Nonprofit Advocacy Reconfigured?
Resource Mobilization, Political Opportunity
and Organizational Change

Daniel Arnesen

Dissertation submitted for the
degree of Philosophiae doctor (Ph.D.)

Department of Sociology and Human Geography
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Oslo
2019
Acknowledgements

The work on this thesis has been a rewarding, even exciting experience, but as with most things also challenging and demanding. It would not have been possible without the help, advice and support of a number of people to whom I am greatly indebted.

First of all, I am grateful for the advice, support and commitment that Karl Henrik Sivesind has provided in the role as my main supervisor. Karl Henry was the one who hired me to work as a research assistant on the research project "Organizational community in transition," which would later become the basis for not only my master’s thesis but also this dissertation. Working on my project, I have benefited greatly from the advice, support and enthusiasm he has offered, and having been able to share in his knowledge and insight into the world of nonprofit and voluntary organizations. Although it undoubtedly has been a challenging undertaking to write this thesis, it would have been far more difficult without Karl Henrik, and I feel both thankful and privileged for having had him as my supervisor.

Lars Mjøset has been my co-supervisor and provided very helpful and valuable input in the early and late stages of my thesis project. Being able to discuss my ideas with him and to draw on his experience has not only provided me with motivation, and helped give perspective to my work and place it into a larger sociological context. I am most grateful to Lars for the advice and insight he has provided in the role as co-supervisor, which most certainly has contributed to improving the final product.

A special thank you is also extended to Kari Steen-Johnsen, who has been the research director of the research group on the Politics, democracy and civil society at the Institute for Social Research. During my time as a PhD fellow at the institute, Kari has taken time out of her schedule for a talk when I have needed it, providing encouragement and advice that has helped me through the process of writing this thesis. I am thankful for all the help she has offered.

Furthermore, it has been an honor to have had the opportunity to work on this thesis at the Institute for Social Research, with its important historical role in the development of social research in Norway. My thesis project has been carried out as part of research projects at the Centre for Research on Civil Society and Voluntary Sector. Bernard Enjolras has been director of the center for most of my time as a research fellow, while Guro Ødegård was held this role when I started. I thank them both for the encouragement they have shown me. A thank you also goes to all the colleagues that have worked at the center during my time as a research fellow, and whom I have learned much from during seminars and discussions.

I have also been part of the research group on Politics, democracy and civil society. My colleagues here have shared their experience, insight and expertise, and provided a warming and inclusive working environment. It has been a privilege to be part of the group, and I extend a large thank you for having taken me in. A special thank you is extended to fellow PhD fellows, Øyvind Bugge Solheim and Nanna Fredheim. In addition, I would like to thank the following from the institute for their feedback on my work at different stages: Atle H. Haugsgjerd, Audun Fladmoe, Dag Wollebæk, Dina Heider Hov, Even Lange, Fredrik Engelstad, Håkon Solbu Trætteberg, Jo Saglie, Johannes Bergh, Marte Winswold, Rune
Karlsen, Signe Bock Segaard, and Trygve Gulbrandsen. The administration at the Institute for Social Research also deserves a thank you for all the support provided.

A big thank you to also to my family and friends, who have seen me through these years of working on the thesis. Most of all, however, I would like to thank Christina for all her love, patience and support, and for reminding me that some things in life are more important than others.
Summary

Advocacy is an essential role of nonprofit and voluntary associations. Through advocacy activities, they contribute in important ways to democratic governance by representing the interests of citizens, influencing public policies and holding government and businesses accountable. In doing so, nonprofit and voluntary associations function as civil society organizations that maintain regular contact with political authorities and the public administration as part of the policymaking process, and in some cases also the policy implementation, such as in the distribution of government funding. However, social groups and forces have differing capacities to mobilize and organize for political action, and not all civil society organizations are necessarily able to make their voice heard. Arguably, understanding how and under what conditions different interests are mobilized, organized and represented in the policy process through civil society is fundamental to the study of contemporary democratic governance.

In Norway and the neighboring Scandinavian countries, nonprofit and voluntary associations have played a distinctive role as intermediary structures between individual citizens and the political and administrative system. Through participation in democratic membership associations integrated in the political and administrative structure through a system of “corporate pluralism”, broad segments of the population were brought into contact with decisive opinion- and decision-making processes. Over the past decades, however, there have been a number of profound changes in Norwegian civil society and its relationship with the state. Among some of the most important changes are: the mobilization of new types of citizen groups, the rise of decentralized and specialized organizational forms, increasing bureaucratization and professionalization, a shift from corporatism to lobbyism, and a new contract culture between civil society and the state. These developments have given rise to concerns about a weakening of the role played by nonprofit and voluntary associations as civil society organizations in the democratic infrastructure.

This thesis examines the implications of these recent changes of Norwegian civil society and its relationship with the state for the role and involvement of nonprofit and voluntary associations in the policymaking process, focusing on the period between 1976 and 2013. By doing so, the thesis aims first to provide theoretical and empirical knowledge about processes of organizational and institutional change in Norwegian civil society, and what this means for the role of nonprofit advocacy in linking citizens to the political and administrative system. Second, it also seeks to contribute to the debate on the changing role of nonprofit and voluntary associations in democratic governance in Norway and Scandinavia. The overall research problem addressed in the thesis is: “How have changes in Norwegian civil society and its relationship with the state affected the involvement of nonprofit and voluntary associations in the policymaking process, and what are the implications for their role as civil society organizations in the democratic infrastructure?”

Theoretically, the thesis contributes to the understanding of nonprofit advocacy engagement by developing a framework that takes a resource mobilization and political opportunity perspective as a starting point for conceptualizing how organizational and institutional change affects the involvement of nonprofit and voluntary associations in the policymaking process. The
analytical framework expands on existing theories by integrating insights from the more recent literature on nonprofit advocacy and interest groups. The empirical contribution of the thesis is based on a mixed methods approach that combines organization survey data covering the period from 1976 to 2013, and qualitative case studies of nonprofit umbrella organizations in a multi-phase study. It contributes by broadening and nuancing findings from existing Norwegian and Scandinavian research on nonprofit and voluntary associations in the policymaking process, and by providing empirical knowledge that adds to the larger international literature on nonprofit advocacy and interest groups.

The overall research problem is examined through three research questions that focus on different aspects of the relationship between resource mobilization, political opportunity and organizational change and the implications for nonprofit advocacy. More specifically, the questions asked are:

- How do changes in the resource mobilization patterns and political opportunity structures impact the representation of different types of nonprofit and voluntary associations in the policymaking process?
- Does government funding constrain nonprofit advocacy engagement or does it in fact encourage it and has the impact changed or diversified as public financial support for some nonprofit and voluntary organizations has increased?
- How does the involvement of umbrella organizations in public grant management affect their autonomy and capacity to promote and support nonprofit advocacy engagement within their organizational field?

Each of the three research questions are examined in separate empirical articles. The first article investigates how changing resource mobilization patterns and political opportunity structures affect nonprofit representation in the policymaking process through a study of citizen group advocacy. In the study, I argue that as the policy process has become less centered on privileged and institutionalized integration through “corporatist” institutions and has shifted to political lobbying, hearings and others forms of participation, this has created opportunities for new types of citizen groups to come into contact with political authorities and the public administration. However, because of the established position of traditional insiders, and the dependence of citizen groups on government support, they are expected to be less likely to access central decision-making arenas. This argument is examined by comparing survey data on Norwegian nonprofit and voluntary associations from 1976 and 2013. The analysis indicates that citizen groups have successfully managed to turn their mobilization into representation in the policymaking process, contributing to an advocacy landscape characterized by a greater variety of different interests and voices. But, in line with expectations, citizen groups are still less likely than traditional insiders to have regular contact with the parliament, government and ministries, with their political activity instead being directed towards directorates and agencies. This is mainly explained by differences in overall organizational resources, which is argued to reflect differing patterns of resource mobilization.

The second article expands on the first by examining the impact of government funding on nonprofit advocacy based on analysis of survey data on Norwegian nonprofit and voluntary associations from 1983 and 2013. Recent decades have seen an increase in government funding
for nonprofit and voluntary associations in Norway. This has been understood as part of a new contract culture between civil society and state. Some argue that this implies increased dependence on government in terms of finances and control, with potentially adverse consequences such as co-optation of organizations. In the study, I compare the hypothesis that increased government funding constrains nonprofit advocacy engagement through the effects of resource dependence and isomorphic institutional processes to a resource mobilization hypothesis. This hypothesis holds, in contrast, that government funding promotes nonprofit advocacy engagement by facilitating increased resource mobilization and enhancing the political capacity of nonprofit and voluntary associations. I also look at the impact of government funding on their involvement with decision-makers in the parliament, government and bureaucracy. The analysis indicates that government funding, measured both as amount and share of total revenues, is positively associated with nonprofit advocacy engagement overall, and the effect has increased with time. However, there is no discernible impact of government funding on the involvement of associations with the parliament, government or bureaucracy. The results are taken to provide partial support the resource mobilization hypothesis.

The third article is based on an explorative case study examining the involvement of nonprofit umbrella associations in public grant management, and the implications for their roles in civil society. I am concerned with whether and to what extent their autonomy and capacity to fulfill functions related to advocacy, support and coordination are affected positively or negatively by taking on responsibilities related to the management of public grants. The analysis focuses on five umbrella associations in the fields of culture, sports, recreation and youth and children’s activities, and is based on in-depth interviews with their leaders and document review of annual reports, strategic plans and policy documents. In the study, I show that their involvement in public grant management is related to bureaucratization and professionalization, goal displacement and other organizational impacts. Consequently, as expected there is a trade-off between autonomy and access to public resources. However, involvement in grant management does not appear adversely to affect their action capacities. Rather, the analysis points to unexpected, important synergies improving their civil society roles, such as strengthening linkages to policymakers, providing greater political influence and access to resources for organizational development, and increasing their authority and legitimacy as representatives of organizations within their organizational field.

Taken together the articles in the thesis provide theoretical and empirical insight into the role and involvement of nonprofit and voluntary associations in advocacy and the policymaking process in Norway. Overall, the findings are taken to indicate a more pluralist policymaking process characterized by a greater variety of interests and voices, even if traditional insider groups continue to have a dominant position because of their greater resources and strategic alignment. Government funding appears to be an important catalyst for nonprofit advocacy engagement by facilitating resource mobilization and enhancing the advocacy capacities of nonprofit and voluntary associations. Furthermore, through umbrella associations and less privileged organizations may overcome barriers of resource mobilization but it can also contribute to the reinforcing the dominant position of the insider group as they monopolize important resources. In the conclusion, I argue that these developments point to a reconfiguration rather than a weakening of the role of civil society organizations in the democratic infrastructure and suggest paths for future research.
# Table of Contents

1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 11

1.1. Do the Northern Lights Still Shine Bright? Scandinavian Civil Society at a Crossroads .......... 12

1.2 Civil Society and the State in Norway: An Inclusive Polity in a State-Friendly Society ............ 14

1.3 Theoretical Traditions and Emerging Agendas: Mobilization, Organization, Representation .... 15

1.4 Research Questions and Contributions .................................................................................. 16

1.5 The Structure of the Thesis .................................................................................................... 18

2 Norway: Organized Civil Society between Change and Stability ............................................. 20

2.1 Historical Overview: From Popular Movements to Leisure Associationalism ....................... 20

2.2 The Changing Contours of Civil Society in Norway ............................................................... 22

2.2.1 A Changing Associational Landscape ................................................................................. 22

2.2.2 From Hierarchy to Networks: Patterns of Institutional Change .......................................... 24

2.2.3 Members, Volunteers and Paid Staff .................................................................................. 25

2.2.4 Civil Society and the State in a Post-Corporatist Society ................................................... 26

3 Civil Society, Nonprofit Advocacy and Interest Representation ................................................ 28

3.1 Defining Civil Society, Nonprofits and Advocacy ................................................................. 28

3.1.1 Nonprofit and voluntary associations as civil society organizations ................................. 29

3.1.2 Conceptualizing nonprofit advocacy .................................................................................. 30

3.2 Democratic Governance and Interest Representation ........................................................... 32

3.2.1 The neo-corporatist model ................................................................................................. 32

3.2.2 The neo-pluralist model .................................................................................................... 34

3.2.3 The associative model ...................................................................................................... 35

4 Resource Mobilization, Political Opportunity and Organizational Change ............................ 36

4.1 The Resource Mobilization Perspective .................................................................................. 36

4.1.1. Types of resources and mechanisms ............................................................................... 36

4.2 Political opportunity and the policy process ......................................................................... 37

4.3. Access and resource exchange ........................................................................................... 38

4.4 Organizational and Institutional Perspectives: Nonprofit Advocacy, Government Funding, Organizational Networks ......................................................................................... 39

4.3.1. Explaining patterns of mobilization and nonprofit advocacy ........................................ 40

4.3.2. Nonprofit funding and resource mobilization and dependence ...................................... 41

4.3.3. Organizational forms and new modes of governance ..................................................... 42

5 Research Design and Methodology ........................................................................................ 43

5.1 Research Design .................................................................................................................... 43

5.2 Data sources ......................................................................................................................... 44
1 Introduction

Civil society—that sphere of “uncoerced human associations between the individual and the state, in which people undertake collective action for normative and substantive purposes, relatively independent of government and the market” (M. Edwards, 2012)—is an essential part of contemporary democratic governance. From a political and communicative perspective, it constitutes a space for value contention, from where individuals can develop democratic norms, values, and skills, express different political, cultural and social interests and counter state and economic power. In this view, voluntary associations, social movements and other types of civil society organizations (CSOs) represent essential ‘intermediary democratic structures’ between individual citizens and the political and administrative system.

Advocacy is considered a fundamental political role of civil society (Kramer, 1981). In this role, CSOs provide “a way to bring group concerns to broader public attention and to push for policy or broader social change, not only on behalf of those belonging to a group but also on behalf of the general public” (Salamon et al., 2000, 66). By participating in lobbying and other advocacy activities, they give a voice to individuals, communities and different kinds of private interests in the policymaking process. Furthermore, it is essential to the functioning of a democratic society because “the legitimacy of political power relies on public discussions, hearings and consultations with affected groups” (Enjolras & Sivesind, 2018, 96).

However, as Dahl (1982, p. 28) remarks that the political influence of CSOs is “at once a fact, a value and a source of harm”. Despite the potential of civil society to enhance democratic governance, there is also a risk that associations and interest groups contribute to distorting political discourse and decisions. Biases often arise in the policymaking process because social groups and forces have differing capacities for mobilizing and organizing for political action and making their voice heard (Schattschneider, 1961; Schlozman et al., 2012). Moreover, different configurations of civil society structures, political institutions and modes of interest representation—between countries and over time — give rise to variations in processes of mobilization and organization and opportunities for political voice (Janoski, 1998).

In Norway and the neighboring Scandinavian countries, nonprofit and voluntary associations have played a civil society role. Over the past decades, however, there have been a number of profound changes in Norwegian civil society and its relationship with the state. Among some of the most important changes are: the mobilization of new types of citizen groups, the rise of decentralized and specialized organizational forms, increasing bureaucratization and professionalization, a shift from corporatism to lobbyism, and a new contract culture between civil society and the state. These developments have given rise concerns about a weakening of the role played by nonprofit and voluntary associations as civil society organizations in the democratic infrastructure. This thesis examines these changes by studying the role of CSOs in advocacy and public policymaking in Norway. More specifically, it examines the implications of these recent changes of Norwegian civil society and its relationship with the state for the role and involvement of nonprofit and voluntary associations in the advocacy and policymaking process, focusing on the period between 1976 and 2013.
1.1. Do the Northern Lights Still Shine Bright? Scandinavian Civil Society at a Crossroads

A smooth passage to modernity with the outcome of a benevolent welfare state combined with a vibrant civil society measured in terms of membership affiliation and active civic engagement has set the Scandinavian countries apart from other regions in the world that in the past were far less successful in managing the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society peacefully and without major disruptions (Wijkström & Zimmer, 2011, p. 88).

