



Article

The changing demography of the EU interest system since 1990

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Abstract

European Union scholars have used a variety of data sources to assess the contours of the EU interest community, including directories maintained by the European Commission and commercial directories of interest organizations active in Brussels. Scholars have typically relied on only one of these sources, the least comprehensive, to assess demographic change in the EU population. We construct and then use a patched-up design focused on the more comprehensive data provided by several directories of interest groups to provide a more valid assessment of demographic changes in the EU interest system since 1990.

Keywords

European Union, interest groups, lobbying

The demography of communities of organized interests is important for a number of reasons. As interest communities become more dense and crowded, the birth and death rates of new interests change markedly (Lowery and Gray, 2001). The mix of lobbying tactics organized interests employ change as well, as they face greater competition for the attention of policy-makers (Gray and Lowery, 1997, 1998). Most importantly, however, the composition of interest communities changes significantly as they become more crowded, thereby favouring some types of interests and disadvantaging others (Lowery et al., 2005). For all of these reasons, attention

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to the births and deaths of organized interests has recently attracted considerable scholarly attention. Indeed, temporal change in a dynamic setting has implications for virtually all large- N studies of interest organizations.

Little of this work, however, has focused on the European Union (EU). Scholars of the EU have typically evaluated interest populations in an under-theorized and more fragmented manner (Balme and Chabanet, 2008; Coen, 1998, 2007; Eising, 2009; Grote and Lang, 2003; Kohler-Koch, 1994; Wessels, 1999, 2004). This is surprising given that the EU provides an almost ideal setting to test questions about interest organization demography. It is still a young polity that might be expected to have an unusually dynamic population of organized interests. This is especially so given that the EU has gone through the successive shocks of greatly expanded policy competencies and a greatly expanded membership over the last two decades, both of which might be expected to have significantly changed the interest system. The interrelation between European integration and interest group activities has been a recurrent theme in (neo-functional) integration theories (Eising, 2004; Haas, 1958). In large part, this failure is owing not to a lack of imagination but to the paucity of data on the EU interest system. EU scholars have used a variety of data sources to assess the contours of the EU interest community, including directories maintained by the European Commission, commercial and scholarly directories of interest organizations active in Brussels, and data on access to the EU Parliament. But none of these sources provides a comprehensive census of the EU interest community over an extended period of time, and their methodologies in terms of inclusion differ markedly (Berkhout and Lowery, 2008; 2010). This makes it extremely difficult to assess how the European interest system has changed over time.

We cannot rectify these problems here. Indeed, no one will be able to definitively assess claims about temporal changes in the structure of the EU interest system until a true lobby registration system is adopted. And, even then, we will never be able to use such a system in the future to examine temporal changes through the historically important period in the development of the EU interest community during the 1990s and early part of this century. Still, we take a step toward at least better grounding claims about the development of the EU interest system and the volatility of its demographic vital rates. After describing the range of data available on EU interest system demography, we used samples from several discontinuous sources of data in a patched-up design to estimate how the size and composition of the EU interest system changed during the 1990s and the early years of this decade. These results suggest that much of the growth of the overall EU interest system occurred in the early 1990s, but that more recent changes markedly altered the composition of that community to include a much broader array of interests.

The problem of measuring the EU interest system over time

Most EU research addressing the demography of organized interests now relies on single temporal snapshots of the EU system of umbrella organizations.

These snapshots are then typically used to retrospectively reconstruct past populations on the basis of the year of establishment of the listed organizations. Any estimates of growth thus ignore both the mortality of the organizations that are counted and whole groups of organizations that are not counted, such as firms and national associations (Balme and Chabanet, 2008: 78–9; Eising and Kohler-Koch, 2005: 18; Wessels, 2004: 204). Yet, some of the most interesting questions now guiding research on interest organizations, as discussed below, concern dynamic change within populations associated with interest organization mortality and founding rates. Other research, most notably Broscheid and Coen (2007) and Messer et al. (2010), has addressed some of these demographic questions indirectly using cross-sectional samples of the EU interest community. But these too are at least potentially vulnerable to confounds in that they require quite strong assumptions about the operation of processes of demographic change across very different types of interest organizations.

