

Roskilde University: International Bachelor Programme in Social Sciences

Agricultural Interest Organisations' Influence on the Legislative Process in Denmark

A Case Study on the Buffer Zone Law

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Table of Contents

Conceptualising	5
Abstract	7
Introduction	8
Problem Area.....	8
Problem Formulation.....	11
Working Questions.....	11
Background	13
Historical development.....	13
Landbrug & Fødevarer	16
Bæredygtigt Landbrug.....	17
The Buffer Zone Law	18
The process of the Water Plans	19
Democracy.....	20
What is an organisation?.....	21
Interest organisations and the relation to agriculture.....	22
Rothenborg's Argumentation model	24
Theory	26
Danish Legislative Process.....	26
Figure 1: The Danish Legislative Process.....	28
Mancur Olsen: The "By-Product" Theory.....	28
Pluralist model.....	29
Corporatist model	30
John R. Commons: The Pressure Group	31
John Friedmann: Planning Theory - Policy Analysis.....	31

Summary.....	33
Methods.....	34
Empirical study.....	35
Interviews.....	35
Observation.....	37
Alternative considerations.....	37
Analytical strategy.....	38
Figure 2: The semi-circular model.....	39
Limitations.....	39
Analysis.....	41
Purpose, power and influence.....	41
Lobbyism and democracy.....	44
A glimpse inside the black box.....	47
Figure 3: Simple black box model.....	49
Figure 4: Revised legislative process model.....	50
Figure 5: Input model.....	51
Figure 6: Input - Output model.....	52
Figure 7: Complex black box model.....	53
Figure 8: Complex transparent black box model.....	54
Involvement within policy-making.....	54
Tools of the Trade.....	57
Conclusion.....	60
Perspective.....	64
References.....	66
Appendix I:	EIU - Democracy Index Report 2012
Appendix II:	Interview with Jacob Tilma
Appendix III:	Interview with Niels Peter Nørring

Appendix IV:	Notes from consultation
Appendix V:	The buffer zone law
Appendix VI:	Law on private contributions to political parties

Conceptualising

In this conceptualising chapter we will present our definition of different terms that can be interpreted in different ways, that we use throughout the project.

Democracy

During the course of this project, the concept ‘democracy’ will refer to *a system of government that serves the interest of the people regardless of their participation in political life* (Heywood, 2007, p. 72).

Groups

The term ‘group’ will be used as *a number of individuals with a common interest*. (Olsen, 1971, p. 8) and it implies that *there is no group without its interest*. (Bentley, Arthur, *The Process of Government* (Evanston, Ill.: Principia Press, 1949) p. 211; Olsen, 1971, p. 8)

Transparency

‘Transparency’ will refer to the ease to perceive or detect political actions and systems (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013).

Interest organisations

For defining the concept of ‘interest organisations’, the definition of interest groups from the Encyclopædia Britannica will be used: a formally organised association that seeks to influence public policy (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013).

Lobbyism

‘Lobbyism’ refers to an instrument used by interest organisations to gain influence on politicians (Den Store Danske 1, 2013).

Black boxes

We will use the concept ‘black boxes’ to refer to the closed meetings between politicians and interest organisations. The concept is inspired from a general black box theory by Mario Bunge that is described in his book *Philosophy of science* (1963) as follows: *A black box is a*

fiction representing a set of concrete systems into which stimuli S impinge and out of which R emerge. The constitution and structure of the black box are altogether irrelevant to the approach under consideration, which is purely external or phenomenological (Bunge, 1963, p. 346).

Abstract

Policy making is a lengthy, legislative process, liable to be subject to various internal and external factors of influence, each practiced within their code of conduct. One influence often kept low-key is that of the interest organisation, attempting to set the agenda to the benefit of its members. A particularly current case of this is the case of the law of buffer zones in Denmark, which allowed for engaged reactions by the agricultural interest organisations. This project is set to examine the workings of these interest organisations, and how they practice lobbying in order to further their own case via closed door meetings - a black box in the legislative process. Our focus, as such, will be on the current case of buffer zones and how these agricultural interest organisations acquire their influence and thusly may enable themselves to affect legislation. We will largely acquire our empirical data through interviews with agricultural interest organisation representatives and we will base our analysis on several theories regarding democracy, interest organisations and group theory.

Introduction

In this chapter we will firstly present certain areas of importance to the project. It is areas we find are lacking in transparency in the Danish democratic systems - specifically when the Danish government get inputs from interest organisations. After the presentation of the problem area, the chapter will culminate in the presentation of our problem formulation and the related working questions.

Problem Area

Agriculture takes up more than half of the total area of Denmark (MoF, 2013). The agriculture sector employ 130,000 people, or 2,3% of the total population of Denmark (Den Store Danske 2, 2013). The total amount of export, in the area of food and agri-industrial products, constitutes approximately 20% of the total Danish export of goods (MoF, 2013).

There has been a strong agricultural tradition in Denmark for a long time and the effects of being mainly a farming culture can be seen to this day. Especially in the 20th century, in the aftermath of World War II, the agricultural sector has had a defining economic significance for Denmark which has led to a position of significant political influence (Nissen, 2009, p. 39).

The Danish state had a special interest in securing the agricultural sector and its members, because they were in charge of a large portion of Denmark's export, which lead the state, in 1896, to establish its first Ministry of Industry – The Department of Agriculture (Nissen, 2009, p. 41). There arose a close cooperation between the organisations of the farming industry and the state, resulting in a tradition of the agricultural organisations to have large influence on the design and implementation of agricultural policy-making in Denmark (Nissen, 2009, p. 41).

Due to the advance of technology, the total number of farmers has decreased. The influence of the European Communities, EC, (later EU) resulted in the agricultural sector losing its former predominance on the Danish state, especially in the 1980's where there arose an increased focus on the consumer and the environment. The Department of Agriculture became The

Ministry of Foods, Agriculture and Fisheries and is working closely with the Ministry of Environment.

The prominence of the farming community has dwindled, yet there seem to be a discrepancy between the importance of the agricultural sector today and the influence they still yield (Nissen, 2009, p. 39).

In 2000 the *EU's Water Framework Directive establishes a framework for the protection of inland surface waters [...] and groundwater in all EU countries. The Directive established a number of environmental objectives and an overall framework for the administrative structure for planning and implementation of policies [...]* (WFD, 2011 (translated from Danish)). In 2012, this directive essentially led the Danish government to launch a national evaluation of the current process of approval of pesticides as an initiative in the prevention of groundwater pollution, and it was intended to strengthen the cooperation between the authorities, businesses and organisations in order to reduce the risk of introducing dangerous pesticides to the groundwater (EPA 1, 2012).

In agriculture, it is required to obtain approval for any use of biocides and pesticides (EPA 3, 2009), though according to the Danish Government's Pesticides Strategy 2013-2015, the government intends to decrease the bureaucratic focus on less problematic pesticides, in order to better focus on the problematic ones (EPA 1, 2012). There is an on-going project to decrease the amount of pesticides by 40% by 2015 based on the Pesticide Load Indicator (translated from Danish: pesticidbelastningsindikator) (EPA 1, 2012). Particular companies that are producing a lot of pollution are required to obtain an environmental approval in order to ensure that they oblige by certain environmental requirements. Larger companies are furthermore required to make a public account available for their standing environmental situation (EPA 2, 2009). One of the measurements the IPM (Integrated Pest Management) has taken is the so-called "buffer zones" (translated from Danish: "randzoner").

On the 1st of September 2012 the law on buffer zones came into effect in Denmark. It dictated that there was to be an obligatory distance of 10 meters between cultivated land and an allotted type of body of water. This came as somewhat of a surprise for two large agricultural interest organisations in Denmark, Landbrug & Fødevarer (in English: Agriculture & Food Council) and Bæredygtigt Landbrug (in English: Sustainable Agriculture), as they, per tradition, were used to be consulted by government officials on major changes made to their area of profession. This tradition can be seen pervaded in the general practice of informal hearing

in the legislative process in the democratic Denmark (FIL, 2011). These interest organisations had in fact not been included in the forming of this law, despite their previous involvement in EU's Water Frame Directive (Appendix 3: *Landbrug & Fødevarer: Niels Peter Nørring interview*, p. 2).

This tradition of informal hearings has the purpose of giving both the government officials and the different Members of the Danish Parliament (in Danish: Folketinget) a chance to let the voices of the people affected by a policy-in-the-making be heard. This possibility has especially been a long-standing tradition of the agricultural sector of Denmark, due to its close affiliation with the economy and politics of the country through history. Yet, it seems that the Danish agricultural sector has *secured a political influence that exceeds the industry's importance to Danish society* (Nissen, 2009, p. 39 (translated from Danish)). Many of these informal hearings are done behind closed doors and the Danish agricultural industry has a reputation of having the most influence compared to other industries in Denmark (Rothenborg, 2006, p. 53).

Governments constantly initiate laws and policies but what instances have an impact on the final decisions? In Denmark there is an official code of conduct on how these legislative procedures is handled, but are all voices related to the given issues heard equally loud? Is it democratic when politicians have meetings behind closed doors with no documentation?

When we initially started researching the buffer zone law, we had a lot of discussions in the group about the so-called "lobbyism" and the assumed effect it has on policy-making in Denmark. We understood it as daily-used and accepted practice for a concept that indicate that there are forces applied to work on politicians and policy-making outside of the given system that can have an effect on the political outcome. So, who are these people, these "lobbyists"? How do they work and why? Is it possible to observe the impact of lobbyism on a policy in Denmark?

What we call lobbyism is built into the code of conduct of policy-making in Denmark. It creates "black boxes" within the code of conduct and we want to investigate these black boxes and portray what actually happens in them. To have a tangible case to study we have chosen the buffer zone case in Denmark, and whether or not the decision to implement them has been influenced by these agricultural lobbyists and if so, how.

What makes the Danish buffer zone law interesting is, that the process of its conception, without any inputs from the Danish interest organisations, is irregular according to the Danish customs. After its creation, and a change of government, the buffer zone law is now heavily debated, questioned and even the subject of several lawsuits by, or from the suggestion of, the Danish agricultural interest organisations.

Problem Formulation

This questioning leads us to present to the following problem formulation:

How do agricultural interest organisations seek to influence the policy making process in regards to the case of buffer zones in Denmark, and what general knowledge can we gain from policy making relating to this case?

Working Questions

And, in addition, the following preliminary working questions:

1. What function do interest organisations have?
2. How does lobbyism influence our views of democracy?
3. How can we gain knowledge to what goes on in the closed meetings in the legislation process?
4. What actors and institutions are involved in the policy-making process of the buffer zones in Denmark, and what general knowledge can we gain from their involvement?
5. What tools do the agricultural interest organisations use to gain influence on the political actors?

Our working questions have a chronological approach to our report. We will first introduce the reader to our background knowledge and specific traditions related to our case. This will be followed by a theory chapter. In this chapter, six theories will be presented. Each of these theories will represent an aspect of our problem and will be used to support discussions and perspectives within our analysis chapter. After the theory chapter, we will, in our methods chapter, explain the structure of our project and our means of collecting empirical material.

We will make use of the empirical material in our analysis chapter and, based on the previously presented theories, discuss the different underlying aspects and problems. The analysis will, as such, collect the strands of our working questions, which will be tied together in the conclusion as an answer to our problem formulation. Following, we will have a perspective chapter to reflect on what we could have done differently and other issues related to our problem.

Beginning from the Background chapter, every time we introduce certain concepts and theories, the sections will end with a small explanation as to why this is relevant to our project.

The above description of the structure of our project reflects our use of the so-called semi-circular model, which allows a concurrent process of using theories and analysis. This strategy will be elaborated in the methods chapter.

Background

In this chapter, we will introduce the framework of information this project is based upon, in order to attain proper knowledge of the context. Firstly, we will present a general historical account of the agriculture in Denmark. Secondly, we will introduce the two agricultural interest organisations referenced in this project: Landbrug & Fødevarer and Bæredygtigt Landbrug. This will be followed by the specific notion of the buffer zone law, including the difference in approach by Landbrug & Fødevarer and Bæredygtigt Landbrug. Then we will present an overview of the Water Plan process. After this, we will focus on democracy as a concept, followed by a general explanation of the concept of an organisation. This will further lead to a description of interest organisations and agriculture. Finally, we will present Rothenborg's Argumentation Model.

Historical development

In order to better understand the way agricultural interests act in the Danish society and in relation to public policy, it is relevant to look at the Danish agriculture's development throughout the years and what its political influence has entailed. Here we will start out with a brief account of agriculture's political life in Denmark throughout the 1900 and conclude with the recent case of EU's Water Framework Directive (WFD) which is the legislative background for the law on buffer zones.

Agriculture has been on the agenda within the Danish government for over a century. The formerly named Ministry of Agriculture was formed in 1896 in order to ensure quality within Danish agriculture and its export, which was a prominent 75% of Denmark's total export (Nissen, 2009, p. 40). The Agricultural Council (in Danish: Landbrugsraadet) was established in 1919 to attempt to act on the political interests of the agricultural community. The organisation urged for a free market, but the government was in general against such an initiative, due to the risk of a decrease in the quality of goods (Nissen, 2009, pp. 40-41).