In the international literature, the Scandinavian countries are often labeled as ‘social democratic’, owing to the commitment to social democratic values in providing generous universal social programs, lowering economic and social inequality and creating a compromise between organized business and labor interests (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Goodin, 1999; Titmuss, 1974). The pathways that Denmark, Norway and Sweden took to arrive at the modern social democratic welfare state were, of course, varied and complex. Still, there is no doubt that the growth of a vital and dynamic civil society alongside the state formed an important piece of the puzzle. Olson (1990) argued that part of the reason for the prosperity of the Scandinavian countries lay in the role of encompassing groups that advanced their self-interest not by seeking privilege through special interest legislation, but rather by working to maximize overall societal welfare. On this he wrote: “I believe there really are northern lights. They are beautiful. They can also give societies a rough sense of direction” (Olson, 1990, p. 91).

Adding to this perspective, social origins theory argues that because of the large responsibility of the public sector in welfare provision in social democratic regimes, the nonprofit and voluntary sector has a small share of welfare services but is relatively more active in promoting social, cultural and other interests (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). Thus, according to this theory, civil society takes on more of an expressive role in Scandinavia. Particularly important in this regard was the ‘popular movement tradition’: movements comprising democratically organized, member based and hierarchically structured civil organizations with broad ideological orientations and close relations to the state (Hvenmark & Wijkström, 2004; Tranvik & Selle, 2007). These movements played not only a significant role by expressing distinct values and being in conflict with government, but also “represented a force in the ideological and organizational transformation towards increased public responsibility” (Sivesind et al., 2002, p. 89).

Rothstein (2001, p. 215) argues that “one can hardly overestimate the importance of the popular movements for the type of democracy that came to characterize the Scandinavian countries since the turn of the century”. Internally, the movements formed democratic arenas for discussion and coordination among members, while externally, they linked different parts of society together, vertically and horizontally (Torpe, 2003). First, through their hierarchical structures they promoted integration and communication between the local and national levels of organization, and facilitated the aggregation of individual preferences into common interests. Second, they were integrated with the political and administrative structure through a system of ‘corporate pluralism’ (Rokkan, 1966), with institutionalized forms of policymaking and cooperation between civil society and state. This meant that they were able to bring broad segments of the population into contact with public opinion- and decision-making processes and have decisive influence on governmental policy (Wollebæk & Selle, 2008).
But do the northern lights still shine as bright? More recent debate on the role of civil society in the Scandinavian democracies has been based in the conclusions of the Power and Democracy Studies that were carried out in Denmark, Norway and Sweden around the turn of the century (Christiansen & Togeby, 2006; Lindvall & Rothstein, 2006; Østerud & Selle, 2006). Their conclusions suggested that significant changes was taking place in the nonprofit and voluntary sectors of the three countries, with some of the more historically important characteristics gradually having been weakened. In some respects, furthermore, they appeared to be becoming increasingly dissimilar due to divergent developments not only within civil society itself but also in the configuration democratic institutions and welfare state structures.

One of the trends highlighted was a falling membership in national popular movements and a rising engagement in cultural, social and political activities outside the traditional, value-oriented associations. At the local organizational level, this is evidenced particularly by a strong growth in leisure and community associations, whereas at the national level, it is reflected in a proliferation of identity and activist groups (Boje et al., 2006; Lundström & Wijkström, 1997; Wollebæk & Selle, 2002). These changes are also coupled with a shift from active, long-term membership to purposeful, short-term volunteering, in which participation is a means of individual self-expression rather than being tied to pre-defined collective identities (Fridberg et al., 2006; Jeppsonn Grassman & Svedberg, 1999; Wollebæk et al., 2000).

Another development emphasized was the weakening of the traditional organizational model characterized by membership based activities and hierarchical-democratic structures (Torpe, 2003; Tranvik & Selle, 2003). First, with organizational participation increasingly taking the form of volunteering, many of the tasks that used to be performed by members in positions of trust have been taken over by paid professionals. Although unpaid work still does form a crucial aspect of associational life, it is largely centered on concrete activities rather than administrative tasks. Second, along with a shift in the orientation of associations to individualized and local communal activities, there has been a decline in links between the local, regional and national levels of organization. This has engendered a bifurcation of civil society with associations to a lesser degree being coupled together hierarchically (Wollebæk et al., 2010).

Last, evidence from Denmark, Norway and Sweden indicate significant changes in formal institutions and normative structures governing the relationship between civil society and the state, with important implications for the participation of CSOs in the policy process. Evidence suggests there has been a decline in the traditional, ‘corporatist pluralist’ structures of interest representation and that the integration of associations and interest groups with the political and administrative structure as a result is weakening (Blom-Hansen, 2000; Lindvall & Sebring, 2005; Öberg et al., 2011). At the same time, governments have expressed stronger expectations for civil society in solving important societal problems and taking on a more central role in policy implementation (Amnå, 2006).

Taken together, these developments raised important questions about the role of civil society in cultivating and promoting democracy in Scandinavia (Amnå, 2006). This thesis intends to engage in this debate by focusing on changes in civil society and its relationship with the state in Norway, where there have been particularly vocal concerns about whether it still represents a force for democratic mobilization and representation.
1.2 Civil Society and the State in Norway: An Inclusive Polity in a State-Friendly Society

In Norway, civil society developed in partnership with, rather than opposition to the state, and became mutually integrated with the political and administrative structure while still retaining a high degree of autonomy (Enjolras & Strømsnes, 2018). Popular movements and membership associations were part of the political mobilization that gave rise to the political parties, and were important in the establishment of elite subgroups within the state (Allern, 2010). Kuhnle & Selle (1992) saw the Norwegian “state-friendly society” as a result of the close proximity between civil society and the state in terms of communication and contact but little dependence in terms of finance and control. The result has been coordination through common goals rather than bargaining or control.

In economic and functional policy areas, furthermore, major interest associations such as employer associations and labor unions were integrated into policy-making and implementation process through representation on policy committees (Christiansen & Rommetvedt, 1999). The institutionalized participation of organized interests in politics provided economic and societal groups with an alternative route to political influence besides that of electoral politics. Rokkan (1966) famously noted that “votes count, but resources decide the outcome in the end”, pointing to the decisive political power exerted by organized interests in the corporatist channel. Expanding upon this model, Christensen and Egeberg (1979) described “a segmented state” of micro-linkages existing around economic-functional policies. Each segment was a world of its own, with a common understanding of relevant policy problems and solutions being shared among the participants.

Owing to the strong integration of organized interests in the policymaking process and tradition of tripartite concertation, Norway is often ranked as one of the most “corporatist” countries in the world (see e.g. Armingeon, 2002; Lijphart & Markus, 1991; Siaroff, 1999). However, Norwegian (and Scandinavian) corporatism differs from the “state-corporatism” originally described by Schmitter (1974), being based on exchange between democratically organized membership associations. The same proximity with the public sector was not reached by more narrowly oriented social organizations for people with diseases or handicaps (see also Kuhnle & Selle, 1990).

The Norwegian study also provided perhaps the most pessimistic assessment among the Scandinavian studies (Østerud et al., 2003), concluding that “we are now in the midst of a transformation of the voluntary sector, gradually eroding some historically important characteristics. What we see is no less than a decline in an important part of the democratic infrastructure” (Selle & Østerud, 2006, p. 562) First, the changes in the nonprofit voluntary sector implied a weakening of the capacity of voluntary organizations to mobilize people for social and political change. Traditional associations were argued to no longer function as a vehicle for mass mobilization, taking instead on the role as professionalized institutions closely tied to the state (Selle, 1999); at the same time, they did not see new organizational forms as being able to function as communication channels in the same way that more traditional organizations once did (Tranvik & Selle, 2003, 2007).

Second, the changes in the relationship between state and civil society were seen as affording organizations a less central role in public policymaking: not only was the political
environment becoming more fragmented, with a less clear connection between mobilization and representation, but the role of organizations was seen as shifting from formulation to implementation (Rommetvedt, 2003; Tranøy & Østerud, 2001). The decline of corporatist policy-making structures has contributed to organizations taking up political lobbying as the primary strategy for influencing public policy, even if this has been part of their strategic repertoire for longer than this (Espeli, 1999). Rommetvedt (2003, 2005) has described this as a “pluralization of politics”, in which there is a stronger emphasis on resources and collation building in the advocacy and policy engagement of associations and interest groups.

Moreover, these developments have taken place against a background of important developments in public policy. The problems of the welfare state to meet the more heterogeneous needs and expectations of its citizens, along with demands for more efficient welfare programs and limiting social expenditures, have been proposed as some of the key drivers behind this development. Even though Norway has a relatively low share of nonprofit welfare provision, changes in nonprofit and voluntary sector policy and funding conditions indicate a shift in the role of the associations from providing inputs to enacting outputs. An important aspect of this change is the emergence of a new “contract culture” between civil society and the state, in which grants and contract have become more important as instruments for implementing public policies (Eikås & Selle, 2000).

1.3 Theoretical Traditions and Emerging Agendas: Mobilization, Organization, Representation

These developments call for theoretical perspectives and empirical research that can help us to make sense of the development in Norwegian organized civil society and what they mean for the advocacy role of voluntary and nonprofit organizations. Seeking to answer this call, the thesis develops an analytical framework that takes the perspectives of resource mobilization and political opportunity structures as a starting point to conceptualize the implications of organizational and institutional change for nonprofit advocacy engagement. In doing so, it builds on both international and Scandinavian contributions within nonprofit advocacy research, interest groups studies and organizational theory.

The “rediscovery” of civil society has since the 1980s given rise to renewed interest in the role of nonprofit and voluntary associations in advocacy and the policymaking process. In particular, the civil society perspective has done so by emphasizing the democratic role of such associations, both in terms developing democratic skills, expressing interests and viewpoint, and countering government and business power (Habermas, 1996; Kocka, 2004; Putnam, 1993). Against this background, there been increased awareness about the impact that nonprofits have in public policy, as well as the other way around, how public policy shapes the conditions of the sector. Recent decades have thus seen an increase in research on nonprofit advocacy (Bass et al., 2007; Berry & Arons, 2003; Pekkanen et al., 2014). Furthermore, the nonprofit literature offers a large tool-box of concepts and perspectives.

These issues also tap into long-standing debates in sociology and political science on social and political mobilization and the role of interest groups (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998). In the 1950s and 1960s, interest group studies occupied a central position in political research, especially in the United States. This period saw a number of important contributions to the
understanding of interest groups in politics, both in terms of their power and influence and their organizational dynamics (see e.g. Dahl, 1956; Lowi, 1969; Olson, 1965; Truman, 1951). Over the following decades, however, interest group research declined and it largely moved from the core to the margins of the discipline. Even so, there were some notable studies and critiques of existing research that nonetheless helped push the research frontier forward, such as Wilson’s (1973) study on political organizations and Walker’s (1983) study of membership-based interest groups. Recent years, furthermore, has seen the emergence a new and growing interest group literature (Schlozman et al., 2012).

Some of the more recent contributions to this literature has sought to close the gap between, on the one hand, studies of mobilization and organizational maintenance and, on the other, research on lobbying and other political influence strategies (Gray & Lowery, 1996). Within the latter, there is a comprehensive literature centered around pluralist policymaking in the United States and other liberal regimes and neo-corporatist representation in many West European countries, which have provided important insights about the influence of organized interests. However, Halpin (2014) has called for interest group scholars to take the question of organization more seriously. By stepping over the boundaries between the nonprofit advocacy literature and interest group studies, this may be done more easily. The perspectives emphasized in this thesis, resource mobilization and political opportunity theory (Kriesi et al., 1992; McCarthy & Zald, 1977) can be one avenue for doing so.

In the Scandinavian context, too, there has been an increased theoretical and empirical interest in nonprofit advocacy and interest groups. In Denmark, Norway and Sweden, there has emerged a new literature examining interest group activity (Binderkrantz et al., 2015; Lundberg, 2012; Rommetvedt et al., 2013). In Norway, the political role of associations has been based on a network perspective inspired by the works of Stein Rokkan, closely related to the perspective of neo-corporatism and neo-pluralism (Nordby, 1994). Here, too, the introduction of civil society perspectives has served to open up the field and provide new approaches to old questions. Especially since the turn of the millennium, following the studies in the wake of the Power and Democracy study have contributed to this development. However, Norwegian research on civil society and associations has largely focused on the local level of organization (Selle & Øymyr, 1995; Wollebæk & Selle, 2002). Although some recent research has provided further insight on then national level (Sivesind et al., 2018), there is a need for increased knowledge, especially in a context of the changes in civil society and its relationship to the state.

1.4 Research Questions and Contributions

This thesis investigates the implications of these recent changes in Norwegian civil society and its relationship with the state for the involvement of nonprofit and voluntary associations in the policymaking process, and by extension, their role as CSOs linking individual citizens to the political and administrative governance system. The overarching aims of the thesis are twofold: First, more broadly to contribute to theoretical understanding and empirical knowledge on the relationship between organizational and institutional change in civil society and the engagement of nonprofit and voluntary associations in advocacy. Second, more narrowly to contribute to the debate on the role of organized civil society and nonprofit advocacy in citizen participation and democratic governance in Norway and Scandinavia.
Research problem. How have changes in Norwegian civil society and its relationship with the state affected the involvement of nonprofit and voluntary associations in advocacy and the policymaking process, and what are the implications for their role as civil society organizations (CSOs) within the broader democratic infrastructure?

Theoretically, this thesis makes a contribution to the understanding of nonprofit advocacy by developing a framework that takes a resource mobilization and political opportunity perspective as a starting point for conceptualizing how organizational and institutional change affects the involvement of nonprofit and voluntary associations in the policymaking process. The analytical framework expands on existing theories by integrating insights from the more recent literature on nonprofit advocacy and interest groups. The empirical contribution of the thesis is based on a mixed methods approach that combines organization survey data covering the period from 1976 to 2013, and qualitative case studies of nonprofit umbrella organizations in a multiphase study. It contributes by broadening and nuancing findings from existing Norwegian and Scandinavian research on nonprofit and voluntary associations in the policymaking process, and by providing empirical knowledge that adds to the larger international literature on nonprofit advocacy and interest groups.

The overall research problem is examined through three research questions that focus on nonprofit advocacy from the perspective of resource mobilization, political opportunity and organizational change. Each question is examined in separate empirical articles. In the first article, I examine the implications of changing resource mobilization patterns for the role of citizen advocacy in the policy process. The question asked in the article is:

**Research question 1.** How do changes in the resource mobilization patterns and political opportunity structures impact the representation of different types of nonprofit and voluntary associations in the policymaking process?

In the study, it is argued that as the policy process has become less centered on privileged and institutionalized integration through “corporatist” institutions and has shifted to political lobbying, hearings and others forms of participation, this has created opportunities for new types of citizen groups to come into contact with political authorities and the public administration. However, because of the established position of traditional insiders, and the dependence of citizen groups on government support, they are expected to be less likely to access central decision-making arenas. This argument is examined by comparing survey data on Norwegian nonprofit and voluntary associations from 1976 and 2013.

The second article expands on the first one by looking at the impact of government funding on nonprofit advocacy. In this article, resource mobilization theory is contrasted with resource dependence and institutional theory to examine whether such funding strengthens or weakens the engagement of voluntary and nonprofit organizations in the policymaking process. More specifically, the question addressed is:
Research question 2. Does government funding constrain nonprofit advocacy engagement or does it in fact encourage it and has the impact changed or diversified as public financial support for some nonprofit and voluntary organizations has increased?