There are at least two important theoretical issues raised by the question of precisely when and how rapidly the EU interest system has grown. First, and in sharp contradiction to earlier claims that the population of interests represented before government inexorably grows through a simple process of accumulation (Olson, 1982), more recent organization ecology models highlight built-in limitations in such growth (Gray and Lowery, 1996). These newer models suggest that interest communities are self-regulating in the sense that density dependence sets in when interest communities are mature, such that the entrance of new interests can come only at the expense or death of older interest organizations. In such crowded interest communities, the tasks of lobbying become more difficult (Gray and Lowery, 1997, 1998), as does simple survival of the individual interest groups that comprise them (Lowery and Gray, 2001). So, where does the EU interest community fall in terms of its current development over time? Is the EU still such a young polity that the interest community is growing in an unlimited fashion, with new organizations being added to the population rather than simply replacing older organizations? Besides its theoretical interest, such questions also matter in light of recent discussion about the regulation and registration of lobbying in the EU. If population growth is indeed self-limiting, then institutional attempts to restrict population growth are less urgent.

Despite relying only on static snapshots, there has been broad agreement among scholars about the rapid growth of the EU interest population, even if many of these claims have not been based on systematic empirical evidence. Greenwood (2003: 8–9; see also Mahoney, 2008: 26–30) noted, for example, that ‘[the figures on the absolute number of groups in Brussels] do at least provide some consistent indications of growth over time, with the key growth period appearing to be the early 1990s’. Indeed, such claims have led to frequent charges – and fears that – that the EU interest system is increasingly characterized by American-style lobbying, with all of its alleged attendant evils.

Still, this frequently noted explosion in the size of the EU interest system was *not* evident in the dominant source used by scholars and the only one providing

anything like a continuous time series – the list maintained by the European Commission and made available by CONECCS (Consultation, the European Commission and Civil Society). Unfortunately, this source counts only EU umbrella associations, thereby excluding most interest organizations engaged in lobbying (Berkhout and Lowery, 2008). Indeed, the EU interest system described by the CONECCS data is considerably smaller than that described by other data sources. Evidence of the growth alluded to by scholars and feared by critics of the EU interest system is far more readily apparent in the commercial directories of EU lobbying organizations that count staff members of lobbying organizations and include national organizations engaged in some sort of Brussels activities as well.

Yet, the several published commercial directories have rarely been used in scholarly research, and the extensive directories by Alan Butt Philip (1991; 1996), and earlier editions of *Landmarks* and *Euroconfidentiel* have, in fact, never been used. The inattention to these sources is not without reason. Although these directories are certainly far more comprehensive, using them to assess temporal change in the size and composition of the EU interest system is fraught with difficulties. Each of these directories uses its own methodology, and thus they differ considerably in their counts of lobbying organizations. Just as problematically, they are discontinuous over time. Thus, none of these sources provides a stable and comprehensive foundation for assessing changes in the size and structure of the EU interest system.

The second theoretical issue raised by the limited evidence now available on the temporal development of the EU interest community concerns bias within the system. Bias, of course, is a long-standing concern of interest group scholars (Olson, 1965; Schattschneider, 1960). Despite or perhaps owing to its importance, there is still considerable disagreement over various types of bias in representation in both the US and EU interest communities. In the USA, for example, Berry (1999) has argued that citizens' groups have become both better represented in terms of numbers of lobbying organizations and more powerful in representing their interests in at least some venues, especially the media. In contrast, Schlozman (1984), looking simply at relatively static snapshots of who lobbies, argued that the limited diversity of the interest community has hardly changed over decades. The situation is even worse with respect to the EU given a lack of systematic data, as discussed below. Most scholars (including Coen, 1998; Eising, 2009; Greenwood, 2007) echo Schlozman in decrying what they view as an overrepresentation of business interests. Others, most notably Kohler-Koch (1994, 2007), have been more optimistic about the representation of non-business interests in the EU, noting, for example, that 'more inclusive consultation strategies have given general interests a stronger voice' (Kohler-Koch, 2007: 268). But these competing claims are only weakly grounded on systematic data.

