 2006: 74). The conduct of risk management involves *'the weighing of policy alternatives, consultancy with concerned parties and [consideration] of scientific advice provided by the EFSA [...]*' (Vos and Wendler 2006: 88). These tasks are primarily realized by the Commission's DG SANCO. As a matter of fact both preparation of food policy drafts, decision-making and management, usually, take place within the DG SANCO. Decision-making on Food policy is performed in accordance with the comitology procedures, introduced by the EU in 1987. Where applied, the Commission has the authority to make the decisions, but only if the draft in questions has been accepted by a committee composed of representatives from the member states (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 80).

In relation with the entering into force of the GLF, a revision of the comitology procedure on Food policy was made. A new comitology committee, the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCFCAH), was put in place. It replaced the various comitology committees that had operated on food safety up to the BSE-crisis in 1996 (Vos and Wendler 2006: 88). Henceforth, in order to adopt new policies on foodstuffs the Commission first has to consult the SCFCAH, whose backing requires the support by a qualified majority of its members (Vos and Wendler 2006: 89). The committee, under which numerous working groups are located, is composed of member state representatives. As was the case with the EFSA advisory group, Norway is represented in both the SCFCAH and its affiliated working

groups (Veggeland 2011: 14). However, due to her status as observer, Norway possess no formal voting rights.

A supervisory role of the comitology procedure, and hence conduct of risk management, has been assigned to the European Parliament (Vos and Wendler 2006: 89). Thus although the EP's active participation in these policy processes appears to be somewhat limited, it nonetheless has a role to play. Its right to scrutinize was given in 1999³⁶, in 2006 it furthermore was given the right to oppose decisions made by the Commission and the SCFCAH, however only in specific instances³⁷ (Council of the European Union 2006, referred to in Vos and Wendler 2006: 89).

Apart from the SCFCAH, the Commission is expected to consult the Advisory Group on the Food Chain and Animal and Plant Health on food safety issues (Vos and Wendler 2006: 91). The Advisory Group ensures the inclusion of private stakeholder groups in DG SANCO policymaking. It was created by the Commission in 2004 in order to meet the requirements as set out in Article 9 of the GFL '*that there shall be an open and transparent public consultation*' (EUR-Lex 2002, referred to in Vos and Wendler 2006: 90). 36 organizations were initially given membership on the basis of the general criteria³⁸ formulated by the Commission. Later on, nine additional organizations have been granted access by the Commission (European Commission 2011). Thus, the Advisory Group now is composed of 45 European level groups, including the likes of COPA-COGECA, FoodDrinkEurope (CIAA) and the Federation of Veterinarian of Europe (FVE) (European Commission 2011). Meetings are in principle held twice a year, during which the group members are consulted and informed by the Commission (Vos and Wendler 2006: 90-91).

3.1.3 Summary thus far

In the two first sections of this chapter, focus has been on the EU's agricultural and food policy sectors. The changes brought about by reform have been fundamental in both policy sectors.

³⁶ Comitology Decision 1999/468 (Vos and Wendler 2006: 89).

³⁷ 'on the grounds that the measures exceed the implementing powers provided for in the basic instrument or are not compatible with the aim or the content of the basic instrument or do not respect the principles of subsidiarity or proportionality;' (Council of the European Union 2006).

³⁸ 'the organisation must have as its primary objective the protection of interests in food safety matters, [...] it must represent all or most of the Member States, as well as have a permanent representation at the Community level' (Vos and Wendler 2006: 90).

With regard to the Common Agricultural Policy changes appear to be most prominent in its *policy* and *politics* dimension, whereas the *polity* – the structure and institutions – of the CAP appears to be more or less untouched. Considerable reform efforts have been directed toward the functioning of the EU's internal agricultural market, including the financial support mechanisms for farmers. Furthermore, the European Parliament has been handed co-decision rights, thereby altering the processes of CAP decision-making, and the GATT/WTO trade negotiations have increased in importance to EU agricultural policy makers (Daugbjerg and Swinbank 2007: 9).

What has taken place with regard to EU Food policy – food safety policy in particular – since the BSE-crisis in 1996, is more or less the birth of a new policy area, with amendments being made both with regard to the *policy*, *polity* and *politics* dimension. Prior to the crisis in 1996, the EU employed an ad hoc approach to food policy. EU laws on food safety were primarily motivated by the objectives of the CAP, i.e. the promotion of the internal market of agricultural goods. Since 1996 however, a new institutional framework has been put in place. It is to administer a considerably enlarged portfolio of policies, which now applies to sectors and actors across the whole food production chain and furthermore have consumer- and health protection as their number one priority (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 70) These changes have been accompanied by the gradual delegation of food policy competences and decision making power from the member state level to the European level (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 92).

3.2 The political systems of food and agriculture at domestic level

The next two sections of this chapter are to focus on the political systems attached to agriculture and food policy in Norway and Germany. Private and public actors, and the institutional arrangements between which – *state-society relations* – are of special interest. Moreover, how the two countries in question are affected by the agricultural and food policy sectors of the EU is to be dealt with. The inquiry into state-society relations in Norway and Germany points forward to one of the main questions underpinning this thesis, whether interest group strategies toward decision making authorities are being adjusted in response to the increasing importance of the EU.

First of all however, what deserves a brief presentation is the system in which farmers, food manufacturers, merchants etc. – the food- and agriculture policy takers – operate; i.e. the food production chain. What is provided is a brief introduction to how the actors under scrutiny relate to each other. Basic interests of actors can arguably be derived from their positioning within the food production chain.

3.2.1 The food production chain

According to Rommetvedt and his fellow scholars (2002: 18) the food production chain – from now on, food chain – can be regarded as constituting a *political-economic system*. Economic in the sense that the chain involves the production, processing, selling, consumption and, last but not least, profiting of food commodities. Political in the sense that activities across the food chain are subjected to public regulations and monitoring from both national and inter-/supranational authorities. Furthermore, public authorities to a varying extent constitute an important source of economic income for actors – such as e.g. farmers – within the food chain. Consequently, with reference to the multiplicity of affiliated actors, an equivalent number of incentives for the exertion of influence on policy-makers exist.

The food chain tends to be portrayed as consisting of four sections; the farmers, the food industry, the food retailers and the consumers (Rommetvedt 2002: 18). With regard to the dynamics linking the four – put very simply – , the farmers appear to be interested in selling their raw materials for a highest possible price, whereas the food industry³⁹ is interested in buying them to favourable prices (Rommetvedt 2002: 24). Similar mechanisms appear to be in work when moving further down the food chain, i.e. from food producers to retailers, and from retailers to consumers. As noted by Rommetvedt (2002: 24) such dynamics easily create contradictory interests between the different sectors of the food chain. On the other hand, one might argue that the system, in which the sectors comprising the food chain co-exist, is characterized by *interdependence*, implying that actors are mutually dependent, and hence get affected by each other's actions (Jackson and Sørensen 2007: 103). If so, one might assume actors affiliated with the food chain to coordinate to a greater extent their positions when seeking influence on policy-makers' decisions.

³⁹ With regard to the food industry, what should be noted is the difference between the industry owned by farmers, the agricultural cooperatives, and the private food industry (Rommetvedt 2002: 20, 23).

3.2.2 The political system of agriculture and food in Norway

Policy

The Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food operates with four main objectives as foundation for its agriculture- and food policy. These are food security (the securing of sufficient amounts of food that moreover is safe to eat), agriculture in all regions of Norway, increase in added value (encouragement of innovation and adjustment in order to strengthen the competitiveness of agricultural activities) and sustainable agriculture (sustainable usage of resources in order to safeguard the environment) (Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food 2011: 14). One observes the inclusion of various non-economic objectives in the political framework, including the likes of scattered settlements (regional policy), the environment and the protection of agricultural landscape (Veggeland 2011: 40). It is ‘*a multifunctional agriculture [that] constitutes the foundation for agriculture- and food policy making*’ (Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food 2011a: 15). An apparent indicium is the incorporation of food- and consumer policy into what seemingly used to be an exclusive agricultural policy (Rommetvedt 2002: 31).

Politics and Polity

Agricultural policy in Norway is primarily managed through the annual agricultural negotiations (“jordbruksforhandlingene”). The negotiations have found place every autumn since 1950 – with the establishment of the General Agreement. Based on the longevity of the arrangement, one could argue that the arrangement itself constitutes an institution, and thus amount to a central feature of both agricultural *politics* and the *polity*. Hence, the inclusion of both politics and polity in this section.

The General Agreement constitutes the very symbol of an agricultural policy-making sector distinguished by corporatism (Rommetvedt 2002: 25, Seip 2002: 120). Schmitter (1974: 93) defines corporatism as

a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports.

The relation between societal interests, interest groups, and the public administration is the key feature of this corporative channel (Rommetvedt 2002: 25). In Norway, it is common for interest groups to participate routinely in consultation forums provided by the public administration. In most instances, however, political decisions are made by the popular elected and implemented by the public administration (Rommetvedt 2002: 25). What stands out with regard to the agricultural policy sector is its more ‘complete’ variant of corporatism. In addition to being present in consultancy forums, agricultural interest groups, at least in principal, have a major say in the determination of political outcomes – by means of the General Agreement. What comes out of the negotiations on the General Agreement are moreover, to a great extent implemented by affected special interests themselves (Rommetvedt 2002: 26, Nordby 1994: 9).

With regard to the General Agreement, and the negotiation on which, its constituent parties are the Norwegian Farmers’ Union, the Norwegian Farmers and Smallholders Union and the state authority. The negotiating parties are in principal coequals during the negotiations (Rommetvedt 2002: 26). Both parties, the special interests and the state, appear to have some advantage from the arrangement (Seip 2002: 126). The farmer organizations have gained unique access to national policy-makers and, furthermore, co-decision rights. For state authorities, the General Agreement has functioned as a means to control the developments within the agriculture and food chain as such, and to legitimize its policies (Seip 2002: 119, 126).

Agriculture in Norway has traditionally been extensively regulated. What initially was implemented into national legislation as a response to measures initiated by the Farmers’ Union in the 1930s⁴⁰, has materialized itself in agricultural policy-making later on. The introduction of negotiations on a General Agreement in 1950 thus constituted a formalization of an arrangement already established (Seip 2002: 119-20). Through the negotiations, objectives such as prices on grain feed and the size of farmers’ income subsidies, were discussed and determined. From the 1960s and onwards further objectives, such as e.g. new

⁴⁰ In response to rapidly falling prices on milk and a consequent intensified market competition, the Farmers’ Union in 1930 decided upon the creation of eight milk centrals in eight different districts of Norway. These were assigned with the task of administering the first hand commerce of milk. At the core of the new system was the equalization of prices and the abolishment of competition between producers of milk and the dairies (Rovde 1995: 280).

measures to regulate prices and social measures for farmers, were included in the negotiations. The General Agreement thus came to be decisive not only for the two farm unions, who were taking part in the negotiations, but also for the economic organizations who represented the interests of food industry and food retail (Seip 2002: 127-28).

In the first Norwegian Account on Power (“Den første Maktutredningen”) Egeberg, Olsen and Sætren (1978, referred to in Rommetvedt 2002: 16) elaborated on the possible coming into existence of a *segmented*⁴¹ state. Whereas the three scholars adopted a rather cautious approach to the term, Hernes (1983, referred to in Rasch and Rommetvedt 1999) came to the conclusion that ‘iron triangles’ – close alliances – within sector specific policy areas existed. Members of a sector specific Parliament committee hence were expected to have close alliances with officials in the corresponding sector specific Ministry and sector specific interest groups. Together the parties of the ‘iron triangle’ would sort out the policy-making decisions, thereby establishing a hegemony over their policy sector (Rommetvedt 2002: 16).

Policy-making on agriculture has tended to be highlighted as containing elements of segmentation (Nordby 1994: 32). Accordingly, the main content of policies has been formulated at the negotiation table between the two farmer unions and the state authorities, and then endorsed – usually without amendments – by the Norwegian Parliament (Seip 2002: 135). Furthermore, the implementation of agreed upon policies has been, and still is, administered by a ‘commerce council’ (“omsetningsrådet”) composed of organizations representing agricultural- and food industry interests (Rommetvedt 2002: 26, Norwegian Agricultural Authority 2012). With regard to the organizations representing the food industry, these do not have access to the negotiations on the General Agreement. Thus, whereas the farm unions have tended to rely on the corporative channel, food industry organizations, especially the non co-operatives, have made use of informal channels – by means of lobbyism – in order to attain decision makers (Rommetvedt 2002: 27).

However, as times have been changing so it appears that the precedence held by Norwegian farmer unions, with regard to access to decision makers through corporative channels, has receded. Rommetvedt (2002: 27) in 2002 observes a greater orientation toward informal, less institutionalized lobby strategies, also in agriculture. A greater awareness of the importance of influencing the opinion, and the consumer, via e.g. communication in the media is for

⁴¹ a segment in this setting implies a structure that is permanent and closed (Nordby 1994: 28)

instance being recognized⁴² (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012). This tendency corresponds with the general currents in society, with market economic, neo liberal, thinking paving its way into the different areas of society since the 1980s (Seip 2002: 133). The competition between actors and different segments of the food chain has increased (Rommetvedt 2002: 24-25, Seip 2002: 136). One furthermore observes enhanced concentration of market control in the food retail segment, with relatively few retailers controlling vast majorities of the food market (Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food 2011b: 19). The increased competition within the food chain allegedly reappear in the influence channels toward decision-making authorities (Seip 2002: 136). Farsund (2002: 160) observes the strengthened presence of the food industry in relation with the 1998-2000 agricultural negotiations. Based on these observations, one might argue that the present system, with negotiations on the General Agreement performed exclusively by farm interests and the authorities, is coming under increasing pressure.

The EU's presence in Norwegian Agriculture and Food policy

Not only have the circumstances within the food chain changed over the years, so has the framework for policy making. As noted by Rommetvedt (2002: 21), policy making on agriculture (and, in particular, food) is not conducted in isolation from international influence anymore. In what follows, the EU's effect on Norwegian agriculture and food business is to be presented.

The EEA-agreement

The Agreement on the European Economic Area (from now on, the EEA-agreement) is an international law pertaining agreement between the EU and the three European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries⁴³ Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 84). The European Economic Area thus is comprised of all EU member states and of the three EFTA countries. It entered into force on the 1. of January 1994, the same year the Norwegian people voted no to EU-membership in a referendum. Consequently, instead of EU membership the EEA-agreement has become the foundation of the attachment between the EU and Norway (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012a).

⁴² direct quote: 'inntrykket er at en kanskje har blitt mer og mer bevisst på å påvirke opinionen da, og påvirke forbrukere, folk flest [...] enn bare byråkrati og politikere'. 'det er klart at media og har blitt viktigere da, altså på innflytelse, altså kanskje ikke på media, men via media'.

⁴³ the fourth EFTA-country, Switzerland, is not member of the EEA (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 84).

Main objective of the EEA-agreement is to link the EEA/EFTA-countries to the EU's single market by means of a common legislation on the free exchange of goods, free movement of people, services and capital⁴⁴, and also common rules of competition (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012a: 14). Due to the agreement, Norway gets to participate in the single market, while simultaneously accepting the incorporation of an extensive part of EU legislation – in particular the ones concerning the 'four freedoms' (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 85). One of the central characteristics of the EEA-agreement is its *dynamism* (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012a: 16). The agreement is continuously subject to update as the system of agreements needs to be kept in accordance⁴⁵ with the ever evolving EU legislation. Implementation and compliance to EEA (EU) legislation is monitored by ESA, The EFTA Surveillance Authority (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 85). Originally, the EEA-agreement consisted of 1875 legal documents (when signed in May 1992). Since then, 9008 legal documents⁴⁶ have been implemented into Norwegian legislation (pr. 30. August 2012) (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012a: 16). Thus, the evolution of the EEA-agreement, in terms of its volume and scope, appears to be considerable. Consequently, Norwegian authorities is to a greater extent enforced to include the European dimension when weighing political options (Veggeland 2011: 51).

The influence of the EU on Norwegian agriculture

Agricultural policy was one of the policy areas⁴⁷ that was omitted from the EEA-framework during negotiations in 1990-1992, one reason being the Norwegian government's objective to hold on to its right to protect the agriculture- and food industry from competition from abroad (Veggeland 2011). With agricultural policy being left nearly unaffected by EU/EEA-legislation, Norway has held greater degrees of freedom with regard to the formulation of its agricultural policies (Veggeland 2011: 35). Hence, the continuation of an ambitious agricultural policy with extensive usage of support mechanisms, strong import protection and clear targets for production and income (Veggeland 2011: 40).

Norway's interests with regard to the EU's Common Agricultural Policy appear to be somewhat defensive. With the exception of the cheese brand 'Jarlsberg', Norwegian

⁴⁴ The four freedoms of the EU – free movement of goods, capital, services and people.

⁴⁵ One primary target for the EU is the uniform, homogenous, development of its legislation.

⁴⁶ total amount of EEA legal documents in force today is 4445.

⁴⁷ another policy area that was excluded was fishery (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012: 16).

ambitions in terms of export of agricultural products arguably are non-existent (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012b). Moreover, according to an informant from one of the leading interest groups of Norwegian food industry, the CAP is being looked upon as a ‘threat’ by the industry. The main reason is the difference in competitive ability, generated by differences in Norwegian and EU agricultural policy, first and foremost with regard to the emphasis on market orientation (Interview Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2012).

Although being to some extent protected from the EU’s agricultural policy, two law provisions of the EEA-agreement nonetheless affect Norwegian agriculture- and food industry. Both of which concern the trade of agricultural goods. These are Article 19 and Protocol 3.

According to Article 19 of the EEA Agreement (EFTA 2011: 11)

1. The Contracting Parties shall examine any difficulties that might arise in their trade in agricultural products and shall endeavour to seek appropriate solutions.

2. The Contracting Parties undertake to continue their efforts with a view to achieving progressive liberalization of agricultural trade.

3. To this end, the Contracting Parties will carry out, before the end of 1993 and subsequently at two-yearly intervals, reviews of the conditions of trade in agricultural products.

Which stated, an ambition to further liberalize agricultural trade between the EFTA signatories and the EU is expressed in the agreement. It is in particular the trade with basis agricultural products, such as milk, meat, vegetables etc, that this provision is directed at (Prestegard et al 2009: 121). The first agreement on the review of Article 19 entered into force on 1. of July 2003. As a consequence, competition levels on the domestic food market increased a little. On the other hand, one observed some increase in the export potential for Norwegian food enterprises (Prestegard et al 2009: 121). A second agreement on the Article 19 came into force on the 1. of January 2012. In response to EU member states’ demands of easier market access, the Norwegian government has given concessions on agricultural goods where import already features, or import is requested by the food industry (Prestegard et al 2009: 121, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012a: 19).

Protocol 3 of the EEA-agreement concerns the trade with ‘Price Compensation to processed Agricultural Products’ (“RÅK⁴⁸-varer”), understood as goods for which raw material compensation is given (Prestegard et al 2009: 122). Products such as yoghurt, ice cream, soup and pasta typically belong to this category. According to Protocol 3, products belonging to the raw material compensated category are subjected to the general provisions on the free movement of goods, as stated in the EEA-agreement (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012a: 19). The entering into force of the protocol in Norway, 1. of January 2002, resulted in the general cut of tariff rates of approximately 3 percent. Which in turn led to the enhancement of competition in the domestic markets, in which products affected by the protocol were traded (Prestegard 2009: 122).

Whereas Norwegian agriculture in the strict sense is less affected by EU policy-making, the agriculture and food industry appear to be increasingly exposed to competition from EU agricultural markets. As noted by Veggeland (2011: 36), the import of agricultural goods from the EU has increased to levels fivefold higher than what was observed in 1990⁴⁹. The levels for Norwegian export to the EU have increased⁵⁰ as well, however to a considerably lower extent than the import levels.