As mentioned above, recent decades have seen an increase in government funding for non-profit and voluntary associations in Norway. This has been understood as part of a new contract culture between civil society and state. Some argue that this implies increased dependence on government in terms of finances and control, with potentially adverse consequences such as co-optation of organizations. The study compares the hypothesis that increased government funding constrains nonprofit advocacy engagement through the effects of resource dependence and isomorphic institutional processes to a resource mobilization hypothesis. This hypothesis holds, in contrast, that government funding promotes nonprofit advocacy engagement by facilitating increased resource mobilization and enhancing the political capacity of nonprofit and voluntary associations. It also looks at the impact of government funding on their involvement with decision-makers in the parliament, government and bureaucracy.

The third article focuses on the role of inter-organizational networks in resource mobilization and nonprofit advocacy. More specifically, it is conceived as an explorative case study that examines the involvement of nonprofit umbrella associations in public grant management, and the implications for their autonomy and capacity to fulfill roles related to advocacy.

Research question 3. How does the involvement of umbrella organizations in public grant management affect their autonomy and capacity to promote and support nonprofit advocacy engagement within their organizational field?

Umbrella associations play an important role in organized civil society by providing advocacy, support and administrative functions. In Norway, however, some umbrella associations also perform governmental functions related to the management and distribution of public grants, raising questions about the instrumentalization and co-optation. Drawing on in-depth interviews from a case study of nonprofit umbrella associations, this article examines their role in public grant-making and its implications for their civil society functions.

1.5 The Structure of the Thesis

The structure of the thesis is as follows. Chapter 2 expands on the background of the thesis. It first gives an overview of the development of the Norwegian voluntary sector and the traditional model of civil society. This is then followed by a description of more recent changes in the scope, composition and structure of the sector and in its relationship to the state based on existing research in the field. Chapter 3 elaborates different definitions of civil society and nonprofit and voluntary associations. These concepts are then linked to nonprofit advocacy, interest representation and democratic governance. Specifically, three different models for interest representation are presented, including neo-corporatism, neo-pluralism and associative democracy. Chapter 4 presents and discusses relevant perspectives related to the dynamic between mobilization, organizations and representation: On the one hand, it introduces a perspective from resource mobilization and political process theories, in addition to other organizational and institutional perspectives. On the other hand, it presents the concepts of access and resource exchange, and other group
theories. Chapter 5 presents the research design, data sources and methodology used in the articles of this thesis. The thesis based on a mixed methods approach that combines organization survey data covering the period from 1976 to 2013, and qualitative case studies of nonprofit umbrella organizations in a multiphase study. This is followed by a presentation of the articles in Chapter 6 and a discussion of some overarching conclusions in Chapter 7.
2 Norway: Organized Civil Society between Change and Stability

Along with its Scandinavian neighbors, Norway is characterized by a vital civil society that is characterized by a rich and dense associational landscape and high levels of volunteering and organizational participation (Enjolras & Strømsnes, 2018). These features have been linked to a specific Scandinavian model of civil society, set apart by a tradition of popular movements and broad-based membership associations.

This chapter describes the changes that have taken place in Norwegian civil society and in its relationship to the state. It begins with an outline of the historical development of associational life in Norway, from the rise of the popular movements through the transformation to an affluent leisure society to present day. The idea is to delineate some main features of the traditional Scandinavian civil society model. This is followed by a summary of more recent trends in the nonprofit and voluntary sector based on a review of relevant existing research, in which similarities and differences to other national context also are highlighted.

2.1 Historical Overview: From Popular Movements to Leisure Associationalism

What historically has distinguished Norwegian (and Scandinavian) civil society from that of most other Western European countries is an institutional core of democratically organized and hierarchically structured membership organizations rooted in a strong popular movement tradition (Tranvik & Selle, 2007). The popular movements first arose during the social transformations of the 19th century, with their formation being linked to the processes of democratization and nation-building that took place in Norway in this period.1 Generally, they started out as small-scale, local initiatives around political, economic and social issues, which spread and grew into ideologically grounded, nationwide movements. Most important among them were the peasant, fishermen, smallholder, worker, temperance, language and religious movements, in addition to the social and humanitarian associations (Sivesind & Selle, 2010).

Membership recruitment to the popular movements was unusually extensive, crossing both geographical and social divides. They had high levels of activity and commitment, with some movements counting hundreds of thousands of individual members. In part, the broad and active participation reflected a long tradition for voluntary community work that involved strong expectations of individual contribution to the common good (Lorentzen & Dugstad, 2011). Perhaps most important, however, was the organizational structure of the popular movements. Each of the movements encompassed a vast network of organizations composed of relatively autonomous local chapters that were linked together with regional and national associations in an ordered hierarchy (Tranvik & Selle, 2007). This structure enabled the movements to reach

---

1 Local associations existed even before the 1800s, but were mostly confined to the larger cities and did not have a national structure. An important catalyst for the «age of association», as Rokkan (1967) termed it, and the rise of national popular movements was the introduction of freedom of association in 1842.
out all over the country, from the smallest towns to the largest cities, and so that they brought local communities in touch with the broader society.

This hierarchical structure also underpinned the participation of members in democratic governance of the organizations within the movements. Through it, members with equal rights could influence decisions at higher levels through representatives in the governing bodies of the organizations and contact with the central office, while decided-upon directives conversely were sent from the central office down through the regional bodies to local chapters. It meant that the organizations represented channels for both integration and communication between the local and national level. By being involved in their governance, furthermore, individuals were given the opportunity to learn democratic norms and values develop civic competencies and become more politically active. As noted by Selle and Stømsnes (2001), the organizations could be considered “real intermediate institutions in the Tocquevillean sense”.

Alongside this vertical integrated structure, there was also strong horizontal integration between the movements and the state. For one, the structure of the popular movements mirrored that of the political system with its division into municipalities, counties and the central government. The different movements were part of the political mobilization that gave rise to the political parties, and they became a crucial part of the competition for political power (Rokkan, 1967). As a result, civil society developed in partnership with rather than in opposition to the state, and became quite closely integrated with the political structure. Kuhnle and Selle (1990) describe for example how in the fields of education, health and social services, associations were parts of public policy from very early on. They identified needs and initiated and organized care, often supported through public subsidies, were granted seats in official boards, councils and committees, and even engaged in pressure-group activity to some extent (see also Berven & Selle, 2001).

Although marked by increasing expansion and differentiation, Norwegian civil society remained largely unchanged from the turn of the century and well into the post-war period. Starting in the 1960s, however, it gradually began to change in character, with its center of gravity shifting from ideological popular movements to activity-oriented leisure organizations. At the local level, in particular, there was a proliferation of associations for culture, sports and recreation, while organizations affiliated with traditional movements were losing ground (Selle & Øymyr, 1995). There were also changes in the relationship between voluntary organizations and the state. After the Second World War, the social democratic majority government sought to create a system for concertation between labor and capital. The organizations and opposition agreed to stronger government intervention in the economy, in exchange for organizational participation in economic policy-making. The system that was put in place entailed a democratic corporatist model of interest representation based on bargaining and negotiations between, in particular, capital, labor and the state (Nordby, 1994).

Furthermore, while there emerged new national movements, such as the feminist and environmental movements, they had largely already culminated by the 1970s and 1980s. Even though they did contribute to attitudinal change in the population and a mainstreaming of policies in these areas, their membership and participation did not reach similar heights as the traditional movements (Sivesind et al., 2018). Rather, the development at the national level to some extent mirrored that of the local level, with an increase in activity and identity oriented organizations. Some new types of political and social associations also appeared during the
post-war period, in particular associations for the disabled and patients and international relief aid organizations (Raaum, 1988). During this period, the relationship between civil society and the state was characterized by strengthened integration, giving rise to the model of ‘the segmented state’ described in the first Power and Democracy Study (Christensen & Egeberg, 1979). Altogether, however, while the period from 1960 to the 1990s saw some important ideological and structural changes in Norwegian civil society, much of its traditional characteristics still remained in place. First in the following decades, more profound changes began to occur.

2.2 The Changing Contours of Civil Society in Norway

2.2.1 A Changing Associational Landscape

Much of the research on voluntary and nonprofit organizations in Norway has focused on the local level, because local self-governed, democratic associations traditionally have been the locus of individual activity (Eimhjellen et al., 2018). Recent studies of the local voluntary and nonprofit sector suggest that the developments observed in the post-war period continued into the 1990s and 2000s, with further expansion and differentiation of the associational landscape. Much of the growth at the local level has accordingly taken place in leisure associations and community associations, as well as self-help groups (Wollebæk & Selle, 2002). However, new data has enabled researchers to examine more closely the development of national associations too, and to comparing the development across the local and national levels of the voluntary and nonprofit sector (Sivesind et al., 2018). In other countries, studies have shown a proliferation of citizen groups concerned with post-materialist “quality-of life” issues (Berry, 1999; Gabriel et al., 2012; Jordan et al., 2010). In Norway, too, there are signs of this development when looking at the national associational population over recent decades.

Sivesind et al. (2018) estimate that the number of national nonprofit and voluntary associations increased from just below 1,900 in 1983 to nearly 3,400 in 2013. This has been accompanied by important shifts in the composition of the sector. Figure 2.1 illustrates the changes that have taken place from the 1980s to present day. In the field of culture and leisure, there are clear parallels to the development at the local level, and many of the organizations that come here have as their goal to be a national gathering point for new leisure interests. Furthermore, there has been a growth of organizations for people with disabilities and people with disabilities, as well as support for vulnerable and marginalized. Among these, patient groups are one increasingly important type of organization (Opedal et al., 2012). Furthermore, some of these new organizations have not only a national orientation but also address international issues related to human rights. International aid and emergency aid is a field that long has been in growth nationally. Although it is characterized mainly by large, highly visible organizations, more recent developments have seen the rise of smaller organizations that often run or support small, individual development projects.
In the welfare field and among religious organizations, the organizational growth has been somewhat less than what we see in the other categories. This is in part related to the fact that the welfare state, which was especially an important context for the organizations within health, nursing and rescue work and social services, has been consolidated. These are also fields where there are some broad, national organizations with a strong ability to innovate and offer many and varied activities. Despite these changes, economic organizations nonetheless show a persistent, albeit they have been affected by changes in the social structure. While many business associations have experienced fusions with other organizations, the field of labor unions has become more fragmented. Furthermore, there has been a strong growth in different types of professional associations.
2.2.2 From Hierarchy to Networks: Patterns of Institutional Change

Profound structural changes at both the local and national levels have accompanied these changes in the associational landscape. The hierarchical-federated model traditionally has been dominant is not the same as the organization’s first choice. Wollebæk (2001) finds that local associations to a lesser extent want to be part of national networks, and more often are independent of national organizations. Without ideological goals or socio-political objectives, they do not see the same need for connection to central bodies. Primarily, it is newer associations that have abandoned the traditional organizational model.

Other studies focusing on the national level confirm this trend. Evidence suggests there has been an increase in the share of centralized organizations without local or regional chapters or departments, while those with a hierarchical structure has declined (Sivesind et al., 2018). As illustrated in Figure 2.1, the reason is that new organizations increasingly choose a centralized form, while the hierarchical structure is more common among older organizations.

![Figure 2.2. Organizational form of Norwegian national associations by founding year](source: Sivesind et al. (2018))

Moreover, there is a growing segment of umbrella associations. Such organizations organize other organizations rather than individuals, acting as a type of “meta-organization” (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008). The increasing important of umbrella associations likely reflects the increasing fragmentation of the associational landscape, and the fact that fewer associations are part of traditional federative structures. Organizations seek together in looser networks and coalitions to coordinate their activities, share resources and knowledge, and to influence public policy (Arnesen, 2018).

An important factor in this context, furthermore, is that it has become easier to organize at the national level as the internet and social media have made it easier to communicate despite great distances. Such technology has increasingly been adopted in associational life (Eimhjellen, 2014). A recent study of national associations in Norway show that digital media are extensively used to mobilize members, volunteers and resources, as well as a tool for advocacy and influencing policy (Beyer & Steen-Johnsen, 2018).
2.2.3 Members, Volunteers and Paid Staff

One assumed effect of individualization is an increasing prevalence of passive membership, i.e. where members provide financial support by virtue of membership fees (or donations). In their study of environmental organizations, for example, Grendstad et al. (2006) find, for example, that this form of membership has gained in importance in environmental organizations. Traditionally, voluntary work for associations and organizations has to a large extent been carried out within the framework of membership. But more and more people are also contributing unpaid efforts without being a member of the organizations for which they are committed. Wollebæk (2001) shows that there are differences by age in the perceptions of the ties to voluntary organizations in the Norwegian population. He finds that elderly people to a greater extent than younger people consider it important to be a member of the organization they participate in and that they also place greater emphasis on participating in a particular organization. The findings are linked to a stronger orientation towards materialistic values of the growing generation, which - put on the head - puts pleasure in performance. Later studies have also shown that this is a trend that is now occurring in increasingly large parts of the population.

Table 2.1. Membership, volunteering and paid work in the Norwegian voluntary sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th></th>
<th>Volunteering</th>
<th></th>
<th>Paid work</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Membships</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>FTEs</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>FTEs</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and arts</td>
<td>483,739</td>
<td>5,2</td>
<td>17,896</td>
<td>12,6</td>
<td>2,340</td>
<td>7,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>2,526,065</td>
<td>27,3</td>
<td>34,110</td>
<td>24,1</td>
<td>4,754</td>
<td>15,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social recreation</td>
<td>932,519</td>
<td>10,1</td>
<td>18,848</td>
<td>13,3</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>445,285</td>
<td>4,8</td>
<td>11,642</td>
<td>8,2</td>
<td>6,208</td>
<td>20,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>40,111</td>
<td>0,4</td>
<td>8,611</td>
<td>6,1</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>0,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>561,293</td>
<td>6,1</td>
<td>9,991</td>
<td>7,1</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>0,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services</td>
<td>14,298</td>
<td>0,2</td>
<td>7,497</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>2,610</td>
<td>8,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentalism</td>
<td>115,185</td>
<td>1,2</td>
<td>6,166</td>
<td>4,4</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>2,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic and advocacy</td>
<td>1,001,574</td>
<td>10,8</td>
<td>1,402</td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td>3,651</td>
<td>11,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International activities</td>
<td>312,755</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>5,910</td>
<td>4,2</td>
<td>1,454</td>
<td>4,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and development</td>
<td>93,341</td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td>12,941</td>
<td>9,1</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>2,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and labor</td>
<td>2,707,634</td>
<td>29,3</td>
<td>5,975</td>
<td>4,2</td>
<td>7,499</td>
<td>24,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6,447</td>
<td>0,1</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>0,4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9,240,300</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>141,595</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>31,034</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Arnesen et al., 2016)

Estimates show overall there has been an absolute decline of around a million memberships from the 1980s to 2010s (Sivesind et al., 2018). Table 2.1 shows that the largest share of membership is in sports and business and labor, both of which have just fewer than 30%. Social recreation is also a relatively large category along with civic and advocacy of 10%. Next in line are culture and arts, religion and international activities. and the other categories. In essence, the patterns of membership reflect the composition of associations in the sector.

As for volunteering, the table displays a slightly different pattern. This has to do with the fact that the voluntary activity mainly takes place at the local level, and thus to a greater extent reflects the features of the local organizational landscape. From the table it is seen that the majority of volunteer hours are carried out in culture and arts, sports and social recreation. Housing and development is a large category, indicating the important role of housing and
community associations, as well as education, health and social services. Notably, civic and advocacy has a small share of volunteers compared to the share of membership. However, as is also revealed by the table, this category has a relatively large share of paid work.