This is especially so when it comes to comparisons over time. And this is particularly important because the questions of size and bias are far from independent. Recent work, again within the population ecology perspective, suggests that the life expectancies of different kinds of interest organization are dramatically influenced

by how crowded the system is and whether it has already become so crowded that density dependence has set in. Simply put, Lowery et al. (2005) found that citizens' groups are often disadvantaged in terms of further increasing their numbers in crowded interest systems in comparison with at least some types of business interests, especially health, banking and manufacturing interests.¹ As a result, the diversity of or bias in interest communities can be significantly influenced by how rapidly the interest community is still growing and whether density dependence has set in. Mature or crowded systems may well make it more difficult for new organizations to join by providing few viable niches in which they can survive. Thus, we need to know how the EU interest system has changed over time to assess how friendly it might be to the inclusion of new interest organizations, including those representing citizens' interests.

Constructing a better temporal assessment

To make better use of the more comprehensive but problematic data provided by the several directories to outline the changing contours of the EU interest system, we employ data developed by Berkhout and Lowery (2008). To determine how these several sources differ from each other and over time, Berkhout and Lowery (2008) randomly sampled two editions of the relevant sections of each of the major commercial directories: Landmarks (1996, 2005), Euroconfidentiel (1999, 2002) and Philip (1991, 1996), as well as samples of the European Parliament (EP) door pass registry and registries maintained by the European Commissions (CONECCS) and the Council of Europe. The sampling procedures are described more fully in Berkhout and Lowery (2008). Given our attention to change over the 1990s and early part of this decade, we focus here on the more continuous data provided by several commercial directories of interest organizations.

Organizations in the samples ($n \sim 50$) of the several directories were coded on a number of criteria, including 'type of organization'² and substantive interest, using information provided by the sources and the websites of the listed organizations.³ More important for our purposes here, we checked whether the organization in each sample appeared in each of the other directories (whether or not they were part of the sample of 50 or so organizations initially drawn from these other directories). This enabled us to calculate both the overlap of the different data sources at any point in time and their overlap over time, thereby allowing us to calculate the survival rates of the organizations on the published lists for the directories that were sampled twice.⁴

In calculating the overlap among populations identified by the several sources, we relied on two sources of information for each comparison. That is, we generated one estimate of the overlap between sample A and population B and another of the overlap of sample B and population A. We then used the normal average between the two numerical assessments of the overlap to generate the joint estimates of overlap across sources, as reported by Berkhout and Lowery (2008), and overlaps over time, as we report here. We further subtracted this assessment of their overlap

from the total of entries in the respective directories to calculate the non-overlap or unique number of organizations in each of the directories.

The data allow us to construct a patched-up design to assess the longer-term changes in the EU interest system. That is, we are able first to make paired comparisons across several sources at the same point where they both provide simultaneous observations of the EU interest system, but where differences in the demographic results will certainly exist given differences in the methodology of the directories. We are then able to make paired comparisons within sources over time in which the methodology of a given directory is more or less held constant. By adjusting these data over time for differences in the methodology of the samples used by the different directories, we are able to construct what we believe is a more valid and comprehensive assessment of how the EU interest system has developed and changed over its recent history.

Data were collected from the Landmarks (1996, 2005), Euroconfidentiel (1999, 2002) and Philip (1991, 1996) directories. As described by Berkhout and Lowery (2008), the Landmarks *Public Affairs Directory* provides the largest and most comprehensive report on organized interests in the EU. In contrast, CONECCS, the data source now used in almost all analyses of temporal change in the EU interest system, reports only a small fraction of organizations found in the published directories, systematically excluding several important types of lobby organizations, including individual firms and national associations. In addition, the CONECCS list is no longer available because it was replaced in the summer of 2008 by a new and quite different 'Register of Interest Representatives'. And the EP registry is simply too new and unstable in its implementation for longer-term temporal analysis (Berkhout and Lowery, 2008) of the type we are attempting here, although it may be useful in assessing shorter-term changes in the EU interest community.