The influence of the EU on the Norwegian political system of food

In contrast to agricultural policy, food policy, including food safety, was included in the EEA-agreement when it entered into force in 1994. Most of the EU’s veterinarian legislation was however held outside of the final agreement, much because of Norway’s insistence on retaining its border controls of animals and animal products (Veggeland 2011: 16). Still, developments in Norwegian food policy making after 1994, can to a great extent be ascribed to developments at EU level. As noted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2012a: 67) ‘the food policy area, in numbers, comprise the definite largest share of legal documents within the EEA-agreement’. According to an informant, ‘over 60 percent, or at least more than 50 percent of the EEA-agreement is related to decisions concerning food safety’⁵¹ (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012a).

⁴⁸ in Norwegian: råvarepriskompensasjon

⁴⁹ 1990: 500 000 kg, 2010: 2 500 000 kg (SSB, referred to in Veggeland 2011: 36)

⁵⁰ 1990: 60 000 kg (approx.), 2010: 700 000 kg (SSB, referred to in Veggeland 2011: 36)

⁵¹ direct quote: man kan godt legge fram tall som viser at det er over 60 prosent. I hvert fall godt over halvparten av hele EØS-avtalen er på mattrygghetsspørsmålet.

Norway, and Scandinavian countries in general, is regarded for having established high standard regulatory systems for food policy, with consequent good animal health levels (Veggeland 2011: 16). What Elvbakken and Rykkja (2008: 78-81) furthermore observe is the presence of diverging interests in food policy making and management, with agricultural authorities emphasizing the *quality* aspects of food control and health authorities emphasizing the integrity and pure health aspects.

That being said, Norwegian decision makers, as a whole, appear to have common interests with the EU on Food policy. As noted by an informant, *'no severe general controversies exist between the EU and Norway on this area⁵² for the time being'* (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012a). The informant in question portrays the EU's food policy as being *'without doubt an advantage for Norway, in that it, to a considerable extent, contributes to the improvement of Norwegian food safety by a knowledge based and more sophisticated and targeted legislation'* (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012a). The active participation and contribution to the further development of EU Food policies is indeed being highlighted as a central priority in the Norwegian Government's policy toward Europe (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012a: 67). On the basis of these observations, it could be argued that the Norwegian approach to food policy making in Brussels, is somewhat more offensive. However, diverging opinions on the implementation of EU policy into Norwegian food legislation are observed as well. These are to be elaborated on in the forthcoming chapter.

Although the EEA-agreement does not confine the freedom of Norway to decide on its organization of food policy management, one nevertheless observes some extent of adjustment to the emerging institutions at EU level (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 118, 125). With regard to policy content, Norway implemented the EU's General Food Law in 2003, thereby adopting the integrated approach toward the whole food chain – 'from farm to fork' (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 109). A stronger emphasis on consumer considerations – also present in EU Food Policy – was introduced in 1999, with the Ministry of Agriculture's (1999: 73) report to the Storting (Parliament) stating that 'the consumer is the employer of agriculture, industry and trade'. What furthermore happened in 1999, was the incorporation of EU veterinary legislation into the EEA-agreement, thereby abolishing the veterinarian border control toward EU member states (Veggeland 2011: 17). In 2004, major food reform was introduced, a

⁵² direct quote: det er ikke noen store overgripende kontroverser mellom EU og Norge på dette området for øyeblikket.

consequence being the strict separation, both functionally and institutionally, of risk management and risk assessment. Thus, the former is now managed by the Norwegian Food Safety Authority, under the co-administration of the Ministries of Food and Agriculture⁵³, Health and Care Services as well as Fisheries and Coastal Affairs (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 111). The conduct of risk assessment, on the other hand, is handled by the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety, an agency that is independent of the Norwegian Food Safety Authority (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 114).

Contact between the EU/EEA and Norwegian institutions on food policy making and management is considerable (Lie and Veggeland 2010). ESA inspectors pay visits to the Norwegian Food Safety Authority, and sometimes participate in the latter's inspections, in order to control Norwegian food policy management's consistency with the EEA-agreement (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 86). The Norwegian Food Safety Authority for its part constitutes Norway's formal point of contact with the EU Food policy regime. In 2011, the Food Safety Authority participated in 223 meetings at EU level (Norwegian Food Safety Authority 2011: 7). Representatives of the Authority participate in numerous of the DG SANCO's committees and working groups, including the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCFCAH) (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 120). Extensive routines have been established in order to coordinate the positions of the Norwegian government prior to meetings in the DG SANCO committees. The three ministries responsible for the Food Safety Authority, meet with the Authority every Friday. The two food safety counsellors at the Mission are also participating in the deliberations by phone. During the meeting, proposals for positions on upcoming issues are discussed. The positions are decided at the meeting or later that same day. Prior to the session in the Commission, preparatory meetings are furthermore held between emissions from the Food Safety Authority and officials at the Mission of Norway to the EU (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012a, Norwegian Food Safety Authority 2011: 7).

The Norwegian Food Safety Authority's participation in DG SANCO committees constitutes Norwegian public authorities' most important channel to the EU Food policy regime, both with regard to information seeking and exertion of influence (Veggeland 2011: 32, Interview DG SANCO 2012). As briefly mentioned in the presentation of the EU Food policy regime, Norway do not possess any formal voting rights when EU decisions are made. Hence, the

⁵³ The former Ministry of Agriculture was renamed the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in 2004. In addition to its professional responsibilities, the Ministry holds the administrative responsibility for the Authority (Lie and Veggeland 2011: 111).

importance of Norwegian activism in the early stages of EU policy making processes (Lie and Veggeland 2010: 120).

In that respect what is realized is the concern advanced by the Norwegian Farmers' Union and the Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises, implying that opportunities for submitting input to the Food Safety Authority, and its responsible ministries, are too variable. Both interest groups argue that consultation procedures, and initiatives to which, are too dependent on the individual case officer. According to the two, the potential for exerting influence on EU food policy processes would have been strengthened if interest groups and state authorities coordinated their positions at the earliest possible stage (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012, Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012a, Interview by phone Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2013, Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2012). One informant, while admitting his/her limited insight in state-society coordination at domestic level, still believe there is a potential not fully utilized in that regard (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012a).

3.2.3 The political system of agriculture and food in Germany

When clarifying the agriculture- and food policy systems of Germany what first should be emphasised is the *federal* system, on which governance of the Federal Republic of Germany (BRD) is based (Berntzen 2008: 225). The German decision-making system now is composed of 16 federal states (Länder), the federal states constituting one level of governance, and the federal level in Berlin – the federal states' legislative, the Bundesrat, the federal legislative, the Bundestag, and the federal government – constituting the other (Berntzen 2008: 228). A functional division of powers – with legislation primarily managed at federal level and implementation, on the other hand, at federal state level – has been, and still is, maintained in the German federal system⁵⁴ (Jeffery 2005: 78, 85). As is to be touched upon later on, the decentralised organization of state has created challenges with regard to the *effective* and *coordinated* governance of policy, food policies in particular.

Traditional agricultural policy

⁵⁴ In 2006, major revision on the German federal system was agreed upon. As a consequence, a clearer division between legislative responsibilities of the federal government and federal states was introduced (Berntzen 2008: 237).

The German agricultural policy sector has typically been characterized by the application of economic support mechanisms by federal governments, in order to *'protect farmers from a sharp fall in prices'*, *'close co-operation between the ministerial administration and the [agrarian] lobby'* with regard to policy-making and implementation as well as a strong emphasis on self-sufficiency in food (Hendriks 1991: 30, 40). When taking into consideration the volatile history of the German nation state, featuring two world wars and approximately 40 years of separation (1949-1990), the agricultural policy sector stands out as an area distinguished by continuity (Hendriks 1991: 82). Whereas the end of the Second World War led to significant change of the German society and agricultural structure – the latter change, due to the massive loss of land in the east – traditional agricultural policies re-emerged in the Federal Republic, founded on the British, American and French occupational zones in 1949 (Hendriks 1991: 34, 41).

An important element in that respect was the agreement upon the Agricultural Act ("Landwirtschaftsgesetz") in 1955, then characterized by a farm interest group leader as *'the Magna Charta of German agricultural policy'* (Rieger 2007: 299). The Act constituted a 'parity law', according to which the federal government was to present an annual 'Green report' on the situation in German agriculture. Although not being obliged to guarantee clearly defined income targets, the government nevertheless was to represent a 'Green plan' – on the basis of the 'Green report' – encompassing primarily economic support measures for the German agricultural sector (Hendriks 1991: 37-38).

Central to the introduction of the Agricultural Act was the argumentation put forward by the German Farmers' Union (DBV - Deutscher Bauernverband) implying that *'agricultural wages substantially lagged behind those in the industrial sector'* (Hendriks 1991: 37). The DBV had been established in 1948. Due to the loss of the eastern parts of the German Reich, the agricultural sector of the Federal Republic emerged as a sector more coherent and homogenous than had earlier been the case (Rieger 2007: 298). Thus, on the basis of a prevailing farmer majority composed of Christian conservative family farmers, the DBV was able to establish itself as *'the voice of all agricultural activities in Germany'* (Rieger 2007: 297, Interview by phone DBV 2012). It came to be the umbrella organization, representing the interests of the farmers' associations at federal state level and county level⁵⁵ – and, later

⁵⁵ According to the DBV (2012), 'more than 90 percent of the about 380 000 German farmers are voluntary associated [with the DBV]'.

on, the European level too (Deutscher Bauernverband 2012). The farmers themselves are volunteer members of the Association at county level (Interview by phone DBV 2012).

Polity and politics of German agriculture

The political system that evolved from the 1950s and onwards share some apparent commonalities with the ‘segmented’ system in Norway. Agricultural policy issues have arguably been handled within a structural triangle, consisting of the agricultural ministry, the agricultural committee in the Bundestag and the farm lobby, with processes allegedly being kept at an arm’s distance from the outsider electorate and diverging interests (Rieger 2007: 309).

Key feature of this structure has been the close relationship between the farm lobby – first and foremost the DBV, which up until the early 1970s had a monopoly in terms of representing German farmers – and the Federal institution responsible for agricultural policy, the then Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry (BMELF⁵⁶) (Hendriks 1991: 38). A complex set of personal contacts between the DBV and the Ministry manifested itself through e.g. monthly meetings between the DBV President and the Minister of Agriculture and the continuous access to the Ministry’s management committees. By means of these arrangements the Farmers’ Union has been able to present its opinions to officials, as well as consult the Ministry on important issues prior to the decision-making (Hendriks 1991: 146). According to one informant, when speaking about the contact between state and interest groups in the present, pressure groups have *‘formal right [...] to speak or to say what [their] problems are with legislation’* (Interview by phone DBV 2012). Hence, pressure groups are consulted by the federal government on upcoming issues, before they are being given to the parliament. Then, the parliament *‘asks us [as pressure group] whether we are in favor or against, or what suggestions we have’* (Interview by phone DBV 2012). These arrangements for consultation appear to come close to the concept corporatism.

What furthermore has been special with this policy sector, is the apparent absence of associations and political parties promoting agri-oppositional interests. Thus, the Ministry of Agriculture came to be a representative of agricultural interests, whereas the interests of the consumer and tax payer were promoted by the Ministries of Economics and Finance (Rieger

⁵⁶ Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten

2007: 298). However, as illustrated by informants, consultation procedures in the present are by no means reserved only for the DBV (Interview BDSI 2012, Interview FEI/GFP 2012). As is to be emphasized later on, the agricultural and food policy sectors in Germany have become increasingly pluralized.

Close contacts have moreover been present between the farm lobby and the agricultural committee in the Bundestag. According to Rieger (2007: 308) the committee constituted an important basis for the “inner” farm lobby.

In addition to the close relations between farm interests and public institutions, the farm lobby has been assigned with implementation responsibilities⁵⁷ (Rieger 2007: 313). These are accomplished in cooperation with the Agricultural Chambers (“Landwirtschaftskammer”) at federal state level. The Chambers function as linkages between the Farm Unions (at federal state level) and policy, while simultaneously being *de facto* public institutions (Rieger 2007: 299). A number of consultancy services towards the farming society are being provided by the Chambers. Furthermore, the Chambers have been assigned with the responsibility for educational systems⁵⁸ (Rudzio 2006: 62). Central coordination of the Agricultural Chambers is secured through the Association of Agricultural Chambers (VLK⁵⁹). The VLK is member of the Central Committee of German Agriculture (“Zentralausschuss der Deutschen Landwirtschaft”), at which the positions of the Association of Agricultural Co-operatives (“DRV”⁶⁰), the German Agricultural Society (“DLG”⁶¹) and the VLK are coordinated with the ones of the Farmers’ Union (DBV) (Rieger 2007: 297).

The arrangements clarified above are elements of the domestic institutional governance structure, into which the DBV and the farm lobby have been incorporated. As noted by Rieger (2007: 313) participation in the structure has supplied the DBV with considerable influence on agricultural policy outcomes. However, what is furthermore argued is the reliance of the DBV on the sustainment of this structure, if its potential to influence processes is to remain (Rieger 2007: 313).

⁵⁷ what could be argued is that this arrangement shares some affinities with implementation corporatism, as defined by Nordby (1994: 9).

⁵⁸ A complete illustration of the responsibilities of the Agricultural Chambers, is to be found at the internet portal of the Institut für Kammerrecht e.V. (Institut für Kammerrecht e.V. 2013)

⁵⁹ Verband der Landwirtschaftskammern

⁶⁰ Deutscher Raiffeisenverband e.V.

⁶¹ Deutsche Landwirtschafts- Gesellschaft (an expert organisation dedicated to innovation and progress)

The EU's presence in German Agriculture and Food policy

The Federal Republic of Germany (BRD) has been member of the European Community since its creation in 1951, with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). In the following decades the BRD was to become a protagonist for further policy integration within the framework of the European Communities (EC) (Paterson 2005).

Hendriks (1991: 15) notes that *'the EC [...] provided the framework for [Germany's] political rehabilitation on a worldwide scale'*. The EC⁶², on the other hand, has developed into a level of governance, its legislation having precedence over national legislation. Thus, with regard to the agriculture and food policy sectors, Germany appears to be part of a governance system, in which the EU (the former EC) constitutes the superior legislator (Rudzio 2006: 241).

Similar to the agricultural policy objectives as defined at domestic level, Germany has traditionally defended the support mechanism system based on price support of the CAP (Hendriks 1991: 82). German decision makers initially showed reluctance towards the creation of a common agricultural policy, due to the perceived loss of national control over trade terms and the domestic price level (Hendriks 1991: 40). The agreement on the establishment of CAP in the Treaty of Rome, 1957, has been portrayed as 'the earliest example of 'package deals', in which Germany sacrificed its control over agricultural policies in order for the Customs Union to be achieved (Hendriks 1991: 44). However, in line with the role European policy-making has come to occupy in Germany, negative attitudes toward the CAP framework gradually changed. Thus, in the 1970s, with monetary instability and recession generating uncertainties in the markets, Germany seemingly came to see the CAP as a means to pursue its national agricultural policy objectives (Hendriks 1991: 57, 82). Hence, the German support of CAP arrangements, which in effect enabled the continuation of a favourable high price system on agricultural products (Hendriks 1991: 58-61, 82).

With regard to the farm lobby, its influence on national decision-makers appeared to continue despite the transfer of policy-making authority to Brussels. Hendriks (1991: 147), in her contribution, points to the interdependent relation between the Ministry of Agriculture and the DBV. The Ministry when formulating proposals for European policies is in need of first hand information on the situation in German agriculture, information which the DBV has been able to deliver. For the DBV on the other hand, the preservation of close relations with the

⁶² which in relation with the entering into force of the Maastricht Treaty, 1993, became the EU.

Ministry and the executive arguably became increasingly important, in order to ensure the presentation of its opinions at Community level (Hendriks 1991: 147).

According to an informant from the diplomatic circle in Brussels, an important underlying aspect influencing German positions on EU Agriculture and food policy is the 'diverse situation in Germany, especially in the field of agriculture' (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012). The consequence of having farms 'all over the scale', implying that some are located at below sea level and others 1000-1500 meters above sea level, and some have 5 dairy cows and others 1000 dairy cows, is a variety of interests with regard to determining German positions toward the EU. With reference to this diversity, it is the informant in question's

'feeling [...] that the Germans often try to really contribute to constructive solutions, not always saying this is the best solution for Germany, but often saying this is a good compromise for everybody' (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012)

As compromise apparently is necessary at domestic level, one would hardly be surprised if Germany sought compromises at EU level too.

Resilience toward reform

Nonetheless, Commission proposals for reform of the CAP system have habitually been watered-down by member states, including Germany, within the intergovernmental decision-making arenas of the EU (Hendriks 1991: 228, Nugent 2010: 365). In the 1970s, Germany defended the continued existence of the Monetary Compensatory Amount (MCA)⁶³ against French demands for abolishment (Hendriks 1991: 66). German resistance was also present in the late 1980s and 1990s, when fundamental change to the CAP support mechanism regime was discussed. At the Berlin summit of the European Council in 1999, Germany arguably played a decisive role in the moderation of Agenda 2000 proposals prescribing a strengthening of the ecologic and social profile of the CAP (Rieger 2007: 305).

⁶³ a measure introduced at the end of the 1960s, designed to 'neutralise the impact of currency changes on agricultural prizes' (Hendriks 1991: 58). Due to the MCA, 'the German price level was more than 10 percent above the 'common' EC price level [in the 1970s]' (Hendriks 1991: 60).

The German Farmers' Union (DBV) has made use of its gradually strengthened position within the European Farm Community (COPA)⁶⁴, which with regard to reform rounds from the late 1980s and onwards has taken a critical stance toward Commission proposals (Rieger 2007: 306, Daugbjerg 2009: 401, Grant and Stocker 2009: 236-38). Hendriks (1991: 160) meanwhile argues that if activities at European have proven not sufficient in order for demands to be met, the DBV has tended to pursue strategies directed toward the German government. As a matter of fact, there are some instances to show that such strategies indeed have been successful, with German governments having introduced national subsidies in order to 'counteract' CAP reform in e.g. 1965 and 1988 (Hendriks 1991: 54-55, 73-74, 152-53).

The Agrarian turning point ("Agrarwende")

In the winter of 2000, Germany was hit by an outbreak of the BSE-disease (Dressel et al 2006: 287). The reactions which were to follow – together with existing food- and agriculture regulatory structures' apparent loss of legitimacy – arguably contributed to fundamental changes of the domestic structure, on which farm lobby influence had profited (Rieger 2007: 308).

Fundamental reform of the political system of German food (and agriculture)

Prior to the BSE-crisis in Germany, food policy management, including risk assessment and risk management of food safety, had been conducted by the Federal Agency for Consumer Health Protection and Veterinary Medicine (BgVV⁶⁵), with implementation responsibilities remaining under the authority of the federal states (Dressel et al 2006: 287, 289). Food policy decision-making furthermore was mainly placed under the authority of the Federal Ministry for Health (Dressel et al 2006: 289). What occurred in the aftermath of the German BSE-crisis in terms of reform seems to have established a more comprehensive approach toward food policy and agricultural policy in Germany.

As a consequence of the emerging crisis, both the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Health of the Federal Government in January 2001 chose to resign. In response to a perceived

⁶⁴ according to Hendriks (1991: 147) COPA constitutes 'one of the oldest and most active of professional organisations at Community level. It acts as a channel of influence on the Commission, EP, Council and the Economic and Social Committee'.

⁶⁵ Bundesamt für gesundheitlichen Verbraucherschutz und Veterinärmedizin

need to make the agricultural- and food policy sector more consumer-orientated – and to retain popular confidence in decision-making structures – one decided to create a new ministry, the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV⁶⁶) (Dressel et al 2006: 289, Rieger 2007: 312). The new ministry has been set in charge of the German agriculture- and food policy sector. Later on, that same year, German decision makers acted on the recommendations put forward by the von Wedel commission, and dissolved the food safety agency, the BgVV. Two new units were to replace it, these were the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR⁶⁷) and the Federal Agency for Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL⁶⁸). By reorganizing its food policy institutions, Germany assured her conformity with the EU's General Food Law (Dressel et al 2006: 290-91). Hence, the functional and institutional separation of risk management and risk assessment responsibilities – with the former now being undertaken by the BVL, and the latter by the BfR – in an independent manner, apart from the Ministry (Dressel et al 2006: 287, 292-93, 295-96).