Changes within the sector point to increased professionalization in the voluntary sector, in the sense that teams and organizations make greater use of wage employees full-time and part-time. It is largely in national organizations that there is a significant element of paid work. Increasing complexity in the voluntary sector's political environment can also be an explanation for wage earners' involvement in organizational life. Organizations that seek to get their case through to the authorities have to a greater extent become dependent on advisers with expertise on the political system in general and relevant policy fields more specifically.

These trends in the organizational landscape, in the nonprofit and voluntary sector structure and in participation show that the Norwegian civil society has changed. It is partly related to ideological change, but it can also be seen in the context of a changed resource environment. This is again linked to the development as regards the relationship between the organization and public mining authorities.

2.2.4 Civil Society and the State in a Post-Corporatist Society

Together with these developments within the sector, there have been changes in the relationship between voluntary and nonprofit organizations and government. For many associations the relationship with the authorities has become more important over the past few decades. Since the 1980s, there has been an ideological shift in the governmental understanding of the voluntary sector and its role in the welfare state (Kuhnle & Selle, 1992). At the same time, the traditional corporatist model of interest representation has become weakened in favor of lobbying and other forms of advocacy. Some studies even suggest that the role of organizations in the policymaking process has declined as alternative forms of participation, especially issue-oriented activism, has become more prolific (Rommetvedt, 2003; Strømsnes, 2003)

![Figure 2.3. Number of committees with organizational representation](source: Christiansen et al. (2010))
One indication of the decline of corporatism is the number of policy committees. Rommetvedt (2017) shows that the number of policy preparation committees with organizational representation decreased from what is considered a peak at 68 in 1983 to 36 in 1983 and, after a relatively stable period, further to as few as 12 in 2005, as illustrated in figure 3.1. An even more pronounced pattern is seen in the number of implementation bodies, which decreased from 213 in 1983 to 82 in 2013. These changes follow a general pattern of decline in the number of policy preparing committees and implementation bodies (see also Christiansen et al., 2010). This development is also reflected in changes in the number of organizations represented in policy preparing committees and implementation bodies. Sivesind et al. (2018, 96) finds that a total of 624 voluntary organizations reported having a seat in one or more such bodies in 1983, whereas the corresponding figure was 410 in 2013.

Parallel to this development, there has been a rise in lobbying as a strategy to influence public policy (Espeli, 1999). In the heyday of neo-corporatism in the 1960’s, when parliamentary institutions were weak, approaching the Norwegian parliament was considered a sign of “powerlessness”. Over recent decades, however, the parliament has become a more significant political institution—a change rooted in a “pluralization of politics”, stemming from a less predictable political situation with frequent minority governments, in addition to the fact that the parliament received greater political power vis-à-vis the government and the administration. As a result, interest groups previously integrated into policy-making through committees and consultations are found engage in other influence strategies (Rommetvedt, 2003, 2005). Notably, they have become more prone to engage in direct lobbying of parliament and the government as they increasingly are excluded from the early and less openly politicized phases of policy-making (Rommetvedt et al. 2013).

At the same time, new types of welfare and advocacy organizations have entered into these policy-making arenas, giving competition to more established groups (Sivesind et al., 2018). Such organizations also play an increasingly important role in policy implementation. This has been linked to new perspectives on the role of the voluntary sector in relation to the welfare state. The state wishes to integrate voluntary organizations more strongly into policy implementation in areas ranging from culture and health to handling social inequality and inclusion. Similar to other Scandinavian countries, as well as other welfare states in Europe, there has been a push for a more output-centered role for voluntary organizations (Amnå, 2006; Lundberg, 2012). New public management inspired thought has led to new control mechanisms being applied in public governance, which has also affected the handling of support of organizations. Importantly, public funding schemes have been an important tool for advancing this governmental agenda. As more funds have been allocated to organizations, there have also been implemented stricter regulations and control (Eikås & Selle, 2000; Selle et al., 2018).

This chapter has described changes in the Norwegian civil society and its relationship with the state. The trends presented in the chapter form an empirical background for the issue that is examined in the dissertation. In the next chapter, they are brought into more overarching theoretical context.
3 Civil Society, Nonprofit Advocacy and Interest Representation

Departing from the developments described in the previous chapter, this thesis is concerned with studying the role nonprofit and voluntary associations play as civil society organizations (CSOs) linking individuals and different kinds of private interests to the policymaking process through advocacy. This chapter starts with elaborating the definition of CSOs in the context of the wider scholarly debate about the concept of civil society that has taken place since the 1980s. It then relates the concept to nonprofit advocacy, interest representation and democratic governance. Specifically, three different models for interest representation are presented and discussed: neo-corporatism, neo-pluralism and associative democracy.

3.1 Defining Civil Society, Nonprofits and Advocacy

Since its revival in the 1980s, the concept of civil society has been the subject of much scholarly discussion and it still remains a highly debated concept. Part of the reason is the difficulty of disentangling its different layers of meaning. It holds at once descriptive, analytical and normative meaning, and is highly sensitive to context. For this reason, civil society as a concept is open to diverse interpretation, and that is defined in different ways within the literature. It reflects that it is “a necessary and necessarily contested idea” (M. Edwards, 2011).

Perhaps the most common definition is civil society as a third sector of society distinct from the state and the market, and which comprises all kinds of voluntary associations from loose networks and initiatives to clubs, societies and churches through politically oriented interest groups. What distinguishes such institutions and associational forms is, according to Cohen and Arato (1992, p. 429), that they “require communicative interaction for their reproduction and that rely primarily on processes of social integration for coordinating action within their boundaries.”

Drawing on different schools of thought, M. Edwards (2004) distinguishes between three related conceptions of civil society: as associational life, as the good society and as the public sphere. The first view is similar to the definition provided above, as a sphere encompassing forms of voluntary association, but also adds a specific meaning: they act as ‘gene carriers of the good society’. They contribute, in essence, to developing democratic values, norms and skills. The second view, the good society, specifies the context of voluntary associations, and as one “insisting that progress towards social, economic and political goals is associated with action across different sets of institutions” (Edwards, 2004).

A similar but distinct clarification is attempted by Kocka (2004) between civil society as a type of social action, a social sphere and a utopian project. As a type of social action, it is “oriented towards discourse, compromise and public understanding, stresses individual independence and collective self-organization, proceeds non-violently and peacefully, and is related to general issues”. This type of action, he argues, is truly dominant in a public space between the state, the market and the private sphere which is occupied by associations, initiatives and
networks of different kinds. In this sense, civil society is also a social sphere of “legally protected non-governmental organizations that tend to be non-violent, self-organizing, self-reflexive and permanently in tension with one another”. Lastly, as a utopian project, it speaks to the historical fact that civil society has been created and maintained in critical response to existing or impending political, economic, social or cultural conditions. This conceptualization also hints at a distinction between a narrower concept of civil society and the more encompassing third sector concept: institutions and organizations within the latter are part of the former only in so far they conform to the affiliated type of social action.

A relational and historical approach is implied, furthermore, in the civil society perspective. As an intermediary arena, its boundaries to the three social spheres are fuzzy and overlapping, meaning that civil society actors, resources, legitimacy, and goals are constituted relative to the state, market, and family. The influence exerted by actors in these spheres may give rise to different, historically contingent civil society regimes. Different regimes in turn entail different roles for voluntary organizations, from the expression of political, economic, and cultural interests to provision of services either in cooperation with or alternative to the state and market (Janoski, 1998; Salamon & Anheier, 1998).

Thus, civil society inherently threads the line between institutional autonomy and state dependency. Its essential democratic function of articulating and promoting citizens’ interest presupposes inclusion in the political structure of the state, but also the autonomy to do so without undue interference or regulation. This tension has been the subject much debate in recent decades, especially in Scandinavia, where the relationship between civil society and state appears to be shifting from nearness to dependence. Starting from a weak philanthropic tradition and faced with increasing market pressures, civil society organizations that struggle with balancing their budgets turn to the state not only for influence but also financial support. However, the benefit of public funding may come at the cost of a degree of public-sector scrutiny and control that potentially is detrimental to their advocacy role.

3.1.1 Nonprofit and voluntary associations as civil society organizations

In the perspective taken here, the institutional core of civil society is seen as “constituted by voluntary associations outside the sphere of the state and the economy” (Flyvbjerg, 1998, 210). Although civil society encompasses more informal groups and initiatives as well, for the purposes of this thesis focus is placed more squarely on the role of formal voluntary organization. As such, civil society organizations have to be conceptualized in tandem with the nonprofit and voluntary sector. In the European consensus definition, five basic characteristics are outlined: entities belonging to the nonprofit and voluntary sector are private, self-governing and non-compulsory organizations that are either totally or significantly limited from distributing surplus income (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2014). Under this definition, associations, nonprofit service agencies, foundations, cooperatives, mutual aids and social enterprises are all considered part of the nonprofit and voluntary sector.

The focus of this thesis is on nonprofit and voluntary associations as civil society organizations (CSOs). Civil society organizations (CSOs) are defined as nonprofit and voluntary associations that seek to influence policy decisions in pursuit of shared interests, whether political,
cultural, social, or economic, through contact with political authorities and the public administration as part of the policymaking process. These are organizations that, through engaging in advocacy, are assumed to contribute in important ways to democratic governance. They represent the interests of citizens and other private interests, influence public policies on behalf of their constituencies, and hold government and businesses accountable to their actions. Under this definition, different types of organizations are included, from voluntary associations, through nonprofit organizations to interest groups.

In the literature, there are different typologies and classifications of CSOs (see e.g. Baroni et al., 2014; Salamon & Anheier, 1997). This thesis distinguished between three main types of associations inspired by the scheme proposed by van der Meer et al. (2009). Additionally, it distinguishes between different types of associations within these main categories.

Economic organizations, such as business and professional associations and trade unions, primarily promote the material interests of their members. They represent groups of individuals, organizations, and institutions that share common economic interests: firms and industries, experts, professionals, and specialists, or workers, farmers, and other occupational groups. Associations that organize public service institutions can also be added under this rubric. Some examples from the Norwegian context are the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions, the Norwegian Medical Association, and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities.

Public interest groups include associations promote more general objectives, ideals and values. These organizations may have a role both in interest representation and providing public goods. Some groups attempt to push public policy in a specific direction through lobbying and participation in policy committees; others protect the rights of and provide self-help for specific, often marginalized groups, provide self-help and other services, and create social networks. Although their goals may vary, they share a concern for the public good, from which they also derive their legitimacy. There are also groups that promote the interests of more limited constituencies, e.g. patients, disabled, elderly, minorities, which are labeled identity groups (Baroni et al., 2014). Identity groups represent people that share common social characteristics that dictate their identity, and by extension, their interests.

These types in turn should be distinguished from leisure associations, which united people around common cultural and leisure interests, and religious associations, which are associations of people sharing the same religion or life-stance. Such associations are apolitical in nature but they can be mobilized politically if need be; although more numerous in terms of members and volunteers than public benefit and member interest organizations, the interests are generally less vocal and strongly articulated. Their civil society roles are mainly defined by their coordinative and distributive functions, i.e. the provision of particular services, the arranging of events and competitions, provision of subsidies to other organizations.

3.1.2 Conceptualizing nonprofit advocacy

Nonprofit and voluntary associations are often assigned external and internal democratic role (Putnam, 1993; 1995). On the one hand, such organizations function directly as arenas for debate – and for education and articulation of values and norms. Their core tasks are aggregation and
articulation of interests (Tocqueville, 2000). Here, they represent an alternative channel for influence, securing interests that would not be represented otherwise, to be heard. On the other hand, besides the organization’s role as mediating structures, they play an indirect democratic role as arenas for social interaction and integration. In this role they function as schools of democracy with an important socializing, or training, function as communicators of central societal values and as organizers of social capital. They work as identity formative and community constructive institutions, where members of society are socialized into the norms of democracy through participation in the organizations, and thus learn to respect and appreciate democratic values. These aspects are also discussed by Selle and Strømsnes (2001), who argue that the internal effects, which often are given primacy, are less important than the external effects. In this context, the latter is conceived more broadly as intermediary structures that link citizens to the political system. Political integration is, in their view, dependent upon democratic structures that allow active and passive members alike to become part of a greater, societal whole.

One fundamental role of CSOs is advocacy (Kramer, 1981). In the definition by Hopkins (1992, p. 32), advocacy involves the "active espousal of a position, a point of view, or a course of action". In economic theories of the nonprofit sector, organizations are argued to give expression to preferences of groups whose needs are not or cannot be fulfilled by government (Weisbrod, 1977). From a political and communicative perspective, furthermore, the organizations are a space for value contention and struggles between ideas and interests. According to Habermas (1996) civil society organizations as networks for communicative interaction or publ . . .

There are different and overlapping definitions of advocacy in the literature. In a much cited definition, Jenkins (1987) defines advocacy as “any attempt to influence the decisions of any institutional elite on behalf of a collective interest.” This definition brings attention to the fact that advocacy can involve activities directed both at the private sector and government, and that the activity seeks to benefit some collective interest (Salamon, 2002). More broadly understood, however, advocacy can be defined as to any attempt of nonprofit voluntary organizations “to influence public policy, either directly or indirectly” (Pekkanen & Smith, 2014). This definition also casts focus on the character of the activity that advocacy involves. The goals pursued through advocacy activities as well as the tactics employed to reach them may differ widely. Some organizations may attempt to articulate unresolved social problems and solutions, while others a work to overturn proposed governmental policies and other again promote the interests of specific socioeconomic groups. Furthermore, different types of advocacy are involved in advocacy to a differing degree, face different policy environments and play different roles in the policy process.
Advocacy can encompass direct tactics, such as lobbying of elected officials and civil servants, participation in public committees, or more indirect ones, including writing letters and providing testimonies, organizing demonstrations, actions and petition, or public education and media events (see e.g. Binderkrantz, 2008; Reid, 1999). Often, a distinction is made between advocacy and lobbying, with the former referring more broadly to all types of the aforementioned activities and the latter to the specific act of direct contact with political or administrative authorities. Other terms are political advocacy and policy advocacy, which touch upon the same distinction.

3.2 Democratic Governance and Interest Representation

Different models of interest representation provide different views on the relationship between organized civil society and the state and its role in political advocacy. The participation of interest groups in the public policy-making process in Norway has traditionally been characterized by a form of neo-corporatist representation (Nordby, 1994). In the following, three models of interest representation are presented: along with neo-corporatism model which has been characteristic of the relationship between Norwegian civil society and the state, it also discusses the neo-pluralist and associative models as two alternative conceptions.

3.3.1 The neo-corporatist model

Norwegian democracy can be characterized as consensus-based. After the Second World War, the national elites joined forces despite disagreements on basic ideological outlooks to shape something they could agree on: the modern welfare state. The 1960s was important in that the basic social welfare policies were mainly formed in course of this decade. Even more significant, some would argue, were the structures for tripartism and concertation on economic policy instituted during the 1950s. And others again may point to the collaboration between broad social movements and the state in the nation-building period of the 19th century and early 20th century. (Rokkan, 1966, p. 110) argued that governments “rarely, if ever, force through decisions on the basis of its electoral power but has to temper its policies in complex consultations and bargains with major interest organizations”. The road towards the consensus-based model can be traced step-by-step back to the beginnings of civil society (Rokkan, 1970).

Consensus democracy is a model of democracy designed to find and create common ground in pluralistic societies and to base decision making on consensus. Consensus democracies also seek to allow different political interests to share power. The consensus democratic model is characterized by executive power-sharing in broad multi party coalitions, executive-legislative balance of power, multi-party system, proportional representation, and most importantly, coordinated and corporatist interest groups system aimed at compromise and concertation (Lijphart, 2012). Major interest groups were granted representation on public administrative boards, councils and committees and consulted by the government on policy issues that affected their interests, in addition to having more informal contacts with elected officials and civil servants.