During the economic crisis of the 1930s, prices on agricultural goods decreased and the farmers oppositely increased their production of goods, causing the prices to decrease even further. This prompted the leaders of the Agricultural Council, and its lesser affiliated organisations (such as the Farmers' association and the Smallholders' association), to realise that an in-

creased agricultural control was needed in order to secure its economy (Nissen, 2009, pp. 41-43). This crisis led to further communication between the organisations and the government. Still, the position of Minister of Agriculture was often possessed by a farmer, or someone otherwise engaged in the agricultural community. As such, the Minister of Agriculture acted as the direct link between the farmers and Agricultural Council on one side, and the government on the other. Due to this close interplay between the ministry and the Agricultural Council, the former of the two kept primarily to the legal management, whereas the Agricultural Council managed the more centralised agricultural schemes such as export and agricultural goods (Nissen, 2009, pp. 41-43).

After World War II, the Danish agricultural society changed notably, especially when Denmark entered the EC in 1973. The amount of full-time farms decreased and the amount of full-time agricultural employees went with it. This encouraged the existing farms to grow and become more specialized in their production. In 1960, the sizes of the Danish farms were 15.8 ha, which 35 years later had grown to 40.7 ha. In other words, in course of time, the farms decreased in numbers, but those left grew in size. The individual farms specified their focus to one or two specific trades within agriculture. This was in great contrast to the earlier years where the farmers engaged in vast, general trade (Nissen, 2009, pp. 42-43).

Denmark entering the EC was for the agricultural community an economic necessity. Their export had beforehand depended greatly on Great Britain. In the 1950s, Great Britain had initiated increasingly strict import customs which left the Danish agricultural economy in bad shape and left the farmers depended on production finance aid from the government. This resulted in the Agricultural Council encouraging Danish membership in the EC, hoping it would better the options for export. However, not all of the sub-organisations concurred. While the Smallholder's Association (in Danish: Husmandsforeningen) was against EC membership and held ties with the Danish Social Liberal Party (in Danish: Radikale Venstre), the larger Agricultural Council was able to strongly and publicly encouraged membership through its affiliations with the Danish Left, Liberal Party (in Danish: Venstre) as the opinion regarding an European partnership primarily went hand in hand with the organisations' political alliance (Nissen, 2009, pp. 45-46).

As Denmark gained EC membership in 1973, the Agricultural Council formed a lobby office in Brussels, because the agricultural politics had been centralised there, and they desired an on-going strong political influence. The Agricultural Council also gained membership in

COPA (Committee of Professional Agricultural Associations) which enabled them, along with other agricultural interest organisation representatives, to work on a collective position relating to agricultural issues, and present this to EC's appraisal. Thus they acquired a direct influential link to the political network in the EC (Nedergaard, et. al., 1993, pp. 50-52).

Throughout the 1980s, the prices on agricultural goods increased less than the general prices and salaries, which led to a decreasing relative price over the years, due to an overproduction of agricultural goods within the EC, as well as an increase of salaries and other agricultural costs. This led the EC to introduce production quotas on certain goods and, later in the 1990s, environmental restrictions on arable soil to reduce the amount of unwanted chemicals in streams, creeks and other water lines. The EU (as per 1993) furthermore introduced restrictions on the amount of livestock compared to the size of the farm's arable land. Finally, the general focus of the EU had shifted to a clear environmental angle and the agricultural support from the aforementioned political parties dwindled with the increase in urbanisation. Furthermore, the previous affiliation between the Agricultural Council and the Ministry of Agriculture in Denmark became practically non-existent with the increased governmental focus on environmental concerns. The farming community in Denmark initially attempted to ward off these legislations with counter arguments and scientific claims (Nissen, 2009, pp. 46-48). Despite the fact that the close interplay between the Agricultural Council and the Ministry of Agriculture in Denmark had ceased to exist, primary means of gaining influence beneficial to the farmer's interests was still seen in informal meetings with various political parties and, still, the Minister of Agriculture (Hansen, 1994, pp. 172-173).

The Danish population voted against membership of the EU in 1992 which caused the Agricultural Council to present claims that the rejection would have damaging consequences on unemployment and export opportunities within the farming community. As such, the Agricultural Council succeeded in pressuring the government to address the issues related to the EU, and also to put pressure on the Danish population to vote for membership of the EU in a new referendum (Nissen, 2009, p. 48). With the Danish membership of EU in 1993, the agricultural interest organisations continued to practice their direct influence through COPA and, more indirectly, through Danish political actors in more informal settings (Hansen, 1994, p. 173).

With the turn of the century, the farming communities in Denmark remain on the receiving end of notable financial aid from EU (Nissen, 2009, p. 49) and is often considered to have

some of the most powerful political influence in Denmark (Hansen, 1994, pp. 174-175). This is despite the clear decrease in number of farms and, oppositely, the growing size of the remaining ones. Furthermore, the Agricultural Council (as of 2009 a part of Landbrug & Fødevarer) expressed a continuous interest in maintaining a healthy environment and further appears with a co-operative image (Nissen, 2009, p. 49).

EU's Water Framework Directive (WFD) was first adopted in 2000 with the intention to provide environmental protection to future water resources (European Commission, 2010). The status reports made by the WFD in 2007 and 2012 started the current debate of buffer zones between the government on one hand, and the political opposition and agricultural interest organisations on the other. The former Agricultural Council, now Landbrug & Fødevarer, and Bæredygtig Landbrug are the primary representatives of the agricultural community. Yet, despite their common interests, the two organisations claim to have different ways of gaining influence and practicing their interests.

There has been a notable change throughout the years of the agricultural sector and its political activity in Denmark. In the former half of the 1900, the farming communities existed as a primary source of economic progress, with clear support from certain political parties and direct interplay with ministries of relevance. Over the years, migration from countryside to the big cities in Denmark resulted in farming as a profession decreasing in national importance. But the Danish farmers has continuously been able to adapt and obtain the necessary tools to best get their interests across and obtain the attention of influential decision makers.

Landbrug & Fødevarer

The Danish agricultural organisation Landbrug & Fødevarer [...] *represents the farming and food industries of Denmark including businesses, trade and farmers' associations* (L&F1, 2013) and *promotes the political influence of the agricultural sector* (L&F1, 2013). Landbrug & Fødevarer was established in 2009 and is a fusion between the Agricultural Council (Landbrugsraadet), Danish Slaughterhouses (in Danish: Danske Slagterier), Danish Pig Production (in Danish: Dansk Svineproduktion), Danish Agriculture (in Danish: Dansk Landbrug) and other organisations within the agricultural sector (L&F1, 2013).

Landbrug & Fødevarer has sued the government twice: On the 31st of may 2012, Landbrug & Fødevarer sued the government, specifically the Ministry of Environment, regarding the Water Plans of 2011, concerning, among other things, how the Water Framework Directive (WFD) was implemented (L&F2, 2013).

On the 12th of October 2012, Landbrug & Fødevarer sued the government, specifically the Ministry of Food, Agriculture & Fisheries and the Ministry of Environment. This lawsuit relates to the overall effect of the initiatives launched in regards to the Green Growth (in Danish: Grøn Vækst) package, specifically the buffer zone law, the requirements of the after-crops and the modified watercourse maintenance. Landbrug & Fødevarer believes that both separately and put together, these actions constitute expropriation in breach of the Constitution § 73¹. Landbrug & Fødevarer believes that the interventions did not happen in the public interest and were not necessary, and if the court of law would accept the initiatives, the members of Landbrug & Fødevarer must receive full compensation (L&F2, 2013).

Bæredygtigt Landbrug

Bæredygtigt Landbrug is an interest organisation started in 2010 with the purpose of increasing the profit of agricultural businesses in Denmark, by pointing out absurdities and limitations in the production through professional and objective argumentation. Today they have a total of approximately 4100 members from the agricultural industry, who, in total, is responsible for around 50% of the Danish food production. Since Bæredygtigt Landbrug started, the organisation has had three cases: The Water Plan-case, the fertilizer-case, and now the buffer zone-case (BL1, 2013).

The goals of Bæredygtigt Landbrug are to abolish the economically straining part of Green Growth, to secure the members against new interventions, and to eliminate taxes and fees that place a strain on the agricultural economy compared to competitors (BL2, 2013).

Bæredygtigt Landbrug sued the Ministry of Food Agriculture and Fisheries on 8 February 2013, with the requirement that the buffer zone law abolished. They believe the buffer zone law will end up costing Danish agriculture 7.7 billion Danish kroner. Head of Bæredygtigt

¹ Expropriation means coercive takeover of private property by the government. To protect against such violations, § 73 of the Danish constitution 1) gives full compensation of the area taken over, 2) it is only allowed with regards to the common good and 3) it must be authorised by law (Den Store Danske 3, 2013).

Landbrug, Vang Lundsteen explains: *The individual farmer will with buffer zones get large parts of their land expropriated [...] the area forced out of production, and the farmer loses the opportunity to grow as he wants and make profit of that area. I know of no other business that will stand that the state reduces their revenue base by up to five percent, just like that* (BL1, 2013).

The Buffer Zone Law

The Danish buffer zone law states, that for all the watercourses in rural areas, and for lakes with a surface area of over 100 m² in rural areas, a 10 meter buffer zone must be established. This area must not be fertilized, sprayed, cultivated or other tillage, with the exception of areas with forestry, gardening, and parks (Appendix 5: *The buffer zone law*, pp. 1-2). This corresponds to an area of 50.000ha (L&F3, 2013). As such, the total area at disposal to the farmer is reduced, resulting in e.g. a reduction of livestock (L&F5, 2012, p. 18). Furthermore, the 10 meter buffer zone is open to the public, as long as the buffer zone is located where it can be accessed without intruding private property (L&F4, 2013).

The buffer zone case: Bæredygtigt Landbrug vs. Landbrug & Fødevarer

Bæredygtigt Landbrug (BL)...	Landbrug & Fødevarer (L&F)...
Has sued on behalf of their members. This means that every member of BL is part of the trial, and the result will apply to all members as well.	Has sued on behalf of five members. The remaining members are recommended to have their own lawyer assess whether they should sue. L&F hope that the result of this case can be serve as an example for the remaining farmers, thereby achieving the same result as the five in the lawsuit.
Claim that the buffer zone law is invalid, in part because it is expropriation, and in part because it is not in line with EU's Water Framework Directive (meaning it is wrongful executions). The lawsuit specifically 'attacks' the buffer zones (not cover crops and maintenance of watercourses), and does so from two angles, respectively as illegal expropriation according	Claim that the combined effects of the buffer zones, cover crops and different maintenance of the watercourses are expropriation. The lawsuit 'attacks' the combined effect of the mentioned initiatives as illegal expropriation according to the constitution and the rules of the EU (though with the possibility

to the constitution and the rules of the EU, but also as illegal, wrongful executions of the EU directive.	of one of the initiatives being illegal expropriation by itself). There are no claims of wrongful execution.
Along and their lawyer, consider the possibility of achieving delaying effects surrounding the enforcement of the buffer zones.	Rule out the possibility of achieving delaying effects surrounding the enforcement of the buffer zones.
Believes it is a case of illegal expropriation, since they deem the initiatives involving the buffer zones unnecessary because the farmers have not been fully compensated.	Believes it is a case of illegal expropriation, since they deem the initiatives involving the buffer zones etc. unnecessary because the farmers have not been fully compensated.
No request for an expert's report	Have requested an expert's report in the case, which means an inspection of the specific initiatives, must take place and an impartial expert has to answer a series of questions stipulated by the two parties in the cases.
Describe the general effects of buffer zones in Danish agriculture i.e. consequences of operation, environment and economy.	Describe the specific effects of buffer zones etc. for each of the five farmers in the lawsuit i.e. consequences of operation, environment and economy.

(BL3, 2013 (translated from Danish))

The process of the Water Plans

03-10.12.2011: As there had been made changes to the original Water Plan, a supplementary hearing was held by the Danish Nature Agency (in Danish: Naturstyrelsen, under Miljøministeriet).

08.11.2012: The agricultural district (in Danish: landbrugsdistriktet) submits small adjustments for the Water Plans to the committee.

06.12.2012: The Complaints Board of Nature and Environment (in Danish: Natur- og Miljøklagenævnet) has subsequently decided that the supplementary hearing on the 03-10.12.2011 was too short, and therefore the Water Plans were declared invalid.

26.02.2013: New Water Plans must be valid in 2013 for the compensation to be in order.

08.05.2013: The modified Water Plans are put in hearing for six months by the acting Minister of Environment Pia Olsen Dyhr. As such, the new Water Plans cannot be validated by 2013.

Democracy

Defining democracy

The term democracy derives from the ancient Greek ‘demos’ meaning the people or the many and ‘kratos’ meaning rule or power. An essential principle of democracy is that political power should be distributed as equally and widely as possible. Though certain restrictions are still necessary, e.g. in the form of age, gender, mental health, and so on. However, the restrictions on official voting limitations are not as pronounced today as they were when the tradition first arrived. Strictness and nature of restrictions do vary from country to country, and the option of political participation or right thereof, does still in some places, exclude people from political participation on basis of e.g. gender, status/income, and race. In the case of Denmark, people over the age of 18, with exception of the certifiably insane, have the right to vote and participate in political affairs, if they wish. (Heywood, 2007, pp. 72-73)

Denmark has what is called a representative democracy, which is a limited and indirect form of democracy. It is limited in the sense that [...] *popular participation in government is infrequent and brief, being restricted to the act of voting every few years* [...] (Heywood, 2007, p. 74) and restricted in the sense that the public does not exercise political power themselves, but rather, by voting, choose representatives to rule on their behalf. Where direct democracy might be viewed as the optimal type of democracy, representative democracy offers a much more manageable and easier-in-praxis democracy for larger communities (Heywood, 2007, p. 74).