With regard to the federal structure of Germany – implementation responsibilities still lie with the federal states – the BfR and BVL furthermore function as 'interface managers' between levels of governance, i.e. a means of contact between regulators at European and federal state level. Reorganization thus appears to have been directed toward the improvement of coordination and effectiveness of the regime (Dressel et al 2006: 306). With regard to the coordination of German positions on EU affairs, it is important to notice that official positions need to be accepted by all Federal Ministries before being valid. Thus, although the majority of preparatory work on food- and agricultural policy is done by the BMELV, acceptance by the other ministries still is needed before a position can be presented at EU level (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012). Once again, the need to find compromises becomes evident.

The changes observed in the German agriculture- and food policy sector after the 'agricultural turning point' is by Rieger (2007: 309) denoted 'the pluralisation of an arena of power'. The dominant position of the farm lobby, first and foremost the DBV, in both administration and parliament has come under increasing pressure. As noted by the informant from the DBV

⁶⁶ Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz

⁶⁷ Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung

⁶⁸ Bundesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsrecht

(interview by phone 2012) when commenting on the scope of accessible influence channels toward national authorities,

'[...] it becomes more difficult because [...] on the authority side, on the political side, there are not much farmers anymore, and they are speaking more and more from the consumer side. [...] so, on this side, it became harder to understand what farmers want'.

The agricultural committee in the Bundestag has been renamed the Committee on Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, so as to reflect its corresponding ministry. According to Rieger (2007: 308) the fraction of committee member being affiliated with the DBV has decreased. The committee is now chaired by a veterinarian who represents the liberal party, FDP⁶⁹ (Deutscher Bundestag 2013). Similarly, first-hand access to decision-makers within the Federal Ministry appears not to be a matter of course for representatives of the DBV anymore. Consumer reorientation and extension of responsibilities have eased the accessibility of electoral interests to the agricultural ministry, thereby accelerating the struggle for access between interest groups (Rieger 2007: 312). One indicator being the participation of not only agricultural interests, but consumer-, food retail-, food industry-, environmental-, animal welfare interests etc. too, in the formulation of the BMELV's (2012: 3) *Charta für Landwirtschaft und Verbraucher*, which lays down the challenges for food and agriculture in Germany.

2013 reform of the CAP

This year, 2013, the member states of the EU are about to find an agreement on reform of the CAP. The forthcoming round is the first attempt of major CAP reform since the accession of the 12 Central East European Countries (CEECs) in the 2000s (kilde). It furthermore constitutes the first round of CAP reform since the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty, after which co-decision rights on agricultural policy were given to the European Parliament (Folgart 2012: 13). The emergence of an additional actor with decision making authority is likely to influence the dynamism of the negotiations. In which way, however, remains to be seen.

According to the Commission's DG Agriculture and Rural Development

⁶⁹ Freie Demokratische Partei

proposals for a reform of the CAP after 2013 aim to strengthen the competitiveness and the sustainability of agriculture and maintain its presence in all regions, in order to guarantee European citizens healthy and quality food production, to preserve the environment and to help develop rural areas (European Commission 2012).

The German federal government supports an extension of CAP policies, by which the farmers' orientation to the market is further strengthened and bureaucratic arrangements simplified and reduced (BMELV 2011: 3-4). Moreover, Germany is *'interested in making, or keeping the CAP green, and as environmental friendly as it can be'* (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012).

The reform package on which negotiations are to be held is undoubtedly of interest to interest groups too, not only the agricultural ones, but to food manufacturers, veterinarians, food retailers, environmentalists and so on etcetera. Interest group priorities do not necessarily coincide with the ones of the federal authorities all the time (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012). How interests groups act in order to exert influence on EU policy-making processes is to be focused on in the next chapter.

3.3 Summary

Both agriculture and food policy have been subject to considerable change the recent 20 years. At EU level, the common agricultural policy has been subject to three major rounds of reform, all of which inspired by a perceived, and demanded, need to limit EU spending on agriculture, and strengthen the orientation of farmers to the markets. Simultaneously, food policy competences, especially on food safety, at EU level have been extensively enhanced. Thus, whereas agricultural policy primarily was motivated by economic considerations and the security of supply from the outset, health and consumer concerns have come to occupy a primary role in EU agriculture and food policy.

With regard to the two countries under scrutiny, Germany as EU-member is wholly integrated in the EU's agriculture and food policy, and consequently is affected to a considerable extent by policy making in Brussels. Significant competences have been delegated from national authorities to the EU institutions. This in fact has been the case since the late 50s/early 60s, as the Federal Republic has been part of the CAP since its establishment. Food policies however, remained mainly under national jurisdiction until the mid/late 1990s. Norway, for its part, is

not member of the EU, but nonetheless is affected by decision-making in Brussels through the EEA-agreement. Agricultural policy however has been kept out of the EEA-framework. Thus making the continuation of an offensive agricultural policy possible. On the other hand, Norway appears to be more or less wholly integrated in EU food policy making, due to the EEA-agreement. A seemingly contradictory situation has developed, in which concerned actors are both *within* and *outside* of the EU framework.

In both countries private agricultural interests have traditionally held dense relations with national authorities. Notwithstanding, societal developments have strengthened the presence of pluralism in the agricultural and food sector, meaning that an increasing number of interests have come to occupy an interest in the formulation of policies. In the next chapter, what is to be emphasized is the strategies of Norwegian and German interest groups. How are they operating, and why do they act as they do?

4 Interest group strategies toward policy-making systems in change

The interest groups chosen for study constitute the units of this analysis. All of which are domestic based interest groups, which in turn makes it possible to categorize them into what I refer to as ‘the German system of interest groups’ and ‘the Norwegian system of interest groups’. The two domestic systems of interest groups constitute the two cases subjected for analytical examination. Included in the cases are interest groups representing either farmers⁷⁰, the food industry⁷¹ – the two first segments of the food chain – or veterinarians⁷². Consequently, both producer and health scientific interests are present, both of which are to a varying extent affected by agricultural and/or food policy decision-making.

Two aspects are of special interest with regard to the analysis. First, *how* the interest groups in Germany and Norway are distributed on this thesis’ dependent variable, namely ‘the selection of influence channel(s)’. Consequentially, what is to appear in the analysis is *how*, or more precisely, through which channels the interest groups operate in order to influence agricultural and/or food policy-making. In that regard, three alternatives appear to be most plausible, the domestic channel, toward national authorities, and the two European channels, toward either European associations of interest groups, or directly toward EU institutions. Second, in order to assess *why* interest groups operate as they do, a number of theoretical assumptions from Moravcsik’s (1993) Liberal intergovernmentalism (LI) and Pierson’s (2000, 2004) Historical institutionalism (HI) approaches have been derived. The analysis and discussion around these is to structure the analysis.

What first is to be elaborated is the extent to which theoretical assumptions derived from LI can explain interest group behaviour. Then, interest group behaviour is to be examined against HI theoretical assumptions. In the third section, the extent to which interest groups’ channelization of influence has come to resemble the characteristics of multi-level governance is to be evaluated. With regard to the analysis, what needs to be accentuated, is that confirmation of one or the other theoretical approaches’ applicability is not the objective.

⁷⁰ In Norway: The Norwegian Farmers’ Union. In Germany: Deutscher Bauernverband (DBV).

⁷¹ In Norway: Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industry, Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises. In Germany: Bundesverband der Deutschen Süßwarenindustrie (BDSI), Gemeinschaft zur Förderung der privaten deutschen Pflanzenzüchtung (GFP), Forschungskreis der Ernährungsindustrie (FEI).

⁷² In Norway: The Norwegian Veterinary Association (DNV). In Germany: Bundestierärztekammer (BTK).

Rather, emphasis is put on providing a careful analysis of *how* these interest groups operate in order to exert influence on policy making processes, and *whether*, and if so, *how* theoretical assumptions offer explanations of their behaviour.

The forthcoming sections are structured in accordance with the theoretical assumptions, and, moreover, observations of the farm unions, food industry and veterinarians' behaviour.

4.1 Liberal intergovernmentalism

At the core of Moravcsik's (1993: 480) theoretical approach is the suggestion that '*the EC [EU] is best seen as an international regime for policy co-ordination*'. By means of a two level process, national preferences are first identified through state-society interactions at domestic level, and then brought forward to interstate negotiations by national governments (Moravcsik 1993: 480-81). Accordingly, interest groups are expected to channelize their activities toward state authorities, which effectively hold a gate-keeper role toward international regimes, such as the EU.

The LI theoretical expectations on which the forthcoming analysis is structured, apparently offer explanatory power in two ways. First, LI's liberal element – i.e. its emphasis on issue salience and cost/benefit perceptions – is perceived to constitute an account on *what*, or, put differently, which aspects of EU agricultural- and food policy that make interest groups mobilize politically. Second, LI's intergovernmental element – i.e. channelization of activity toward national authorities – offers insight on the character of the EU agricultural- and policy making system itself. If identified one might regard the policy-making system as being equivalent to an intergovernmental regime where national authorities control processes.

4.1.1 Issue salience

Determinant of interest groups' cost/benefit assumptions

The competitiveness of actors at domestic and international markets is assumed to influence producer interests' weighing of costs and/or benefits of policies aimed at commercial liberalization. As both EU agricultural- and food policy include some degree of commercial liberalization, one is lead to assume domestic producers' extent of competitiveness as being important in terms of their perception of (EU) issue salience.

Norway

Figures concerning the import and export of food products might yield some insight with regard to the competitiveness of Norwegian and German agriculture and food industry. The Norwegian food industry – the fishery sector excluded – exported for about 629 million Euro⁷³ in 2011, whereas the corresponding import figure amounted to about 3,3 billion Euro. Of all food production in Norway in 2011, 81,8 percent was produced for the domestic market, and 4,0 percent for markets abroad (Hval and Rålm 2012: 92). Favourable conditions, in terms of protection from foreign business, are furthermore secured through import restrictions on agricultural products from abroad (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012b). Needless to say, the competitive strength of Norwegian farmers and food producers is identified to be on the domestic market. In accordance with the LI perspective, producer interests, given these framework conditions, are expected to perceive commercial liberalization policies⁷⁴ as less profitable for business. The primary reason being the expectancy of increased competition on domestic markets from abroad (Moravcsik 1993: 489).

This might be one of the reasons why farmers, represented by the Norwegian Farmers' Union appears to be reluctant toward the liberalization of agricultural markets. In 2011 it reacted negatively when the Norwegian government, under a WTO ministerial meeting, signed a declaration against protectionism (Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012b: 34). Furthermore, the fall in prices in EU member states provoked by CAP developments⁷⁵, is not perceived to be good for Norwegian farmers. The reason why is the enhanced competitiveness of EU producers toward the Norwegian market (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012). In that regard, one ought to keep in mind that Norway, relative to EU member states, has considerable higher price levels for milk, cheese and eggs (Veggeland 2011: 45). The commerce of these products constitutes an important source of income for farmers. In other words, Norwegian farmers would probably not profit from a strengthened competition with cheaper products from abroad.

⁷³ the calculation is based on the average Euro currency in 2011, when compared to NOK: 7,7926 (Norges Bank 2013).

⁷⁴ one consequence being the increased transborder flow of goods.

⁷⁵ e.g. reforms aimed at further liberalization of the common agricultural market.

The Norwegian government's decision in the autumn of 2012 to amend the principle for duties on selected agricultural products⁷⁶, uncovered contradictions in a Norwegian food industry segment whose interests in most instances coincide (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012b). The Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises has members from both the agricultural co-operative segment and the private segment. Key objective for the federation is to secure the sufficient volume of supply to member firms' production, and to secure competitiveness (Interview Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2012). The same objectives can be attributed to the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries (Interview 2012). Still, the former federation supported the Government's amendment, whereas the latter opposed it (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012b, Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industry 2012a). The Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries represents the interests of primarily private firms, some of which are exposed to greater competition from abroad as their products fall under the scope of Article 19 and protocol 3 of the EEA-agreement. On the other hand, the Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises' (Interview 2012) traditional group of members has primarily been composed of manufacturers of meat products. These are products which to a greater extent fall under the scope of border protection arrangements.

Thus, one plausible reason for the differing view on the government's amendment of duty principle, is, as indicated by Veggeland (2011: 40), that manufacturers of processed agricultural products – some of which are members of the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries – are better suited to handle increased competition from abroad. Manufacturers of meat, milk, eggs etc. – a tangible share of the members of the Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises – on the other hand, appear to be more vulnerable. Here too, the LI perspective appears to offer some extent of explanatory power of interest group approximations. Whereas the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries cannot be said to wish for enhanced competition from abroad, its member companies nevertheless have been forced to accommodate their production to international competition. One apparent implication is member companies' greater extent of robustness, relative to the other federation's members, in terms of versatility towards enhanced levels of import from abroad. Thus, although not necessarily assessing the further liberalization of

⁷⁶ Which implies a change from duties grounded on the NOK, to duties grounded on percentages (Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2012a).

markets as profitable for business, members of the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries could be viewed as being more versatile to international competition than members of the Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises. This might explain why the two federations appear to mobilize on somewhat different political grounds.

Germany

Germany, with regard to the competitiveness of its farmers and food producers, ought to be 'in another division' if compared to corresponding actors in Norway. Germany has the largest turnover in terms of food industry, when compared to the other EU member states, the figure amounting to 151,8 billion Euro in 2010 (Hval and Rålm 2012: 46). The export of German agriculture and food industry goods amounted to 51,8 billion Euro in 2010, the export to the EU zone amounting to 40 billion Euro (BMELV 2011: 44). In 2011 the export of agriculture, hunting, and food products amounted to 51,8 billion Euro, whereas the import figure was about 65,4 billion Euro (Statistisches Bundesamt 2013a).

Extensive export figures, and exposure to foreign competition notwithstanding, German farmers are not necessarily enthusiastic supporters of measures aimed at the further liberalization of agricultural markets (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012). Bearing in mind the structural change in progress, the DBV (2011: 50) in its 2010/2011 annual report states that the number of farms has continued to fall, whereas the remaining farms are becoming larger. Thus, in terms of competitiveness, it might be argued that ongoing processes of change, increase the standing of German agriculture in that it is becoming more effective. However, at the expense of the continuous drop in the number of active farmers. The DBV (2010: 3), in its position paper on the forthcoming CAP reform, 2013, states that a strong EU agricultural policy, with the continuous support of farmers through direct payments, needs to be maintained. Financial subsidization by governing authorities is needed in order to compensate the contribution of agriculture to society, and the higher standards in the EU when compared to the world market (DBV 2010: 3).

Thus, although appearing to be competitive domestically and abroad, German farmers still seem to be very much in favour of market interventionist measures. An LI approach to the condition, might be that German farmers still constitute import-competing producers and consequently is expected to oppose free trade (Moravcsik 1993: 489). According to an informant (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012), German farmers' self understanding is based

on the perception that they are producing high value food, to feed, not the world, but to feed Germany. In that regard, the further liberalization of markets, with concomitant rising import figures and falling prices, could be viewed as a threat to farmers' business. Faced by a potential fall in profit from production, one consequently could foresee the high issue salience attached by farmers to policies aimed at commercial liberalization. In other words, what is identified is a plausible reason for farms to mobilize politically.

According to the BVE⁷⁷, the political top-level association of the German food and drink industry, Germany, with its six percent share of the world market for foodstuff (2010), constitutes the third largest food stuff exporting nation in the world (BVE 2012: 17). Furthermore, as the import figures from the Statistisches Bundesamt (2013a) indicate, Germany is a leading importer of food and agricultural products too. Thus, besides being a competitive force worldwide, the food industry appears to be exposed to considerable international competition at domestic level. With regard to the industry's political objectives, it is stated by the BVE that disintegration of barriers to trade and the opening of markets through international trade agreements, such as the WTO, are of central concern (BVE 2012: 17). Similar attitudes can be observed in the BDSI's⁷⁸ position on the CAP reform in 2013. BDSI, also a member of the BVE, welcomes the proposal brought forward by the EU Commission which stipulates the continuation of a path toward a CAP more strongly orientated to the market (BDSI 2011). One important issue for the federation⁷⁹, is the abolishment of quotas that put limits on the channelization of European sugar into food production, and, moreover, on the import of sugar from outside of the EU. This again appear to be subject for opposition from sugar producing farmers in Europe (Interview BDSI 2012, e-mail correspondence BDSI 2013, COPA-COGECA 2004).

Bearing in mind the observations above, the objectives framed by the BVE and the BDSI seem to come close to Moravcsik's (1993: 489) expectation, in that *'exporters [...] tend to support freer trade'*. EU policy suggestions that stipulate enhanced levels of commercial liberalization are seemingly supported both by the BVE and the BDSI. Hence, the perception that a considerable share of German food industry is likely to consider such policy amendments as profitable for business. Here too, one identifies an incentive for interest groups to mobilize politically.

⁷⁷ Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Ernährungsindustrie

⁷⁸ Bundesverband der Deutschen Süßwarenindustrie

⁷⁹ which represents 90 percent of the German confectionary industry.

Interest specificity and ambiguity toward EU policy

Norway

The extent to which Norwegian interest groups under scrutiny mobilize politically on issues related to the EU, appear to coincide with the scope of the EEA-agreement. As noted by the informant from the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industry (Interview 2012) '[...] *Norway through the EEA-agreement is not integrated with the EU's agricultural policy, thus, positions on the CAP as such is not natural for us*⁸⁰. Agricultural policy-making is a national competence. Still, as noted by another informant, it is obvious that both the Norwegian government and food industry have an interest in monitoring the developments of agricultural policy-making in Europe (Interview Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2012). One reason being the indirect influence of EU developments on import, competitiveness and, furthermore, the potential usage of the EU as 'role model' in discussions over policy and framework condition amendments (e-mail correspondence Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2013b). With reference to the previous section, the EU's agricultural policy is clearly identified as a potential threat in that EU farmers and food industry are being regarded as more competitive by Norwegian producers. The level of mobilization on CAP issues however is moderate, arguably because of the absence of significant and certain costs and/or benefits. Hence, the perception of CAP policies by actors as being less significant for business.

The Norwegian Farmers' Union does not appear to employ an active strategy toward the CAP, in terms of efforts aimed at influencing policy-making processes, either. On food, veterinary and trade issues however, the situation appears to be somehow different. Decision-making on food and veterinary policy is being highlighted as *the* areas on which the EU influences the Norwegian farmers' every day the most (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012). Animal welfare and animal health, the importance of making use of the scope of action vis-à-vis the EU, in order to sustain Norway's traditional higher levels on these issue areas, is identified as important. Thus, whereas mobilization on issues related to the CAP appears to be rather limited, activity levels on issues pertaining to food policy are evident. One reason seems to be the perceived salience of animal health and animal welfare legislation for Norwegian farmers' activity. Apparently, the Farmers' Union observes a certain and significant effect imposed on

⁸⁰ direct quote: 'du vet at Norge er jo ikke integrert gjennom EØS-avtalen med EUs landbrukspolitikk, så derfor så er det ikke naturlig at vi tar posisjoner som sådan der'.

its members' business. The Veterinary agreement in 1998, which abolished the veterinarian control of animals from the EU, is for instance being pointed to as having enhanced the risk for getting contagious diseases into the country (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2013, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012b: 649). An apparent consequence of revelations such as this one, is a political mobilization on EU food policy by the Farmers' Union.