Corporatism gained popularity as a response to pluralism, due to the perceived poor fit between pluralist theory and the political systems of West Europe compared to the United States. Schmitter (1974) 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 (Schmitter, 1974, p. 93-94)

However, following (Lehmbruch, 1979, p. 150), corporatism can also be conceived as a particular process through which public policy is formed: “an institutionalized pattern of policy-formation in which large interest organizations cooperate with each other and with public authorities not only in the articulation (or even ‘intermediation’) of interest, but – in its developed forms – in the ‘authoritative allocations of values’ and in the implementation of such policies”. On this definition, the distinguishing feature is a high degree of collaboration among groups and between government and ‘cartels’ of organized groups. Corporatism is generally held to be most conspicuous in the area of economic policy-formation, so that its constituent elements are before all labor unions, employer’s associations and the state (see also Cawson, 1978; Panitch, 1977)

Christiansen et al. (2010, p. 27) define corporatism as “the institutionalized and privileged integration of organized interests in the preparation and/or implementation of public policies”. Organizations participate in corporatist policymaking are provided certain privileges in exchange for the concession they make vis-à-vis public authorities (Molina & Rhodes, 2002) Traditionally, corporatist structures are organized around socioeconomic issues, with economic-functional interest groups being privileged. Furthermore, the autonomy of groups is to some extent limited. Groups provide the state with some degree of control over their membership in return for policy influence. In societal corporatism, this does not usually involve direct control on selection of leaders or decision-making in associations, but rather that the associations attempt to discipline their members’ opinions. The job of the leadership in this case would be garner support for government policies among members by making using of opinion-making process and other mechanisms within the organization (see also Baccaro, 2003; Öberg et al., 2011).

Neo-corporatism has had its share of criticisms, however. Heisler (1979) criticized its main theorists for cherry-picking examples to validate rather than to falsify his model, and achieving parsimony by ignoring the complex, multifarious and polycentric nature of interest representation that in reality characterizes those instances. Other questioned the diffuse conceptualization of some of the defining elements of the theory: What is the role of the state within this system, does it direct the activities of the organizations or is it merely a bargaining partner? What separates bargaining in a corporatist system from that which takes place under interest-group pluralism? (see Martin, 1983). Although the neo-corporatist model has survived this criticism in many ways, it has, to a lesser extent, been considered sufficient to describe the relationship between organized interests and the state of European countries. This has led to a search for other models to describe this relationship.
3.2.2 The neo-pluralist model

A second model is the neo-pluralist model, which is an extension of the classical pluralist model derived from classical interest group studies in the 1950s and 1960s. The modern foundations of the theory of interest-group pluralism are found in Truman’s (1951) *The Governmental Process*. From the pluralist perspective, interest groups were understood as an integral part of the democratic process rather than as special interests that challenged the public good (Sussman, 2011). More specifically, pluralism describes a system of interest representation in which all salient interests in society are represented in a plurality of conflicting interests groups that compete in a relatively equal manner for influence over public policies, with the state as a neutral arbiter between them. Overlapping memberships create cross-pressures that moderate views and counter factionalism, resulting in a ‘dynamic equilibrium’ where different demands are modified and accommodated (Latham, 1952).

A problem with the classical pluralist model is that it fails to account for differences in power and influence between organizations. Mills (1956) argued that it was dominated by what he called “the power elite”, who occupied dominant positions in the dominant institutions of the military, economy and politics. Schattschneider (1961, p. 35) famously wrote that “the flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent”. His argument was that far from being representative of the whole community, the interest group system tended in most of its aspects to be biased towards business and upper-class interests. Different groups have varying capacities for mobilizing and organizing politically. Large, diffuse interests are often more difficult to mobilize compared to small, coherent interests due to free-rider problems (Olson, 1965). The groups that prevail, whether large or small, are usually those resourceful and well-organized, and that are able to provide sufficient incentives for members to want to join their organization.

Neo-pluralist theories have sought to remedy some of the shortcomings of the classical models (Smith, 1990). There is, first, an acknowledgement that some interests have a greater say in the policy process than others, because they may exert power over other actors involved in the process. Second, there is the idea of counter-wailing group power which “prevents the capture of a governmental agency by a dominant group [which may] enhance the autonomy of [those agencies]” (McFarland, 2007). Interest organizations may, furthermore, form inter-organizational coalitions to join forces against other actors or other coalitions. Fewer concessions are made in terms of monopolized access to government, but the mechanisms of counter-wailing groups are assumed to hinder monopolistic situations. Power is assumed to be more dispersed and fragmented.

Based on neo-pluralist thought, alternative models have been proposed. Grossmann (2012) has suggested a model he terms institutionalized pluralism in which he calls attention to how structural characteristics influence the representation of different types of interests. Similarly, Binderkrantz et al. (2015) have proposed the concept of privileged pluralism to describe a system where a multitude of groups compete for policy influence, but with biases that consistently provide greater policy benefits to some groups over others. A main distinction, then, in comparison with the neo-corporatist model is the degree of formal and institutionalized privilege that groups have in accessing the policymaking process.
3.2.3 The associative model

A third model is the associative model, based on the concept of “associative democracy, which involves a system where voluntary organizations have special access to a central government, and the state act directly on the associative environment in support of democratic norms (Hirst, 1994). In this model, one accepts the pluralist assumption of fragmented and dispersed power, but it challenges the pluralist view of a self-correcting system and natural equilibrium. Rather, this model suggests that the state seeks representation for excluded interests as well, by drawing on new participatory democratic forms and modes of network governance.

The associative model has affinity with the deliberative model of democracy, and can in particular be related to Iris M. Young’s (1997) model of communicative democracy. In communicative democracy, differences of social position and identity perspective are viewed as a resource for public reason. Here, communicative interaction is understood in terms of encountering differences of meaning, social position or need other than that the participant herself shares and identifies with. Central is the idea that each social position has a partial perspective on the public – and through the communicative process, participants transcend and transform initial situated knowledge. Extending this thinking to the notion of an associative democracy, it suggests that the inclusion of marginalized interests may contribute to enhancing the policy-making process by drawn on “difference as a resource”

A second thread for expanding this model is the concept of policy networks (Rhodes, 1997). This is a concept that can understood in relation to the broader notion of governance networks, which emphasize horizontal coordination and steering through self-organizing, inter-organizational networks comprising public and private actors (Torfing & Sørensen, 2007). A distinction can be made between different types of networks according to their scope and structure: On the one hand, policy communities that are characterized by a limited number of participants who share basic values and partake in frequent, high-quality interactions; on the other hand, issue networks that are large, encompassing a range of affected interests who interact with fluctuating frequency and intensity. While there is a balance of power among members of a policy community, it is assumed to be more unequal in issue networks.

Summing up, this thesis explores nonprofit advocacy engagement in Norway and the role of civil society in democratic governance. One side of this is the change from corporate interest presentation characterized by privileged and institutionalized integration of organized interests to other models. In this chapter, two alternative models have been presented: the neopluralist model, which has traditionally been the counterpart of the corporate model; and the associative model, which integrates aspects from both of these models. These different models serve as a basis for evaluating the changes examined in the thesis.
4 Resource Mobilization, Political Opportunity and Organizational Change

This chapter outlines the analytical framework of the thesis. At the center of this framework are the perspectives resource mobilization and political opportunity. The aim is to provide tools to better understand the how processes of organizational and institutional change in organized civil society and the engagement of nonprofit and voluntary associations as CSOs involved in the policymaking process.

4.1 The Resource Mobilization Perspective

Originally, the resource mobilization perspective was developed within the study of social movements, but its application has since been expanded to nonprofit organizations and even other private entities. In this perspective, successful social movement mobilization is the result of mobilization of resources such as time, money, people, legitimacy, attention from the media, gaining public support, creating alliances with political and other actors and refining the organizational structure (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). This theoretical framework formed a contrast with the notion that movements and organizations arise as a result of social disorganization and grievances, instead arguing that it should be explained in terms of rationality and social factors (Gamson, 2004; Jenkins, 1983).

Although resource mobilization has had an important impact, it is treated with some ambiguity in the literature (Spier, 2017). Partly, this stems from the lack of any consensus regarding the underlying theory. Benski et al. (2013, p. 557) notes that “since the 1980s the field of social movement studies has been characterized by an eclecticism with many theoretical strands but without a dominant paradigm(s)”. Furthermore, critics of the resource mobilization perspective have taken issue with its downplaying of grievances in understanding the formation of movements and associations.

For the purpose of this thesis, however, the main point taken from the resource mobilization perspective is the importance of resources for nonprofit advocacy engagement. More specifically, it focuses on the assumption that effective advocacy requires organizations to mobilize different human, financial and organizational. Such resources are necessary for organizations to set up offices, establish communication links, divert resource to lobbying and advocacy and so forth. Developing the expertise and knowledge desired by policy-makers cannot solely be done on a volunteer-basis, so that professional resources become important (Salamon, 2002).

4.1.1. Types of resources and mechanisms

The capacity to mobilize resources is contingent upon organizational factors pertaining to individual associations and the institutional features of the larger field to which they belong. Organizational factors include, inter alia, the amount and type of labor an association is able to invest in collective action, the form and structure of its organization, and strategic choices about which resources to pursue and how (B. Edwards & McCarthy, 2004).

The resource mobilized by associations through processes of resource mobilization can be of different types. Some of the most important types of resources are: moral resources such
as support and legitimacy; cultural resources, such as knowledge and expertise; organizational resources that relate to form and structure of the organization; material resources such as financial resources and physical infrastructure; and human resources, including labor, experience, skills and expertise. According to B. Edwards and McCarthy (2004), resources can accessed in different ways. First, resource can be come from self-production whereby associations or movements aggregate or generate resources or receive resources from patrons. Second, they can be accessed through co-optation of existing resources already aggregated by other organizations. Third, they can also be directly appropriated through exploitation. Among these mechanisms, patronage is particularly important for present purposes. Walker (1991) argued patronage was essential to the mobilization of citizen advocacy groups. By his view, interest groups arise and persist according to the ability to secure funds from outside their membership:

The key to success in these efforts usually is the ability of group organizers to secure both start-up funds and reliable sources of continuing financial support from patrons of political action … citizen groups (non-occupational) get most of their funding from individual gift (Walker, 1991, p. 100).

Nownes (1995) later sought to refine and expand on the patronage perspective. Professionalism is considered an important element in gaining access to resources from patrons, particularly government funding. Such funding is important because it enhances the capabilities of organizations by giving them resources that can be used for this purpose.

Non-profit organizations draw on a number of different resources when engaging in advocacy activities. They rely on member and volunteer efforts and the work of paid staff. Financial resources are especially important. They generate their own income through membership dues, participation and service fees, proceeds from sales of products and financial investments. Many also rely on individual giving, corporate sponsorships and grants and endowments from private foundations. In addition, some receive government support in the form of public grants and contracts, statutory transfers and third-party payments for services rendered (Anheier, 2005). The composition of these revenue sources—self-generated income, private donations and public funding—varies between non-profit sectors, fields of activity, and individual organizations.

4.2 Political opportunity and the policy process

Many studies of interest group influence has based their conceptualization on the distinction made by Hart (1976) between control over resources, control over actors, and control over events and outcomes. Control over events and outcomes, lastly, implies influence as the result of actors ability to have an impact on particular events that lead to certain outcomes Control over actors brings attention to how influence may involve one actor forcing another to make a particular decision. Control over resources, lastly, involves understanding influence as proportional to the share of relevant resources that interest groups possess. The idea here is that groups that has the most resources “wins”. Thus, insufficient resource mobilization may contribute to the non-participation of new groups in the policymaking process.

Political structures are important for civil society organizations' involvement in policymaking. The political opportunity perspective, central to what is known as political process
theory and closely related to resource mobilization theory, emphasizes associations and interest groups' involvement to public policy also depends on aspects of the political system (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004). Political opportunity can be defined as those "aspects of the political system that affect the possibilities that challenging groups have to mobilize effectively" (Giugni, 2011, p. 271). At the macro-level, some of the factors emphasize in explaining the participation of organized interests in the policymaking process are increased pluralism, decline in traditional forms of representation, division among elites and increased political enfranchisement. In terms of the political system, however, the structure of political opportunities can according to Kriesi et al. (1992) be understood in terms of three aspects “its formal institutional structure, its informal procedures and strategies with regard to challengers, and the configuration of power relevant for the confrontation with challengers”. The access of organized interests to the political can be understood to differ according to the political opportunity structure, and change with it.

Such perspectives have long been used to analyze the political mobilization and participation of movements and associations. Dryzek (1996) argues that because corporatism features consensus and stable partisanship within governing elites and closed decision-making, its political opportunity structure was conducive to the development of new social movements. These perspectives can also be linked more closely to the concept of the policy process, and the concept of insiders and outsiders. Scharpf (1997) understands the policy process as constituted by problems, actors with particular orientations and capabilities, actor constellations, modes of interaction, and policy outcomes, and circumscribed by a policy environment and institutional contexts. An institution is defined as “systems of rules that structure the courses of actions that a set of actors may choose” (Scharpf, 1997, p. 38). Formal legal rules and social norms define the permissible actions resources, e.g. competencies and participation rights available to the actors involved. In the process itself, the actors are part of constellations involving other relevant players, certain strategy options, combinations, and preferred outcomes.

When organizations are seen as legitimate policy actors, they are ‘insiders’. Insiders are, then, recognized by public authorities as spokespersons for the constituencies or causes they represent, and receive, by virtue of this recognition, privileged access to decision-making on issue of concern to them. In return, the groups agree to the rules of the game, or else they may face political exclusion. Outsiders are omitted from such arrangements, either because they do not have the resource to gain recognition, or by their often ideologically-grounded choice. The lack of privileges means that these organizations may have to apply different policy strategies than insiders, if they are to succeed in influencing decision-makers (see Maloney et al., 1994)

4.3. Access and resource exchange

The involvement of associations in the policymaking process, furthermore, can be conceptualized in terms of “access”. Access can more formally be defined as a “direct expression of demands to decision-makers” (Dür, 2008, p. 1128). It is important to note that access differs from influence, but access can still be understood as indicative of influence. One approach to explaining the access of organized interests to policy-makers is the theory of access goods (Bouwen, 2002). Briefly put, this framework posits access as following the logic of supply and demand: influence-seeking organizations are given access in exchange for providing policy-relevant goods to
political decision-makers. Access goods can include technical knowledge and expertise, information about the needs of core constituencies, and direct support for policy decisions, to mention some examples.

This exchange perspective can be combined with the concept of political opportunity structure to understand the interaction between organizations and public authorities under different models. According to Öberg et al. (2011), for example, corporatist exchange is characterized by the exchange of certain, desirable resources that either party wants. On the one hand, the state controls favorable public policy through its legitimate monopoly over legislation, financing, and participation rights in decision-making. On the other hand, voluntary organizations control disciplined moderated opinions through their legitimate monopoly over support for public decisions. The exchanges may involve strategies such as log-rolling, bargaining, and deliberation, and take place in committees as well through more informal interactions with cabinet members and state level bureaucrats.

Broadening this perspective within a pluralist context, there are good reasons for groups to access the parliament, and for parliamentary politicians to demand that input. Because they are actively involved in preparing policy proposals, members of parliament value the technical information and expertise that interest groups are able to provide (Eising, 2007). They also need to leverage the interests of different groups, albeit with an eye to garnering support among core voters rather than achieving a compromise between conflicting parties, but members of parliament also may also attempt to draw attention to a particular issue with support from interest groups. Bureaucrats, on the other hand, “need technical information and knowledge about the political support of core actors […] in order to prepare implementable and politically feasible policy decisions” (Binderkrantz et al., 2015).