This does not mean, of course, that the directories are themselves consistent in their enumeration of the EU lobby population. As discussed by Berkhout and Lowery (2008), these differences result from publishers' choices about what types of organizations to include and whether to include organizations without a Brussels office. The Landmarks directory reports the largest set of organizations because it includes corporate representations and national associations. Therefore, as discussed in Berkhout and Lowery (2008), an extra sample was drawn to focus exclusively on the sections in the Landmarks directory dealing with trade associations (B1) and membership groups (B2) in order to provide more direct comparisons with the other directories. This sample should be similar to the Philip and Euroconfidentiel directories. Still, differences remain. These can be seen in three-dimensional Venn diagram shown in Figure 1. The figure indicates that the 1996 Philip directory encompasses all organizations in the 1996 B1 and B2 Landmarks directory plus an additional estimated 550 organizations. The third directory in the diagram is the Euroconfidentiel directory from 1999, which includes some additional organizations (probably owing partly to growth between 1996 and 1999) and which has a 47 percent overlap with the Landmarks directory. In short, the populations described by the several directories share a core set of organizations, but

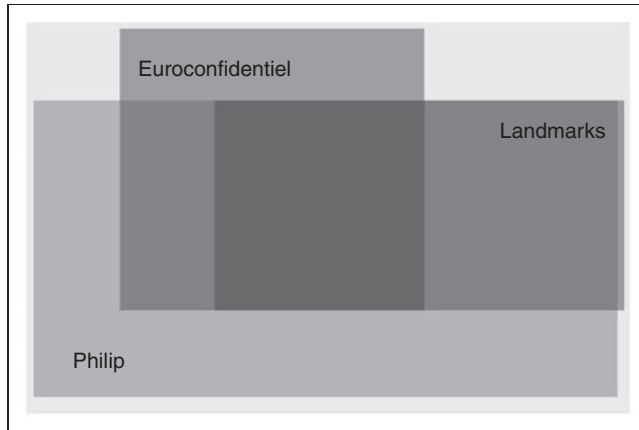


Figure 1. Three-dimensional Venn diagram on the estimated overlap between the 1996 Landmarks directory (sections B1 and B2), the Euroconfidentiel directory (1999) and the Philip et al. directory (1996).

also differ from each other in systematic ways. One of these key differences concerns the inclusion or exclusion of European organizations that may be only sporadically involved in EU policies but that do not maintain an office in Brussels.⁵ These organizations are included in the Philip directory, but they are excluded from the Landmarks directory.

Critically, these differences are not unrelated to our efforts to assess the rate of births and deaths of organized interests in the EU. As we have already noted, simple comparisons over time are difficult given discontinuities in the Philip directories' coverage over time and because of limited availability of the earlier Landmarks and Euroconfidentiel directories. Obviously, systematic differences in the composition of the directories make comparisons over time using multiple data sources rather tentative.⁶ That is, differences in how the publishers define and select their populations, even if we can account for them in a crude fashion, are likely to be related to the probabilities associated with organizational vital rates or their rates of births and deaths. For example, organizations with a Brussels office and European associations of national organizations may very well be more institutionalized, and are thus likely to have lower mortality rates, than organizations that are less institutionalized in a Brussels context, such as national associations that may come to Brussels for a specific purpose and then leave without establishing an office. Thus, we need to compare carefully across time within common sources and across sources where they overlap.