Article 19 and protocol three of the EEA-agreement, which confer guiding rules on the trade of certain agricultural products, are perceived to influence farmers too. Under the assumption that increasing import⁸¹ of agricultural products from the EU, does harm to the Norwegian agricultural production, the Norwegian Farmers' Union, in order to minimize levels of import from the EU, mobilize when these issues are subject for negotiation (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012). Yet again, the observation of political mobilization in response to policies which costs are perceived of as certain, significant and risky for farmers. Also present when negotiations on Article 19 and protocol three are held, is the Norwegian food industry. For members of the two food industry federations under scrutiny, the outcome of these negotiations do necessarily have consequences for their competitive strength, and for some, the supply of goods. Hence, the mobilization under negotiation processes in order to sustain a competitive framework for business.

What furthermore is observed in that regard, is the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries (2012b: 1, 2013: 4) different approximation of the Art. 19 and protocol three negotiations, when compared to the Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises. This might be seen in light of the already emphasised difference in approximations of costs and/or benefits from commercial liberalization policies. As already pointed to, members of the former federation who deal with processed agricultural products, are exposed to international competition through protocol three. Decision-making that reverse processes of liberalization on trade of processed agricultural products, would ultimately bring unforeseen changes to the framework conditions of these member companies. Hence, the federation's apparent estimation of consequences generated by Art. 19 and protocol three decisions as significant and risky.

⁸¹ the import of agricultural products (fisheries excluded) has increased from 6,1 percent in 1996, to 38 percent of the total market in 2011, whereas the figure for export was 3,9 percent in 1996 and 4,0 percent in 2011 (Hval and Rålm 2012: 92).

Decision-making on Art. 19 and protocol three are undoubtedly of significant importance to members of the Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises too. The federation in 2000 came to view negotiations on additional mutual tariff reductions through protocol three as unacceptable. The primary reason being that eventual reductions would not contribute to a balanced outcome – especially when seen in light of the adverse development in raw material prices – with EU and Norwegian producers as equal beneficiaries (Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2000). As members of the federation to a greater extent are protected from international markets by tariff barriers, one might argue that the eventual expansion of Art. 19 and protocol three agreements constitutes the greater threat to business. To summarize, both federations seem to consider outcomes of protocol three and Art. 19 negotiations as significant, certain and risky for their members. Consequently, both federations appear to mobilize politically when these negotiations are in progress. However, as their weighing of cost/benefits in terms of commercial liberalization appear to deviate somewhat, they also seem to mobilize on apparently different political grounds.

The Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries' viewpoint toward Art. 19 and protocol three negotiations is assumed to be related to its approach to EU food policy, on which it maintains that it does not want legislation in the EU and Norway to be different. The reason why is that differences affect business interests' incentives to invest in Norway (Interview Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industry 2012). In other words, EU food policy making is perceived of as generating significant benefits to the Norwegian food industry. As stated by an informant, the introduction of EU food policies, food safety standards in particular, is *'an unconditional advantage, which has contributed to the furthered professionalization and modernization of food policy in Norway'*⁸² (Interview Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industry 2012).

The Federation of Norwegian Food, Agricultural and Forestry Enterprises' approach to food policy appears to be focused on other aspects. Although recognizing that much of the EU's regulations are satisfactory, what in addition is being emphasised is the incompatibility sometimes arising between Norwegian regulations and EU legislations on food production, animal health and animal welfare (Interview by phone Federation of Norwegian Food,

⁸² direct quote: 'matpolitikken som da integrert del av EØS-avtalen er en ubetinget fordel. Den gjør at matpolitikken i Norge blir mer moderne, mer profesjonell'.

Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2013, e-mail correspondence [same org.] 2013c). The risk of incompatibility is pointed to by the Norwegian Farmers' Union too, however primarily on animal health and welfare legislation (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2013). At the same time, the Norwegian tendency to implement the strictest solutions, e.g. on transport of animals to slaughter houses, is being identified as a potential challenge (Interview by phone Federation of Norwegian Food, Agricultural and Forestry Enterprises 2013). The Federation of Norwegian Food, Agricultural and Forestry Enterprises' approach to food policy consequently emphasises both the benefits and costs for business. Moreover, as the effect of decision making clearly is perceived of as certain, significant and risky, the Federation do mobilize politically on issues relating to food policy.

The Norwegian Veterinary Association differs from the other interest groups dealt with above, in that it represents the interests of health personnel, and not producers. Consequently, when speaking of costs or benefits imposed on veterinarians' business, one cannot refer to framework conditions for production. The Norwegian Veterinary Association is a union, whose major objective is the promotion of the science based veterinary field (Interview Norwegian Veterinary Association 2012). Of major concern to the association is the safeguarding of animal welfare, animal health and public health, all of which closely associated with the management and assessment of food safety. Decision making on these policy areas is of certain significance to veterinarians' conditions of work. This incidence comes from the fact that the veterinarian is an integral part of the food safety control regime. Hence, the salient effect and incentive for veterinarians to mobilize politically whenever amendments of the system are being made. Yet another aspect which affects the Norwegian veterinarian, is the EU's arrangement for accreditation of education against European standards. This indeed is being pointed to as '*a European affair*'⁸³ by the association (Interview Norwegian Veterinary Association 2012). Here too, the Veterinary Association apparently mobilizes in response to policies with certain and significant effects on business.

Germany

With regard to German interest groups' cost or benefit calculations, it is worthwhile to keep in mind that full EU membership necessarily implies that consequences of decisions taken at EU level, to some extent are imposed on German actors. Furthermore, as noted by one informant,

⁸³ direct quote: 'dette med akkreditering av veterinærutdanning, det blir jo en europeisk greie.'

because of the diverse composition of German agriculture, *'at the end, everything which is touched by the CAP, is an issue for us'* (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012).

German agriculture received about 5,4 billion Euro through direct payments from the CAP's first pillar in 2010. Subsidization from the EU's CAP budget thus amounted to about 50 percent of German agriculture's income in 2009/10 (DBV 2011: 44). Needless to say, the CAP is of substantial importance to German farmers. Here too, one observes interest group mobilization on policy issues which impose certain and significant costs and/or benefits on members. In relation with the forthcoming reform of the EU's agricultural policy, the DBV has actively pursued a strategy aimed at maintaining a strong EU agricultural budget (Interview by phone DBV 2012). Also of importance to the DBV is the simplification of the bureaucracy associated with the EU's cross compliance arrangement, which appears to impose an administrative burden on farmers (DBV 2011: 43, Interview Brussels diplomat 2012). Food policy, including issues such as animal health and animal welfare, is equally very much being dealt with. One illustration being the DBV's engagement in relation with DG SANCO's proposed amendment of the regulation on protection of animals during transport⁸⁴ in 2009 (DBV 2011: 70). What these observations clearly show is that the DBV sees the EU's agriculture and food policy as imposing significant and certain effects on its members, i.e. farmers. On these grounds it do endeavour to influence policy outcomes.

The EU's agricultural policy is of considerable importance to the German food industry too. As already touched upon, for the Association of the German Confectionery Industry (BDSI) the EU's sugar quota constitutes a big issue. It is pointed out that *'the main problem of the sugar quota is that not all the sugar produced in the EU can be used for food, even though there would be enough'* (e-mail correspondence BDSI 2013). Whereas stating that the European sugar beet is preferred by the industry, the BDSI points to the negative impact on the industry caused by the quota restriction. As pointed out by an informant *'they [the firms] have a lot of losses, and there are even some enterprises who have to stop their work'* (Interview BDSI 2012). In other words, potentially severe costs are imposed on the confectionery industry due to the EU quota regulations. Implicit lies an incentive to mobilize politically in order to advocate amendment of the quota system. The implications of the CAP on the industry driven research and innovation interest groups GFP and FEI are perhaps slightly less dramatic. Nevertheless, for German plant breeders organized in the GFP,

⁸⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005

research and innovation always becomes more important, due to the competition from new plants, and, possibly, diseases from abroad (Interview GFP/FEI 2012). Hence, the interest in research funding programs at both national and European level. In that regard, the Commission's pronouncement of additional investment in research and innovation in the future CAP, is believed to attract more interest, especially from plant breeders (Interview GFP/FEI 2012, European Commission 2012). In other words, increased funding opportunities seem to have made the EU more salient for the two research oriented interest groups. It thus might be argued that enhanced salience has contributed to the strengthening of activities related to EU policy issues.

EU food policy has provided the German food industry with numerous incentives to mobilize politically. One of the BDSI's primary concerns has been on issues related to food information regulation and labelling. The association was very much involved in the resistance toward the introduction of so called traffic lights – red, yellow, green labels – on food products (Interview BDSI 2012). The introduction of such labelling, could have imposed significant costs on BDSI members' business. The FEI and GFP, due to their primary focus on research and innovation appear not to be involved in food policy decisions. The main organization of the GFP however, Bundesverband Deutscher Pflanzenzüchter (BDP), is occupied with EU food policy issues, such as seed legislation and plant health. Both of which affect the German plant breeder to some extent (BDP 2010: 20-21). Also the BVE, to which the FEI is loosely associated, is active on health-related consumer protection issues (Interview GFP/FEI 2012). What is being highlighted is the decreasing freedom of manoeuvre imposed on the industry in relation with the broadening scope of food legislation. This necessarily imposes confinements on the industry's methods for production, or, put differently, significant and risky costs. Some of which, according to the BVE, has not necessarily been justifiable on consumer protection terms, rather a fundamental scepticism toward the industrial manufacturing of food products (BVE 2013a).

The Bundestierärztekammer (BTK) represents the interests of German veterinarians, '*[...] the ones who know the scientific base [for food control].*' (Interview by phone BTK 2013). Of major concern to the BTK is the perceived dysfunction of the food chain. According to the BTK, the '*EFSA, or the European Union [in terms of food hygiene] seems to solely focus [...] on zoonosis risk assessment, and nothing on [the] quality [aspect]*' (Interview by phone BTK 2013). The perceived shortcomings in food safety risk assessment naturally is of concern to

the association, whose members are part of the risk management and assessment regime. On these grounds, it seems plausible to assume that costs or benefits of EU food policy are certain, significant and risky for German veterinarians too. In order to counteract identified deficiencies, the BTK is in favour of the employment of more veterinarians into the controlling bodies. This would be perceived of as a benefit to both veterinarians and consumers, who would be supplied with safe food products of high quality. What furthermore seems to be an important aspect for the BTK, is the maintenance of veterinarians' reputation. The notion is affirmed in the EU debate on medical prescription. The BTK argues in favour of veterinarians by reasoning that he or she, in terms of the use of animal medicine, constitutes the better advisor due to the loss of reputation if he or she does not do well (Interview by phone BTK 2013). Needless to say, a loss in reputation would constitute a significant cost to veterinarians. However, as is to be pointed to in a subsequent section, the perception of a given EU food policy as significant in terms of costs or benefits, does not necessarily lead to political mobilization by the BTK. The reason why seems to be the reactive method of operation held by the interest group. In other words, the expectation derived from LI, in that issue salience influence the extent to which actors mobilize, cannot be said to apply to the Bundestierärztekammer. However, with regard to the other German observations its application appears to be just.

Mobilization

Liberal intergovernmentalism holds that the extent of mobilized interests is greater on issues related to food policy, than on agricultural policy. The primary reason being that food policy impose certain, significant and risky costs and/or benefits on multiple societal groups, whereas effects from agricultural decision-making are believed to be imposed primarily on producers.

Norway

What generally is being pointed to with regard to the Norwegian society is the prevalence of harmony and consequent absence of extensive conflict (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012b). So it appears that domestic debates on food and agricultural policy is rather peaceful. One does not see the burning of tires or other aggressive manifestations very often.

However, as suggested by an informant, in contamination, the spread of diseases, instances related to animal welfare or systemic failure lie a potential for conflict (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012a). A very recent incidence is the so called horsemeat scandal, where one discovered the presence of non-clarified horsemeat in food products at various locations in Europe (CNN 2013). Food is something to which everyone can relate, it is something that everyone has one or the other opinion about (Interview Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2012). When moreover taking into consideration the fact that EU food policy applies to a broad range of actors within the food chain, one comes to realize that the scope of affected segments in society is rather extensive. In addition to producer and retail interests along the food chain, one observes the presence of consumer interests, animal welfare organizations, environmentalists and so on. The observation seems to correspond with Moravcsik's (1993: 493) expectation, in that socio-economic goods provision policies constitute two-dimensional issues.

As noted in the last chapter, agricultural policy making in Norway has been portrayed as taking place within an 'iron triangle' of sector specific interests and actors (Hernes 1983, referred to in Rasch and Rommetvedt 1999). According to one informant, the food industry in present time is less involved in agricultural policy making, than what is the case on food policy. One reason being its respect of the matter of fact that not all areas of agricultural policy-making should be of its concern⁸⁵ (Interview Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2012). What moreover is being pointed to, is the institutionalized system surrounding agricultural policy-making, which contributes to the greater influence of the agricultural sector (Interview Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2012, Interview Norwegian Veterinary Association 2012). These observations do seem to support the LI expectation, in that the range of mobilized interests related to commercial policy is confined to producers (Moravcsik 1993: 488). Moreover, on agricultural policy, merely farm interests appear to be active.

However, what temporary debates on issues such as government amendments of guiding principles for duties – most recently, on specific products from abroad, e.g. types of cheese – illustrate, is agricultural policy's extensive contact surface. The debate that arose in the autumn of 2012, mobilized not merely actors from within the agricultural food chain, but the

⁸⁵ the aspects of interest to the industry being first and foremost policies that affect competitiveness and predictability.

fisheries sector, consumers and chefs too (Interview Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2012, Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012). Also underpinning discussions on agricultural policy, are the contrasting views of political right and centre-left on the baseline of agricultural policy in Norway. Hence, whereas the former is in favour of the deregulation and liberalization of agricultural markets, the latter tend to defend existing arrangements (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012b). In other words, policy making on agricultural policy cannot be said to attract the interest of merely producer interests. One consequently observes an apparent contradiction to "the commercial policy expectation" derived from LI.

Germany

The level of debate on agriculture and food policy making in Germany seems to bear resemblance to the characteristics described in the case of Norway. According to an informant, *'there are [of course] conflicts, but [...] in comparison to other political fields, these conflicts are small'* (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012). That being said, agricultural and food policy still are being identified as spheres in focus of the society. And *'because food is an everyday thing, [probably] more of the food side, than the agricultural side'* (Interview by phone DBV 2012). Germany, at least relative to Norway, is distinguished by strong consumer protectionist, environmental and, in particular, animal welfare groups. One indicator is the number of members in the biggest animal welfare group, Deutscher Tierschutzbund, which amounts to 800 000. In comparison, the number of farmers in Germany amount to about 300-350 000 (Deutscher Tierschutzbund 2013, BMELV 2011: 36). Animal welfare arguably does not constitute a "green topic" in Germany, it is a topic with traditional strong salience in society (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012). What these observations indicate is the presence of a wide range of societal interests when food policy is up for discussion in Germany. In other words, the range of mobilization on food policy issues is in accordance with the expectation derived from LI, in that socio-economic public goods provision attracts the interest of multiple societal groups.

In Germany too, one observes considerable debate on agricultural policy, especially in terms of the future farming structure and the industrialization of farming. At the annual Grüne Woche in Berlin, January 2013, about 25 000 people demonstrated against what they perceive to be *'animal factories'* (Nationen 2013, Wir haben es satt 2013). A comprehensive alliance of

animal welfare groups, environmentalists, small- to medium scale farmers and opponents of globalization are behind the initiative, which goes under the name 'Wir haben es satt!' (2013). One hereby observes the presence of both producer and non-producer interests in the agricultural sphere, which apparently contradicts the LI expectation of commercial policy. One possible explanation is the apparent fluidity with regard to the boundaries between food and agricultural policy making. Hence, what first and foremost might appear to be an agricultural issue, could equally contain elements of animal welfare and human health concerns (Interview by phone BTK 2013). In other words, the distinction between agricultural policy and food policy appears to be more complex and less clear cut than LI theory predicts.

Information obtained from interviews further strengthens this assumption. According to one informant, *'with the upcoming of renewables in agriculture, 10 years, 15-20 years ago, [...] other stakeholders, [such as car producers and fuel producers] came in [too]'* (Interview by phone DBV 2012). Yet another informant points to the effect of increasing ambitions in terms of export of agricultural products. According to the informant *'Germany never used to be an export nation for animal products'* (Interview by phone BTK 2013). Figures indicating that German food industry altogether exported for about 16 billion Euro in 1990, whereas in 2011, for about 60 billion Euro, seem to confirm this statement (Statistisches Bundesamt 2013b). This too, arguably fuels the agricultural debate in Germany (Interview by phone BTK 2013). Thus, in apparent contradiction to the theoretical assumption, there seems to be a reiterated number of stakeholders on agricultural policy too.

4.1.2 Channelization of influence

Norway

In terms of agricultural policy, the Norwegian interest groups all seem to view the national authorities as the most important target for influence, against which strategic activity is channelized. The Norwegian Farmers' Union is of course one of the participants in the annual negotiations on the General Agreement, which outcome is of considerable significance to farmers. Both the Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises and the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries emphasize the importance of maintaining close, and regular contact with responsible ministries and agencies. However, where the former seems to prefer a more frequent contact, the latter federation prefers the

concentration of contact in two or three meetings a year (Interview by phone Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2013, Interview Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2012).

The same pattern appears to prevail on EEA-related issues, such as negotiations on Article 19 and protocol three. As pointed out by an informant, '*we do not sit and discuss with the EU Commission on circumstances related to Norwegian agricultural policy, [...], that is not right*'⁸⁶(Interview Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2012). Thus, on agricultural policy, the pattern of Norwegian interest group behaviour seems to be in line with the LI expectancy. Strategic activity is primarily channelized toward national authorities. However, one needs to keep in mind that the majority of agricultural policy-making is made in Norway. Hence, the natural orientation toward responsible authorities, whose agricultural policy decisions are most salient for the members of the interest groups in question.

On food policy issues, Norwegian interest group priorities appear to deviate somewhat. While emphasizing that first one needs to influence Norwegian authorities in order for authorities to promote farmers' interests toward the EU, the Norwegian Farmers' Union does not rule out the parallel employment of other channels of influence (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012). Thus, the Farmers' Union has endeavoured on building alliances with fellow Farm Unions in Scandinavia, especially the Swedish and Finnish ones. All of which are participating in COPA-COGECA, the European Farmers' Association. On animal health issues in particular, Nordic Farm Unions have tended to pursue a coordination of viewpoints prior to meetings in COPA-COGECA (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012, 2013). These observations indicate that the Norwegian Farmers' Union channelize some activity toward the EU too. As LI theory considers the national authority to be the decisive actor at both domestic and European level, one would not expect domestic interest groups to engage in processes of preference formulation with actors and institutions abroad. This behaviour is difficult to explain by use of LI theory.

The Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises similarly as the Farmers' Union perceives the Norwegian authorities to be its primary target for influence on food policy. The federation is being characterized as too little an actor for efforts, in terms of channelizing influence towards the EU. Hence, its emphasis on coordinated efforts by private

⁸⁶ direct quote: vi sitter ikke og snakker med Kommisjonen om forhold knyttet til norsk landbrukspolitikk, det blir ikke, det er ikke rett.

actors and national authorities (Interview by phone Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2013). As touched upon in the previous chapter, the federation has called for the establishment of a consultative arrangement, in which affected interests are given the opportunity to supply government with their opinions on upcoming EU issues (Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2012).

In terms of influence, the Federation of Norwegian Food and Industry shares the approach expressed by the other two organizations, in that Norwegian authorities constitute the most important target. Its approach consequently seems to fall in line with the expectation derived from LI. However, what stands out with regard to the latter federation is its routine work toward FoodDrinkEurope, the European Association for Food and Drink Industries. The Federation in that regard emphasizes the importance of participating in an active cooperation with European colleagues. The emphasis is put on influence through close cooperation at EU level, not necessarily the direct pursuit of influence on positions towards EU institutions. On research and innovation policies however, the Federation has laid down a more active approach in terms of influence. (Interview Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2012). By means of its participation in the European Technology Platform (EPT) 'Food for life'⁸⁷, it can contribute to the preparation of research strategy agendas, which ultimately are being brought forward to the EU Commission (Food for life NO 2013). Similarly as identified in the Norwegian Farmers' Union's method of operation, the Federation of Norwegian Food and Industry makes use of multiple channels of influence. LI's anticipation of an almost exclusive channelization toward national authorities seems to be at odds with reality.