A standard assumption in the interest group literature is that economic-functional organizations are better able to supply information to the bureaucracy because they possess highly specialized, sector-specific expertise (Bouwen, 2004; Yackee & Yackee, 2006). Along with this, the fact that economic interest groups control important societal and economic functions often has necessitated consulting affected organizations prior to making and implementing decisions (Christensen & Egeberg, 1979). Other types of non-economic groups on the other hand provide information on broad topics, place general issues on the agenda and mobilize popular support. This information is useful for elections and agenda-setting in parliament. Thus citizen groups are often involved at a later stage, and more often target the parliament.

4.4 Organizational and Institutional Perspectives: Nonprofit Advocacy, Government Funding, Organizational Networks
The above perspectives are in this thesis linked to issues that concern changes in the mobilization and representation of nonprofit and voluntary associations, the relationship between government funding and nonprofit advocacy and the role of umbrella organizations. In the following, some organizational theoretical views are presented on these in light of resource mobilization and political opportunity theory.
4.3.1. Explaining patterns of mobilization and nonprofit advocacy

Studies from countries such as Germany, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom show that the increase of new types of groups represents, in fact, a trend across much of Europe (Gabriel et al., 2012; Jordan et al., 2010). And last but not least, in the United States, the concept of an “advocacy explosion” has long been used to describe the growth of new interest groups and professional lobbying groups (Berry, 1999; Skocpol, 2003; Walker, 1991). Similar trends have been described in the neighboring Scandinavian countries as well (Binderkrantz et al., 2016; Boje et al., 2006).

Changes in the mobilization patterns in civil society have been linked to political, social and economic changes associated with the rise of an affluent leisure society, in which post-materialist values, individual self-realization and quality-of-life issues take precedence over typical material concerns (Inglehart, 1997). Petracca (1992) identifies the growth of the middle class, the revolution in communication technology and the emergence of interest group patrons as the most important factors explaining the rise of new groups. Some also point to the decline of traditional parties and expansion of welfare programs as catalyst (Berry & Arons, 2003; Salamon, 2003). Lastly, demographic trends such as a growing ageing population and increasing immigration have been emphasized, not only in terms of identity groups, but also broader movements reacting to related economic and social developments.

Organizational form and structure has been shown to be connected to the policy participation of associations (Jordan & Maloney, 1997). Institutionally speaking, this type of structure can also be argued to be associated with a higher level of legitimacy, in the sense that it is democratically and membership based, and in many ways reflects that of the state. On the other hand, a more singular structure provides increased flexibility, which can be advantageous in a more competitive setting with shifting political priorities. In the administrative arena, this may not play their advantage; however, as civil servants seek out organizations that represent relevant interest groups. As such, if structure matters, we expect it to matter more for the access to the administrative arena than the parliamentary and governmental arena.

From a resource mobilization perspective, the hierarchical structure provides organizations with a strengthened ability to mobilize membership resources. Whether this is to their advantage, is of course an empirical question. The theoretical proposition is that in a more pluralist setting, what matters is not ultimately the legitimacy derived from membership, but rather the capacity of organizations to provide useful policy knowledge. Flexible organizations should in principle not be less suited to doing so. However, the question is whether such organizations are able to muster the professional resources necessary.

While more flexible organizations may lack the legitimacy and professional resources needed to gain access to the policy process. At a general level, organizations that are connected to other organizations, either within their own field of activity our outside, are expected to have more access than those who stand alone. Adding to this, singular associations that struggle to attain legitimacy and resources, may bond together with other organizations to counteract the disadvantages derived from their organizational structure. To what extent this dynamic comes into play in a very fragmented environment, of course, is a different question. On the one hand, it may create incentives for them to bond together, but on the other, competition may override cooperation.
4.3.2. Nonprofit funding and resource mobilization and dependence

Different types of resources provide varying action space for organizations, different opportunities for mobilizing resources relevant to policy-makers, and may also have various institutional and organizational effects. A growing body of literature has explored the impact of different factors on voluntary and nonprofit organizations’ political activity (Arvidson et al., 2018; Child & Grønbjerg, 2007; Neumayr et al., 2013). Studies suggest that the composition of revenues may impact their engagement in lobbying and advocacy in different ways. Government funding in particular has been an important focus. Such revenues are theorized to both hamper and suppress voluntary and nonprofit organizations political activity.

A resource dependence perspective suggests that the revenue mix of non-profit organizations has implications for their advocacy strategies and approaches. The basic premise is that the dependence on others for resources necessary to their operation, whether it be members, donors or government, creates uncertainty (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). It is difficult for organizations not only to anticipate the actions of particular resource providers, but also to manage the different relations to them as stakeholders carrying certain demands and expectations (Enjolras, 2009). Some stakeholders can be more important that others depending on how critical the resources they control are, and organizations will for this reason respond more to their demands. In this sense, dependencies can also be understood as relations of power (Pfeffer, 1982).

Institutional theory focuses on the structure, rules, norms and culture of organizations. A useful concept within this perspective is that of isomorphism, which refers to “constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Organizations will tend to do so to access resource and increase their legitimacy and influence in order to ensure their survival. These processes can be coercive, which involve pressures from other organizations; mimetic, in which uncertainty encourages imitation of other organizational models; and normative, by which pressures are brought on by professions.

Following the basic argument of resource dependence, public funding to nonprofit organizations may involve demands and conditions that suppress their advocacy activities (Chaves et al., 2004; Moulton & Eckerd, 2011; Schmid et al., 2008). Different reasons are given in the literature for why this is so: First, those organizations that receive public funding are wary of placing themselves in opposition to government policies for fear of losing government funding. This assumes, of course, that funding decisions are taken at a political level rather than administrative level. Chaves et al. (2004) terms this the “don’t-bite-the-hand-that-feeds-you”-mechanism. Second, the conditions placed on funding may directly require organizations to invest in specific activities related to i.e. implementation, meaning they are unable to invest those (and other) resources in an advocacy role.

An alternative, second view which can be linked to resource mobilization and resource exchange theory holds that public funding enables organizations to build their lobbying capacity. Public funding decreases is argued to decrease their dependence on other revenue sources, thus allowing them to focus their energy and resources on lobbying rather than being tied up in fundraising efforts. Additionally, government support is assumed to drive processes that enhance the organizations’ capacities, for example professionalization and bureaucratization. Collaboration
with public funding agents and other governmental bodies may also allow them to further their policy agendas and serve as a vehicle for lobbying.

### 4.3.3. Organizational forms and new modes of governance

Umbrella organizations can be seen as a manifestation of this trend. Umbrella organizations are a form of network organization that is becoming steadily more prevalent in the voluntary sector. They differ from other types of voluntary organization in that they are associations of other organizations rather than individuals (D. R. Young, 2001). Being part of an umbrella provides, amongst other things, legitimation for the organizations. Furthermore, they can receive support from the umbrellas more directly in the form of advice, bolstering their lobbying capacity.

Although an important form of organization the literature on umbrella associations has been limited (Melville, 2001). Nevertheless, there have been made some notable theoretical and empirical contributions to the study of umbrella associations in more recent years (Ahrne & Brunnsson, 2008; Brilliant & Young, 2004; Karlberg & Jacobsson, 2015; Wittberg, 2013; D. R. Young, 2001). These contributions have contributed to a better understanding of the characteristics of such associations and the complex and varied roles they play in organized civil society.

While often established to advocate the interests of organizations within a specific field, they appear to take on new roles in relation to third sector and the state. They are still players in the public policy process, but also function as structures for collaboration and resource pooling within the nonprofit and voluntary sector, as well as organizations linking the civil society to the state. Umbrella associations are delegated responsibility by public authorities to provide services or distribute governmental funds. Such involvement, understood as a private-public partnership or collaboration, may in turn contribute to increased influence in public policy-making and provide them with increased access to relevant resources. At the same time, there is the risk of co-optation by the state, which might weaken the autonomy of the associations.

Umbrella associations are in this way a means by which voluntary associations can gain strength in numbers. However, we have little knowledge about these kinds of organizations, how they are structured and behave, and what their role is in the third sector and in relation to the state and civil society. Umbrella associations are constituted by their members, but they also act as independent organizations through their board and administration. But in contrast to more traditional voluntary associations, which are hierarchically structured, umbrella organizations are characterized by horizontal relations. Managing and uniting the different interests of their membership is therefore an important aspect of this function. To retain cohesion, legitimacy and resources, the organizations need to facilitate collaborative efforts and avoid conflict. Decision-making is done through democratic institutions, and although voting is important, creating favorable reception among the groups affected by policy-initiatives is often equally important. The administration has important functions in doing so and involving CSOs and umbrella organizations at an early stage in the policymaking process is an important tool.

In conclusion, this chapter has introduced resource mobilization and political opportunity as concepts for understanding changes in nonprofit advocacy engagement. By expanding upon these perspectives based on organization and institutional theory, it has presented a framework comprising concepts and tools to better understand the involvement of nonprofit and voluntary associations in the policy making process.
5 Research Design and Methodology

The thesis project has been carried out as part of different research projects at the Centre for Research on Civil Society and Voluntary Sector, which is a collaboration between the Institute for Social Research and NORCE - Norwegian Research Centre in Bergen. It uses organization survey data and case study data collected through these projects, in addition to existing data made available by the Norwegian Center for Research Data.

This chapter describes the research design, data sources and methodology used. First, the research design takes a mixed method approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in a single, multiphase study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). By doing so, it draws on the strengths of different methods and data sources, potentially offsetting some of their unique weaknesses. The data sources used in the thesis are, more specifically, survey data on national voluntary and nonprofit associations, and qualitative interviews from case studies of umbrella organizations. In the articles that comprise the thesis, these data are studied through different techniques of analysis.

5.1 Research Design

Initially, the thesis project was developed against the backdrop of research projects that focused on change within the Norwegian organizational community and in the relationship between nonprofit and voluntary associations and the state (see Arnesen & Sivesind, 2017; Arnesen et al., 2016). However, although framed against existing projects, it should be emphasized that the thesis was motivated by an interest in a set of independently conceived research questions.

As the theoretical framework of the thesis took shape, the perspectives of resource mobilization and political opportunity became important as frames for the research design. These perspectives served as a way to reframe existing research and theories deductively and inductively. On the one hand, it provides the basis for the formulation of hypothesis for research regarding change in civil society and its relationship to the state, and the impact on nonprofit advocacy engagement. On the other hand, it made it possible to make better sense of the data, offering a way to approach the dialectic between questions, data, methods and results (Kalleberg, 1996).

Later, a qualitative case-study approach was integrated into the design to examine some interesting aspects of the relationship between associations and state in greater depth and to explore possible explanations for the changes observed. This case study focused on the development of national umbrella organizations in Norway and changes in their societal role based on organizational data and interviews with key informants. More specifically, it examined on their involvement in organizational development in the voluntary sector, influencing public policy and the management and distribution of public grants (Arnesen, 2018).

The research design of the thesis can be viewed as a mixed methods design. Mixed methods that integrate quantitative and qualitative analysis have become increasingly common in social research in recent years. As defined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), it refers to “a
research design (or methodology) in which the researcher collects, analyzes, and mixes (integrates or connects) both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a multiphase program of inquiry”. In this thesis, methods are not ‘mixed’ in any individual study, but they are combined as part of the larger thesis project. The advantage of doing so is that they complement each other in a way that builds on their common strengths and offsets their different weaknesses, and help provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon at hand (Denscombe, 2017).

Quantitative, survey-based analysis benefits from large-scale sample data and provides a way to examine variation in organizations’ advocacy activity and relationships between organizational factors and political engagement. In such studies, “claims to knowledge are based on cause-and-effect reasoning, reducing the research problem to variables and their interrelations, the detailed observation and measurement of variables, and the testing of hypotheses and theories” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). A case study approach, on the other hand, is appropriate when investigating the why and how of social phenomena. Yin (2018, 9898) defines a case study as “an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident”.

5.2 Data sources

5.2.1 Organization survey data

Surveys of nonprofit and voluntary organizations have been carried out as part of comparative political research in Norway going as far back as the early 1960’s. This effort was initially motivated by and initiated as part of a call for more research on political representation, interest groups and intermediation and organizational society. It was also inspired by similar surveys conducted in other countries around the same time, such as the United States, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany (Moren, 1966). The first survey was completed in 1964 (with an update in 1967) as part of projects at the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen. Later, it was followed by corresponding surveys in 1972, 1976, 1983 and 1992, carried out at the Institute for Social Research in Oslo, the University of Oslo and the University of Tromsø (Hallenstvedt, 1983; Hallenstvedt et al., 1976; Hallenstvedt & Trollvik, 1993; Moren, 1972). The data from the surveys are today available from the Archive of Non-profit Organization, a database administrated by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

Aside from a more limited survey in 2005, these prior organization surveys were not followed until 2013, when the Centre for Research on Voluntary Sector and Civil Society carried out a survey of nonprofit and voluntary organizations (Gulbrandsen & Sivesind, 2013). This survey was originally intended to complement the local association surveys known as the Hordaland surveys, which in turn formed a part of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project (see see Sivesind et al., 2002). However, the survey was also designed to provide a basis for assessing the development of the national level of nonprofit and voluntary sector, and thus incorporated many of the items that had been in the earlier organization surveys to provide a basis for comparisons over time.

In each of the surveys, lists of nonprofit and voluntary associations were compiled based on information from public registries, telephone directories, newspapers and, in the most recent
case, the Internet. This includes national organizations with regional or local chapters, umbrella organizations with other national member organizations, organizations with more than a regional area of activity but without local or regional chapters, and Norwegian chapters of transnational or international organizations.

It is believed that the results of these efforts came fairly close to the “true” populations of organizations (see see Rommetvedt et al., 2013). However, it can be noted that the establishment of the Central Coordinating Register for Legal Entities in 1995 has greatly simplified the process of mapping nonprofit and voluntary associations in Norway. Although not obligatory to be registered here, it is often necessary in practice due to requirements in applying for government funding. Furthermore, the Internet has made it decidedly easier to search for sources that can provide information about such organizations. In the work on the survey in 2013, a list over registered associations was used to get an initial overview of the organizational population, which then was supplemented by internet searches to identify associations that were not listed.

Another difference between the older and newest survey, is that while the questionnaires in the former were administered by regular mail, the latter used a web-based questionnaire. The implementation of the older surveys is regrettably rather poorly documented, while naturally there is more information about the newest one. In this case, information about the survey along with a link to the questionnaire was sent to the organizations by e-mail, which had been collected as part of the mapping of the population. The invitation was directed to persons in the organizations within the secretariat, such as the secretary general or chief of administration. Since it was difficult to know beforehand who would be best suited to provide answers to the questions, however, it was up the organizations themselves to decide this.

### Table 5.1. Key information about the organizational surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>3 395</td>
<td>933</td>
<td>27.5 %</td>
<td>Gulbrandsen &amp; Sivesind, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2 427</td>
<td>1 005</td>
<td>41.4 %</td>
<td>Hallenstvedt &amp; Trollvik, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>1 648</td>
<td>1 127</td>
<td>68.4 %</td>
<td>Hallenstvedt et. al., 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1 182</td>
<td>1 021</td>
<td>86.4 %</td>
<td>Moren, Hallenstvedt &amp; Christensen, 1976</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reliability, validity and generalization

Falling response rates is a growing problem in survey research in social and political sciences. One reason is survey fatigue. This is also an issue in surveys among nonprofit and voluntary organizations. Response rate is important in so far it bears on the representativeness of the sample (Cook et al., 2000). There is reason to believe that these surveys indeed are representative of the more central parts of the voluntary sector, and that they as such provide a valid data basis. Many of the organizations that did not respond are likely of being less inactive or even possibly non-existing. In many cases, the founders will not go to the trouble of dissolving their organization officially, meaning that it still remains in public registries, telephone books, and on the internet. This would suggest, conversely, that the samples cover quite well the segment of the population that we interested in, and that our results are generalizable to what can be regarded as the Norwegian voluntary sector.
Another issue is that of missing data on variables. In some cases, organizations have completed the survey, but have not been able or willing to provide information on all questions asked. This particularly concerns for instance membership figures, revenue data, but also extends to other questions about their activity. Changes in the questions asked furthermore, may lead data not to be comparable in all instances. In relation to other operationalization of advocacy and access to policy making, this data provides information on groups' inclination to contact formal political and administrative authorities, overall, access to various policy making arenas (parliament, government, ministries, and agencies) and the frequency of contact. One strong aspect of the data set is that the questions are posed in the same way so that one can be relatively confident that one measures the same over time. A third aspect of the data that should be mentioned is that they do not provide any information on advocacy in a broader sense, such as by indirect strategies. The newer data partly provides an input to investigate this further, but since this thesis has been concerned with examining changes, it has instead been made a choice not to use this information. As such, the analyses in thesis are limited to the interaction of the organizations with formal political and administrative authorities.