Measuring democracy

There are different levels or states of democracy. The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has developed a method of measuring the state of a country’s democracy, and has since 2006 pro-

duced five Democracy Index reports. In these reports the EIU measure democracy in 167 countries, 165 independent states and two territories, rank them according to score, and compare score to previous years. They measure the state of democracy by asking mostly experts, but also public opinion, 60 questions with a couple of choices for answers. The 60 questions are grouped in five categories: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation, and political culture. Ultimately, the score will place the countries in one of four categories: full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid regimes, and authoritarian regimes. In the EIU Democracy Index report from 2012, Norway is ranked number one and is thereby considered to have full democracy and in the very bottom, ranked 167, is North Korea with an authoritarian regime. Denmark also has full democracy and is ranked number four (Appendix 1: *EIU Democracy Index Report*, 2013).

Why is this relevant to our project? It can give us a picture of how democratic Denmark is considered to be compared to other countries. Defining democracy, and the way it is measured, can help us gain knowledge of transparency or lack thereof. We can, furthermore, use this background in our reflections concerning the existing black boxes and the lack of democracy these may or may not pose.

What is an organisation?

In order to understand interest organisations, it is important to understand what an organisation is.

The purpose of an organisation can be characterised as [...] *the furtherance of the interests of their members* (Olsen, 1971, p. 5). As Aristotle expressed it: *Men journey together with a view to particular advantage, and by way of providing some particular thing needed for the purposes of life, and similarly the political association seems to have come together originally, and to continue in existence, for the sake of the general advantages it brings* (Ethics VIII.9.1160a; Olsen, 1971, p. 6). Expressed differently; actors join together in organisations with a common interest in order to fulfil these interest. The advance of the common interest is the organisations' [...] *characteristic and primary function* (Olsen, 1971, p. 7).

An organisation is expected to further the interest of its members e.g. *Farm organisations are expected to strive for favourable legislation for their members* (Olsen, 1971, p. 6). If an organisation fails to do so, it is expected of its members to object, forcing the organisation to

adjust its priorities. If unsuccessful, it can result in loss of membership in the organisation, and the emerging of new organisations (Olsen, 1971, p. 6).

Interest organisations and the relation to agriculture

Interest organisations generally collect its members within a narrower category of interest than a political party (Ronit, 1998, p. 7) and [...] *confine their activities to the concerns of their members* [...] (Wilson, 1977, pp. 80-81). In the case of agriculture, we see a historically important trade, which now only employ a small part of the population. Still, the organisations representing agriculture are influential and powerful, as seen in Denmark where there is a [...] *strong tradition of organisations directly involved in all stages of the political and administrative decision-making process* [...] (Buksti, 1984, p. 16 (translated from Danish)) which originates from before the government started regulating in those areas (Buksti, 1984, p. 16).

In relation to what makes an interest organisation powerful the case of the dominant British agricultural interest organisation NFU (National Farmers' Union) can be used. Its power originates from its recruitment of members, the absence of rivalling organisations and its close relationship with the Government Department (Wilson, 1977, p. 30). This can also be called the resources of the organisations, which also entails representativeness, economic strength, expertise within the field of interest and the administrative capacity (Buksti, 1984, p. 18).

Wilson expresses his admiration for the success achieved by the NFU, as it has [succeeded] *in organizing an industry renowned for individualism and characterized by geographical isolation* (Wilson, 1977, p. 31). In addition to that, Wilson argues that agriculture is a difficult industry to govern, as it consists of small units of singular farms, and the skill of the individual farmer varies, as does the quality of the soil, compared to a more homogeneous trade such as production or factories, which are less vulnerable to individual expertise (Wilson, 1977, p. 1). Due to [...] *the technical revolution in agriculture* [...] *many farmers faced low or even decreasing marginal costs of production* (Wilson, 1977, p. 2). Wilson goes on, saying: *Under free market conditions with farmers behaving like rational economic men, an automatic reduction in the numbers of farms would result from the comparatively low wages and profits in agriculture* (Wilson, 1977, p. 2), as such creating a trend where low-profit farms would be

sold to high-profit farms, *until farm incomes were once more comparable to those enjoyed in other sectors* (Wilson, 1977, p. 2). One reason as to why this has not happened is that farmers do not behave as rational economic men. Wilson takes note of how farmers tend to have emotional ties with their land and the feeling of independence, and are, as such, not willing to give up their livelihood (Wilson, 1977, p. 2).

In addition to that, there are the agricultural subsidies. Instead of [...] *helping farmers shift into different, more profitable occupations* (Wilson, 1977, p. 2), governments attempt [...] *to maintain farm prices and incomes at some level justified either by history or by comparisons with the rest of the economy* (Wilson, 1977, p. 2), and by doing this, the government is directing massive amounts of money into an industry defined as low-profitable by economists (Wilson, 1977, p. 3). Therefore, agricultural subsidies *defy the 'laws' of comparative advantage* (Wilson, 1977, p. 3) and Wilson concludes that [...] *more valuable production [...] could have been achieved by investing the same amount of money elsewhere* (Wilson, 1977, p. 4).

With these arguments against subsidies, one can reflect upon why the subsidies are not removed. As already mentioned, the historical importance of the industry has created a protective environment, but what is most relevant in this context, is that of agricultural interest organisations. In the United States some agricultural interest organisations, such as the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) and the Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union of America (NFU - not to be confused with the British organisation of the same abridgment), are capable of persuading like-minded congressmen to vote in correlation with the opinions of the organisations (Wilson, 1977, p. 8). Furthermore, the organisations hold a political power in regards to elections, where they can [...] *punish enemies and reward friends through campaign contributions* [...] (Wilson, 1977, p. 8). It can therefore be difficult to make changes in the agricultural legislation, as [...] *either Congress, the Executive, or both, [can be] unwilling to offend these powerful organized interests* [...] (Wilson, 1977, p. 75).

In Denmark, the situation is not the same, but similarities can be drawn. As in the United States, the interest organisations provide parliamentary politicians with information, with the objective of changing the agenda. Regarding financial support, the law on private contributions to political parties states that contributions exceeding the amount of 20.000 Danish kroner and that, *the benefactor's name and address must appear in the accounts* (Appendix 6: *Law on private contributions to political parties*, §3, stk. 2), but the amount contributed is not required to be revealed. If the donation is anonymous, and the amount exceeds the 20.000kr,

the actual amount must be declared (Appendix 6: *Law on private contributions to political parties*, §3, stk. 2). The account of a political party must be submitted to the Danish Parliament and the Danish Parliament will afterwards present the account for public inspection (Appendix 6: *Law on private contributions to political parties*, §5). An analysis made by the Danish labour union HK/Danmark questions this law, as it finds that [...] *the legislation has not provided a situation where the political parties can compete equally in financial terms. The private contributions have created and are still creating inequality* (Bille, 2004, p. 52).

Why is this relevant to our project? This gives us insight into what makes an interest organisation powerful and how farmers, organisations, and government interact with each other and the reasoning behind their decision-making.

Rothenborg's Argumentation model

In 2006, the Danish journalist Michael Rothenborg wrote a book called *In Conflict With Nature* (in Danish: *I Strid Med Naturen*) that deals with the Danish agricultural sector's congestion of the Danish environment. He argues that the pollution by the agricultural sector in Denmark has gotten to a point where you cannot make new environmental preservation legislations, without hurting the growth and economy in Denmark. Rothenborg explains that it is due to the farming community's excellent ability to navigate in the Danish political landscape, and its long tradition of strong political figures that the matter has gotten to this point, as can be seen in the following quote:

The Danish agricultural sector has a strong representation in politics. The industry's people are well versed in playing on the feelings of their own and Denmark's economy, the farming traditions and the uncertainties between experts. And they have halted many attempts to tighten environmental regulations (Rothenborg 2006, p. 51 (translated from Danish)).

Rothenborg also presents a standard model of rejection of new more strict environmental requirements by the agricultural sector in Denmark. A model, he claims, they have had a lot of success with and still use to this day. It goes as follows:

1. There is no problem.
2. If there is a problem, it is not our fault.
3. If it is our fault, we cannot do anything about it.

4. If we have to do something about it, we require compensation.

In Rothenborg's book, Professor Emeritus of Urban Water Engineering at the Danish Technical University, Mogens Henze, also marvels at the fact that the Danish agricultural sector has been able to secure compensation for stopping their pollution.

[...] The main principle of Danish and International policy have always been that the polluter pays and the industry companies never got compensation when they were required to reduce their pollution. [...] Still the agricultural sector managed to secure compensation. That is truly skilful, says Henze (Rothenborg 2006, p. 56-57 (translated from Danish)).

Rothenborg gives several examples on how the agricultural sector in Denmark argues for how they are responsible for large portions of the Danish economy. An example of this is how the farming community claimed that they secured 37 billion kroner. out of the 54,6 billion kroner profit Denmark made in 2005. Yet, the Danish Society for Nature Conservation (in Danish: Danmarks Naturfredningsforening) concluded in the same year that only 8% of the value creation in Denmark was contributed from the farming community (Rothenborg, 2006, p. 63). Arguably, profit and value creation is two different things, but it can be an indicator of where the agricultural sector in Denmark has its focus.

Why is this relevant to our project? Rothenborg's book explains how the Danish agricultural sector exercises its influence and gives a critical view on the some of the overall methods they use.

Theory

In this chapter, we will introduce 6 different theories. Each of these theories will support various aspects of our problem, with different perspectives and approaches. Firstly, we will present the general comprehension of the Danish Legislative Process. Secondly, we will explain the By-Product theory by Mancur Olsen. Then we will first explain the Pluralist Model, which will be followed by the countering theory of the Corporatist Model. Then we will proceed with the theory of Pressure Groups by John R. Commons, followed by John Friedmann's planning theory of Policy Analysis. We will end this chapter with a final summary of the entire chapter in order to put the theories into context.

Danish Legislative Process

The need for new legislation can originate from different parts of society. It can be a result of an idea, a change in society, a reform, a need to modernise an old law, a wish to solve a concrete problem, a result of EU directives, etc. When the need for a new law is established, either the government officials or the opposition officials will prepare drafts of the bill. When the bill is completed, the minister will approve it and must, as a minimum requirement, send it to a hearing in the Ministry of Justice's legislative office. In addition to that, the Ministry of Finance and the Prime Minister's Department must be notified. Along with these mandatory hearings, the bill may be sent to a variety of different partners and interest organisations depending on the type of bill and whom it affects. The bill will at this point be uploaded to the relevant ministry's official webpage. Feedback from the hearings can include suggestions of a technical nature (such as layout and phrasing) as well as suggestions for actual changes of contents. This feedback will be sent by the minister to the department of the Danish Parliament that the bill belongs to, where the bill might be changed in accordance to the suggestions of the feedback.

Before being presented to the Danish Parliament, the bill must pass through a hearing by the governments' political spokesmen, the governments' coordination committee and a ministerial conference. When the bill is presented to the Danish Parliament, it occurs in two stages.

At the "first process", the spokesmen from the Danish Parliament comment on the bill, but both the spokesmen from the Danish Parliament and the minister have the opportunity to take

the floor several times. This entire process is broadcasted on TV and is additionally available on the internet. This can go on for many hours, but if the bill has a strong support, the process will move somewhat faster, and finally it is sent to debate in committee, where the member of the committee can ask the minister questions or chose to call the minister in to a consultation. This part of the process will result in a report about the bill from the members of the committee.

At the “second process”, the bill is discussed again, questions are asked and ultimately the Danish Parliament votes on the possible changes. If there are no new proposed amendments, the “third process” entails that the complete bill will be sent the general vote. If the bill is passed, the queen of Denmark must approve the bill at the council of state and allow it to be presented. As a very last step, the bill receives the Royal Assent by the Queen; otherwise the law cannot take effect. What is left is to choose a date for when the law becomes binding (MoE, 2013).

Now the bill is ready to be presented. The chairman of the Danish Parliament announces the minister who wishes to present it. This must happen no later than 30 days before they wish for the law to take effect.