The Norwegian Veterinary Association as noted by an informant, '*continuously attempts to be in dialogue with national authorities. [And] maybe be a corrective to some of the authorities' decision-making*'⁸⁸ (Interview Norwegian Veterinary Association 2012). Simultaneously, the Veterinary Association holds a full membership in the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE). As stated by an informant, '*often, it can be equally as fruitful to work via the FVE, the Commission, and back to Norway, as to attempt to go direct to the Ministry of Agriculture in*

⁸⁷ located within the organizational confines of FoodDrinkEurope.

⁸⁸ direct quote: vi forsøker hele tiden å være i dialog. Kanskje være et korrektiv til mye av det myndighetene finner på.

Norway⁸⁹ (Interview Norwegian Veterinary Association 2012). What is being pointed to in that regard is the perceived scepticism with which the Veterinary Association is being met in the Ministry. Arguably because it is being conceived of by the Ministry as a labour union⁹⁰ (Interview Norwegian Veterinary Association 2012). Similarly as the Farmers' Union, the Veterinary Association seek close contact with their Nordic colleagues. Meetings between Norwegian, Finnish, Danish and Icelandic veterinary associations always take place prior to European meetings (Interview Norwegian Veterinary Association 2012).

A brief summary now seems appropriate. With regard to the Norwegian interest groups channelization of strategic efforts on issues related to food policy, two patterns stand out. First, the Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises and the Norwegian Farmers' Union both seem to emphasise first and foremost the importance of keeping in contact with national authorities. The Farmers' Union do participate in a European association, COPA-COGECA, and do seek transnational cooperation if possible, but its main emphasis still seems to be the channelization of activity toward national authorities. In other words, the behaviour of these interest groups seem to come closest to the expectation derived from LI, in that strategic activity is mainly channelized toward national authorities. The second pattern emerges in the behaviour of the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries and the Norwegian Veterinary Association. What these interest groups seem to have in common, is the channelization of strategic efforts toward both national authorities and the European associations in which they participate. This observation, including the Norwegian Farmers' Union's activity abroad, cannot be explained by LI expectations. There consequently seems to be some evidence to suggest that the EU's food policy regime is not equivalent to an intergovernmental regime. Apparently, EU decision-making processes are not exclusively for national authorities to decide.

Germany

What stands out with regard to the German interest groups under scrutiny is the apparent prevalence of strategies in which multiple channels of influence are being used. Thus, not only national authorities, also European Associations and EU institutions are being identified

⁸⁹ direct quote: ofte kan det være like fruktbart å jobbe via FVE, Kommisjonen, og tilbake til Norge, som å prøve å gå direkte på Landbruksdepartementet i Norge.

⁹⁰ In 2003-2005, controversy between the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Norwegian Veterinary Association arose, because of the difficulty in coming to an understanding on the agreement on veterinary watch (Norwegian Veterinary Association 2005: 117).

as targets for influence. In other words, the observation of German interest group behaviour seems to run counter to the expectation of exclusive channelization of activity toward national authorities, as emphasised in LI.

The German Farmers' Union (DBV), while stressing that there is close contact on a day to day basis with federal ministries⁹¹, is involved in the working of COPA-COGECA too. In addition, the DBV has its own office in Brussels, from which direct contact with German officials in the Commission, members of the EP and other German associations are being kept (Interview by phone DBV 2012). Whether strategic activities are being channelized toward the national level, or the European level, arguably depends on the issue. On market issues, i.e. *'the budget, and the farm subsidies, [the DBV has] to speak in Brussels, and [...] influence [its] national government'*. On tax issues however, *'[the DBV does not] speak with Brussels, because there is no power, or they have no power in dealing with taxes'* (Interview by phone DBV 2012). One is left with the impression that channelization to some extent depends on the location of policy-making competences. In other words, where policy-making competences are to be found, interest group activity is equally present.

This impression is further sustained when looking at the strategic activities of the German food industry. The German Confectionery Association, BDSI, has an office of its own in Brussels, as do the research and innovation oriented GFP/FEI. According to the informant from the BDSI, the EU constitutes the most important target for influence (Interview BDSI 2012). Whether activities are channelized toward national authorities, and, furthermore, European arenas or institutions, appears to be issue dependent. Thus, on the sugar quota issue, contacts between the BDSI and the federal ministry⁹² is momentary quite frequent. Furthermore, *'the issues where the EU can't say anything, it's of course still a national thing and it stays in Germany'* (Interview BDSI 2012). However, as pointed out, issues that are dealt with at national level, are very often dealt with at European level too (Interview BDSI 2012). In other words, the prevalence of domestic and European aspects in policy issues, makes the channelization of strategic activity toward both national and European level necessary. At EU level, the BDSI admittedly looks for alliances in e.g. its European associations⁹³. However, in instances where common positions are not possible to find, it is

⁹¹ in particular with the BMELV, but also the ministry of environment and ministry of finance.

⁹² first and foremost the BMELV.

⁹³ BDSI is member of CAUBISCO, the European Confectionery Association and EUROGRAS, the European Ice-cream Association.

also lobbying alone (Interview BDSI 2012). What consequently is observed is a rather flexible approach, in terms of the BDSI's selection of channel(s) of influence.

The main focus of the GFP and the FEI is the national level, an apparent logical priority when taking into consideration that about 85 percent of the total Germany research budget is coming from national authorities, whereas European funding amount to 15 percent (Interview GFP/FEI 2012). Nevertheless, the two interest groups are active at both national and European level. Here too, the channelization of strategic activity is perceived to be issue dependent (Interview GFP/FEI 2012). What is being emphasised is that national and European strategies are getting increasingly difficult to divide, due to the presence of multiple decision making levels on more and more issues. In other words, the EU policy-making system does not seem to fit the characteristics of an intergovernmental regime, which LI theory anticipates. Decision-making competence does not seem to be an exclusive property for national authorities, it rather is shared by actors across multiple levels of governance. On Horizon 2020⁹⁴, to take one example, contact with national authorities, which are involved in the development of the new EU framework, is close (Interview GFP/FEI 2012). At European level, regular participation in the European Associations constitutes the baseline approach of both interest groups. The FEI is proxy member⁹⁵ of FoodDrinkEurope, which means that it participates on topics related to research and innovation. The GFP for its part, is member of the European Seed Association (ESA). Moreover, both the FEI and GFP is attached to European Technology Platforms (EPTs), in which research strategy agendas are being worked out (Interview GFP/FEI 2012).

Of German interest groups included in this analysis, the Bundestierärztekammer (BTK) is the only one who does not have an office of its own in Brussels. The observation corresponds with what is being pointed to, in that the '*[the BTK's] main aim is not the European, it's the national*' (Interview by phone BTK 2013). The BTK's points of view are nevertheless being promoted at EU level by the FVE, in which the German veterinary association participates routinely. In fact, it holds one of the FVE vice president positions. In other words, the European activity of the BTK is mainly being channelized through the FVE. A more direct, autonomous European presence, would allegedly mean to take away the FVE's competencies.

⁹⁴ the new framework program of the EU for research and innovation.

⁹⁵ The German food industry is formally represented by the BVE and BLL (Bund für Lebensmittelrecht und Lebensmittelkunde). However, on research and innovation, on which the BVE and BLL do not work, participation is performed by the FVE (Interview GFP/FEI 2012).

As pointed out by an informant *'it would be stepping on their toes, which we don't want'* (Interview by phone BTK 2012). The majority of the BTK's activities thus find place at national level, toward national authorities such as the BMELV, BfR and the BVL. Contact with the authorities is perceived to be very good, one reason being its scientific basis. In that regard, it is worth noticing that the BTK does not pursue a proactive strategy, rather a reactive one (Interview by phone BTK 2013). Apparently, the BTK in most instances does not contact national authorities on issues, *'[it] 'react[s] to issues that are [...] presented to it by federal ministry'* (Interview by phone BTK 2012).

What has been identified in this section is the employment of multiple channels of influence by German interest groups. This furthermore is perceived of as an expression of the character of the EU's agricultural- and food policy regime, which apparently does not correspond with the attributes of an intergovernmental regime as anticipated by LI.

4.2 Historical institutionalism

Bearing in mind the presentation thus far, one might argue that Moravcsik's (1993) liberalism notions on individual producers' competitive position in domestic and international markets, do offer explanatory power of interest group positioning toward EU policy-making, in particular the ones through which liberalization of markets is foreseen. Interest groups' approach to EU policy moreover correspond with their perception issue salience. In other words, political mobilization is possible to explain by emphasising interest groups' calculation of cost and/or benefits from EU policy-making. Thus, in terms of identifying reasons *why* interest groups decide to act – regardless of how the behaviour might appear – liberal intergovernmentalism seems to be helpful.

What however is being identified in interviews with informants, and, moreover, written primary sources is interest groups' tendency to employ multiple channels of influence. Moreover, what is realized is the varying extent of individual interest groups' employment of these channels, in particular the European channels. The German interest groups, with the exception of the Bundestierärztekammer, have established EU units within their organizations, which continuously operate in Brussels. One plausible explanation of course is the matter of fact that Germany is an EU member state, and indeed one of the more influential ones. The presence of Norwegian interest groups in Brussels on the other hand appears to

vary, in particular on the extent to which participation in the European Associations is being extensively made use of.

According to an informant's impression, *'Norwegian food industry is almost absent [in Brussels]'*⁹⁶ (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012a). Norway is not member of the EU, which again could be an explanation of the perceived absence. Nevertheless, as pointed out in the previous chapter, Norway through the EEA-agreement is very much committed to the EU, especially its food policies. Thus, the motivation for active participation at European level do exist for Norwegian interest groups as well. There in fact seems to be a good base for greater influence on EU food policy for Norwegian actors, both private and governmental ones (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012a).

The historical institutionalism approach does anticipate neither the preference of European channels, nor domestic ones. Rather the emphasis is put on historical processes, put differently *'the unfolding of processes over time'* (Pierson 2000: 264). Two aspects stand out in that regard. First, critical juncture emphasises *'specific patterns of timing and sequencing'*, i.e. the occurrence of *'"small" or contingent events, [from which] particular courses of action'* might be generated (Pierson 2000: 251). The occurrence or absence of a critical juncture is assumed to explain substantial change, or the absence of which, in interest groups' methods of operations, i.e. channelization of efforts aimed at influencing policy-making processes. Second, processes of increasing returns are assumed to explain the eventual presence of path dependence. Where path dependency is present, *'particular courses of action, once introduced, [are] virtually impossible to reverse'* (Pierson 2000: 251). Thus, interest group behaviour which pattern seems to be rigid and stable, might be explained by the 'lock in' effects caused by increasing returns.

4.2.1 Critical juncture

Norway

Both informants from the Norwegian Farmers' Union (Interview 2012, 2013) emphasize that Norwegian authorities constitute the primary focus of the union's activities. One of them *'think[s] [...] that one attaches greater value to the results at national level'*⁹⁷ (Interview

⁹⁶ direct quote: i realiteten er norske næringsorganisasjoner nesten fraværende.

⁹⁷ direct quote: jeg tror nok at man verdsetter mer de resultatene på nasjonalt nivå ja.

Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012). Whereas the other points out that '*[one] probably underestimate[s] the framework laid down by the EU, and, that [one] is not good enough on that work, neither from the government's side, nor from our side*'⁹⁸ (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2013). What is suggested is that the delegation of decision-making competence from national to European level, has not constituted a critical juncture for the Norwegian Farmers' Union, in terms of strengthened presence at EU level. This might explain the Farmers' Union's continuing tendency for channelizing activity toward national governments. On agricultural policy, considerable resources have traditionally been channelized into the negotiations on the General Agreement (Seip 2002, Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012b). In accordance with Pierson's (2004: 71) assumption in that '*groups able to consolidate early advantages may achieve enduring superiority*', it is tempting to suggest that establishment of the annual negotiations on a General Agreement, 1950, constituted an event, by which advantages for farm interests were consolidated. This suggestion however, cannot be supported by empirical data, and thus needs to be regarded as mere speculation.

The EU-issue has been central to the Farmers' Union for at least 20 years. A continuous engagement and economic support of the grass root movement "No to the EC/EU" is observed from at least 1992, up to present day (Norwegian Farmers' Union 1992: 44, 2003: 52, 2011: 34). The majority of this activity, which is focused on preventing Norway from becoming EU member, is channelized toward the public opinion at domestic level. In 1993 however, the Farmers' Union in cooperation with the Federation of Norwegian Agricultural Co-operatives, established an office in Brussels. As pointed out in the annual report,

'[the establishment] was necessary in a situation where the Norwegian negotiators [– on EU accession –] did not contribute to an open and objective presentation of the progress of negotiations' (Norwegian Farmers' Union 1994: 38).

In the aftermath of the Norwegian rejection of EU membership, 1994, the office allegedly was left unstaffed until about 2000, and then used again up to late 2009, at which point it was closed because of economic re-ordered priorities (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012). With reference to an eventual path dependent European activity, this cannot be said to be a supporting observation. One would have expected the high costs related to a cease of direct presence in Brussels, to make up a preventive effect. On the other hand, the Farmers' Union has been participating in a European Association at least since prior to 1990. Prior to

⁹⁸ direct quote: sannsynligvis så undervurderer vi jo litt rammene EU legger, og, at vi er ikke gode nok på det arbeidet, hverken fra myndighetenes side, eller vår side.

2004, European activity was channelized toward the Confederation of European Agriculture (CEA), arguably an organization which was more used for discussion and network-building, than direct influencing (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012, Norwegian Farmers' Union 2004: 55). Due to the accession of the Central- and East-European countries (CEECs) into the EU, and the consequent inclusion of its farm unions in COPA in 2004, one decided to subject the CEA to the COPA-COGECA umbrella too (Norwegian Farmers' Union 2004: 55). Since then, activities toward Europe have mainly been channelized toward that association. The Norwegian Farmers' Union participates in COPA-COGECA working party meetings two to three times a year. However, while acknowledging the importance of the EU, the magnitude of missions related to national affairs sometimes necessitates the lesser priority given to EU affairs (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2013).

On these grounds, one might argue that the Norwegian Farmers' Union is 'locked-in' on a national path, where the strengthened participation in COPA-COGECA is prevented by the amount of work on national level. What furthermore is identified, is an apparent absence of a critical juncture in that its employment of channels of influence does not seem to have changed substantially.

Whether 'locked-in' on a national path or not, the Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises nevertheless appears to have a tradition for channelizing the greater majority of its activity toward national authorities. Emphasis on maintaining close contact with the authorities was communicated by the then KIFF⁹⁹ in relation with negotiations on the EEA-agreement, the extension of the EEA-agreement through Article 19, protocol three, legislation on animal welfare, so on so forth (Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 1993: 9, 1997: 12, 2002: 5, 2010: 16). References to activities at European level are confined to study tours now and then, and observation of EU processes. One incidence however needs to be highlighted. In 2003, the Federation worked toward both the European Parliament and national authorities, in an attempt to convince the EU to approve the usage of carbon monoxide in meat packaging processes (Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2004: 6). In the end, the attempt fell through as the EP voted against it by a small margin. The Federation conceded in the aftermath,

⁹⁹ "Kjøttindustriens Fellesforening", the former name of the Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises.

'Communication with Norwegian authorities, companies and professional organizations indicated that there is no/very insufficient Norwegian competence and experience with practical lobbying activity toward the EU Parliament. The work furthermore indicated the significance of support from Norwegian political authorities. Such support was to a lesser extent possible to obtain' (Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2004: 7).

Three years later, in 2006, the Federation, according to its annual report, finally succeeded in getting recognition for its view, in that routines for cooperation between the industry and national authorities on EEA-issues needed to be improved. A workshop, "Team EEA", with participants from the authorities and the industry was initiated in early 2007 (Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2007: 17, 2008: 16). Whereas events such as the carbon monoxide packaging issue do not seem to have contributed to substantial change, in terms of the adding of a European channel of influence by the Federation, one might argue that they have contributed to its intensified employment of the preferred channel of influence, i.e. the domestic one. The critical juncture apparently has not occurred in the historical unfolding of processes. Hence, the likely persistence of existing methods of operation.

The picture is different when looking at the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries. As already touched upon, the Federation lays down a serious effort at European level, in FoodDrinkEurope, and toward authorities in Norway. The Federation was established in 1990, under the name NIL¹⁰⁰, the main reason being the establishment of the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) one year earlier (Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 1991: 5). The newly established interest group went on to establish contacts with Swedish and Finnish sister organizations. One of the motives was to send a joint application to CIAA, the European Association for food (Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 1991: 19). Thus, what is observed from the outset is clear objectives in terms of *'establishing a good international network'*, and, simultaneously, *'influencing national authorities in central industry political issues'* (Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 1992: 4, 6).

According to one informant, the coming into being of the EEA-agreement has been an important motivation behind the Federation's priorities. In that regard, one ought to keep in mind that the interest group was founded just prior to the negotiations on Norway's accession

¹⁰⁰ "Næringsmiddelindustriens landsforening.

into the EU, and, moreover the EEA-agreement. Thus, in order to meet strategic objectives, as e.g. the monitoring of EU legislative developments and the expansion of networks, the Federation realized that a structure of its own was needed (Interview Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2012). With reference to HI theory, what is identified is the temporal intersection of two apparent distinct processes, namely the founding of the interest group and the initiation of EU/EEA negotiations. This might have constituted a critical juncture, due to the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries' adding of a European aspect to its behaviour.

One central expression of this European aspect has been the Federation's relation with the CIAA. In 1997, informal contact with the European association had been established. As noted in its annual report, this contact *'has given [...] the Federation access to information on legislative processes at an early stage'* (Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 1998: 13). Whereas, *'when the issues come via Norwegian authorities, it is often too late to influence'* (Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 1998: 12). The Federation became associated member of the CIAA in 2002, after having emphasised its preference for coming into a better position for the exertion of influence at EU-level. The immediate background seemingly being the revolution in EU food policies. Here too, one observes the apparent contribution by changes at EU level on the strategic priorities of the interest group. However, it coincidentally stressed an emphasis on working first and foremost with Norwegian authorities. This was expressed by the establishment of a contact forum on food policy legislation, in which participants from national ministries and actors from the industry were to participate (Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2002: 6, 2003: 7).

What is perceived with regard to the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries is an apparent continuity in its objectives and channelization of activity. Thus, leading to the assumption that the path, or trajectory, which seems to have a distinct multi-level governance character, has been present from the beginning. What, on the other hand, cannot be ruled out, is the potential consequences generated by negotiations on EU membership, and the EEA-agreement. Regardless of whether these process constituted critical junctures, in that interest group behaviour was substantially altered, they do seem to have vindicated the enhanced emphasis on European developments. This was indeed briefly touched upon by the informant.

The Norwegian Veterinary Association's (DNV) strategic activities toward decision makers is mainly dealt with by its secretariat, which, while keeping in minds its gradual

professionalization, amount to ten employees (Interview Norwegian Veterinary Association 2012). Consequently, due to limited capacities, the association regards the prioritization of relations as necessary. As identified earlier, what stands out in that regard is the DNV's work toward national ministries, in particular the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Food Safety Authority and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (Norwegian Veterinary Association 2011: 288). According to one informant, the DNV has been member of the FVE for about 15-20 years¹⁰¹. As the FVE does not constitute an EU agency, rather an organization of veterinary organizations in Europe, the DNV holds a full membership with all organizational privileges at hand (Interview Norwegian Veterinary Association 2012). Active participation in the FVE is observed from at least 1998. In its evaluation of activities that same year, the association states

'As most of the framework conditions for our activity gradually are being laid down in Brussels, do the network which is created here and the information obtained through this work, become increasingly important. It also has to be accentuated that Norway, together with the other Nordic countries and the Baltic countries, has a real opportunity to influence decisions made in our European organization' (Norwegian Veterinary Association 1999: 18)

The traditional working method of the association, with regard to FVE, seems to be the participation in the two to three member sessions every year. In 2003, the association's FVE delegation counted four members, in 2008, six members and in 2012, seven members (Norwegian Veterinary Association 1999: 18, 2004: 336, 2009: 440, Interview 2012). Participation undoubtedly seems to have been given priority over the years. In 2009, the Association records

'This [FVE] gives us an unique opportunity to monitor our sector in Europe, [...] we have good opportunities to influence decision-making processes, which we otherwise barely would have known about' (Norwegian Veterinary Association 2009: 440).