The development of the EU interest system

Our focus, then, is on longer-term changes in the EU interest community over the course of the 1990s and first few years of the new millennium following the

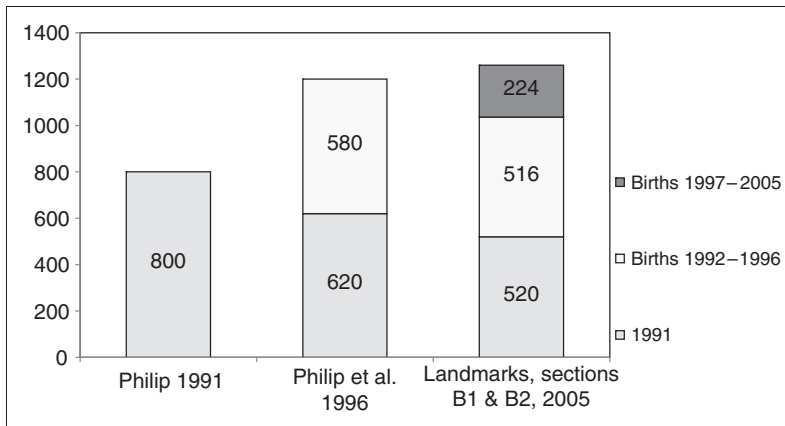


Figure 2. Growth and births of EU interest group population.

expansion of EU policy competencies at the beginning of the period and the anticipated enlargement of the EU at the end. As noted, such a comparison entails a two-step process using multiple directories in order to cover the full period. We first use the numbers of the full lists of sections of the directories to observe the overall pattern of growth and we then examine samples thereof to estimate mortality rates.

First, as seen in the first two bars of Figure 2, the Philip directory reported a growth rate of 50 percent from its 1991 to its 1996 directory, from 800 to 1200 entries (7 % per year). Further, an estimated 23 percent (~180) of the 1991 interest organizations did not (re)appear in the 1996 directory (mortality of 2.5 % per year). For the 1996 to 2005 period, we will compare the respective sections in the Landmarks directories below. For now though, we also compare in the second and third bars of Figure 2 the Philip 1996 and the Landmarks 2005 directories. In comparing these two directories at two points in time (1996 and 2005), we observe hardly any growth over this period.⁷ Thus, there seems to have been some growth in the early part of the 1990s and little thereafter.

We have to consider these figures with some caution, however, given that we have compared across different sources to generate our assessment of growth. That is, we would observe substantial growth between 1996 and 2005 if we had looked at only the absolute numbers in the associations and groups sections in the Landmarks directories of 1996 and 2005 – 677 (152 + 525) and 1259 (424 + 835) entries, the lowest categories of the second and third bars in Figure 3. So, it may be that organizations included in the Philip 1996 directory, but not yet present in Brussels, had moved to Brussels and thus were then included in the Landmarks list. Remember the notable differences in the office locations criterion of the organizations included in these two sources. Alternatively, and methodologically more problematic, it may be that Landmarks included these organizations from the Philip directory (and the Euroconfidentiel list) in their survey in the second half of the 1990s. If so, we would be observing not real growth in the interest system in

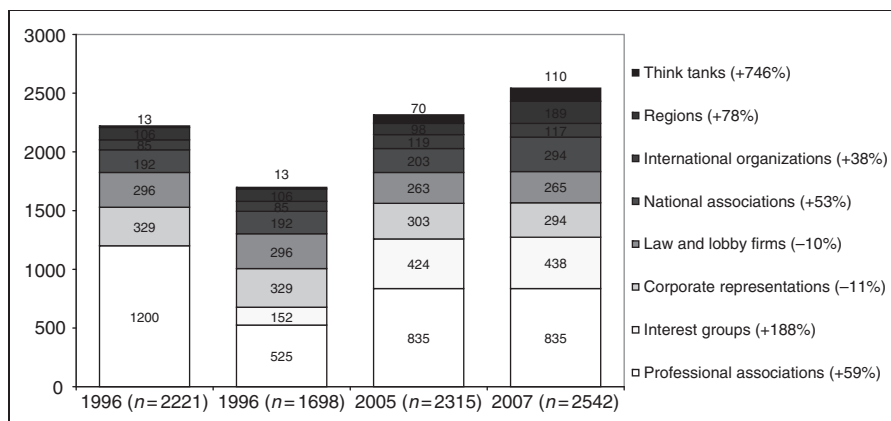


Figure 3. Number of organizations per section in the *Landmarks Public Affairs Directory*.