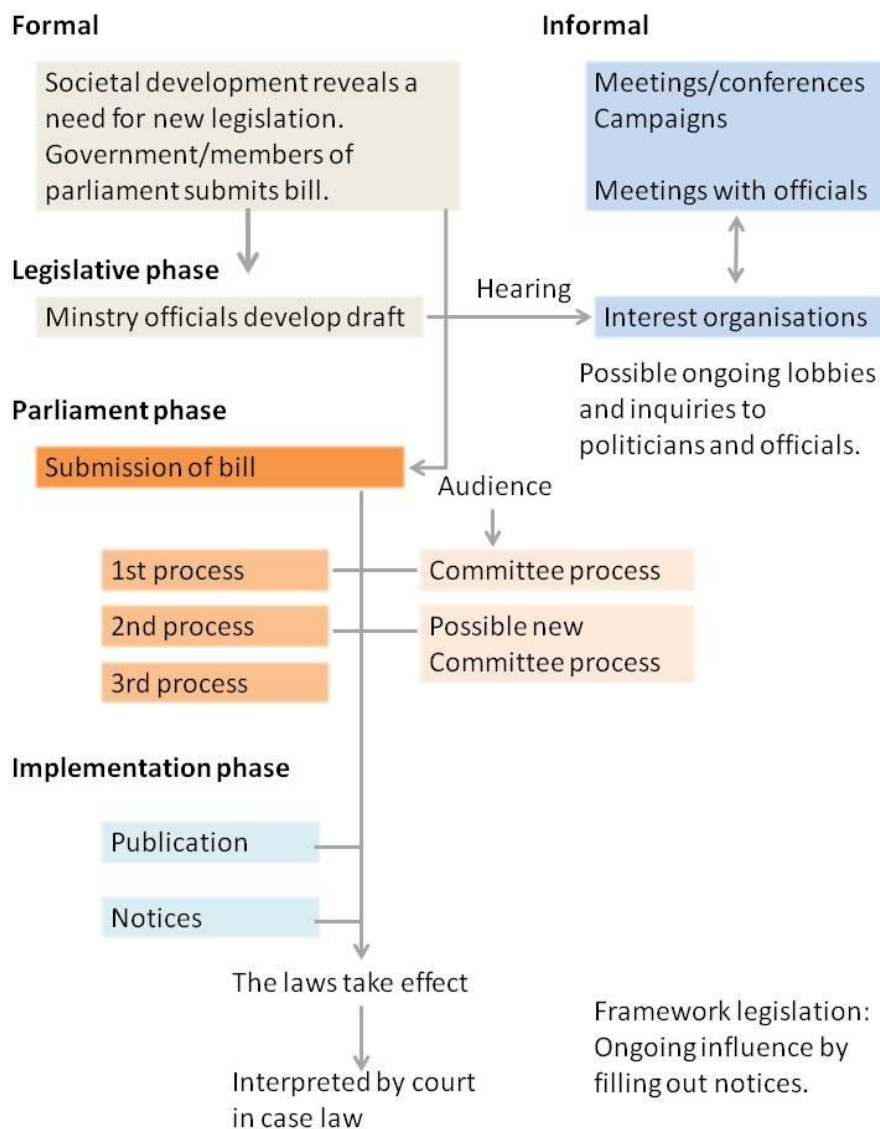


Figure 1: The Danish Legislative Process (samfundsfag.dk, 2013)

Why is this relevant to our project? It gives an overview of how the Danish legislative process works and helps us to pinpoint where interest organisations fit in.

Mancur Olsen: The “By-Product” Theory

In the book *The Logic of Collective Action*, the economist and social scientist Mancur Olsen argues that there has been an understanding [...] that groups act to serve their interests presumably [which is] based on the assumption that the individuals in groups act out of self-interest (Olsen, 1971, p. 1). Put differently, if there is a common objective in the group, which would benefit all, it is assumed that the members of the group, [...] if they were rational and

self-interested (Olsen, 1971, p. 1) would strive to achieve this common objective. This argument, Olsen argues, is not true. Olsen found that [...] rational self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests (Olsen, 1971, p. 2) unless there is some sort of force compelling them to do so, or if there is offered a type of benefit, different from what the common goal of the group is. If this has not been realised, the rational self-interested individual will not strive for a common good.

The “By-Product” theory explains how there exists large organised groups despite how, as explained above, the individuals in such groups have no motivation [...] *to organise a lobby or to obtain a collective benefit* (Olsen, 1971, p. 132). Olsen asserts that there is a common characteristic among the large organised economic groups, which separates them from those groups that are not organised. This common characteristic [...] *is that these groups are also organised for some other purpose. The large and powerful economic lobbies are in fact the by-products of organisations that obtain their strength and support because they perform some function in addition to lobbying for collective goods* (Olsen, 1971, p. 132). As such, according to this theory, when there are interest organisations that are strong and influential, the lobbying part of the organisation is rather a tool, but not the goal of the organisation. To summarise; the “By-Product” theory claims that the power of the large interest organisations does not derive from the lobbying conducted by the organisation, but rather that it is a by-product of the organisation’s other activities (Olsen, 1971, p. 3).

Why is this relevant to our project? As this project examines the influence and power of the Danish agricultural interest organisations, this theory can offer an explanation to some of our issues, e.g. how the interest organisations organise and distribute their resources.

Pluralist model

There are many ways of viewing interest groups and their function in society and the political life. On one hand, one can consider interest organisations and pressure groups beneficial to the processes of policy making and society in general, which is greatly supported by the political tradition of “pluralism”, though pluralism does not only encompass interest groups and their behaviour. Pluralism as a political philosophy insists that all organisations within the private sector should be allowed to play an essential part within society (Olsen, 1971, p. 111). The pluralist model of interest group politics further encourages the communication between

interest group and government actors, and argues that it allows the promotion of the democratic process. This statement is based on the following assumptions:

[...] that all groups and interests have the potential to organize and gain access to government, that they are internally responsive in the sense that leaders broadly articulate the interests or values of their members, and that their political influence is roughly in line with their size and the intensity of their support (Heywood, 2007. p. 298).

Olsen states that pluralism [...] *emphasises the spontaneity, the liberty, and the voluntary quality of the private association in contrast with the compulsory, coercive character of the state* (Olsen, 1971, p. 112). Heywood further supports this theory with the indication that all groups are capable of being heard within the processes of policy making, and that this complements the representative democratic process (Heywood, 2007. p. 300). From this, you can consider that the tradition of pluralism and the pluralist model offer a complimentary environment for interest organisations. Pluralism compels interest organisations to take political action and engage in interactions with the state.

Why is this theory relevant to our project? This is interesting to consider as we will be able to discuss the influence interest organisations have on decision making, and what problems this aspect may or may not pose, particularly relating to democratic tendencies.

Corporatist model

Contrary to the theory of the pluralist model, Heywood presents the corporatist model, which argues that certain group's relation to the government is a privilege as it enables [...] *them to influence the formulation and implementation of public policy* (Heywood, 2007. p. 299). It stresses this privilege with the formal ties between government and interest organisation, and further suggests that this is a matter of interdependent relationship. On one hand, interest groups aim for these bonds with the government for better access to decision making, in order to better perform as is beneficial to their interests. On the other hand, the government seeks groups [...] *as a source of knowledge and information, and because the compliance of major interests is essential if policy is to be workable* (Heywood, 2007. p. 299). Unlike pluralism, the corporatist model furthermore indicates that these groups are [...] *hierarchically ordered and dominated by leaders who are not directly accountable to members* (Heywood, 2007. p. 300). The corporatist model additionally suggests that the relationship and bargaining be-

tween interest group and government is [...] *in no way subject to public scrutiny* (Heywood, 2007. p. 300) and that it as such poses a threat to representative democracy.

Why is this relevant to our project? This shows the mutually beneficial relationship between politicians and interest organisations and the potential for lack of transparency.

John R. Commons: The Pressure Group

The institutional economist John R. Commons was a strong support for the pressure group, as he believed that [...] *pressure groups were the most representative and beneficial forces affecting American economic policy* (Olsen, 1971, p. 115). Commons based this view upon how he found that the way the system worked, especially the market mechanisms, [...] *did not for themselves bring about fair results to the different groups in the economy* (Olsen, 1971, p. 115). The disparity of the market mechanisms would not be corrected by the mechanisms of government, unless the pressure groups were able to coerce through the necessary actions (Olsen, 1971, p. 115). This, Commons argues for, was due to how “machine” politicians and men with enough wealth to buy influence, control the legislatures (Olsen, 1971, p. 115). As such, Commons argues that [...] *pressure groups were [...] virtually an indispensable means for the achievement of a just and rational economic order* (Commons, *Economics of Collective Action*, *passim*, esp. pp. 33, 59, 262-291; *Institutional Economics*, *passim*; Olsen, 1971, p. 115). For that reason, Commons suggests that the pressure groups, especially the farm organisations among others, [is] *the most vital institutions in society and the lifeblood of democracy* (Olsen, 1971, p. 116).

Why is this relevant to our project? Commons represents a view that pressure groups are a vital part of the society and represents the very lifeblood of democracy, as he found that the legislative and political process was insufficient. This is relevant to our project as we discuss the democratic value of interest organisations in the Danish society.

John Friedmann: Planning Theory - Policy Analysis

An established understanding of aspects within decision making is needed, when we examine the influence interest organisations have on government policy making. Policy analysis is a

relatively young strategy with origin in the late 1960s. Professor of Planning, John Friedmann discusses it as a procedure which [...] *promised to become the gyroscope that would help us keep us on a steady course* (Friedmann, 1987, p. 137), referring to accomplishments and societal guidance within a nation. He highlights three branches of academic traditions practices which he argues shaped the field of policy analysis: systems engineering, management science and, finally, political and administrative sciences. The merging of these three branches was supported by the general ideal to have scientific methods make for rational policy decisions and, further, that these rational policy decisions would strengthen [...] *problem-solving abilities of organizations* (Friedmann, 1987, pp. 137-139).

Friedmann indicates the lack of attention this profession brought to the specific field of interest in the early days of the emergence of the policy analysts. He argues that the effectiveness of an analyst depends on their [...] *knowledge of the historical and institutional context for decision* (Friedmann, 1987, p. 143). With this in mind, you could consider the need for specialised analysts within their subject of decision planning, for a competent and focused analysis area of expertise. However, Friedmann also argues for the universal problem-solving abilities and flexibility found in analysts, quoting Wildavsky in order to emphasise [...] *analysis, not subject matter*. This further stresses that a universal understanding of policy analysis is found in systems (Friedmann, 1987, p. 143). From this, you could derive a need for professionals with a distinctive understanding of the field of analysis, with a lesser, albeit present, insight into the specific area subject to decision.

Upon reflection, the methods and concepts of policy analysis can be subject to critique. Friedmann interprets essays by Rittel and Weber, where they discuss the nature of problems and the contrasting "benign" and "wicked" problems, with particular focus on the latter. "Benign" or "tame" problems are defined as a problem with a clear aim and a clear estimation of whether or not the problem has been solved. Alternatively, they present the so-called "wicked" problems, which represent problems tricky in nature, with no immediate solution. They explain that "wicked" problems encompass all social issues and, further, that [...] *social problems are never solved; they are merely displaced by other problems* (Friedmann, 1987, pp. 165-167). In relation to this, Friedmann puts light on "the veil of time": the desire to forecast future occurrences, as is popular in any science. He argues that this tradition of forecasting is improbable to hold much merit as actual and certain predictions, although it can be useful as a tool in various situations, e.g. awareness of a coming crisis (Friedmann, 1987, pp. 168-170).

Why is this theory relevant to our project? The theory of policy analysis will help us explain how decision making is conducted. It will, furthermore, address the problems that may arise during decision making. This is relevant because our project concerns a specific case of policy making, the buffer zones in Denmark, and we will from this be able to explain underlying aspects to this process.

Summary

In this summary we will explain the connection between our numerous theories. The theory on the Danish Legislative Process and the Corporatist Model are connected as they deal with the legislative system and how the various actors interact. An additional connection is the Pluralist Model, which encourages the communication between interest group and government actors. The Pluralist Model is furthermore interlinked with the theory on pressure groups made by Commons in their agreement on the positive effect pressure groups, or interest organisations, have on society. On the subject of interest organisation, the “By-Product” theory by Olsen connects to all the above mentioned theories, as it gives an explanation to the structure of the interest organisation.

The Policy Analysis theory by Friedmann is well linked with the theory on the Danish Legislative Process and the Corporatist Model, as it deals with understanding aspects within decision making and the problems that may arise during this.

Methods

In this chapter, we will present our considerations in relation to the methodology of this project report. Firstly, we will give an account of our theoretical framework and the use of qualitative research therein. Secondly, we will describe and reflect upon our means of collecting knowledge. Thirdly, we will discuss our analytical strategy and the structure of our project. Lastly, we will offer some thought to limitations.

As 2nd semester students our theoretical framework was essentially given to us because of RUC's study bylaws assert that our semester project has to be a interdisciplinary between at least two of the four subjects we have had so far (Political Science, Sociology, Economics and Planning, Space and Resources). The interdisciplinarity offers an array of interesting topics to choose between. In our case, we aim to focus on Political Science and Planning, Space and Resources. In addition, we adopt aspects of Sociology due to its strong affiliations with qualitative methods. Arguably this could be seen as an impediment of the choice of research, but in our own project group it was only perceived as a helpful guide to what theories to choose, after we had chosen our area of research.

As opposed to quantitative research with a focus on statistics as well as numerical data and presentations, qualitative data engages in studies more subjective in nature. You can break this down into four essential features: [...] *the correct choice of appropriate methods and theories; the recognition and analysis of different perspectives; the researchers' reflections on their research as part of the process of knowledge production; and the variety of approaches and methods* (Flick, 2009. p. 14). With the focus on key terms such as 'different perspectives', 'reflections' and 'variety of approaches', you can argue that qualitative research focuses in essence on subjective tendencies. All of these features furthermore depend on your specific study in question.

We chose to focus on a single case (the case of buffer zones in Denmark) because of several factors: 1) It had many different actors (political parties, ministers, interest groups, NGO's) involved. 2) These actors (forces) are easily identified and 3) many different kinds of empirical data are available, depending on the methodological approach we choose. The case of buffer zones furthermore opens up for new knowledge to examine through venues of these different actors and the empirical data available; an aspect we consider very interesting.