Similarly as perceived in the analysis of the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries, the Norwegian Veterinary Association appears to have a continuous tradition for channelizing efforts towards both national and European levels. Since information on the point of time, at which the DNV joined the FVE is not at hand, valid assumptions on the occurrence of a critical juncture are difficult to derive. Nevertheless, one can observe that the Association has emphasised the increasing importance of activities at European level. Which

¹⁰¹ due to a lack of written primary sources covering the period prior to 1998, the exact point of time for the DNV's accession into the FVE cannot be identified.

again seem to indicate that changes in the EU policy making structure have given grounds for amendments in interest group priorities.

Germany

Annual reports, or other written primary sources on German interest group activity since 1990, has been rather difficult to get hold of, the distance to their offices in Germany being an important reason. Thus, data material for assessing whether delegation of competence from national to European level, and reform of the CAP constitute critical junctures for German interest groups, is somewhat limited. Some points can still be made on the grounds of interview data.

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the German Farmers' Union, DBV, has traditionally held very close relations with national German authorities, in particular the federal ministry of agriculture (Hendriks 1991: 38). This condition of state seems to be in place in the present too, with contact between authority and interest group being characterized as very close (Interview by phone DBV 2012). One perceives a possible parallel to the argument put forward by Pierson (2004: 71), in that '*groups able to consolidate early advantages may achieve enduring superiority [vis-à-vis others arriving later]*'. The DBV of course played a prominent role in the introduction of the Agricultural Act in 1955, arguably the Magna Charta of German agricultural politics (Hendriks 1991: 37, Rieger 2007: 299). However, the so called agricultural turning point in 2001 – also touched upon in the previous chapter – whether constituting a critical juncture or not, seems to have made the channelization of efforts to the right person more challenging (Interview by phone DBV 2012). The apparent reason being the reorganization of German agriculture and food authorities since 2001, thereby giving the administration a more consumer friendly profile (Rieger 2007). In that regard, it is tempting to suggest that the agricultural turning point necessitated an amendment of behaviour by agricultural interest groups.

In terms of European affairs, the DBV has been member of COPA-COGECA since the late 1950s/early 1960s. It has held an office of its own in Brussels for 15-20 years (Interview by phone DBV 2012). Consequently, experience with operating in Brussels ought to be considerable. Work towards the EU has traditionally been channelized into COPA-COGECA, the EU Commission and toward the national government. However, and this indeed is an indication of amendment in behaviour generated by reform, efforts toward the European

Parliament have been enhanced *'a lot, a lot, a lot'* because of the Lisbon treaty (Interview by phone DBV 2012). Arguably *'because they are speaking about agricultural policy. They decide, and that's why we speak with them'* (Interview by phone DBV 2012). What is observed is a significant amendment by the DBV, in terms of its employment of channels of influence. However, as the DBV was strongly present at EU level prior to the Lisbon treaty too, it probably is misleading to denote the amendment a critical juncture.

The Bundestierärztekammer has been present at European level for a while too, arguably since the FVE was founded – in 1975 (Interview by phone BTK 2013, FVE 2013). On the other hand, one needs to keep in mind that the core of BTK activities take place at national level. As it turns out *'for the FVE, we [the BTK] only supply information when they want to, or we might give them a hint'* (Interview by phone BTK 2013). In other words, its tendency to work in accordance with a reactive strategy, rather than a proactive one, appears to apply to activities at both national and European level. One possible reason is that veterinarians used to work on call only (Interview by phone BTK 2013). The assumed implication being that traditional working methods have an effect on the BTK's strategic activities. If so, the existence of path dependent mechanisms might be argued in favour for. Thereby making probable the absence of a critical juncture, due to an apparently unchanged presence at EU level, as well.

The research and innovation oriented interest groups FEI and GFP have operated an office in Brussels in cooperation since 2001. The primary reason has been to open the European funding market for their member enterprises (Interview GFP/FEI 2012). Whether or not this decision was motivated by political developments in the EU at the time¹⁰², is difficult to say. One can nevertheless observe that the strengthened EU presence of both organizations corresponds with the above mentioned developments. In other words, change in the EU policy-making system is perceived to have contributed to the increasing employment of European channels of influence by German interest groups. The matter of fact, that the GFP has been present at European level since 1996 corresponds with this observation too (Interview GFP/FEI 2012). With regard to the BDSI, they too appear to have been present in Brussels for a considerable time (Interview BDSI 2012).

¹⁰² in terms of the delegation of policy making competence from national to European level, and the parallel reform of the food policy institutions of the EU.

4.2.2 Increasing returns

Norway

Characteristic of the Norwegian interest group's identification of positives acquired from European level activities is the emphasis on learning effects, in terms of a greater understanding of how the EU works. Thus, in accordance with the expectancy derived from HI, the increasing accumulation of knowledge and experience constitutes one explanatory factor of Norwegian interest groups' presence at EU level. As indicated by an informant in the Commission's DG SANCO, one needs to behave in accordance with established norms of procedure in Brussels. To give an illustration, representatives of the Finnish bureaucracy, after having become member of the EU, were sent on courses, allegedly in order to learn to behave internationally (Interview DG SANCO 2012). Another informant points out the significance of presenting proposals, that can be suitable to a widest extent of actors as possible (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012a).

The informant from the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries (Interview 2012) moreover emphasizes the *'better understanding of [...] how legislative processes in the EU take place, [...] to understand the EU system, how it functions technically and structurally'*¹⁰³. Equally important seems to be the access to information on EU legislative processes at an earliest possible stage. As pointed out by the informant, *'it is important that one does not experience the tumbling arrival of a legislation by post, without having had the opportunity to follow its development'*¹⁰⁴ (Interview Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2012). In other words, the opportunity to accommodate one's activities in good time before a legislation comes into effect, is recognized as one prominent benefit of activities in Brussels. Which again might explain why some interest groups make use of a European channel of influence. The Norwegian Farmers' Union too often experience that its European Association, COPA-COGECA, is earlier involved in legislative processes, than Norwegian authorities are able to involve business interest in discussions on EU legislative processes (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2013). Moreover, although, or perhaps because of its associated membership status, the Farmers' Union do not have direct access to COPA's data bases, in

¹⁰³ direct quote: du kan si at det har gitt oss en bedre forståelse av hele, hvordan regelverksprosesser i EU foregår. [...] Så i det hele tatt, det å skjønne EU systemet, hvordan det fungerer teknisk og strukturelt.

¹⁰⁴ direct quote: det er viktig at man ikke opplever at et regelverk kommer ramlende i posten, uten at man har fått fulgt med i utviklingen av det.

which information is stored (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2013). In other words, the benefit from participating in European level agencies is clearly seen by the Farmers' Union. However, it seems to experience greater endeavours when it comes to the attainment of benefits. With reference to the challenge in terms of capacity identified by informants from the Farmers' Union, the above mentioned observation does not seem to be a positive benefit. It probably does not contribute to a greater use of European channels of influence by the interest group.

Increasing returns are expected to emerge as so called coordination effects too (Pierson 2000: 254). An apparent example in that regard is the Norwegian Farmers' Union's participation in the annual negotiations on the General Agreement. Although it cannot be characterized as a coordination of policies, the Farmers' Union nevertheless have a say in the process where negotiations with national authorities are held, in order to decide on future agricultural policies. In terms of activities toward EU level, what is observed is that demands for improved consultative arrangements with national authorities, to a greater extent are impelled by the interest groups with seemingly less intensive efforts towards Brussels (Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2012, Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012a). This could be interpreted as one possible implication of the absent element of positive feed-back, in terms of access to information on EU legislative process at an earliest possible stage. Efforts in terms of coordination among interest groups themselves are observed too. The Norwegian Farmers' Union in collaboration with the Federation of Norwegian Agricultural Co-operatives (2013) and firms have established an advisory panel on food safety¹⁰⁵. However, the panel appears not to have functioned perfectly the recent years (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2013). In terms coordination effects, at least in this incident, strategic activity on issues related to food policy has generated merely modest benefits for the Norwegian Farmers' Union.

With reference to the aspects highlighted above, neither the Norwegian Veterinary Association nor the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries seem to emphasize demands for improved consultative arrangements to the same extent (Interview Norwegian Veterinary Association 2012, Norwegian Veterinary Association 2011, Interview Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2012, Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2013, 2012b). In the processes of EU hygiene regulation translations in 2006, the

¹⁰⁵ RUMT – rådgivende utvalg for mattrygghet.

Federation of Food and Drink Industries¹⁰⁶ expressed a general discontent with regard to the communication between authorities and the industry. Simultaneously, participation in the "Food and Consumer Policy Committee" of the CIAA, was being pointed out as *'very important in terms of monitoring development in the EU, and giving a basis for influencing legislative developments at domestic level'* (Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2007: 9). On these grounds, what could be argued is that positive feed-back, in terms of e.g. information on legislative process, might still be generated through European level activities, if feed-back from the communication with national authorities does not meet interest groups' expectations.

Germany

Relative to the impression given by Norwegian interest groups under scrutiny, learning and gaining experience, according to an informant, do not seem to be the main issue for German interest groups in Brussels. Rather,

'the main issue is that they try to make the business they are representing to be more profitable, or at least not less profitable. [...] that they try to prevent things being really a problem for their business' (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012).

DBV activities in Brussels seem to generate positives very much in line with the argument above. As already touched upon, the German farmers' association has been involved in the fight for a strong EU agricultural budget in the period to come, i.e. 2014-2020 (Interview by phone DBV 2012). In his comment on the long term budgetary agreement, 8. February 2013, DBV President Joachim Rukwied, while conceding the reductions to the budget, emphasised that a reliable basis for EU policy making toward 2020 had been achieved (DBV 2013). The informant from the BDSI (Interview 2012) points out that the organization pursues tangible interests, *'in that [the EU] has really economic consequences for us economically, concerning the employees [...], so it's really important for that, to be here'*. The GFP/FEI informant, for its part, indicates that success at Brussels level, only can be measured on the extent to which more funding possibilities are opened (Interview GFP/FEI 2012). In other words, when thinking of benefits generated from European level activities, German interest groups tend first and foremost to highlight the economic aspects. This in turn is identified to

¹⁰⁶ the federation then went under the name NIL, Næringsmiddelbedriftenes landsforening.

be a persuasive reason for German interest groups' employment of European channels of influence.

What might seem to be an almost exclusive "realpolitik" approach by German interest groups, in terms of perceived returns from European activities, is however somewhat misleading. The informant from the DBV for instance, emphasises the need to act smarter at European level. *'[Brussels is] more the town of compromises than Berlin is. [...] on Berlin level, we know that we can speak a little bit louder, a little bit harder, a little bit direct'* (Interview by phone DBV 2012). The need to adapt to the norms of procedure in Brussels seems to be evident. In that regard, the BDSI informant notes that one has to be proactive. Emphasis is put on the *'challenge [...] to see things developing, the consequences, the advantages'* (Interview BDSI 2012). Simultaneously, one observes what other actors are doing, in terms of arguments and specific activities (Interview BDSI 2012). Consequently, learning effects, in terms of learning from one another's behaviour, appear to be present. The perception of gradually more advanced methods of operation at European level, might be an expression of path dependency. The reason why is that interest groups, by developing their activities toward Brussels arguably become increasingly nested into day to day activities at European level. According to HI, this 'lock in' of influence channelization becomes increasingly difficult to reverse as time moves on.

With regard to the German food industry, one apparently came to realize that some division of labour on EU activity between the three peak organizations was necessary. Hence, the arrangement where the BVE, the main organization, focuses on general framework conditions, the BLL on law issues, in particular towards the EFSA, and the FEI on research and innovation (Interview GFP/FEI 2012, BVE 2013b). Interest group activities toward the EU, especially in terms of food policy, thus give the impression of being to some extent coordinated. Hence, the observation of benefit from European activities in terms of coordination effects.

Multiple equilibrium – inertia

The general impression given by Norwegian and German informants, in terms of whether the extent of available influence channels has increased or decreased, is more or less concurrent. This explains why the presentation of findings is channelized into one section.

The general impression is namely that of a gradual increase in influence channels available to interest groups. In other words, the observed condition seems to come closest to a state of multiple equilibrium. This, in turn, would imply that a process of increasing returns is absent. One channel, which has become more important over the years, is the media. As pointed out by an informant, '*one might have become more and more conscious on influencing the public opinion*'¹⁰⁷ (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012). In that regard, influence via the media appears to become increasingly important. Communication in general, as e.g. in terms of communication through social media, is frequently being highlighted by interest groups in both Norway and Germany. In other words, informal channels seems to have been subject for an increase, whereas the formal ones to a greater extent remain unaltered in numbers (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012b). This condition of state is suggested by representatives for German veterinarians and farmers too.

Brussels is said to have been "a wasp's nest" for lobbying for some time (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012b). And moreover, the extent of lobbying still seems to be increasing. One informant points to the presence of professional lobby bureaus, which take on missions toward decision making authorities on behalf of interests (Interview DG SANCO 2012). The apparent increase in channels of influence notwithstanding, it might be argued that the interest groups under scrutiny make use of a fixed selection of channels, in particular at EU level. Contrary to what was highlighted above, this would imply that interest group activity might be subject to process of increasing returns after all. Norwegian interest groups who are working towards Brussels, channelize their efforts toward their European associations (Interviews Norwegian Veterinary Association 2012, Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2012, Norwegian Farmers' Union 2013). The possible exception being in instances where they in addition consult with national experts in the EU Commission (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012). German interest groups are to a greater extent working towards both European associations and EU institutions. A major share of these direct contacts are conducted with German citizens in the Commission and the European Parliament¹⁰⁸ (Interview by phone DBV 2012, Interview BDSI 2012). In other words, a greater flexibility in terms of using multiple channels of influence at European level seems to be evident in German interest groups' method of operation. One plausible reason is the

¹⁰⁷ direct quote: inntrykket er at en kanskje har blitt mer og mer bevisst på å påvirke opinionen.

¹⁰⁸ whether contact is channelized toward a German citizen however comes with the issue, whether it concerns German affairs (phone conversation BDSI 2013).

longevity of German interest groups' presence in Brussels. In other words, they might have generated more experience in terms of how to employ European channels of influence, than what is the case for Norwegian interest groups.

What furthermore should be noted is the perceived tendency of particular strong firms to influence institutions in very different ways. One example being the tobacco industry which sometimes appear as single enterprises, as association of farmers producing tobacco, enterprises producing packaging etc. (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012). Whereas a prominent firm like Orkla make use of its Nordic profile, which seemingly implies that it uses its Swedish or Danish profile when talking to the Commission, and its Norwegian profile when talking to Norwegian authorities (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012b).

Institutional density – costs of establishing a trajectory, costs of exit

'If the FVE had not been invented, we would probably invent it quickly.' (Interview by phone BTK 2013). The statement belongs to an informant from the Bundestierärztekammer, and gives a good impression of interest groups' evaluation of their presence in Brussels. Neither of the informants gave the impression that a future end to European activities was plausible. One informant characterized it as a chaos scenario, with the loss of knowledge supply as one salient negative effect (interview Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries 2012). Another one points to the negative effect on business in the long run (Interview Brussels diplomat 2012). Whereas a third informant anticipates a great significance from an eventual end of activities at EU level, in terms of the consequent loss of accessible knowledge for Norwegian actors (Interview Mission of Norway to the EU 2012a).

In other words, the need to monitor and influence EU developments in order to promote sustainable framework conditions for business, seems to be a persuasive argument for continued activities toward Brussels. In fact, a sensible share of the interest group informants foresee a greater emphasis on EU level activities in the years to come. Here too, one observes a potential expression of increasing returns, in that EU level activity is expected to be deepened in the years to come. The Bundestierärztekammer, which is mainly operating at domestic level, is currently debating whether it needs to have somebody in their office to look more into the EU matters (Interview by phone BTK 2013). One of its motivations is the perceived need *'to support the FVE, because they are such a small organization, and [...] therefore they can only deal with very few issues'* (Interview by phone BTK 2013). The

Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises too, which neither has exercised a very active approach towards Brussels, is currently considering its engagement towards the EU. One possible outcome is *'an enhanced emphasis on contacts with the EU and Brussels-system'*¹⁰⁹ (Interview Norwegian Federation of Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2012).

However, the costs related to establishing oneself with an office in Brussels is perceived to be considerable. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Norwegian interest groups under scrutiny do not have their own offices in Brussels¹¹⁰, and rather prefer to travel back and forth when there is a meeting. German groups who are present with an office in Brussels, on the other hand give the impression that their presence is expected to continue (Interview BDSI, GFP/FEI 2012, Interview by phone DBV 2012). If seen in light of Pierson's assumptions, the set-up costs related to the establishment of strategic activities in Brussels have been high. Hence, the likely continuation of the activity.

4.3 Multi-level governance

The Multi-level governance approach is included in the thesis in order to assess whether the findings of the analysis, in particular those generated from the HI expectations, correspond with an LI or MLG assumption of interest group channelization of strategic efforts. Findings in accordance with the MLG perspective would suggest that the policy-making system that underpins the EU's agricultural- and food policy is equivalent with a multi-level polity. If so, decision-making competence is regarded to be held by both national authorities and EU institutions. Consequently, decision-making on agriculture and food policy should occur at multiple levels of governance, i.e. the subnational, the national and the supranational level.

In accordance with what has been highlighted up to now, neither German nor Norwegian interest groups seem to exclusively channelize their strategic activities toward national authorities. The possible exception being the Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises. Attached to the Federation however, are trade organizations representing slaughter and meat processing interests, two of which are members of European associations

¹⁰⁹ direct quote: det kan nok være at vi kommer til å bruke mer, noe mer tid på kontakt med EU og Brüssel-systemet.

¹¹⁰ The Federation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) does have an office in Brussels. However, it is rarely being used by the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries (Interview 2012).

(Interview by phone Federation of Norwegian Food, Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises 2013). In other words, although not being directly connected to European arenas itself, a de facto indirect presence might be identified in the participation of its trade organizations. The Norwegian Farmers' Union's behaviour seems to come close to the expectation derived from LI too, in that they emphasise the need first to influence Norwegian authorities, who then can bring farmers' interests forward to the EU (Interview Norwegian Farmers' Union 2012). Simultaneously, however, the Farmers' Union participates in COPA-COGECA, the European association for farmers and agricultural co-operatives.

Thus, while keeping in mind the differing scale, what nevertheless can be pointed out is the presence, whether to a moderate or great extent, of Norwegian and German interest groups at multiple levels of governance. In other words, the observations identified in the analysis seem to come close to the main assumptions of the multi-level governance (MLG) approach. There thus seems to be some evidence to suggest that the EU agricultural and food policy-making system constitutes a multi-level polity. In light of the observations in the HI section, what is identified is a persistent presence of German interest groups at European level. The German Farmers' Union, DBV, has been member of COPA-COGECA since the late 1950s, or early 1960s. The other German interest groups dealt with in the analysis have gradually established European channels too. What moreover is observed in the analysis of developments in the 1990s and 2000s, is the tendency of German interest groups to establish own offices in Brussels. Consequently, a continuous level of operation can be maintained. Norwegian interest groups, on the other hand, are not present in Brussels with units of their own. Nevertheless, a varying extent of presence at European level is identified. Two of the interest groups included in the analysis – the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries and the Norwegian Veterinary Association – seem to have strengthened their presence at European level over the recent 10-15 years. The strengthening is manifested in the greater emphasis ascribed to activities in their respective European associations. A strengthening of European activity equivalent to these two interest groups is not identified in the Norwegian Farmers' Union's method of operation.