Note: Composite figure in first bar: professional associations and interest groups from Philip directory 1996 ($n = 1200$) plus additional categories from Landmarks directory 1996 ($n = 1021$).

the second half of the 1990s, but rather a growth in the visibility of organizations (to Landmarks via a new counting methodology or criteria for inclusion) that were already active in the early 1990s as testified by the Philip directory. Indeed, closer examination of the sources suggests that some combination of these two possibilities is the case. That is, it seems that Landmarks slightly broadened its criteria and increasingly listed non-Brussels organizations. Meanwhile, the 1996 Philip directory seems to have stretched the definition of ‘policy activity’ of interest organizations a bit too far.

So, considering these difficulties, we will have to use some sort of composite figure in order to get a reasonable picture of the structure of the 1996 population. Such a composite figure is presented in the first bar of Figure 3. Remember that the Philip directory exclusively focuses on interest *groups* and professional associations and that Landmarks additionally includes other types of interest organizations, such as corporations and regions. The first bar in Figure 3 makes use of this difference, combining the interest group data of the Philip directory with additional data from the Landmarks list. This leads us to conclude that the 1996 EU population included about 2200 interest organizations, a bit over half of which are professional associations or interest *groups*. The different shadings of the bars represent the different sections of the Landmarks directory from which the data were extracted.⁸ Indeed, had we relied only on Landmarks data, we would observe a smaller 1996 population of about 1700 organizations; this is represented in the second bar of Figure 3. As noted earlier, depending on the method used, one would observe varying levels of growth between 1996 and 2005.

While taking this into consideration, we can still use Landmarks to evaluate the growth of several specific types of organizations over this time period.

The proportions in brackets in the legend of the figure indicate the growth per section between 1996 and 2007. That is, the interest groups section that deals with not-for-profit interests grew from 152 entries in 1996 to 438 entries in the 2007 edition. This is notably faster than the 'for-profit' associations section, which grew from 525 to 835 entries over the same time period.⁹ This higher growth of 'public' or non-profit interests thus supports scholars who claim that the EU interest system has become more 'balanced' in the types of interests that find representation (Greenwood, 2007). This is especially the case because the number of 'hired guns' (lobby firms) and corporate representations dropped by about 10 percent between 1996 and 2007.

The third and fourth bars of Figure 3 represent the composition of the Landmarks directory in 2005 and 2007. There is remarkably little growth in the numbers of the 'usual suspects' of interest representation, such as the firms, groups and associations. Rather, all of the growth in this time period can be accounted for by the growth in the numbers of think tanks, national associations and regional liaison offices. Certain niches in the interest system thus seem to have been filled by the mid-1990s whereas others were still experiencing considerable population growth. This indicates that the EU system is definitively still dynamic and not (yet) as crowded as one might believe it to be. However, this uneven pattern of continued growth across different types of interest niche is also evident in more mature and crowded interest group systems, such as that found in Washington. However, in the US case, it is growth of numbers of individual institutions – especially individual firms – that seems to drive any further expansion of the already crowded interest system (Gray and Lowery, 1998). More research is clearly needed to see if this difference between the USA and the EU represents real or substantive distinctions or is a product of the very truncated period of observation for which we have truly comparable data.

In our more detailed samples of these directories, we coded the types of organization in a different manner, most importantly differentiating between associations of national associations and associations of institutions or companies. We did not observe any changes in the relative proportion of these types of organizations. It may be that European associations of national associations adapted internally by creating a separate membership category for individual institutions, as suggested by Coen (1998: 97) and Eising (2004). To conclude, in the early 1990s, the EU interest population grew significantly and this growth flattened out towards the second half of the decade. In terms of composition, from 1996 onwards, non-profit public interest organizations became more numerous in comparison with other interests. More recently, different types of organization, such as regional liaison offices and national associations, claimed a bigger share of the interest population.