### 5.2.2 Case study data

The case study data include in-depth interviews with the leaders of five umbrella organizations, in addition to internal documents such as annual reports, strategic plans and policy documents.

Organizations were strategically selected according to a number of criteria. The most important criteria were that they had to be involved in the management of public funds. This is what is often called “selection on the dependent variables” (Swanborn, 2010). This criterion was set as the main interest was to examine what this involvement meant for the organizations role and functions in civil society. Second, although there are organizations in other fields that distribute government funding, this form of collaboration with the state is most prominent in culture, sports and recreation, so the cases were restricted to these types of organizations. The advantage of this is that, while there is also considerable variation within this category, it also provides a more unified backdrop for the study. Third, in so far it was possible, the selection sought to include some variation in terms of size and structure to have an adequate basis for making comparisons.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face over a period of a few weeks, each being one to two hours long. The interviewees received the interview guide beforehand so that they would be better prepared to answer my questions and be trustful of the project. Importantly, some of the questions concerned details about the organizational operation that likely would be difficult to answer without preparation. However, as a semi-structured arrangement, it was also possible to follow up on specifics that concerned the organizations without necessarily basis it on the questions in the guide. Some practical adaptations were also made in course of the project as it became clear that some questions worked better than others.

### Reliability, validity and generalization

With qualitative methods, data cannot be replicated through accessing a dataset. Rather, assessments about the reliability and validity of the data rely on the transparency and reports of the
researcher about the data collection (reference). For this purpose, there was for each of the organizations included in the case study written a report detailing the data and its handling.

One perspective is that case studies cannot be used to provide reliable information about a larger class of objects and is simply a useful for a stage of pre-investigation However, there others who argue that the very purpose of a case study is “to shed light on a larger class of cases” (Gerring, 2007). Furthermore, Giddens (1984) wrote that “research which is geared primarily to hermeneutic problems may be of generalized importance in so far as it serves to elucidate the nature of agents’ knowledgeability, and thereby their reasons for action, across a wide range of action-contexts”. In a similar vein, Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that it is a misconception that it is not possible to generalize from case studies. He writes that the ““the force of example” is underestimated” is underestimated in the social sciences. As such, case studies provide a basis for illustrating social phenomena, and can also be used for analytical generalizations through thick descriptions. They can provide insight into commonalities and diversity across cases and covariation between cases (see also Ragin, 1994).

**Ethical considerations**
The case study data have been treated in accordance with legal and ethical guidelines regarding data collection and analysis (The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, 2016). The research design interview guides were approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data, which is the Data Protection Official for Research. A primary concern in the data collection was to safeguard the anonymity of the interviewees and the integrity of their organizations. The interviewees were given written information about the study before agreeing to participate, which outlined its purpose and stated that participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time during the study. It was also made clear that all personal information would be anonymized and only information about the organizations themselves would be recognizable.

**5.3 Strategy of Analysis**
The first article makes use of the information on the population of organizations, in addition to the survey data. Describing aggregate change in organizational population – in other words, counting organizations at different points in time – is useful in order to say something about the types of groups that represented not only in organizational society but also in the policymaking process. This basic population analysis is then combined with bivariate cross-table analysis to more closely examine differences and change in the access of various organizational types to the policy-making arenas. Lastly, regression analysis is employed to examine statistical variation between variables measuring different organizations characteristics and arena access. Furthermore, to compare the effects across the two years in question, the analysis introduces a year variable to separate the two surveys in a single model. This variable is interacted with the independent variables to assess the possible change in its effect.

The second article extends this method of analysis by using a particular type of regression model: the Hackman selection procedure (Heckman, 1979). In this article, I examine the impact of government funding both the engagement in advocacy and the access to different policy-making arenas. However, the data available do not provide information about whether the organizations engage in other forms of political activity, nor on their manifest or latent
propensity to do so. In an effort to mitigate this, the analysis uses selection model to account for the bias of organizations “self-selection” into advocacy. The advantage of this method is that it enables us to model the selection process in two steps, so that we first examine what organizations are most likely to engage in advocacy, and then use the information to control for their non-random selection so that we achieve more efficient and precise estimates.

The third article encompasses qualitative case-studies of umbrella organizations, looking at how their involvement in public grant management impacts their roles and functions as network-based civil society organizations. In this article, I exploit information from in-depth interviews with organizational leaders, organizational documents and other online sources. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the transcript analyzed through multiple readings where I looked for themes, sub-topics, keywords and other aspects of interest. The analysis does not adhere to any particular paradigm of interview research, but I mainly view the interview as a process of mutual interaction between interviewer and interviewee.
6 Summary of Articles

The thesis comprises three articles that examine change in different aspects of the relationship between voluntary organizations and public political and administrative authorities in Norway, as understood in terms of the public policy process. Each of the articles aims to make a distinct theoretical and empirical contribution to an understanding of the role and involvement of civil society organizations in advocacy and the policy-making process.

6.1. Article 1: Outsiders Wanting In: Diversity and Bias in the Mobilization and Representation of CSOs in Norway, 1976-2013

The first article investigates how changing resource mobilization patterns and political opportunity structures affect nonprofit representation in the policymaking process through a study of citizen group advocacy. A large share of the existing literature on organized interests in Scandinavia has focused on the describing and explaining the decline of corporatism. There has been considerably less attention on the implications of this development for the role and participation of voluntary organizations in the public policy process, particularly outside the traditional context of the labor market. By investigating how the political involvement of associations has changed over the past decades, this study has sought to bridge this gap in current research.

It is argued in the article that the disruption of corporatist policymaking institutions is associated with expanding opportunities for associations and interest groups to affect policy decisions. However, precisely due to the more open and inclusive character of the policy process, there is increased competition for political attention, contributing to a stronger emphasis on professional lobbying and advocacy activities. Reinforced by structural and ideological changes in civil society, this development ultimately works in favor of larger, established and more resourceful organizations seeking to maintain their influence rather than those smaller and poorer in resources. This argument is examined using a unique dataset comprising surveys of nationwide Norwegian associations from 1976, 1992 and 2013. Using these data, it compares the development of the composition and structure of the organizational population across these three years and examines changes in the contact of different types of associations with central political and administrative authorities. Furthermore, the study investigates the factors influencing patterns of the contacts in different arenas, with a particular focus on the role of organizational resources.

Consistent with this argument, the results of the empirical analysis indicates that there have been significant changes in the scope and composition of organized interests in Norway. We find that since the 1970’s, when corporatist policy-making reached its peak, public interest and advocacy groups have gradually gained ground over traditional economic interest groups. Parallel developments found in other countries, this can be understood as reflecting a more general trend of increasing citizen mobilization and participation in the policymaking process. However, a more open and inclusive policy environment also engenders increased competition for political attention, which may lead organizations to professionalize their lobbying and advocacy activities in an effort to gain the upper hand. There are indications that organizational resources have become more important in determining access to the political and administrative
system. This might have implications for the participation of organizations in public policy-making.

In line with this expectation, the analysis also shows that newer organizations still are less likely than traditional insiders to have regular contact with the parliament, government and ministries, with their political activity instead being directed towards directorates and agencies. This is mainly explained by differences in overall organizational resources, which is argued to reflect differing patterns of resource mobilization between established insider organizations and new types of citizen groups that are more dependent on government support.


The second article expands on the first by examining the impact of government funding on nonprofit advocacy based on analysis of survey data on Norwegian nonprofit and voluntary associations from 1983 and 2013. Over the past decades, there has been an increase in government funding for nonprofit and voluntary associations in Norway. More recent studies of the Norwegian (and Scandinavian) non-profit sector have argued that the introduction of a new contract culture in the wake of New Public Management-inspired reforms has contributed to changing the relationship between civil society and the state. The non-profit sector has been ‘rediscovered’ by the state and given a more central role in the implementation of public policy. This has engendered a growth in the scope and forms of government funding, with a greater degree of monitoring and control (Selle et al., 2018).

This study compares the hypothesis that increased government funding constrains nonprofit advocacy engagement through the effects of resource dependence and isomorphic institutional processes to a resource mobilization hypothesis. This hypothesis holds, in contrast, that government funding promotes nonprofit advocacy engagement by facilitating increased resource mobilization and enhancing the political capacity of nonprofit and voluntary associations. It also looks at the impact of government funding on their involvement with decision-makers in the parliament, government and bureaucracy. The analysis indicates that government funding, measured both as amount and share of total revenues, is positively associated with nonprofit advocacy engagement overall, and the effect has increased with time. However, there is no discernible impact of government funding on the involvement of associations with the parliament, government or bureaucracy. The results are taken to provide partial support the resource mobilization hypothesis.

More specifically, nonprofit and voluntary associations with government funding are more likely to be engaged in policy advocacy, and this likelihood increases with the more funding they receive. The effect of the amount of government funding has also increased over time. The results also show that non-profits that depended highly on government funding were less likely to engage in legislative or administrative advocacy than those that received a moderate share of their income from such funding in 1983, but that this relationship changed by 2013, so that there is a more linearly positive effect. However, there is little to indicate that government
funding has any direct impact—positive or negative—on contact between nonprofit and voluntary associations and decision makers in parliament, government or bureaucracy, whether measured as a total amount or share of their income.

Compared to existing research on the relationship between government funding and non-profit advocacy, the findings of this study conforms to the conclusion of the meta-analysis by Lu (2016), which is positive or null. As such, it contributes to a growing body of evidence that such funding does not, at least, suppress the advocacy engagement of non-profit organizations (see also Neumayr et al., 2013) Rather, it seems to suggest that government funding, in general, can be conducive to the political involvement of non-profits because it provides the linkages and resources needed for effective advocacy. This stands in contrast to the perspective that government funding has a constraining effect on the political activity of non-profit organizations,

In conclusion, similar to many other Western countries, government funding continues to be an important source of income for non-profit and voluntary associations in Norway. This study contributes to the existing literature on the impact of government funding on non-profit advocacy by studying it in the Scandinavian context. The overall conclusion is in line with the more general findings in parts of the literature, and more specifically, the resource mobilization perspective, and also challenges existing notions about the impact of government funding in the Scandinavian debate. The study also suggests some pathways for future research by developing new more detailed data and including other perspectives from the literature.

6.3. Article 3: Voices of Civil Society or Tools of Government? The Involvement of Nonprofit Umbrella Associations in Public Grant-Making

The third article is based on an explorative case study examining the involvement of nonprofit umbrella associations in public grant management, and the implications for their roles in civil society. This study is concerned with whether and to what extent their autonomy and capacity to fulfill functions related to advocacy, service provision and internal coordination are affected positively or negatively by taking on responsibilities related to the management of public grants. The analysis focuses on five umbrella associations in the fields of culture, sports, recreation and youth and children’s activities, and is based on in-depth interviews with their leaders and document review of annual reports, strategic plans and policy documents.

The analysis indicates that the involvement of umbrella associations in public grant-making complements rather than compromises their roles in civil society. While the analysis suggests that they do not are wholly unaffected by taking on public grant-making responsibilities, indicating a trade-off between autonomy and resource control, it also identifies unexpected but interesting synergies with their roles in policy advocacy, development and coordination. On the one hand, by taking on grant-making responsibilities on behalf of public authorities, they gain access to resources that can bolster their administrative capacity, contribute to their efforts in organizational development and provide the basis for more effective advocacy efforts. First, the analysis indicates that their involvement in grant-making provides the umbrella associations control over important resources, and increases their authority and legitimacy as representatives of the organizations within their organizational field. Second, even though they have to adhere
to certain guidelines and criteria in the management of the grants, they are able to prioritize the allocation of funding in line with developmental goals in their field. And third, regular interactions with public authorities strengthen their linkages to and status among political decision-makers, which contributes to their policy influence.

However, although the umbrella associations draw significant benefits from taking on responsibilities in the management and distribution of public grants, the study also identifies organizational impacts that may have adverse effects on their operation and lead to a loss of autonomy. Dependence on public funding makes them vulnerable to disruptions of their revenue streams because of changes in grant policy, and it is far from given they always will be able to resist governmental priorities. An increased politicization of grant-making might constrain their scope of action as the funding becomes subject to political negotiation and bargaining. Furthermore, processes of institutional isomorphism resulting from requirements, standards and regulations imposed by government as part of the grant-making responsibilities can affect the structures and activities of the associations. Professionalization and bureaucratization may, for example, lead to goal displacement and mission drift in the associations.

Overall, the analysis illustrates some aspects of the role of the umbrella associations in public grant-making. The findings suggest that there are pressures on the associations as a result of this role, but that they largely resist or adapt in a way that—on the whole—is viewed as beneficial. The study contributes to knowledge on the role of umbrella associations in organized civil society and adds to a limited but growing body of research, while also providing insights relevant to the larger literature on the relationship between civil society and the state.
7 Conclusions

The three articles in this thesis document and analyze changes in various aspects of non-profit and voluntary relations with public authorities and participation in policymaking processes. In this concluding chapter, I put the empirical findings into a broader theoretical context and discuss what it means for nonprofit advocacy and the role of civil society organizations in democratic governance.

7.1 Towards a Post-Corporatist State? Changing Patterns of Interest Representation

The first question asked in this thesis concerned changes in organized civil society and their implications for the mobilization of different political, economic, social and cultural interests. Existing research on the Norwegian nonprofit and voluntary sector suggest that past decades it has seen a number of significant ideological and structural transformations of the sector over the past few decades, as described in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Although the popular movements indeed no longer form as distinctive a force for mass mobilization as they did in the "age of association" (Rokkan, 1967), civil society still represents an important institution for social and political mobilization. What it is shown in existing research, and further confirmed in Article 1, is that the associational landscape is marked by a greater variety in the interests and voices that are represented through nonprofit and voluntary associations. Notably, it documents a proliferation of national leisure associations and citizen advocacy groups as the nonprofit and voluntary sector has expanded and become more differentiated, similar to that found in the other Scandinavian countries and in the United States and much of Europe. At the same time, the analysis also shows that traditional movements and economic organizations - corporatist insiders - still have a central position in policy-making processes. Although the political structures favor such groups to a lesser extent, the more competitive impact of policy contributes to the accumulation of resources and legitimacy to ensure continued access to decision-makers.

Similar to what has been found in the United States, this could indicate an interest politics sector “that encourages variety and voice with respect to the many issues now represented in national politics and political discourse, but one that is also highly professional in its operating structure and in its relationships to its constituency and established political actors” (Minkoff et al., 2008). But with increased diversity, potential differences in associations and groups' access to policy making also follow. The findings in this thesis also indicate that this is the case to some extent. They can partly be seen in the context of the political reality. Politicians and civil servants necessarily have limited capacity and attention, and they make priorities based on strategic considerations. It also helps to raise some issues at the expense of others. On the other hand, it is about the resources that the organizations possess, and their ability to translate them into advocacy activities and political influence.