A considerable share of the informants have emphasized the increasing importance of the EU, in terms of policy-making competences. What furthermore is foreseen is the continuing accumulation of competences at EU level. As stated by one of the informants,

'I think we have to do more in Brussels, more in Europe, because more and more regulation, especially for farmers, is coming from that. And on national level, on regional level, [...] we deal with the consequences' (Interview by phone DBV 2012).

Still, as identified earlier in this chapter, both Norwegian and German interest groups are channelizing severe efforts toward national authorities too. In that regard, one could argue that the interest groups, in particular the German ones, perceive both national and European authorities to be important targets for influence. Which again leads to the assumption that *'decision-making competencies are shared by actors at different levels'* (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 3). One observes the contrast to a genuine intergovernmental regime, as emphasised by LI, in which national authorities control the outcome of policy-making processes.

Yet another suggestion that framework conditions to some extent resemble the assumptions of multi-level governance, is the existence of transnational networks between interest groups from different countries. Both the Norwegian Veterinary Association (Interview 2012) and the Norwegian Farmers' Union (Interview 2013) have emphasised that coordinative meetings between Nordic associations often find place prior to meetings in their respective European associations. What these activities seem to indicate is that processes of preference formation do not exclusively occur within the national arenas. Thus, rather than being nested, as LI would presume, political arenas for preference formation seem to be interconnected (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 4).

4.4 Summary

The previous section identified the main findings of the analysis in terms of *how the* interest groups operate in order to influence agriculture and food policy-making.

What furthermore has been subject for focus is the reason *why* interest groups mobilize on issues related to EU agriculture and food policy, and *why* they channelize strategic efforts as they do. With regard to the first aspect, it is argued that the liberal elements of LI constitute a sound basis for explaining interest group mobilization. Expectations grounded in the assumption that competitive position in domestic and international markets influence producer interests' perception of commercial liberalization policies, seem to be confirmed. Moreover, the perception of consequences from EU policies as significant or insignificant, put differently, certain or ambiguous, do seem to affect levels of mobilization.

Expectations derived from HI appear to be better suited to explain the second aspect, i.e. interest groups' prioritization of channels of influence. One assumption in this thesis is that delegation of policy-making competence from national to European level, and reforms of EU agricultural policy, constitute critical junctures in interest groups' method of operation. What the findings seem to suggest is that substantial change has not occurred, rather patterns of interest groups' channelization of influence seem to be stable. Nevertheless, the analysis of the previous two decades identifies a gradual increase in interest groups' presence at European level. Hence, the assumption that the suggested junctures have had some effect on interest group behaviour. Moreover, regardless of whether the majority of activity is located at national or European level, there is some evidence to suggest that increasing returns processes contribute to the entrenchment of existing methods of operation.

If taking into consideration these observations, one might argue that the two theoretical approaches, LI and HI, to some extent complement each other. Apparently, the former offers explanatory power of interest group mobilization, and the latter, preference for patterns of influence channelization.

Finally, one brief comment on the resource basis of interest groups. Both the analysis of German interest groups and Norwegian interest groups suggest that extensive amount of manpower is an advantage when operating at national and European level. For instance, multiple level presence is not recognized as a challenge by the informant from the DBV (interview by phone 2012). The DBV of course represents all German farmers. It is a major actor, with extensive manpower. However, observations of other German interest groups, such as the GFP and FEI, both of which represent small sectors, may suggest that extensive resources is not strictly required for continuous presence at two levels to be maintained (Interview GFP/FEI 2012). With regard to the Norwegian observations, the Norwegian Veterinary Association, despite of its rather modest manpower – its secretariat amount to ten people – still seems to be able to participate at both national and European level (Norwegian Veterinary Association 2011: 288). In other words, extensive manpower does not appear to be a compelling necessity in order for interest groups to expand their activities to the European level.

5 Concluding remarks

This study has been carried out in order to answer the following research question:

How do agricultural interest groups in Norway and Germany adapt their activities to changing institutional structures at national and EU level? How to explain eventual changes in interest groups' strategies toward decision making authorities?

Before summarizing the main findings of the study, what needs to be emphasised is the rationale for selecting a Norwegian and a German case in the first place. An analysis of a German system of agricultural interest group is expected to generate insight on how EU member interest groups channelize their strategic efforts toward EU agriculture and food policy. The analysis of a Norwegian system of agricultural interest groups on the other hand, is expected to generate insight on how interest groups in EFTA member states, which is part of the EU's single market by means of the EEA-agreement, channelize strategic efforts on issues related to EU agriculture and food policy. One implication of Norway's formal attachment through the EEA-agreement, is that agricultural policy is held outside of the system of agreements, whereas food policy is included. Germany as EU member, is integrated on both agricultural and food policy. In light of these observations, differences and similarities in agricultural interest group behaviour across the underlying variable, EFTA (EEA) - EU member state, ought to be identified. Eventual observations could possibly contribute to the debate on the extent to which domestic interest groups' potential for influencing EU policy-making processes is utilized. And moreover, whether changes at the EU level affect interest group mobilization at the national level.

5.1 Policy-making systems in process of change

In chapter three, emphasis was put on the considerable changes in policy-making systems since 1990. The presentation identified the implications of consecutive reform processes at EU level, in terms of its agriculture and food policies. With regard to the former, income support mechanisms have replaced previous price-level support mechanisms. Moreover, the introduction of de-coupling has made the payment of CAP subsidies contingent on farmers meeting additional standards, in terms of food safety etc. And last, but not least, the Lisbon

Treaty, 2009, introduced the co-decision procedure on CAP. Thus, the European Parliament is now to decide EU agricultural policy on equal terms as the Council.

The changes in EU food policy since the mid-1990s have undeniably been considerable. From constituting primarily an ad hoc approach, food policy now amounts to one of the most important policy areas in the EU. One implication of this enhancement in importance has been the transfer of policy making competence from national to EU level. A considerable share of food policy-making, including risk management, now occurs in the Commission's DG SANCO. Moreover, risk assessment is being carried out by the EFSA. Yet another innovation is the "from farm to fork" approach, which implies that EU food policy is to apply to all activities in the food production chain.

Changes at the EU level seem to affect political developments at national level too. Norway, while not being an EU member state, still is committed to EU food policy arrangements through the EEA-agreement. Consequently, a contrasting picture emerges, in which Norway in terms of food policy, is almost completely integrated in the EU framework, whereas on agricultural policy she is not. Hence, the situation where agricultural actors, i.e. farmers and food producers, are protected from the EU's common agricultural market by high tariff barriers. Whereas on food policy, the Norwegian system appears to become increasingly similar to the system developed by the EU. One illustration being its accommodation to the EU's General Food Law. With regard to processes of agricultural policy making, one furthermore observes the persistence of the Norwegian General Agreement. By means of this arrangement, farm interest have the right to participate in annual negotiations with state authorities on future policy objectives.

Germany of course is full member of the EU. Consequently, both the EU's agricultural policy and food policy apply to German actors. With reference to the traditional close bonds between Norwegian agricultural interests and Norwegian authorities, similar patterns are identified in Germany too. The German Farmers' Union, DBV, was for some time the single speaking tube for German farmers' toward federal authorities. Although more agricultural interest groups gradually have emerged, the DBV holds close contact with national authorities in the present as well. However, the agricultural turning point in 2001 has brought perceptible change to the German political system, both in terms of agricultural policy and food policy. A consequent strengthening of policies' consumer profile seems to have contributed to a situation, whereby

agricultural and food policy making attract greater interest from the society in general. In other words, the number of stakeholders has seemingly increased.

5.2 Interest group behaviour in change too?

Three theoretical approaches have been made use of in order to analyse the influence channelization by agricultural interest groups in Norway and Germany. First, liberal intergovernmentalism which emphasises interest groups' perception of costs and/or benefits, i.e. issue salience, when explaining why they mobilize politically. Moreover, as the EU is anticipated to be an intergovernmental regime, LI assumes interest group activity mainly to be channelized toward national authorities. Second, historical institutionalism emphasise the presence of critical junctures, and processes of increasing returns when explaining interest groups' employment of channels of influence. In other words, if substantial change¹¹¹ is observed, this might be explained by the occurrence of a critical juncture. Moreover, if the employment of influence channels has remained unchanged, this might be explained by the occurrence of 'lock in' processes, i.e. increasing returns. Third, multi-level governance has been employed as an alternative approach to LI's anticipation of the EU political system. In other words, interest group activity at both domestic and European level is understood be an expression of the multi-level character of the EU polity. This furthermore would imply that decision making competence on agricultural and food policy is shared by multiple actors, including national authorities and the EU.

With regard to the findings in the analysis, some aspects in particular stand out. First, in terms of *how* agricultural interest groups adapt their activities to changing institutional structures at national and EU level, multi-level governance seems to offer the greater explanatory power. What the findings in chapter four suggest is a prevailing presence of domestic interest groups at multiple levels of governance. Norwegian interest groups, on issues related to agricultural and food policy, channelize a considerable share of their strategic efforts toward national authorities. In terms of agricultural policy, this behaviour is of course a natural consequence of the matter of fact that the majority of policy making competence is located at national level. On food policy, where Norway is integrated in the EU's framework, interest group activity is channelized toward European associations of interest groups too. Of the four Norwegian groups chosen for study, channelization of activity toward European associations

¹¹¹ i.e. changes in influence channel priority.

seems to be pursued most actively by the Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industries and the Norwegian Veterinary Association. What furthermore is identified, is that Norwegian interest groups do not seem to use channels toward EU institutions very frequently.

All German interest groups included in this study to some extent channelize activity toward multiple levels of governance. Furthermore, what stands out, if compared with the Norwegian observations, is German interest groups continuous presence in Brussels. From offices in Germany and Brussels, they are channelizing efforts toward both European associations and directly toward EU institutions. With regard to the latter, the greater presence of German officials in EU institutions is assumed to be helpful in establishing direct contact between institutions and interest groups. Nevertheless, one observes a European approach by German interest groups, which to a greater extent is flexible in terms of selecting channel of influence.

These findings are assumed to be an expression of the multi-level character of the EU. It seems plausible to expect interest group activity to be present wherever decision-making competence is located. Hence, the presence of agricultural interest groups at both national and European level.

Second, with reference to the last part of the research question – *how* to explain eventual changes in interest groups' strategies toward decision making authorities – both liberal intergovernmentalism and historical institutionalism offer some extent of explanatory power.

The liberal component of LI – the emphasis on interest groups' cost/benefit perceptions from EU policy-making, i.e. issue salience – to some extent seem to explain *why* interest groups mobilize politically. As both EU agricultural policy and food policy contain elements of commercial liberalization, amendments in one or the other direction are expected to impose costs and/or benefits on individual producers. Furthermore, the competitive position in domestic and international markets is assumed to influence individual producers' perception of new policies as positive or negative for business. What the analysis moreover seems to suggest is that costs and/or benefits need to be perceived of as 'certain, significant and risky' in order for interest groups to mobilize politically.

The third main observation in the analysis is the apparent continuity in interest groups' prioritization of channels of influence. With regard to HI's emphasis on critical juncture, two events were highlighted as plausible junctures in interest group patterns of behaviour; the

delegation of decision making competence from national to EU level and the completion of major EU CAP reform. What the findings seem to suggest is that neither of these have constituted critical junctures in Norwegian and German agricultural interest groups' behaviour since 1990. With regard to the Norwegian case, on which an analysis of post-1990 historical developments of interest groups have been undertaken, some extent of presence at European and national level is identified at least from the early 1990s. With reference to the critical juncture assumptions, no radical change in interest groups' selection of influence channel is identified. However, what is identified is a gradual increase in Norwegian interest groups European presence, in particular by the ones who from the outset seemed to emphasise the importance of maintaining/establishing contact with European level actors.

With regard to the German findings, one need to keep in mind the somewhat limited basis for analysis, as written material has been more difficult to get hold of. Nevertheless, the German interest groups who were subject for analysis, appear to have held some kind of presence at European level for considerable time. Here too, however, one identifies a strengthened presence in Brussels during the historical period subject for analysis. All interest groups, except for one, have established offices in Brussels. In other words, although the suggested critical junctures do not seem to have generated substantial change in German interest groups' channelization of strategic activities, one observes an expansion in terms of the employment of European channels. Moreover, the channelization of strategic efforts on issues related to EU agricultural policy seems to have changed in the aftermath of the Lisbon Treaty. One informant from the German Farmers' Union, DBV, notes that the European Parliament has become an ever more important target for strategic activities. Thus, although not having constituted critical junctures in interest group behaviour, one nevertheless observes some contribution by the suggested events to interest groups' enhanced presence at European level.

In the analysis, Pierson's conception of increasing returns processes is identified as one plausible approach in terms of *how to explain* eventual continuity in the interest groups' employment of channels of influence. There indeed seems to be some evidence to suggest that participation in activities at European level generates positive feed-back for the actors whose interests are represented by these interest groups. In that regard, what is highlighted is German interest groups' tendency to, first and foremost, emphasise economic aspects, whereas Norwegian interest groups tend to emphasise the knowledge/learning aspects. This might suggest that EU agriculture and food policy-making has a greater direct effect on German

actors, in terms of economic costs/benefits. However, knowledge and learning aspects could be translated into economic benefits too, as business get to prepare for what is coming from Brussels. In fact, there seems to be a prevailing expectancy of EU agriculture and food policy-making to become ever more important in the years to come.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

This study applies liberal intergovernmentalism (LI) and historical institutionalism (HI) theory in order to approach the research question. Moreover, multi-level governance (MLG) is included as a means to assess whether findings correspond to the framework condition characteristics as set out in LI or MLG. The theoretical approach appears to be useful for analyses of interest groups' strategic behaviour, in particular if the topic chosen for study touches upon EU policies. On the one hand, MLG and LI offer two seemingly distinct expectations of how interest groups operate, in terms of channelization of strategic efforts. On the other hand, LI and HI variables both seem to offer some explanatory power of why interest groups act as they do. That being said, one ought to keep in mind that interest group behaviour, in terms of interest channelization, might plausibly be explained by other theoretical approaches too. The continued accumulation of research on similar topics, however, by means of different theoretical approaches and methods, is undoubtedly believed to strengthen our basis for explanation.

With regard to the research undertaken in this thesis, in particular one aspect is recognized as promising for further research, namely the inclusion of the retail segment in the analysis. In light of the ongoing discussion on the balance of power in the food chain, it is indeed regrettable that the third segment, retail, was left out of the analysis. By including this latter group, and the interest groups of which, one possibly would achieve greater insight on the Norwegian and German food production chain as a whole. With reference to the apparent shift in balance of power to the advantage of the retail segment (Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food 2011b), one might observe greater and more diverse levels of retail strategic activity too.

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Appendix

Appendix nr. 1: Interview guide for Norwegian interest group representatives

Introduksjon:

- Tema for avhandlingen
- Informere informant om hans / hennes betydning for prosjektet
- Forsikre informanten at informasjonen han eller hun gir, vil bli behandlet i tråd med forskningsetiske prinsipper, og at han eller hun vil forbli anonym. (spør også om han ønsker å forbli anonym, eller om det er greit at sitater benyttes i oppgaven)

Bakgrunnsinformasjon:

- Nøkkelinformasjon om interessegruppe – hvem den representerer, dets posisjon / funksjon på nasjonalt/overnasjonalt nivå.
- Informantens posisjon, funksjon og oppgaver i interessegruppen
- Hvor lenge?
- Fulltid/deltid?
- Tidligere relevante posisjoner

Spørsmål basert på Liberal intergovernmentalisme

- Hvilke problemstillinger/saker innenfor EUs CAP og matpolitikk er av størst interesse for din/deres organisasjon? Hva er din/deres posisjon på disse sakene?
- Hvor ofte er du i kontakt med nasjonale statlige myndigheter på disse sakene?
 - o Hvilke deler av det nasjonale byråkratiet?
 - o På hvilke saker henvender dere dere til nasjonale myndigheter for å utøve innflytelse? (på det landbruks- og matpolitiske området)
 - o På hvilke saker velger dere å kanalisere deres innsats, for å påvirke prosesser, gjennom EU-nivå?
 - I hvilken grad vil du si deg enig i påstanden om at "type kontakt (nasjonal / overnasjonal) avhenger av type saker? Hvis informant er enig; kan han/hun identifisere skillet?
 - o Hvor godt posisjonert anser du din organisasjon å være, med tanke på å få tilgang til nasjonale myndigheter? Hvor nært er samspillet?
 - Formalisert kontakt (gjennom faste møtearenaer/komiteer) eller mer uformell kontakt?

Engasjement i politiske beslutningsprosesser på inter-/overnasjonalt nivå

- Hva er din erfaring/inntrykk med/av koordineringen av nasjonale preferanser på/-tvers av forskjellige nivåer, *i forkant av møter i EU?*
 - mellom interessegrupper
 - mellom offentlige myndigheter (departementer, direktorater etc.)

- mellom stat og interessegruppe
- Opplever du en koordinering av preferanser mellom stat og interessegrupper *under* politiske prosesser / forhandlinger på EU-nivå?

Det politiske saksområdets i øyenfallenhet:

- Er landbruks- og matpolitikk generelt ansett for å være konfliktutsatte saksområder i det norske/tyske samfunnet?
- Hvilke saksområder innenfor den landbruks- og matpolitiske sektor anser du for å være spesielt konflikt genererende? (med mye interesse motsetninger)
- Er det områder som ikke genererer konflikter og uenighet?
- Har du et inntrykk av hvordan fordelingen av nasjonale interessegrupper som sikter mot innflytelse på nasjonale myndigheter i landbruks- og matpolitiske saker er? (utvalg av næringslivs- /ikke-økonomiske interesser som er involvert - antall grupper til stede)
- Observerer du variasjon i interessegruppers / private aktørers tilstedeværelse/grad av mobilisering (omtrentlig antall aktører) ut fra hvilke saksområder som er oppe til diskusjon? (f.eks utelukkende landbruks-/mat politiske saker)
- Hvilke interessegrupper ser du på som deres konkurrenter i "kampen for innflytelse"?
- Sakskopling med andre interessegrupper som representerer ulike segmenter i samfunnet (alliansebygging), eller "lukket"/sektorisert interesseaggregering med aktører som representerer overlappende interesser?
- CAP og EUs matpolitikk, fordel eller ulempe for deres medlemmer?

Spørsmål basert på Multi-level governance

- Hvilken autoritet oppfatter du som å være det viktigste målet for innflytelse?
 - EU (direkte kontakt og / eller via euro-gruppe)
 - Nasjonale myndigheter (indirekte kobling til EU)
- Er din organisasjon tilstedeværende på europeisk nivå? Siden når?
- Hvis ja, kan du fortelle meg mer spesifikt hvordan?
 - I hvilken organisasjon(er)/arena(er) er dere tilstedeværende/ involvert?
 - Hvilken medlemskapsstatus har dere i organisasjonen(e)? Hva er implikasjonene av denne statusen?
 - Hvordan er beslutningsregelen i eurogruppen? Konsensus? Er det en effektiv arena for påvirkning?
 - Er din organisasjon i direkte kontakt med EU organer/representanter?
 - Hvis ja, hvilke EU-institusjoner representerer de?
- Hvor mye verdsetter din organisasjon resultatene fra aktiviteter på europeisk nivå, sammenlignet med resultatene fra deres aktiviteter på nasjonalt nivå?
 - Opptrer dere på forskjellig måte når det kommer til å påvirke politiske prosesser på EU-nivå (euro-gruppe inkl.), og politiske prosesser på nasjonalt nivå?