Conclusion

Several conclusions are warranted by these findings. The first, more methodological in character, is that precise assessments of growth and mortality within the EU over

the historically important period of the 1990s and early part of the 21st century cannot be viewed independently from how the several sources that have been used define and select their populations. Lacking a comprehensive census of EU interests of the type that might be generated from a true lobby registration system, and which cannot be retrospectively constructed even should such a system be adopted in the future, claims based upon reliance on any one source should be taken with a grain of salt. As discussed in relation to the 1996 EU interest population, it seems useful to use composite samples relying in a selective and critical manner on several sources so as to bridge their different criteria for inclusion. The construction of such a database consisting of multiple data sources has been undertaken by Wonka et al. (2009). Their database presents a representative list of interest organizations active in the European Union in 2007/8. The research presented here shows the importance of having time-series data on the population of organized interests and, thus, the need to regularly update the database produced by Wonka et al. in order to keep track of changes in the composition of the interest community over time.

Second and more substantively, assuming that the methodology *within* each set of comparisons remained reasonably constant over the periods we have examined, it seems that the demography of the EU interest system was far more dynamic during the early 1990s than in the late 1990s. That is, using a composite figure for the 1996 population, we conclude that the ‘explosion’ of the interest population was confined to the early part of the decade. During the late 1990s, the number of organizations that were active in the EU remained nearly constant despite the impending growth of the European Union and its expanding policy competencies.

Third, however, in this period the Landmarks directory showed substantial changes in the types of interest that found representation. Over the longer term, perhaps surprisingly, the Landmarks directory shows a decline or stabilization of corporate representation and ‘hired guns’. In contrast, the number of organizations advocating ‘public’ interests has grown. Their increase comes in the form of ‘traditional’ interest representation by associations and via other types of organizations, such as think tanks and regional representations.

These last two conclusions present us with something of a puzzle with respect to prevailing organizational ecology models of interest representation. That is, the slowing of the overall growth of the interest system in the later part of the period suggests that some degree of self-regulation of the interest community via density dependence had set in by the late 1990s. However, this more stable interest system does not seem to have precluded the entrance of new organizations representing non-business interests, as might have been expected given some prior organization ecology analysis of the US interest system (Lowery et al., 2005). This combination remains a bit of a puzzle requiring further work. Still, this combination of attributes is not without its merits. In a sense, by the end of the 1990s, the EU interest system seems to have been entering a quite favourable period with respect to the diversity of interests represented in the interest community – a period of slower growth among the traditional business interests that have dominated the EU while retaining relative ease of entrance for new groups.

Further research, of course, is needed. First, more research is required to further specify the contours of the EU interest system. Or, rather, EU lobby registration is probably necessary to better answer our questions about the dynamic character of the EU lobby system. At best, our analysis was based on a patched-up design relying on multiple, and very different, sources, in which the data in the Landmarks directory were cross-validated with other directories. The limitations of this approach – however necessary now – should be obvious. At best, going beyond simple historical analysis of the evolution of the EU, our analysis should help to anchor claims about the evolving nature of the EU interest system on a modestly more secure foundation than is now available. Second, and more interestingly, we noted the many reasons why the demography of interest communities should interest scholars addressing the full range of questions about interest representation found in the literature. That is, the size and growth rate of lobbying communities profoundly influence the survival of lobby organizations, the composition of lobbying communities and how organized interests lobby. With the data employed here, and even more so should the EU move to a true lobby registration system,¹⁰ we should begin systematically investigating the consequences of the demographic structure of the EU lobbying community for these vitally important issues.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association in New Orleans, 8 January 2006. We thank Marianne Ananyeva, Veerle van Doeveren, Willem Masman and Anne Messer for their assistance in this research. They also found that citizens' and social interests have an advantage with respect to other types of economic interests, especially agriculture, utilities and natural resources.
2. These include: Membership Group, Association of Membership Groups, Association of Associations, Association of Institutions, Institution, Mixed, Lobby firm, and Other.
3. None of the sources provide detailed information on these variables for all sampled organizations. Hence, information from the their websites was used. Furthermore, some samples we coded twice for the published directories, once with information provided in each directory and again with the usually more extensive information we could find online. Thus, the data reported in the directories were independently validated. In coding the websites, the four coders working on the project regularly discussed difficult cases among themselves and with the project directors. A subset was coded by multiple coders to identify ambiguities in the coding scheme. The 'response rate' – whether a website of an organization in a directory could be found and adequately coded for the most important substantive variables on the type of organization and its substantive interest – varied between 93 percent for CONECCS and 86 percent for the DG Trade list for the official directories. The rates for the unofficial directories varied between 88 percent for Landmarks (2005) and 78 percent for the Philip directory (1996).
4. Although simple in principle, this comparison of the samples proved more difficult than we expected. That is, the directories varied significantly in terms of the ease of identifying organizations. Indeed, the published directories typically have multiple vaguely labelled