Empirical study

In this section, we will introduce our considerations relating to the collection of our empirical material. We will in particular discuss how we can obtain knowledge of the meetings behind closed doors within the legislation process. Firstly, we will present the use of interviews in our research. Here there will also be an introduction of the two interviewees. Secondly, we will explain what role observation has played. Finally, we will offer some alternatives that could have been valid and reflect on why we chose not to include these options. Later, we will reflect on and discuss these points in our analysis, in order to tie them together and answer our third working question in our final conclusion.

Interviews

As a starting point we want to identify the different forces' (with a focus on non-government interests) influence and how this influence has shaped the finished policy the buffer zones. By clarifying this, we established that getting interviews with the relevant actors would be the best approach to get primary data, because it could give us unique insight into the workings of closed meetings between interest organisations and politicians in relation to the case.

We want to use these interviews to investigate how these interest organisations work, whether or not they have influence, and perhaps even what their function is in the Danish democracy. We will research the conditions and consequences of having interest organisations in a democratic system as a whole, and in the buffer zone legislation process specifically.

For the scheduled interviews we prepared pre-designed interview schemas with room for improvisation. The intention with this procedure is to get the interviewees' view on the processes and compare them to the official policy-making procedures. We chose an interview with a representative from each of the two major Danish agricultural interest organisations: Landbrug & Fødevarer and Bæredygtigt Landbrug. Both of these interest organisations are active within our case of study and both will be further introduced later in this report. With these actors in mind, we find that the validity of interview as data collecting method is strengthened, due to the fact that our participants engage in verbal communication within their work environment daily. Verbal communication is a tool for them in order to further their own interests and in conducting interviews with them, we "meet them in their own field", so to speak. For these interviews, we decided to use the semi-structured, or semi-standardised way of structuring the interview.

Flick presents the semi-standardised interview as a way to [...] *study subjective theories* [...] and that these refer [...] *to the fact that interviewees have a complex stock of knowledge about the topic under study*. He indicates that the semi-standardised interview is structured by open, theory-driven and confrontational questions (Flick, 2009, p. 156-158). We have used this structure in our project and find it relevant because influence (as seen in our problem formulation) has subjective tendencies and the various actors have different experiences of these situations. Furthermore, this structure is beneficial to our project, as we engage the interviewee in their specific knowledge and subjective experience with open questions, and re-address some of their relevant claims by confrontational questions (Flick, 2009, p. 157). This gives an insight and grounds for comparability between the interviewees' answers.

We decided to ask our interviewees if it was possible for us to observe any possible on-going negotiations or meetings between government and non-government actors, concerning any related policy-making, in the chance that we could get access to optimal primary data. We find observations particularly interesting because our case has been subject to recent development, in the form of the government and interest organisations' recent reassessment of the buffer zone legislation. The interviewees informed us, however, that these meetings were confidential in nature and that we as such would not be allowed to attend. This explicit expression of black box negotiations will be addressed later in the analysis.

The interviewees

Jacob Tilma is the Chief of Media at the agricultural interest organisation Bæredygtig Landbrug. He has a degree in journalism and started working for Bæredygtig Landbrug in 2011. He was interviewed by Josefine Nytofte and Natasja Wexøe Jakobsen on the 3rd of May 2013, at the office of Bæredygtig Landbrug in Vipperød.

Niels Peter Nørring is the Director of Environment and Energy in the largest agricultural interest organisation in Denmark, Landbrug & Fødevarer. He has a degree in agricultural science and he was interviewed by Nikolaj Gedionsen and Nina Kattler on the 3rd of May 2013, at the office of Landbrug & Fødevarer in Copenhagen.

All interviews were conducted and transcribed in Danish, and as such, when it is referenced to, it will have been directly translated from Danish to English.

Observation

Despite the fact that we were unable to observe an actual black box negotiation, our approach to interview actors within agricultural interest organisations resulted in an invitation to attend a political consultation related to our case of buffer zones, which opened up for a new data collecting method: observation. The consultation was held at Christiansborg, the seat of the Danish Parliament, where the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Mette Gjerskov, attended questions presented by members of the political opposition. As researchers, although we were present, we were not otherwise active participants in the consultation, whereby you could consider the observation overt and our role the 'observer-as-participant'. A disadvantage to this method is that any observation may have an influence on the observed, and the observed may behave differently (Flick, 2009. pp. 222-225), but as all public consultations are filmed, we believe that our influence on the process was minimal, as the political setting explicitly allowed for observers. Had we faced a different, more “natural” setting, our presence could have had an unwanted impact on the observed. A solution to this could be to have filmed the observation and make it covert, though this could pose ethical issues with the observed unaware. We further deemed the academic profit of this approach, the covert observation, non-existent in our case as the observation would be readily accessible for the public regardless on the Danish Parliament's website following the event. One could then argue that our presence was unnecessary, yet we found it an advantage to be able to present our final data as primary, as we would not ultimately be in control of the video data made public. Additionally, we could argue that this research method well complements the additional primary data of interviews with a new dimension of first hand observations.

Alternative considerations

We reflected on using surveys as an alternative to interviews and observations. Surveys would give the data collection an anonymity that some of our subjects might want, but we still needed to identify who to contact and the method did not seem to be able get as in-depth answers as we would like. We also realised that the assumption that our subjects would want anonymity was biased.

We further assessed the validity of analysing official documents (laws, statistics, official transcripts, etc.) as a primary method, but determined it would be a more comparative study and that we, as with surveys, would not get the in-depth answers we seek. We decided to explore the official documents concerning the buffer zone-case and use them as secondary empirical

data. This offers us decent background knowledge in order to better understand the field of study.

Analytical strategy

Another valid discussion of any research concerns the analytical strategy, which can be divided into either a linear or circular research process. If we choose a circular research process, or induction, we will perform our interviews with no theoretical background, and this will subsequently lead to the formulation of a theory in accordance with our gathered data. However, we believe induction should be used carefully, as we think it can be a difficult approach. Alternatively, we could use a more linear or deductive approach, which we think is the safer option and largely preferred analytical strategy among researchers (Flick, 2009. pp. 90-95). Another option could be to adopt a *semi-circular research process* as presented by professor at Roskilde University Dr. Afonso Moreira, where deduction and induction are, in a sense, put together. It offers ground for inspiration for our research process as we find a sense of flexibility in this composition of both inductive and deductive tendencies. With this structure, one starts with a theory or theories. The further structure of this semi-circular model can be seen in figure 2 below. In adopting this structure, we initially did start out with a set of theories which set the ground for our research and framed our problem area. We were, through these theories, able to form our own hypothesis in the form of a problem formulation. This further led us to investigate the relevant background information, which gave us sufficient background knowledge of the area in order to collect the primary empirical material. This is followed by the analysis, which consists of the gathered empirical material which is put in relation to the theories we started out with. The results will enable us to form conclusions based therein.

Dr Moreira's suggestion

Towards a synthesis between the 2 models titled:

Semi-circular Model.

Previous to start writing:

Choose the Theory or Theories

Theme + Problem Area (inc. Preliminary Assumptions) → Hypotheses (=Prob. Formulation + Working Questions) → Analytical Strategy → Collection + Interpretation + Case(s) → Sampling(s) → Interpretation of interviews & fieldwork material → Validation → Analytical Chapter(s) Conclusions

Figure 2: The semi-circular model by Dr. Afonso Moreira.

Limitations

The optimal scenario would be to be able to observe an actual closed door meeting of a policy-in-the-making, but we initially surmised that this was improbable to be attained. This presumption was, as aforementioned in this chapter, later affirmed by the participants' refusal to include us in these closed meetings. This supposition also helped us realise that one of our own bias was to consider actors practicing lobbying as somewhat "shady" characters. This, in turn, also made us consider other bias we had, e.g. when we decided to exclude the word 'lobbyism' from our problem formulation because we felt it sounded too biased. After we read more theory on the subject of lobbying and after conducting our interviews, we came to view lobbying as more of a tool for interest organisations than actual actors doing "behind-the-scenes" work.

A disadvantage and limitation to our choice of data collecting method, the interviews, is the [...] *analytical interplay between the researcher and participants* (Daly, 2007, p. 210). E.g. when we conduct our interviews, the participants will most likely be selective in their por-

trayal as they attempt to interpret our questions and how to appear in accordance with what is beneficial to them. This can be a limitation to our project, since these actors partake in closed meetings and interactions with politicians where they attempt to further their own organisation's interest. We may not be privy to the full story and thus exposed to the participant's bias. We need to be aware of this tendency for the duration of our interview analysis.

Another aspect to be aware of is, that the project deals with a Danish problem area; hence much of the available material will only be in Danish. The majority of the legislative material we have gathered is also in Danish. Furthermore, the interviews we have conducted are in Danish as well. As such, much of the referenced literature and appendix will be in Danish. We have had no problems in finding theoretical literature about our topic, as there are many books written about lobbyism, and lobbyism in agriculture.

Finally, we should determine the relevance of evidence. In examining the closed meetings between interest groups and politicians, we cannot begin to generalise on a broader level. In presenting evidence and deciding on what evidence is, we look at tendencies within our case in question, but this only shows a fraction of a greater picture. The evidence is found in the tools of lobbyism, and the consequences they have on official legislation, as it is the perceived reality of the participants we explore.

Analysis

In this chapter the five working questions presented in the introduction will be examined and discussed. The first is the working question regarding the function of the interest organisation. The second deals with lobbying and democracy. The third working question gives an insight to the black boxes. The fourth examines the actors involved in the decision making process in the case of the law on buffer zones and studies what general knowledge can be derived from this involvement. The fifth, and final, working question deals with the tools used by the interest organisation in order to gain influence on the political actors. These five working questions will, in the conclusion, be tied together in order to answer our problem formulation.

Purpose, power and influence

In this section we will answer the first working question: What function do interest organisations have? This will be done by examining the purpose, power and influence of the interest organisation. Furthermore, we will examine how interest organisations exert their political activities. Firstly, Nørring and Tilma's statements will be presented in relation to the corporatist model. Secondly, the empirical material of interviews will be compared to Commons' theory of pressure groups. Finally, the working question will be answered in a summary of this sub-chapter.

According to the theory on organisations, the interest organisations have the purpose of fulfilling its members' common interests. In the case of agricultural interest organisations, the common interest is better conditions for the farmers. When it is believed that the organisation no longer fulfils its purpose, new organisations emerge to e.g. replace the old or go into a different direction. This explains what occurred when Bæredygtig Landbrug came into existence in 2010 from within the larger organisation Landbrug & Fødevarer. Head of Landbrug & Fødevarer, Niels Peter Nørring is in agreement with this, as he expressed that Bæredygtig Landbrug emerged because:

[...] there was someone who at a time found that we [red: Landbrug & Fødevarer] were not sufficiently pronounced in our opinions, and not achieving the results believed to be achievable (Appendix 3: Interview with Niels Peter Nørring, p. 1).

This is supported by Chief of Media at Bæredygtigt Landbrug, Jacob Tilma, who states that [...] *the members who founded Bæredygtigt Landbrug believed that there were too many interests in Landbrug & Fødevarer* (Appendix 2: *Interview with Jacob Tilma*, p. 1). Having a lot of members in an organisation gives the organisation a financial advantage. With more members, more membership fees will be paid, and the organisation will have more capital to e.g. lead bigger lawsuits. However, one could argue that interest organisations can get too big and have too many interests to manage. The interests of Landbrug & Fødevarer's members vary greatly, with their members ranging from big players, such as ARLA og Danish Crown, Tican, to smaller, independent farmers. This can make it hard for Landbrug & Fødevarer to meet the interests of all their members. Contrary to Landbrug & Fødevarer, Bæredygtigt Landbrug have fewer members, and thereby fewer interests to consider. This provides them with less capital for e.g. lawsuits. With less financial capital and fewer members, Bæredygtigt Landbrug may not acquire the same influential impact as Landbrug & Fødevarer. They may, however, use other means in order to exert their interests, i.e. journalism and PR.

Like a labour union, the interest organisation's power and influence stems from membership, but also from administrative control and relationship with the relevant ministry. As seen in the corporatist model, the relationship between interest organisation and ministry is interdependent, where both parties serve a function to the other. As Niels Peter Nørring, from Landbrug & Fødevarer, puts it:

[...] *political interest management happens on many levels: [...] in dialogue with ministers, [...] in dialogue with parliamentary politicians, [...] within the implementation of regulations of the laws. It is broad; it is in all the different agencies* (Appendix 3: *Interview with Niels Peter Nørring*, p. 2).

Basically, as Nørring expresses:

It takes place in close dialog with parliamentary politicians [and] close dialog with government officials (Appendix 3: *Interview with Niels Peter Nørring*, p. 2).

This dialog, Nørring stresses, [...] *is not negotiations, it is political interest management. It is just like everyone else who practices their opportunity to be heard* (Appendix 3: *Interview with Niels Peter Nørring*, p. 4). In their dialogs with various people of interest, such as politicians or government officials, the interest organisations aspire to set the agenda. This is done

by pitching new ideas, provide new information and offer other solutions to various problems, because, as Nørring argues, it is [...] *incredibly important that you inform the politicians properly, because the politicians act only on presentations from the government offices, but most often, a case needs to be viewed from many angles* (Appendix 3: Interview with Niels Peter Nørring, p. 4).