- Tatt i betraktning ulike rammebetingelser for påvirkningsarbeid (direkte/indirekte, oppstrøm/nedstrøm)
 - Kan du nevne et eksempel på en vellykket tilnærming fra deres side som er blitt oppnådd på EU-nivå?
 - Når du tar i betraktning den totale størrelsen på organisasjonen, i form av arbeidskraft, kompetanse, økonomi osv., hvor mye ressurser er viet til EU-relaterte aktiviteter?
 - Har din organisasjon enheter som utelukkende jobber med EU-relaterte saker?
 - Har dere en permanent representasjon til EU?
 - Er det utfordringer knyttet til å være tilstede både på nasjonalt og europeisk nivå som du vil peke på? Kan du nevne noen konkrete eksempler?

Spørsmål basert på historisk institusjonalisme

- Dersom en legger til grunn en forståelse av strategi som valg av innflytelses kanal(er), hva har vært denne organisasjonens tradisjonelle tilnærmingen? (Hvordan har dere gått frem?)
- Har det vært noen vesentlige endringer i strategiske disposisjoner opp gjennom årene?
- Eventuelt nye organisatoriske endringer for bedre å kunne forfølge strategiske mål?
- Hvis ja, kan du peke på noen spesielle hendelser i tid, som har medvirket til endringer i organisasjons strategiske disposisjoner/apparat? (f.eks; styrket tilstedeværelse på EU / nasjonalt nivå, koordinering med andre aktører etc.)

Multipelt ekvilibrium/inertia:

- Med tanke på omfanget av tilgjengelige innflytelseskanaler overfor nasjonale myndigheter og EU, vil du si at dette har utvidet (større) eller innsnevret (mindre) seg siden den gang? (alternativt siden midten av 90-tallet) (NB; få informasjon om omfanget mot nasjonale myndigheter og EU, separat)

Feed back:

- Spesifiser kapasitet: enten i form av materielle evner (nye lokasjoner, enheter), økonomisk vinning, teknologisk utvikling, organisatoriske evner (rekruttering av nye medarbeidere og ny kompetanse), idémessig (læring, erfaring)
- I hvilken grad har aktiviteter utledet fra deres strategier generert (tilført) nye kapasiteter i deres organisasjon?
 - Hva er ditt generelle inntrykk av tilførselen av nye kapasiteter gjennom de siste 10-15 årene?
- Blir kostnader (i form av tapte inntekter etc.) også generert? Hvis ja, hvilke? Hvor følsomme er elementene i deres strategier for eventuelle kostnader?

Forventninger om tilpasning:

- Ved utformingen av nye strategier, i hvilken grad blir de strategiske disposisjonene - hvis kjent – hos deres "konkurrenter" tatt i betraktning? (tilpasning til andres virkemåte)

Institusjonell robusthet (målt ved de estimerte kostnadene ved exit):

- Hvis dere hadde droppet deres tilstedeværelse/engasjement på nasjonalt eller overnasjonalt nivå, hva ville konsekvensene for organisasjonen og dens medlemmer blitt?
- Anser du et slikt scenario som plausibelt?

Oppsummering:

- Avklaringer
- Oppmuntre informant til å tilføye informasjon han / hun anser for å være relevant, alternativt emner / spørsmål som han / hun føler jeg har viet lite oppmerksomhet til.

Appendix nr. 2: Interview guide for Norwegian diplomats

Introduksjon:

- Tema for avhandlingen
- Informere informant om hans / hennes betydning for prosjektet
- Forsikre informanten at informasjonen han eller hun gir, vil bli behandlet i tråd med forskningsetiske prinsipper, og at han eller hun vil forbli anonym. (spør også om han ønsker å forbli anonym, eller om det er greit at sitater benyttes i oppgaven)

Bakgrunnsinformasjon:

- Nøkkelinformasjon om delegasjonen – hvem den representerer, dets funksjon på nasjonalt/overnasjonalt nivå.
- Informantens posisjon, funksjon og oppgaver på delegasjonen.
- Hvor lenge?
- Fulltid/deltid?
- Tidligere relevante posisjoner

Spesifiser; med interessegrupper menes her *nasjonale interessegrupper med tilknytning til landbruks- og matsektoren*.

Spørsmål basert på Liberal intergovernmentalisme

- Hvilke saker innenfor EUs CAP og matpolitikk er av størst interesse for Norge? Hva er Norges posisjon på disse sakene?
- Hvor ofte blir delegasjonen kontaktet av nasjonale interessegrupper i forbindelse med CAP og matpolitikk?
 - o Hvilke interessegrupper er det som henvender seg til dere?
 - o Hvilke saker er norske interessegrupper opptatt av når de henvender seg til dere?
 - o Hvilke ”tjenester” er det de er ute etter? (Informasjon, påvirkning – i form av at delegasjonen tar saken videre til EU, annet)
- Hvor godt posisjonert anser du Norge å være, med tanke på å få tilgang til, og påvirke, EU i spørsmål som angår landbruks- og matpolitikk? (må nødvendigvis utformes annerledes for Tyskland)
 - o Hvilke EU institusjoner er dere oftest i kontakt med på disse spørsmålene? /Er der institusjoner dere gjerne skulle hatt mer kontakt med?
 - o Hvor mottakelige er de respektive institusjonene for norske synspunkter?
 - o Eventuelt andre kanaler som anvendes/er tilgjengelige?

Engasjement i politiske beslutningsprosesser på inter-/overnasjonalt nivå:

- Hva er din erfaring med koordineringen av nasjonale preferanser på/-tvers av forskjellige nivåer, *i forkant* av møter på EU-nivå?
 - mellom interessegrupper
 - mellom offentlige myndigheter (departementer, direktorater etc.)
 - mellom stat og interessegruppe
- Opplever du en koordinering av preferanser mellom stat og interessegrupper *under* politiske prosesser / forhandlinger på EU-nivå?

Det politiske saksområdets i øyenfallenheter:

- Er landbruks- og matpolitikk generelt ansett for å være konfliktutsatte saksområder i Norge?
- Hvilke saksområder innenfor den landbruks - og matpolitiske sektor anser du for å være spesielt konflikt genererende? (med mye interesse motsetninger)
- Er det områder som ikke genererer konflikter og uenighet?
- Har du et inntrykk av hvordan fordelingen av nasjonale interessegrupper som ønsker innflytelse på nasjonale myndigheter i landbruks- og matpolitiske saker er? (utvalg av økonomiske /ikke-økonomiske interesser som er involvert)
- Hvilke motstridende interesser kommer til syne i ”konkurransen om innflytelse”. Hvilke interessegrupper står som regel ”mot hverandre”?
- Observerer du variasjon i interessegruppers tilstedeværelse/grad av mobilisering ut fra hvilke saksområder som er oppe til diskusjon? (for eksempel utelukkende landbruks-/mat politiske saker)
- CAP og EUs matpolitikk, fordel eller ulempe for Norge?

Spørsmål basert på Multi-level governance

- Hvilket inntrykk har du av norske interessegruppers *tilstedeværelse* på EU-nivå?
 - Hvilke sektorer/organisasjoner innenfor norsk landbruks- og matsektor fremstår som mest aktive på EU-nivå etter ditt syn?
 - Hvilke er i større grad fraværende?
- Hva er inntrykket ditt av norske interessegruppers opptreden her i Brüssel?
 - Hvilke arenaer søker de seg mot? Spesifisering: Europeiske fellesorganisasjoner – direkte forbindelser med EU institusjoner.
 - Opplever du en forskjell mellom norske interessegruppers opptreden i Brüssel og i Norge?
 - Tatt i betraktning ulike rammebetingelser for påvirkningsarbeid (direkte/indirekte, oppstrøm/nedstrøm)
- Kjenner du til eksempler på vellykkede tilnærminger på EU-nivå fra norske interessegrupper?
- Er det utfordringer knyttet til å være tilstede både på nasjonalt og europeisk nivå som du vil peke på? Kan du nevne noen konkrete eksempler?

Spørsmål basert på historisk institusjonalisme

- Dersom en legger til grunn en forståelse av strategi som valg av innflytelses kanal(er), hva har vært norske interessegruppers tradisjonelle tilnærming?
- Har du observert noen vesentlige endringer i norske interessegruppers strategiske disposisjoner opp gjennom årene?
- Hvor lenge har norske interessegrupper vært tilstede/aktive på EU-nivå?
 - o Sett i et historisk perspektiv på 10-15 år, vil du si at deres tilstedeværelse har vært tiltakende eller forholdsvis stabil, evt. synkende?
- Er det spesifikke hendelser i tid, som du tror kan ha medvirket til at norske interessegrupper har endret sine strategiske disposisjoner? (underforstått; styrket sin tilstedeværelse på EU, eventuelt andre elementer)

Multipelt ekvilibrium/inertia:

- Med tanke på omfanget av tilgjengelige innflytelseskanaler for nasjonale interessegrupper overfor 1) nasjonale myndigheter og 2) EU, vil du si at dette har blitt større eller mindre siden den gang / evt. siste 10-15 årene. (NB; få informasjon om omfanget mot nasjonale myndigheter og EU, separat)

Feed back:

- o Spesifiser kapasitet: enten i form av materielle evner (nye lokasjoner, enheter), økonomisk vinning, teknologisk utvikling, organisatoriske evner (rekruttering av nye medarbeidere og ny kompetanse), idémessig (læring, erfaring)
- Hvilket utbytte anslår du at norske interessegrupper har av å være tilstede på EU-nivå?
 - o Spesifiser: utbytte forstått som tilførsel av *kapasiteter* til organisasjonen.
- Blir kostnader (i form av tapte inntekter etc.) også generert? Hvis ja, hvilke?

Forventninger om tilpasning:

- Observerer du stor grad av likhet i hvordan interessegrupper opptrer på EU-/nasjonalt nivå? Eller er det store variasjoner?

Institusjonell robusthet:

- Dersom norske interessegrupper valgte å oppgi sin tilstedeværelse på EU-nivå, hvilke konsekvenser ville det hatt for organisasjonene og deres medlemmer?
- Anser du et slikt scenario som plausibelt?

Oppsummering:

- Avklaringer
- Oppmuntre informant til å tilføye informasjon han / hun anser for å være relevant, alternativt emner / spørsmål som han / hun føler jeg har viet lite oppmerksomhet til.

Appendix nr. 3: Interview guide for German interest group representatives

Introduction:

- The topic of the thesis
- Inform the informant about his/her importance for the project
- Assure the informant that the information he or she provides will be treated in line with research ethical principles, and that he or she will remain anonymous.

Background information:

- Key information about interest group – who is it representing, its' function at domestic/supranational level.
- Informant's position, functioning, tasks in the interest group
- For how long?
- Full time/part time?
- Earlier positions of relevance

Questions grounded on Liberal intergovernmentalism

- What issues within the EU CAP and Food Policy are of most interest to your organization? What is your position on these issues?
- How frequent are you in contact with national state authorities on these matters?
 - o Which parts of the national bureaucracy?
 - o On what issues do you interact with national authorities in order to exert influence?
 - o On what issues do you choose to channelize your influence efforts at EU level?
 - To what extent do you agree with the assertion that “type of contact depends on type of issues? If informant agrees; can he/she identify the dividend?
- How well positioned do you consider your organization to be, in terms of getting access to national authorities? How close is the interaction?

Involvement in policy making processes at inter-/supranational level:

- What is your experience/impression with the co-ordination of national preferences at various levels *prior* to meetings in the EU?
 - between interest groups
 - between public authorities (ministries, directorates etc.)
 - between state and interest group
- Do you experience co-ordination of preferences/positions between state and interest groups in *during* policy making processes/negotiations at EU level?

Salience of policy issue:

- Are agriculture- and food policies in general considered being conflict prone issue areas in the German society?
- What issue areas within the agricultural and food policy sector do you consider to be particularly conflict/dispute generating?
- Are there issue areas which do not generate conflict/controversy?
- Do you have an impression of the distribution of domestic interest groups (range of business/non-business interests involved) seeking influence on national authorities on agricultural and food policy matters?
- Do you observe any variation in interest group mobilization depending on what issue area is in the spotlight? (e.g. exclusively agricultural- / food policy issues)
- Which interest groups do you look upon as being your competitors in the “struggle for influence”?
- Issue linkage with multiple interest groups representing different segments in society, or “closed”/sectorized interest aggregation with actors representing overlapping interests?
- CAP and the EU’s Food policy, advantage or disadvantage for your members?

Questions grounded on Multi-level governance

- Which authority do you perceive to be the most important target for influence?
 - o The EU (direct interaction and/or via euro-group)
 - o National authorities (the indirect linkage to EU)
- Is your organization present at European level? Since when?
- If yes, can you tell me more specifically how?
 - o In which organization(s)/arenas are you present/involved?
 - o What is your membership status in the organization(s)?
 - What are the implications of this status?
 - o Is your organization in direct contact with EU representatives?
 - If yes, which EU institutions do they represent?
- How much does your organization value the outcome from activities at European level, when compared to the outcomes from your activities at domestic level?
 - o Is there a difference in your organization’s appearance/occurrence when seeking influence on policy processes at EU level (euro group included), and policy processes at national level? (different framework conditions..)
- Could you mention an example of a successful approach accomplished by your organization at EU level?
- When taking into consideration the overall size of your organization, in terms of manpower, expertise, financial strength etc., how many resources is devoted to EU related activities?
 - o Does your organization have unit(s) specially assigned to EU related issues?
 - o Do you have a permanent representation to the EU?

- Are there challenges related to being present at both national and European level which you would like to point to? Any concrete examples?

Questions grounded on Historical institutionalism

- When applying an understanding of strategy as the deliberate selection of influence channel(s), what has been your organization's traditional approach? (How have you proceeded?)
- Have there been any major shifts in strategic dispositions over the years?
- Any new organizational amendments in order to better pursue strategic goals?
- Are there specific events in time, which you would say have contributed to changes in the strategic dispositions of your organization? (example, strengthened presence at EU- level, domestic level, coordination with other actors etc.)

Multiple equilibrium/inertia:

- In terms of the scope of accessible influence channels toward 1) national authorities and 2) the EU, would you say that it has widened or narrowed since then / alt. the last 10-15 years? (NB; get info on scope toward national authorities and EU, separately)

Feed back:

Specify: whether in terms of material capabilities (new locations, units), economic income, technological advancement, organizational capabilities (recruitment of new staff and henceforth new expertise), ideational (learning, experience)

- To what extent do activities derived from your strategies generate/supply your organization with capabilities?
 - o What is your general impression of the supply of capabilities to your organization over the last 10-15 years?
- Are costs (in terms of loss of revenue etc.) being generated as well? If yes, which? How sensitive are the elements of your strategy to these costs?

Adaptive expectations:

- When formulating new strategic packages, to what extent are the strategic choices – if known – of your 'competitors'/other actors taken into account?

Institutional stickiness (measured by the estimated costs of exit):

- If you were to drop your presence at 1) domestic or 2) supranational level, what would the anticipated consequences for your organization and its members be like?
- Do you render the above described scenario plausible?

Sum up:

- Clarifications

- Encourage informant to add information he/she regards to be relevant, alternatively topics/questions that he/she feels I have paid little attention to.
- Any literature/informants on the German agriculture and food policy sector which you would recommend me to contact?

Appendix nr. 4: Interview guide for Brussels diplomat

Introduction:

- The topic of the thesis
- Inform the informant about his/her importance for the project
- Assure the informant that the information he or she provides will be treated in line with research ethical principles, and that he or she will remain anonymous.

Background information:

- Key information about the agency to which the informant belongs – who is it representing, its function at domestic and supranational level.
- Informant's position, functioning, tasks in the agency
- For how long?
- Full time/part time?
- Earlier positions of relevance

Specification; When referring to German interest groups, I refer to the ones who are attached to the agriculture- and food sector.

Questions grounded on Liberal intergovernmentalism

- What issues within the EU CAP and Food Policy are of most interest to Germany? What is Germany's position on these issues?
- How often is the agency being contacted by national interest groups on issues related to the CAP and EU Food policy?
 - o Which interest groups is it that contacts you?
 - o What issues are German interest groups occupied with when they contact you?
 - o What "services" do they request for? (information – influence in terms of making their voice heard in decision making arenas in the EU)
- How well positioned do you consider Germany to be, in terms of influencing the EU on issues related to its Common agriculture and Food policy?
 - o In which agriculture and food policy decision making arenas/bodies are German authorities present? Which parts of the German authority are present?
 - o Are there agriculture and food policy arenas at EU level to which you experience a lesser degree of access?
 - o How receptive are EU Agriculture- and Food policy institutions to German points of view?

Involvement in policy making processes at inter-/supranational level:

- What is your experience with the co-ordination of national preferences at various levels *prior* to meetings in the EU?
 - between interest groups
 - between public authorities (ministries, directorates etc.)
 - between state and interest group
- Do you experience co-ordination of preferences/positions between state and interest groups in *during* policy making processes/negotiations at EU level?

Salience of policy issue:

- Are agricultural and food policies in general considered being conflict prone issue areas in the German society?
- What issue areas within the agricultural and food policy sector do you consider to be particularly conflict generating?
- Are there issue areas which do not generate conflict/controversy?
- Do you have an impression of the distribution of domestic interest groups (range of business/non-business interests involved) seeking influence on national authorities in agricultural and food policy matters?
- Which contradictory interests do appear in the German “competition for influence”? Which interest groups appear to embody these contradictory interests?
- Do you observe any variation in interest group mobilization depending on what issue area is in the spotlight? (e.g. exclusively agricultural- / food policy issues)
- CAP and the EU’s Food policy, advantage or disadvantage for your members?

Questions grounded on Multi-level governance

- Which authority do you perceive to be most influential on German agriculture- and food policy?
 - The EU
 - The Federal authorities
 - The Federated states / Länder
- What is your impression of German interest groups’ *presence* at EU-level?
 - Which sectors/organizations within the German agriculture- and food sector stand out as most active at EU-level in your opinion?
 - Which sectors/organizations stand out as less active?
- What is your impression with German interest groups’ appearance here in Brussels?
 - Towards which arenas do they orientate? (Specification; eurogroups or direct relations with EU institutions)
 - Do you observe a difference in German interest groups’ appearance in Brussels and in Germany/Berlin? (different framework conditions..)
- Do you know examples of successful approaches made by German interest groups at EU level?
- Are there challenges associated with being present at both national and European level which you would like to point to? Any concrete examples?

Questions grounded on Historical institutionalism

- When applying an understanding of strategy as the deliberate selection of influence channel(s), what has been German interest groups' traditional approach?
- Have you observed any major shifts in German interest groups' strategic dispositions over the years?
- For how long have German interest groups been present at EU-level?
 - o When seen in an historical perspective of 10-15 years, would you say that their presence has increased, decreased or stabilized?
- Are there specific events in time, which you would say have contributed to changes in the strategic dispositions of German interest groups? (example, strengthened presence at EU- level, etc.)

Multiple equilibrium/inertia:

- In terms of the scope of influence channels, available to German interest groups, toward 1) national authorities and 2) the EU, would you say that it has widened or narrowed since then / alt. the last 10-15 years? (NB; get info on scope toward national authorities and EU, separately)

Feed back:

- What benefit/return do you reckon/consider German interest groups to have from being present at EU-level?
 - o Specify; benefit understood as the supply of capabilities to the organization; whether in terms of material capabilities (new locations, units), economic income, technological advancement, organizational capabilities (recruitment of new staff and henceforth new expertise), ideational (learning, experience)
- Are costs (in terms of loss of revenue etc.) being generated as well? If yes, which?

Adaptive expectations:

- Do you observe a great extent of conformity in terms of how German interest groups appear at EU-/national level? Or is there considerable variance.

Institutional stickiness (measured by the estimated costs of exit):

- If German interest groups were to drop their presence at EU level, what would the anticipated consequences for the organizations and their members be like?
- Do you render the above described scenario plausible?

Sum up:

- Clarifications
- Encourage informant to add information he/she regards to be relevant, alternatively topics/questions that he/she feels I have paid little attention to.

- Any literature/informants on the German agriculture and food policy sector which you would recommend me to contact?