sections (e.g. the European Round Table of Industrialists may be listed under think tanks or professional associations, consultants may be listed in a section for corporations, law firms or public affairs organizations) and tend to sort their listings differently (e.g. by French or English acronym or full name). These problems were especially severe for the unofficial directories, but the official lists also vary in how organizations were identified. The CONECCS list, for example, reports names in several languages whereas the EP register and the DG Trade Dialogue list names in but one. Furthermore, the listed organizations do not use consistent names and/or they change their name over time. To address this identification problem, we relied heavily on the initial coding of all cases in all of the samples from the websites of the listed organizations. These, more detailed, codings allowed us to 'triangulate' among the organization websites. That is, comparison of the websites of organizations in a given sample and the population lists in the other directories was used to identify whether an organization in that sample was included in the other directories, if perhaps under a somewhat different name. The coding of the richer organization websites, then, is a key element underlying the validity of our comparisons across directories.

5. From the samples, proportions of organizations with a contact telephone number outside Brussels (usually in any other member state of the EU): Philip (1991) – 45 percent; Philip (1996) – 40 percent; Landmarks, section A and B (1996) – 14 percent; Euroconfidentiel (1999) – 30 percent; Euroconfidentiel (2002) – 35 percent; Landmarks, section A and B (2005) – 33 percent. Besides the methodological relevance of the Brussels office criterion, it could be that the territorial affiliation of interest organizations has changed over time. We therefore coded the 'scope' of organizations in several categories based on the information on membership or additional information provided in the Philip directories. This produced the following figures: Philip (1991) – World 3 percent, Several EU countries 77 percent, Most of EU 20 percent; Philip (1996) – World 8 percent, Several EU countries 32 percent, Most of EU 60 percent; Landmarks (2005) A and B section – World 17 percent, Several EU countries 38 percent, Most of EU 16 percent, Single EU country 28 percent. For more recent country-specific analysis, see Berkhout and Poppelaars (2009), Eising (2009: 76) and Wonka et al. (2009).
6. The Philip directory was published only in 1991 and 1996. The Landmarks directory was first published in 1990, and so could be used for longitudinal analysis if we assume that the publishers did not change their selection and working methods.
7. Unfortunately, we cannot reliably estimate mortality rates for this figure as we did not directly compare these two samples. The figure presents only a rough estimation based on the mortality of the Landmarks samples of about 24 percent in this time period.
8. In Landmarks terms, professional and trade associations represent for-profit non-public interests, and interest groups represent non-profit public interests such as education, health and human rights. The Philip directory does not make this distinction.
9. We also simply counted the number of pages per section of the editions between 1996 and 2005 and observed that these changes took place incrementally.
10. It will take some years before the new register that replaces CONECCS from June 2008 onwards could provide a sufficiently long time period for useful analysis. Furthermore, we do not know yet whether this register will be continuously updated by the voluntarily registered interest organizations. Additionally, it could be that it will not continue in the exact form it has today, as a merger with the EP register is being discussed (CEC, 2009), the up-take has been problematic (Tait and Chaffin, 2009) and differences from

other registers, such as Landmarks, seem to persist (ALTER-EU, 2009). See, for some discussion of this, Wonka et al. (2009).

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