When the interest organisations are pitching ideas, it often occurs behind closed doors. This, Tilma argues, is not meant to keep secrets, but rather a way for the politicians [...] *to avoid commitment when looking for inspiration* (Appendix 2: Interview with Jacob Tilma, pp. 6-7). This is backed up by Nørring, who finds that the closed meetings are a sign of confidentiality. Because, as he argues:

[...] we do not walk out and talk. If we are at an audience for a committee, where we are trying to tell the environmental committee, foods committee or a different committee, what our position is regarding something, we do not walk out afterwards and convey what this or that parliamentary politicians said when the audience is over (Appendix 3: Interview with Niels Peter Nørring, p. 5).

As expressed by John R. Commons' theory on pressure groups, the interest organisations serve as a vital function in a democracy. He finds that pressure groups are useful as they bring about results which would otherwise not have been completed by the government. This is supported by Nørring, who believes that:

[...] we have a great tradition in Denmark [because the] politicians actually are open to listen to many different views and that they subsequently make the decisions. And then we will do everything we can to be able to render influence (Appendix 3: Interview with Niels Peter Nørring, p. 5)

As such, John R. Commons, Niels Peter Nørring and Jacob Tilma view the interest organisations as vital for the democracy. As Nørring states:

We [red: the interest organisations] go there to talk to them [red: the politicians], we go there to give them good ideas, we try to convince them of what is the right thing to decide. Such are the democratic ground rules (Appendix 3: Interview with Niels Peter Nørring, p. 4).

Interest organisations serve as insightful experts to the politicians, who, according to Tilma, see lobbyists as [...] *just someone you use to gain more insight in a matter* (Appendix 2: *Interview with Jacob Tilma*, p. 7).

A summary of the function of the interest organisation can be done in four steps: The first step is to attend to the particular common interest of the group. The second is to increase the amount of memberships in the organisation, where the optimal goal is achieving monopoly. The third step is to defend the common interest of the group, not necessarily considering the interest of the public. The fourth, and last, step is to maximise the flow of resources the organisation receive and in continuation of that, making sure that the resources are managed effectively in regards to the interests of the members (Bille, 2004, p. 55).

As aforementioned, Tilma and Nørring indicate how they, as interest organisations, and the government each offer something to the other. Interest organisations are capable of producing information, while the government provides the public legislation, which members of the interest organisations in turn must abide by. This symbiotic relationship between interest organisations and the government is further supported by the corporatist model. While pluralism and Commons' theory of pressure groups claim that interest organisations are vital for democracy, this close, interdependent relationship may offer an opposed view of democracy. We will in the next section discuss how lobbyism affects democratic dimensions.

Lobbyism and democracy

In this section, we answer our fourth working question: **How does lobbyism influence our views of democracy?** We will do this by firstly reflecting upon Buksti's theory on pluralism and Commons' theory on pressure groups, and their relation to democracy within interest groups. Secondly, we will connect this with Denmark's position in the EIU's Democracy Index. Thirdly, we will oppose these arguments with Heywood's presentation of the corporatist model linking it to the Danish representative democracy model. We will then discuss these aspects in relation to our specific case, based on our interviews. Finally, these points will be tied together in a preliminary conclusion.

At a glance, lobbyism from interest organisations seems like a "logical" step in a democracy. The interest organisations are a concentrated source of both information for the politicians

and a mouthpiece for the population represented. Especially in Denmark, with the tradition of representative democracy, the fact that the agricultural sector has collected their embodiment in small personified delegations speaks of a custom where it falls natural to elect a few to speak for the many. If you take Heywood's pluralist model into consideration, based on Buksti's theory of Pluralism, it shows us that not only is lobbyism, conducted on the behalf of interest organisations, a promotion of democracy but also something to be praised as it is the ultimate sign of a representative democratic process. John R. Commons' theory on pressure groups also supports this view with the emphasis on these groups being the very lifeblood of democracy.

Denmark's place among the top of EIU's Democracy Index Report, as mentioned in the section on Measuring Democracy, is also a strong indicator of how lobbyism from interest organisations is a sign of a strong democratic process. The fact that the tradition for including interest organisation's input has been an integrated part of Danish legislative process for a long time, can, together with Buksti's and Commons' theories, arguably be one of the explanations for this high place in the Democracy Index.

Additionally, if we consider Heywood's corporatist model, the evidence of how the interest organisations work in Denmark is strengthened, with the exception that there are no indication of the leaders of the two agricultural interest organisations (Landbrug & Fødevarer and Bæredygtigt Landbrug) not being directly accountable to their members. Yet, when the corporatist model also suggests that the [...] *bargaining between the government and the interest organisations is in no way subject to public scrutiny* (Heywood, 2007. p. 300), lobbyism can be seen in a different light.

While Jacob Tilma from Bæredygtigt Landbrug and Niels Peter Nørring from Landbrug & Fødevarer both confirm that a lot of interaction between the agricultural interest organisations and the politicians is undocumented and/or happens in a closed forum, they insist it is for the benefit of the politicians (Appendix 2: *Interview with Jacob Tilma*, p. 2 and Appendix 3: *Interview with Niels Peter Nørring*, p. 5). These closed forums, or meetings behind closed doors, raise the question of transparency in the Danish legislative process. Arguably, the closed meetings also leave out the general population who, according to the definition of democracy, are the ones who rule. On the other hand, the whole idea of representative democracy leaves the decision makings in the hands of a select few, yet, this lack of transparency

gives the impression that the select few has something to hide. This, in turn, gives the use of lobbying as a tool, a touch of something sinister.

According to the “By-Product” theory by Olsen, the success of large and thriving interest organisations does not stem from the lobbying conducted, but rather from other activities. If this theory is true, an organisation like Landbrug & Fødevarer only use lobbying as a tool, and not as the goal itself. This is in agreement with what was expressed by our interview with Niels Peter Nørring:

A lot of those that are employed by Landbrug & Fødevarer are doing research and development of agriculture, development-assignments and so on [...]. But the political aspect, which the companies pay for, and the farmers pay for, is relatively small actually (Appendix 3: Interview with Niels Peter Nørring, p. 4).

Furthermore, Olsen also argues that the rational self-interested individual will not strive for a common good and needs some sort of benefit – a claim that can explain the agricultural interest organisations lobbying success. The organisations, because of their size and resources, can simply afford to hire the best lobbyists to represent them, as Niels Peter Nørring expresses it:

It is direct dues from our farmers and direct dues from our companies which pay for what political interest management we do. And we are so large because there are a lot of things which are of concern for the farmer and for the companies, legislatively (Appendix 3: Interview with Niels Peter Nørring, p. 4).

This picture, together with Heywood's corporatist model, shows lobbying as a tool of indirect influence on the legislative process proportional with the available resources of the patrons of the interest organisations. Resources that can also be used as contributions to political parties. This possibility was not discussed with either Jacob Tilma or Niels Peter Nørring, nor have we found any mention of it on the organisation's websites, yet it is a possibility that is hard to ignore. Given the fact that the amounts contributed to political parties need not be disclosed (Appendix 6: *Law on private contributions to political parties*, p. 2), present another lack of transparency.

This view suggests that if you are a strong and resourceful organisations, you have the opportunity to buy better conditions for your interests – a view which conflict the democratic standpoints. We may also consider that not every individual is capable of organising them-

selves as the larger, financially stable interest organisations can, which further questions the democratic conditions for the single citizen.

In the end we can roughly set the understanding of lobbying up into two parts:

1. Lobbying, as the action of interest organisations with in-depth knowledge of their field, informing decision-making government officials and leaving the politicians to pass the legislations as they see fit, is a celebrated sign of the Danish democracy.
2. Lobbying, as the tool which is used in “back-alley negotiations”, with the goal of squeezing every resource possible out of the deal, without regards to the welfare of others. In this case it is possible to get the best representation money can buy and is therefore the ultimate worst-case scenario you call forth when there are instances such as the black box dialogues in play.

From this we conclude that the option of doing lobbying work is great tool for interest organisations, and as with any tool, it can be used for good or for ill – which is a matter of opinion. But when there are dialogues between the government and a third party that can lead to something as important as legislations, which is not disclosed to the public, questions arise. When you consider the case of the buffer zone - a legislation made to take protect the environment, as strictly pointed out by the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries (Appendix 4: *Notes from Consultation*, p. 2) – any argument against it can be construed as self-serving, especially when coming from the industry that the law affects.

So, for the common citizen in a representative democracy, the black boxes make lobbying seem like an intangible way for interest organisations to gain influence on policy-making. While from the point of view of large industry sectors, such as the agricultural sector in Denmark, lobbying is an informal tool to disclose their knowledge and position on different matters to the right instances – a tool which is their democratic right.

A glimpse inside the black box

In this section, we will discuss and answer our third working question: **How can we gain knowledge to what goes on in the black box in the legislation process?** Firstly, we will pull out key notions from the methods chapter, which support the question. Secondly, we will look

into the Danish legislative process based on two actors within the Danish agricultural interest organisation communities. We will then put this into perspective using the concept of the black box and look into the various aspects of the Danish legislative process, discussing when and where these black boxes might occur. These will be illustrated with models we constructed.

As previously stated in the Methods chapter, it would have been optimal to personally attend a closed meeting between interest organisation's representatives and the government. In doing this, it would have been possible to observe first-hand what exactly goes on behind the closed doors. However, this option was found unlikely and later confirmed to not be possible. We found, then, that a decent alternative could be to conduct interviews with relevant actors. We did so with two prominent characters within their respective agricultural interest organisation, Jacob Tilma from Bæredygtigt Landbrug and Niels Peter Nørring from Landbrug & Fødevarer. We asked both actors if it was possible to observe the closed meeting, which they both denied. Instead they were able to explain how they conduct their work, particularly in relation to the legislative process.

When asking Tilma just how they partake in the legislative process, he reveals that they [...] *investigate the situation carefully* [...] prior to initiating contact with parliamentary politicians. He furthermore explains that he finds them [...] *easy to get into a conversation if you have a decent case* (Appendix 2: *Interview with Jacob Tilma*, p. 3). Nørring supports this statement, but adds that the current government is more inclined to the advice of interest organisations as opposed to the previous Liberal-Conservative government, as the previous government did not invite the interest organisations to join the debate prior to adopting the buffer zone law (Appendix 3: *Interview with Niels Peter Nørring*, p. 2). He indicates that in relation to the preparatory policy work, Landbrug & Fødevarer [...] *try to affect the process as early as possible* (Appendix 3: *Interview with Niels Peter Nørring*, p. 2).

Nørring and Tilma both reveal that they do not make public what they have talked about with politicians due to confidentiality. Tilma explains that *[meetings] behind closed doors is simply lobbyism* [...] and, further, that it is [...] *people inviting other people to express that you would like to be more enlightened and that you would like to see the case from more sides than you have previously*. These meetings occurring behind closed doors are [...] *to make sure that the politicians avoid commitment when looking for inspiration* (Appendix 2: *Interview with Jacob Tilma*, pp. 6-7). Nørring and Tilma also both agree that their own agendas are in

no way hidden, as can be seen in various media. *It is completely clear what we believe when we write a reader's letter, a chronicle [or] if we are interviewed for a newspaper [...]* (Appendix 3: *Interview with Niels Peter Nørring*, p. 5).

While we cannot access the actual black box of policy making, there are two things we can look at, directly related to these hidden conversations: what goes into the black box (the input), and what comes out (the output). The inputs are the things that initially influence the policy making. Interest organisations make no habit of hiding their agenda to the public - on the contrary. According to Tilma, they attempt to get their stories out to those with [...] *a greater interface with the population than what [they] have [themselves]* (Appendix 2: *Interview with Jacob Tilma*, p. 7). Nørring indicates that they do not conduct negotiations within the black boxes per se:

We [red: the Interest Organisations] do not go there to negotiate with them [red: the politicians]. We go there to talk to them, we give them good ideas, we try to convince them of what is the right thing to decide. Such are the democratic ground rules (Appendix 3: *Interview with Niels Peter Nørring*, p. 4).



Figure 3: Simple black box model

Now we have a decent understanding of what goes into the black box - through official medias and first hand material such as interviews. The second step is to look at the output. In policy making, we see the output as the actual policies that emerge or the public notifications in relation to the legislation processes. In combining the two, with an educated understanding of the agendas related to the respective parties involved in the black box, we can begin to make educated guesses as to who pressed for changes in which way and whether or not these requests were met in the output.

One thing is certain: the legislative process is a lengthy one, as previously noted in the theory chapter relating to the Danish legislation. According to figure 1, there are concurrent formal and informal processes. When ministry officials in the legislative phase conduct a draft of a

policy, they have the option of consulting the relevant interest organisations. The figure 1 of this perceived reality furthermore suggests that this is a one-way contact - with the arrow leading from the formal phase to the informal. According to Tilma, they often initiate contact with opposition parties and other members of parliamentary. *Paragraph 20-questions are questions that members of parliament can ask the minister [...]* and explains that [...] *many interest organisations contact members of parliament and ask if they would care to ask the minister this or that question* (Appendix 2: Interview with Jacob Tilma, p. 3). In this regard, you could argue that the government's consultation with the interest organisations is not in fact a one-way dimension.