There is little evidence, however, that memberless, professionalized lobby groups have any dominant position either in the organized civil society. Compared to the conclusions drawn in the Norwegian Power and Democracy Study, where it was claimed that traditional member-
based organizations position had been weakened in favor of professionalized lobby groups (Østerud et al., 2003), there is a need for a nuance. At the same time, traditional organizations indeed appear to no longer have the same mass mobilizing function as before, and to a greater extent appear as professionalized, negotiating institutions closely related to the public sector. Nevertheless, they have an important position both in the organized civil society and in politics, and what they consider legitimate representatives of important population groups and areas of interest.

Many of the new organizations that have emerged in the civil society in recent years are admittedly not member-based in the same way as traditional organizations. The associations are more specialized and often have a decentralized structure without regional or local branches. It does not mean, however, that they cannot play an important democratic role in aggregating individuals and groups’ interests from the local level to national politics. As shown in the analyzes in the Article 1, they promote both general and special issues, thereby furthering both the common, public good and increasing opportunities for citizen participation. One aspect of this that has not been explored in this thesis, but which is likely important in this context is also the role of social media, which makes it possible to organize in other ways than before (Enjolras & Eimhjellen, 2018). The increasing mediatization of politics (Mazzoleni, 2008) also suggest that such media enable these organizations enhance their engagement in advocacy.

Another point is about the organizations' access to different phases of the policy process. The results shown in article 1 may indicate that more established insider organizations have much of their contact with in central arenas such as parliament and government, in line with what has been found in existing research. At the same time, the article also shows that new organizations do not have any less degree of contact with directorates and agencies. Firstly, it is likely that these arenas have become more important in the administration of public support schemes, which many of these organizations depend on. But it is also conceivable that these are important arenas for the organizations to exert influence on public policy, especially if they fail to do so in the preparatory phase. Although the associational landscape in Scandinavia has become more and more diverse, evidence suggests persistent or even increasing biases in the access of different types of groups to the public policy process. What this suggests, in part, is that these different group types are involved in different stages of the policy process, which can have important implications for their ability to influence policy outcomes.

Different models of interest representation and modes of governance involve different structures of inclusion of civil society organizations in policy formulation and implementation. In Norway and Scandinavia, much research has departed from a neo-corporatist perspective emphasizing the representation of organized interests through public boards, councils and committees and formalized negotiation and bargaining (Nordby, 1994). An important development, however, which forms a central point in this thesis, is a decline of such privileged and institutionalized forms of policy participation in civil society. As discussed in this introduction and documented in article 1, the changes observed in the relationship between civil society and the state point towards a more pluralist environment where associations compete for policy access and influence. However, the privileged status many umbrella organizations and traditional national confederations still enjoy is based, not being just another interest group, but on legitimacy as vehicles for promoting general interests, and by being recognized as valuable partners in policy-making processes by both political and administrative authorities. Aspect of the traditional
A neo-corporatist model appears to remain in place, but it is combined with a more competitive interest promotion and struggles for attention in media. This mirrors findings from other studies in Scandinavia, particularly in Denmark (Binderkrantz et al., 2015; Binderkrantz et al., 2016). Still, to play a meaningful role as a civil society organization, nonprofit and voluntary associations are to a lesser extent dependent on access to closed corporate channels or party-controlled media. Even if some organizations are more privileged than others in formal arenas such as parliament, government and administration, outsiders wanting in can likely use a broad repertoir of strategies to influence public policy.

These trends in the relationship between civil society and the state and in nonprofit and voluntary associations involved in the policy making process can potentially also be seen as an expression of a turning towards an associative democracy. In such a model there will be elements of institutionalized policy participation and pluralist interest struggle, complemented by participatory forms. Government funding, as studied in Article 2, can also be understood as a way of facilitating activity in civil society in such a perspective. This could thus also be an important perspective for informing future research.

7.2 Resources Decide? The Impact of a Changing Resource Environment and Organizational Structures

One aspect of the changes in civil society and its relationship with the state is that patronage has become more important in facilitating mobilization within civil society. Individual donations and other types of private contributions have increased significantly in scope. This may also be an important part of the explanation for the proliferation of new leisure and citizen groups. However, it is interesting to note that, fund-raising is becoming increasingly professionalized (Sivesind, 2015), possibly pointing towards a dominance of more resourceful groups in garnering outside patronage. Undoubtedly, furthermore, the social media revolution will come to play an important role in the development of nonprofit fund-raising in the future.

Departing from this perspective, the thesis also brings attention to changes in the resource environment of civil society organizations. Government funding has become more important as government seeks to implement policies through grants, subsidies and contracts. In the international literature, there are two different perspectives on what this means: on the one hand, it may serve to contrast the political involvement of organizations through reducing dependence and institutional isomorphism, while on the other it may encourage its through mutual dependence and resource mobilization. More recent research from Norway and Scandinavia has suggested that this involves the development of state-friendly characteristics and a move towards a contract culture, through which the autonomy of organizations is pressured and government exerts more control over the finances of organizations.

Government funding for voluntary organizations has indeed increased and is a strong predictor of advocacy engagement. Another aspect that concerns smaller, more specialized organizations is that because these groups are unable to finance their activities solely through membership fees or philanthropic contributions, they become more dependent on public funding. Although there is a long-standing tradition of basic public economic support for non-profit and voluntary associations in Scandinavia, the literature suggests that too high a financial dependence on the state can negatively impact their political activity. Empirical evidence does,
however, provide mixed support for this assertion in the Norwegian case, with public funding appearing to being more of a driver of rather than barrier to involvement in public policy-making, conforming to the “state-friendly” hypothesis (Selle & Kuhnle, 1992). This suggests that the political and administrative authorities have a certain capacity to structure its own contacts among the CSOs and umbrella organizations, through grants and insider status.

However, far from constraining the political involvement, it appears to encourage it in line with the resource mobilization hypothesis. Interestingly, there is also a change in the association over time. Dependence on government funding is shown to become more positively associated with advocacy engagement over time. There are two takes on this changing relationship: on the one hand, it may indicate that access to government funding strengthens the capabilities of organizations to engage in advocacy, by enabling them to build professional and communicative capacity. On the other hand, it may also reflect an orientation towards funding and framework conditions in the advocacy engagement of the organizations.

This can also be seen in relation to the expanding number of organizations involved in advocacy and lobbying, and as a result, the more competitive policy environment and increasing significance of resources for access to the policymaking process. In addition, it also goes into the role of organizations in policy implementation. From one point of view, it gaining access to these public resources is possibly a more important prerequisite for organizations to be able to impact the policy process. More established organizations have strong incentives to monopolize such resources as they accrue from them in terms of maintaining their privileged position in the policymaking process. Of course, so do newer organizations as well, in order to build organizational and political capacity, but due to their position they may have a harder time gaining access to policy makers and secure such resources. Considering their dependence on government funding, this may be more detrimental to the advocacy engagement of these organizations.

A related issue is the role of nonprofit umbrella associations in public grant-making, which is examined in Article 3. Traditionally, umbrella associations have sought to represent their members’ interests’ vis-à-vis public authorities, and they still are important in this regard. In fact, some of the major policy areas are to a large extent covered by the umbrella organizations or national confederations that are difficult for outsiders to challenge. Increasingly, however, they have also come to be important for facilitating mutual coordination and collaboration and some are also drawn into the administration of public grants. In such a role, umbrella organizations can be important in providing both large and small organizations with access to public financial resources, which can be used to strengthen advocacy engagement and organizational development within various organizational fields.

However, one issue identified in the article is institutional pressure that may lead different kinds of organizational change. Professionalization and bureaucratization may contribute to umbrella associations increasing their organizational capacity, both in terms of advocacy and service functions. However, bureaucratization is also viewed as possible impeding some core traits of non-profit associations, especially in terms of grassroots organizations. It also raises a set of issues concerning problems of goal displacement, mission drift and other related concepts. Nonetheless, managing these different roles can be a challenge due to crosscutting stakeholder relations that places contradictory demands on the organizations. On the one hand, umbrella associations involved in public administration have, as other umbrellas, to manage relations to their members. This is essential for the organizations to being able to operate effectively as
umbrella associations. On the other hand, they have to meet the demands of the public authorities, especially when it comes to accountability and control of public funds. One problem that arises from this, and which we have identified in this study is specific governing dilemmas as different steering mechanisms and logics come together at once. Umbrella associations are ideal-typically characterized by a decentralized structure built on democratic mechanisms and consensus building. When they become involved in public administration, processes of bureaucratization and professionalization lead to the emergence of competing, less democratic structures. For one, the organizations become an intermediate level in a larger hierarchical structure between state and civil society. And moreover, they enter into a more hierarchical relation to their members and other organizations in their field.

Overall, the findings in Article 2 and 3 complement those describe in Article 1, and provide further insight into the changing relationship between civil society and the state. From the perspective employed in this thesis, the conditions for resource mobilization, and particular the acquisition of government funding, is an important element in understanding the developments observed. Together with shifting political opportunities and modes of interest representation, the resource environment and organizational forms and structures within civil society appear to impact nonprofit advocacy in important ways.

7.3 Nonprofit Advocacy Reconfigured? Civil Society and Democracy in a New Age

The findings presented in this thesis also contribute to the Norwegian (and Scandinavian) debate on the role of civil society. According to the Norwegian Power and Democracy Study, two dual developments implied a weakening of the role of nonprofit and voluntary organizations in democracy. On the one hand, a weakening of the vertically integrated structure of civil society and a consequent diminishing of the role of organizations in social and political mobilization. This is tied to changing group orientations, organizational forms and structures of participation and governance. Popular movement organizations do rightly not play as central a role in mobilization processes within civil society, and to some extent, there has been a shift towards activity oriented leisure organizations. However, existing research has underplayed the role of new types of citizen groups related to public and identity interests, which provide an important outlet for citizen representation and participation. Furthermore, while there indeed has been a change in terms of the structure of the sector, with organizations increasingly opting for a more flexible, decentralized form, this has not necessarily lessened the role of organizations in democratic governance. Rather than interest aggregation through hierarchical, democratic structures, the organizations contribute to increased citizen participation by way of more direct expression of citizen interest and representation through participation in policymaking processes. As such, these new organizations provide opportunities for more narrowly conceived groups to achieve expression through cultural, social and political forms of engagement in civil society and representation within the political system. From the perspective of Young (1997), this could be understood in terms of “difference as a resource” to the democratic process.

On the other hand, the study also argued that weakening corporatist structures and a shift from state-friendliness to a contract culture weakens the role of organizations in promoting societal and citizen interest in the policymaking process through advocacy. In this thesis, it is
shown that largely, new types of civic and advocacy organizations have been able to translate their mobilization into representation in the policymaking process. The generally broad access of organizations to government funding and positive associations between such funding and advocacy engagement also indicates that the state supports the involvement of such groups in the policymaking process. This relates to the needs of public decision-makers – elected officials and civil servants – for knowledge and expertise and to leverage the support of different groups in society when preparing public policy.

From another perspective, a turn towards a more pluralist policy environment could, as mentioned, mean new forms of inequalities and biases in the representation of interests. In the more extreme cases, the mobilization of bias could result in the exclusion of important voices in the policymaking process, and lead to forms of government capture where interest organizations come to dominate the political process. The strong position of popular movement organizations and economic interest organizations and increasing multiple access to central policymaking arenas suggest that to some degree dominate the policy process. The fact that newer organizations tend a greater extent to direct their contact towards directorates and agencies could imply that they take more of an output role, focusing more on funding and implementation of policy and do not play as central a role in policymaking processes. As such, this thesis presents a different image of civil society than that shown in existing research. While there indeed have been important changes in civil society and the voluntary sector, it is premature to talk about a decline of a part of the democratic infrastructure. Rather, what one sees must be understood as a reconfiguration that places civil society organizations into new political, social and technological contexts, which can have both positive and negative consequences.

At the same time, there is also a need to be attentive to developments that potentially can per-vert the role of associations and the public discourse. Professional paid lobbying groups are a part of this landscape, for instance, and in many ways compete with civil society actors. Politics are influenced by other medium than before, i.e. the corporate channel is no longer as dominant as it once was. In part, this development is tied to those changes that have been described in existing research, both as part of the Norwegian power and democracy study, and more recent contributions on civil society and interest groups. The composition and structure of the voluntary sector has an impact on the political representation of different groups in society, and in the way that those interests are channeled into political decision-making. While the interest-based pluralist model provides some important insights about the dynamics of the interest group system in Norway, it does not tell the whole story. In some extent, it could be argued that the developments observed also can understood as a going in the direction of a communicative model. The fact that smaller groups that were more marginalized in the past have gained access to the policy process points in the direction of the communicative governance model. Still, there are obvious barriers for the involvement of associations in some parts of the political system that also point to their exclusion. This also goes into the issue of funding and how it impacts the role of associations in the policy process, with it being a more important condition for gaining access and influence. Importantly, smaller associations may have a harder time gaining access to those resources, which is to the advantage of the larger, more established associations. In some part, developments also suggest that participatory components have become more important, and that protests, actions and so forth are an important part of the repertoire of voluntary associations. For the present purposes, however, it can be concluded that this
has not led to any kind of withdrawal of associations from more formal political processes. Instead, the role of civil society in democratic governance in Norway appears in many respects strengthen, with the scope of the advocacy activities of nonprofit and voluntary associations being enhanced.

7.4 Limitations and Future Research
One limitation of this study is that it only looks at formal and regular contact between CSOs and public authorities. It does not deal with ad hoc lobbying or other informal advocacy activities. The main reason for this is that the study has relied on existing data to investigate changes in nonprofit advocacy engagement and involvement in the policymaking process. Although the study uses recent survey data that provide more detailed information on nonprofit political activity, it would not have been possible to compare this with previous survey data. This reflects not only the questions asked but also the research design chosen to examine them.

New types of data could also help deepen the findings on the relationship between government funding and nonprofit advocacy engagement. The study presented in this thesis provides new and important insights from a Scandinavian context, but is, as most existing studies, limited by the use of cross-sectional survey data. With panel data, for example, it would be possible to investigate this relationship causally and to solve some of the problems of endogeneity associated with most types of data used. One approach could be to study changes in funding from particular grant schemes on the advocacy engagement of organizations, or differences in the political activity of new and existing recipients.

Besides the limitations of the data sources used in this thesis and the opportunities that other data may provide, there are also interesting topics not explored here that would be relevant to pursue in future research. One such avenues is to study in more detail the involvement of associations from the perspective of associative democracy and the policy networks approach. Another path for further research is to examine the role of the Internet and social media in nonprofit advocacy engagement. While there is a growing international literature on this topic, there have been few studies in Scandinavia. New communication technologies have the potential to give small and less visible groups greater influence in the policymaking process by providing them with a voice in public politics and enabling them to mobilize resources needed for effective advocacy. However, there is also a risk that such media are vulnerable to the biases that tend to prevail in the interest-political landscape because their use requires human, financial and organizational resources.

7.5 Concluding remarks
This thesis examines changes in nonprofit and voluntary associations’ advocacy engagement and involvement in the policy making process in Norway. Based on the articles that make up the thesis, important changes in the characteristics of nonprofit advocacy are documented, in the relationship between the organization and the public and the importance of various organizational factors. Overall, the results point to a shift away from a corporate model of interest representation to a pluralistic or associative democratic model. This involves changes in the forms of organizational participation in the policy process, and in the integration in policy mak-
ing and implementation. Second, the results go against the image of the democratic infrastructure in decline by highlighting the continued central role of the associations in democratic governance. In conclusion, the thesis makes an important contribution to existing research by contributing new knowledge on the engagement of nonprofit and voluntary associations in advocacy and their role in democratic governance in Scandinavia.
8 Bibliography