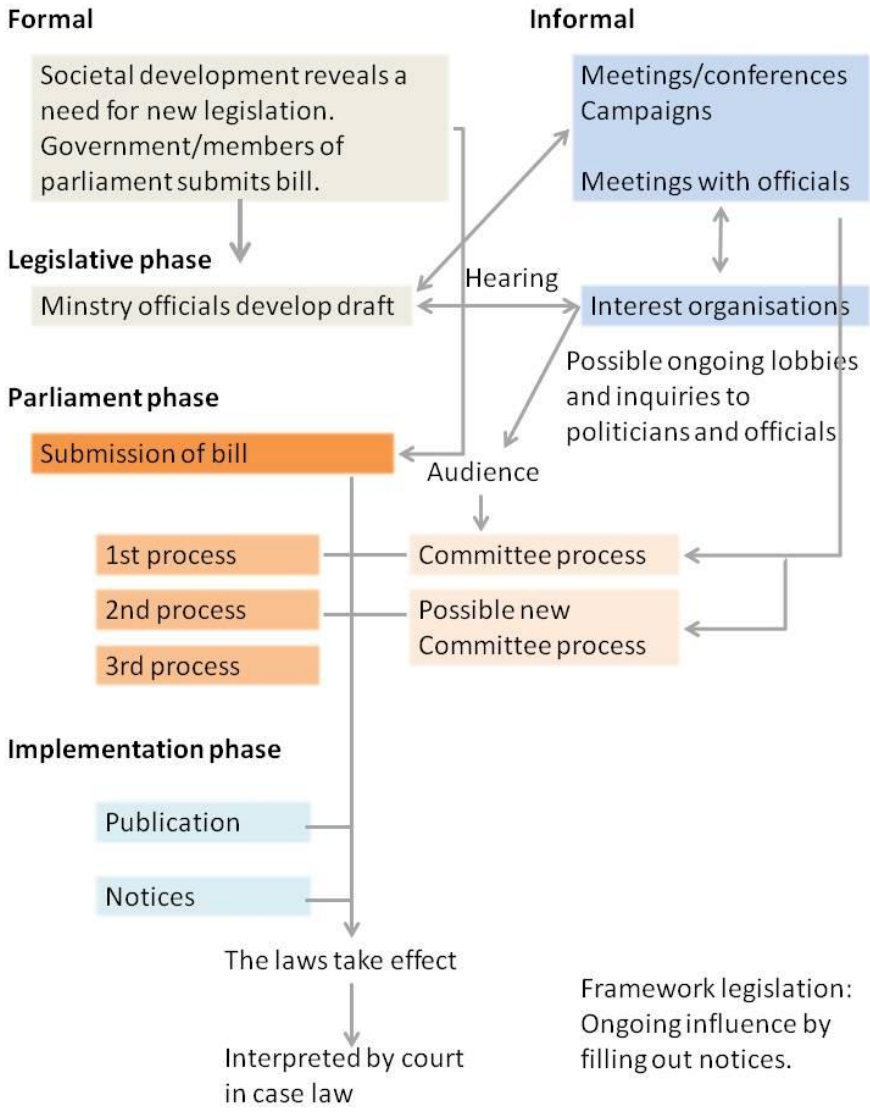


Figure 4: Revised legislative process model

Figure 4 shows a complex version of figure 1 seen previously in this project. The actors are the same, yet the arrows indicate a much more complex process where political officials and interest organisations gain influence in many aspects and phases of the legislative process. Figure 1 only indicated a one-way communication between ministry officials and interest organisations. Our proposal of what actually occurs in the legislative processes can be seen in figure 4, as is based on our interviews and observations, and indicates that interest organisation and political officials in turn initiate contact with ministry officials during the legislation phase. The figure further shows that political officials have an influence on the committee processes, as seen in the hearing as well as Tilma's account of the paragraph 20 questions.

An example of a possible black box incident can be brought out from our case of buffer zones. Initially, the buffer zone law was taken into effect by the previous Liberal-Conservative government due to environmental considerations based on EU's Water Framework Directive. It was later modified and made stricter by the current government for the same reason: the environment. Their incentive was, and is, to support EU's Water Framework Directive and protect the environment by introducing laws that they believe will reduce the amount of pesticides and chemicals, originating from the agricultural sector, in the water. However, the focus inevitably changed as per the Political Consultation on the 8th of May 2013 concerning the water plans. Parliamentary politicians, who are members of the committee of Foods, Agriculture and Fisheries, were questioning the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Mette Gjerskov. The meeting was, in its essence, concerned with the issues relating to the compensation offered to farmers in relation to buffer zones (Appendix 4: *Notes from consultation*, p. 1). Part of the planned compensation was supposed to be financed by the EU, but due to the fact that the Water Plans were denied by the EU Commission, the financial aid from EU is no longer available (Appendix 4: *Notes from consultation*, p. 2). As such, it would seem that the compensation to the farmers was suddenly jeopardised.



Figure 5: Input model

With a strong sense of argument, we can assume that the issue of the financial repercussions was raised by the individuals it was likely to affect. In this case, the farmers, whose arable

lands were scheduled to be cut down, followed a potential lack of financial compensation. The natural step for the farmers is to take their case to those who act as their voice: the interest organisations. We may consider this as **the input**, as shown in the above figure 5.



Figure 6: Input - Output model

Next, we have the consultation. Opposing parties were questioning the Minister's solution in relation to the lack of compensations. The farmers' problems became a clear agenda. The Minister assured that farmers would receive their compensation in the form of a government financial aid, save a handful of the largest corporations, due to a specific loft of financial support the government can give a company called the De Minimis rule (Appendix 4: *Notes from consultation*, p. 1). The EU compensation was as such replaced with a government financial aid, thus successfully answering the farmers' initial plea. We can consider this **the output**, as illustrated in the above figure 6.

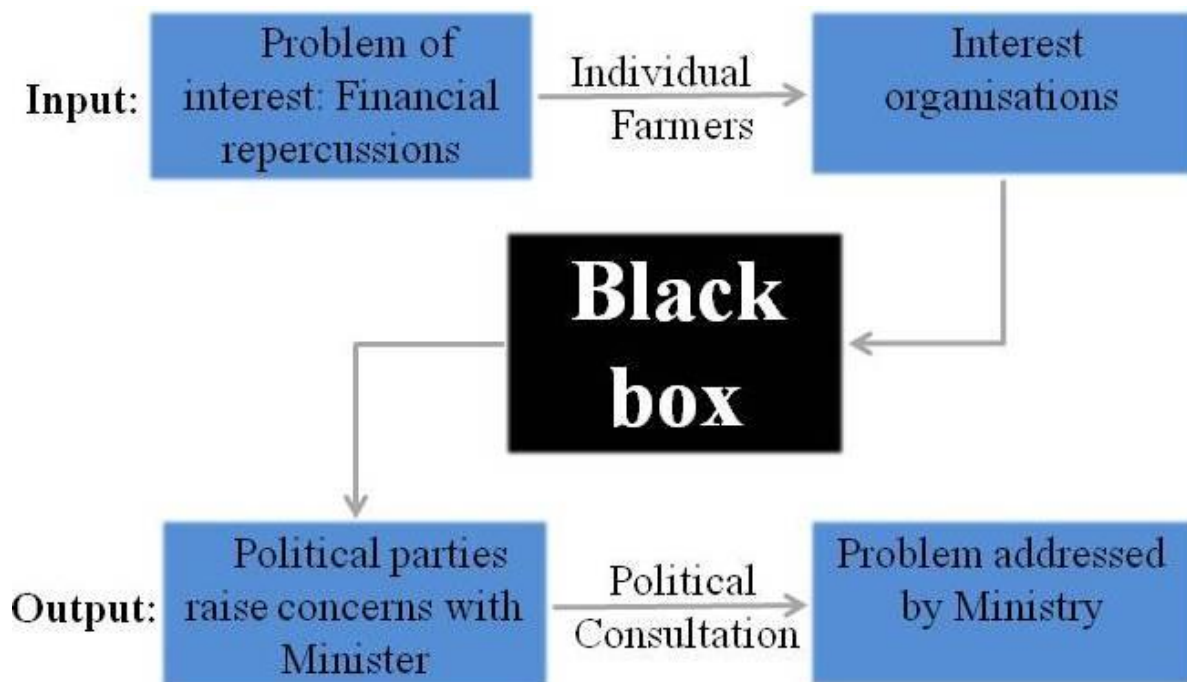


Figure 7: Complex black box model

At first, as figures 3 and 7 illustrate, the black box seems non-transparent. How can we know what happened in between? The likely step following the farmers' concerns could have been for the interest organisation to take the matter further up the ladder to a politician with strong pull. In relation to the consultation on the 8th of May, Tilma explains that [all] *of the* [political] *opposition has been interested in this case* and that Bæredygtigt Landbrug has [...] *presented documentation for the opposition which they [the opposition] found sufficiently interesting to invite the Minister to the consultation* (Appendix 2: Interview with Jacob Tilma, p. 3).

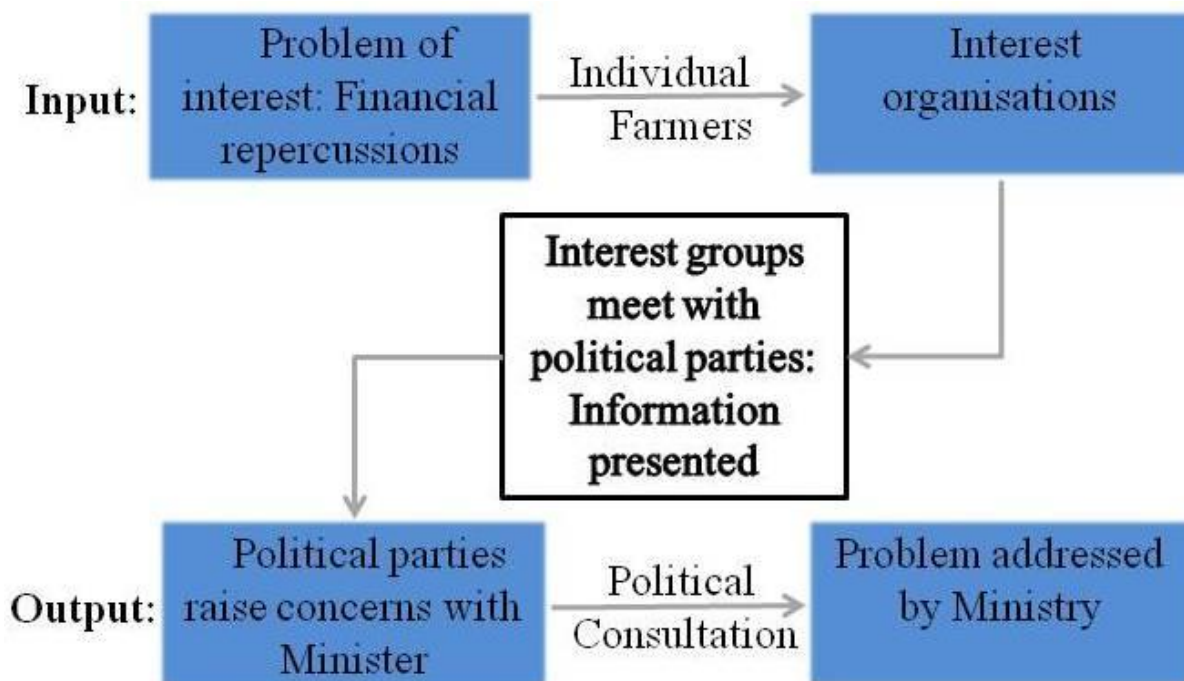


Figure 8: Complex transparent black box model

Based on the initial input, the farmers' concerns and the interest organisations' protecting the interests of their members, and the following output - the reaction by the opposing parties calling the Minister to a consultation, the black box becomes more transparent as seen in the above figure 8. Interest organisations present documentation and information to unknown politicians. The material presented must have been sufficiently persuasive to the politicians, due to how the case became an issue.

Finally, it should be noted that the processes of the black box is a complex matter. Yet, through sufficient investigation, the researcher may be able to interpret the framework of what occurs behind closed doors. Regarding this project, it has been a combination of subject background research of interests, interviews with lobbying actors and observing a consultation. In this sense, we find that we have, in fact, obtained knowledge of a black box in the legislative process.

Involvement within policy-making

In this section we will discuss and answer working question four: **What actors and institutions are involved in the policy-making process of the buffer zones in Denmark, and what general knowledge can we gain from their involvement?** In order to do this, we will

take a look at the different actors involved and the nature of their involvement. Lastly, we will use Friedmann's planning theory to explain actions and reactions.

Originally, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries along with the Ministry of Environment worked out the buffer zone law as a consequence of the Green Growth package, a plan on how to meet standards of EU's Water Framework Directive from 2000, worked out by the previous, liberal-conservative government in 2009, as a part of the Water Plans. Aforementioned figure 1: The Danish Legislative Process shows how, traditionally, interest organisations are included in the legislative process. As Niels Peter Nørring puts it:

We are in dialog with them [red: the politicians] when things are discussed in the Danish Parliament and the government (Appendix 3: Interview with Niels Peter Nørring, p. 2).

However, with this particular law of the buffer zones, the agricultural interest organisations and by extension farmers, were excluded from the hearings and had no say. This displeased agricultural interest organisations and subsequently they have pushed to have the Water Plans declared invalid. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, some of the members of Landbrug & Fødevarer felt that not enough action was taken by their organisation, so they formed the organisation Bæredygtigt Landbrug. Jacob Tilma explains:

Bæredygtigt Landbrug was formed in 2010 as a protest-organisation, because some thought Landbrug & Fødevarer did not do their political job well enough. [...] Landbrug & Fødevarer tend to seek dialog whereas we [Red: Bæredygtigt Landbrug] bite the hamstrings a little and put pressure on them. (Appendix 2: Interview with Jacob Tilma, p. 1 and 5).

As seen in the chapter on the process of the Water Plans, the Water Plans were declared invalid, due to the fact that the supplementary hearing regarding the Water Plans on the 03-10.12.2011 was too short. The next step on the agenda for the agricultural interest organisations were the buffer zone law. They use the tools available, such as PR and journalism, in order to gain interest and attention from both politicians and the public. Then they used lobbying in closed meetings to enlighten politicians of the government opposition on the matter, in order to gain influence on the decision making of the buffer zones. Ultimately, interest organisations, politicians in the government and of the opposition alike all have influence on the buffer zones in each their own way.

Using aforementioned planning theory by Friedmann, we can gain knowledge on why the previous government chose to leave out the organisations during negotiations. According to the theory, the Danish government is faced with a problem from EU in form of the Water Framework Directive. The problem is of the "wicked" kind due to the fact that it is a social issue, which poses great trickiness regarding solutions. As Friedmann says: [...] *social problems are never solved; they are merely displaced by other problems* (Friedmann, 1987, p. 167). This means that regardless of what solution is found, new issues will just arise. The Green Growth package, which features the Water Plans and, by extension, the buffer zone law, was an attempt to solve the EU Water Framework Directive's "wicked" problem. Now that they have attempted to solve the problem of living up to the standards of EU's Water Framework Directive with the buffer zones, the initial problem has been replaced by other issues. An example of the problem moving around could be that the agricultural sector in Denmark might experience a loss of international competitiveness, which will ultimately have negative effects on the Danish economy.

By excluding interest organisations from the legislative process of the Green Growth package, politicians might have left out individuals, who possess the proper knowledge and are specialised within their field. Jacob Tilma states:

It is just a "desk-way" of doing things. They forget to go out and see what the actual conditions are like. The farmers want them to come out and do tests of the water courses. "What are the conditions"? Rather that do a "desk-calculation" of "This is how it must be, this is how it will be." (Appendix 2: Interview with Jacob Tilma, p. 6).

Friedmann talks about this in his theory on "the veil of time", which discusses the desire to forecast future occurrences. He argues that this tradition of forecasting is improbable to hold much merit as actual and certain predictions, although the forecasting can be useful as a tool in various situations (Friedmann, 1987, pp. 168-170), as elaborated in the theory chapter. Instead of doing a "desk-calculation" or models of the situation, politicians could have included interest organisations in the hearings, and used their expert knowledge of the field when finding a solution to the problem. However, there is always the risk that this expert knowledge is coming from a biased person. As Friedmann states, the effectiveness of an analyst depends on their [...] *knowledge of the historical and institutional context for decision* (Friedmann, 1987, p. 143). A representative of an interest organisation cannot be described as completely objective in the matter, and the possibility of a conflict of interests could be viewed as highly likely. This could lead to distrust in the representative, where his/her expert knowledge is put

up against a possible ulterior motive, which might be why the politicians chose to exclude the interest organisations. Furthermore, they may not possess the general analytical skills which, as expressed by Friedmann, are needed in the policy analysis process. However, the alternative when analysts, of no relation to the case, assume full responsibility for the making of a policy, it becomes problematic that they do not have the needed background knowledge. It becomes a double-edged blade where you require knowledge of the case in question, but at the same time objectivity is necessary.

Tools of the Trade

In this section, we will answer our fifth working question: **What tools do the agricultural interest organisations use to gain influence on the political actors?** Firstly, we will account for the tools the agricultural interest organisations use when influencing a policy, with references to our interviews. Secondly, we will link the tools to Rothenborg's model. Thirdly, we will give a brief reflection on the possibility of political party contribution. Lastly, we will conclude with a small reflection.

The basic function of an interest organisation is to represent a portion of the population, and therefore it is a given, that the larger number of members an organisation has, the larger the influence in a democracy, as established by Heywood (2007, p. 298). If you yield a great economic authority on top of a large number of members, it is likely that your influence has a larger impact.

As explained earlier, the size of the agricultural sector in Denmark has dwindled since the 1950's, but its tradition of influence and political know-how has moved with the times. As Jacob Tilma from Bæredygtigt Landbrug confirms, it is customary within their interest organisation to employ journalists and legal counsellors in their public relations department (Appendix 2: *Interview with Jacob Tilma*, p. 2). One could then argue that this behaviour would be similar within the interest organisations of the remaining agricultural sector. Combined with the agricultural sector's employment of their own researchers, as Niels Peter Nørring from Landbrug & Fødevarer explains (Appendix 3: *Interview with Niels Peter Nørring*, p. 4), they are able to present strong cases for the politicians. These cases can be used to both backup claims or deny them, and as the agricultural organisations are not officially tied to any specific party, they are in a position to present the cases to the political actors most beneficial

to their case, which Jacob Tilma substantiates in his interview (Appendix 2: *Interview with Jacob Tilma*, p. 8).

By employing their own researchers, the agricultural organisations are also able to create a self-manifested credibility for themselves and consequently are more likely to be taken into council, e.g. when new agricultural legislations are being discussed. Additionally, the enlistment of legal counsellors gives them the ability to navigate in the legislative processes, and their utilisation of journalists arguably grants them the capability to better use the media to their advantage. Because, as Tilma explains;

[...] *if we have a story that we think is really good, we contact Jyllandsposten or Politiken [red: two major Danish newspapers] or someone we find could get it out to a broader platform [...] than our own* (Appendix 2: *Interview with Jacob Tilma*, p. 7).

Rothenborg's argumentation model shows the line of reasoning for rejecting more strict environmental restrictions and paints a picture of how the agricultural interest organisations tactics are formed. A line of reasoning that can be seen when Niels Peter Nørring says, that those affected by the buffer zone law need compensation, also on how the opposition focused their questions on securing compensation for the agricultural sector to the Minister, in the consultation on the 8th of May (Appendix 4: *Notes from consultation*, p. 1), despite how the very reason for implementing this law comes from the pollution created by the agricultural sector. This, in turn, can be traced back to the 2nd point of Rothenborg's argumentation model - if there is a problem, it is not our fault. This shows how the agricultural sector has established a sound configuration for a line of reasoning, where they will likely gain something to their own advantage no matter what the politicians decide.

So, when Niels Peter Nørring says that the way they influence the policy-making processes is with dialogue (Appendix 3: *Interview with Niels Peter Nørring*, p. 2) he is not wrong, but it is the weight behind the arguments and the diverse way of presenting these that makes the difference - whether it is facts from a case or a way to interpret a law, as attested by Jacob Tilma (Appendix 2: *Interview with Jacob Tilma*, p. 4). Adding the possibility of choosing which cases to present to whom, combined with a long-standing custom of being heard, the tools of the agricultural interest organisations become many-faceted.

On top of all these ways of getting their views across, there is also the possibility of political party contributions (Appendix 6: *Law on private contributions to political parties*, p. 2) as

discussed earlier in the analysis. This option, as stated, is not an issue we have found any tangible evidence on ourselves, but an option that cannot be ignored. A political party contribution can be an official way of declaring a political standpoint, but if you exercise the right to withhold the amount contributed (Appendix 6: *Law on private contributions to political parties*, p. 2) then, much like the meetings behind closed doors, this lack of transparency can be interpreted as an inauspicious act.

From this, we conclude that the agricultural interest organisations have many tools at their disposal, each with many different applications and varying degrees of transparency. To operate a lot of these tools though, you need a high level of knowledge of especially the legislative process and the media. Knowledge the agricultural sector has a great understanding of using for example when employing professionals to research, represent and argue on their behalf.

Conclusion

In the following conclusion we will combine the five conclusions of the working questions made in the previous chapter, and pull the strands together into an answer to our problem formulation.

1. What function do interest organisations have?

The function of an interest organisation is primarily to manage the specific interests of their members, which does not necessarily coincide with the interests of the general public. In order for the interest organisation to function, they need to increase amount of memberships to obtain enough financial capital through membership fees. Finally, the function of an interest organisation is to achieve efficient merit of expertise in order to sufficiently exert their political influence.

2. How does lobbyism influence our views of democracy?

Lobbyism's influence on our views of democracy depends entirely on the point of view. For the common citizen with limited opportunity to organise him- or herself in a larger organisation, the black boxes of the legislation processes, in which lobbyism occurs, seem unreachable and intangible. This view of lobbyism appears undemocratic in nature. However, to the individual member of the interest organisations - and the leaders of the interest organisations as well - lobbyism is a way of being heard and a commonly used tool in this regard. It furthermore offers specialised information to the politicians and analysts in charge of conducting the policy in question. From this perspective, lobbyism seems like an important aspect to the democratic dimension.

3. How can we gain knowledge to what goes on in the closed meetings in the legislation process?

Due to the confidential nature of the closed meetings of the legislation processes, it was not possible for us to gain access to the black box. The only variables we can consider are the input and the output of the black box. If the researcher has sufficient background knowledge of the subject at hand, he or she can be able investigate the conditions not available for public scrutiny, by analysing the input and the output. This may further include the researcher's in-

teraction with the actors involved in these legislation processes - interactions such as interviews and observations.

4. What actors and institutions are involved in the decision making process of buffer zones in Denmark, and what general knowledge can we gain from their involvement?

Typically, political actors, interest organisations, ministries and other interested parties are involved in the decision making processes. However, in the specific case of the buffer zone law in Denmark, the government chose to exclude interest organisations from the initial negotiation stages instead of employing their specialised insight and expert knowledge. With the advancement of the case, the interest organisations used lobbying tools to include themselves in the legislation process. From this, we can derive in general terms that political actors set their own agenda and include the knowledge derived from interest organisations if they find it beneficial to their cause.

5. What tools do the agricultural interest organisations use to gain influence on the political actors?

Interest organisations utilise many different tools in their pursuit to gain influence on political actors. They take part in dialogues with related politicians, dialogues which may be either closed or open for public scrutiny. Furthermore, the interest organisations use journalism and implore PR in other media in order to raise awareness of their interests. In addition, the interest organisations employ specialised professionals with expert knowledge relating to the interest organisations' area of interest. Thus maximising their credibility to political actors, as well as the public population, when they engage in legislative processes.

Problem formulation:

How do agricultural interest organisations seek to influence the policy-making process in regards to the case of buffer zones in Denmark, and what general knowledge can we gain from policy-making relating to this case?

When agricultural interest organisations seek to influence the policy-making processes in relation to the buffer zones in Denmark, they act in their members' interest in order to further their own case. In order to do this, they utilise various tools, where lobbyism is an important

aspect. As seen in the case of buffer zones, the interest organisations regularly offer ideas and inspiration to political actors. The interest organisations can offer these ideas and inspiration to the political actors specifically in accordance with what they anticipate to be the most beneficial to their interests. In the buffer zone legislation, the interest organisations have primarily had interactions with politicians in the opposition parties to the current government. Ironically, the same parties that originally implemented the law without consulting the interest organisations. These are interactions based on a mutual, interdependent relationship between the interest organisations representatives and the political actors: The interest organisations offer the politicians expert knowledge based on the researchers and professionals they employ. In return, the political actors proceed in the system with this information, in bringing it to relevant ministries for perusal and debate. This tendency is seen clearly in the case of buffer zones, where political opposition called the decisions of Minister of Foods, Agriculture and Fisheries into consultation. However, as these problems are being attended to and attempted solved, they become displaced. Other problems arise in its place which affirms the theory that legislation processes address issues that are social scientific in nature and are, as such, “wicked” in nature. Despite the interest organisations’ aspirations to solve the problem of their trade themselves, the problem is only moved around and may, in turn, affect other aspects of society. For example, the competitiveness of the Danish agricultural sector, and by extension the entire Danish economy, will be damaged if the buffer zone law is implemented, according to the statements we have gathered in our empirical study. However, one might consider what the consequences for the environment might be, if the buffer zone law is not implemented.

The problems may, in essence, affect the individual who does in fact not possess the resources to organise him- or herself as interest organisations are capable of. Furthermore, the individual usually does not have the resources to employ researchers and experts, nor do they necessarily have the available network to attend the black box of the legislation processes. The individual is therefore unable to support and/or object to the information presented in closed meetings between interest organisations and politicians. Due to this dimension, the individual is not capable of exerting his or her interests as well as the greater interest organisation can, if they desire to push something through the legislative system. In this sense, we find that the democratic dimension of the work of interest organisations is questionable. Furthermore, the nature of the policy-making process should undergo revision in order to address the need for a legislative system more in favour of the individual’s right to address his or her democratic

rights. But as stated earlier, Denmark is a representative democracy and therefore the idea of the few representing the many, is actually the core of the Danish democracy.

In conclusion, by exercising their constitutional right to organise and their democratic right to express their opinions to the elected officials, the interest organisations influence the policy-making process in Denmark all in accordance with the law. However, by examining the case of the buffer zone law, we have discovered what can be argued as undemocratic aspects of the legislative process in Denmark.

Perspective

In this chapter, firstly, we will contemplate what problems arise from the conclusion drawn/made in our project. Secondly, we will discuss what we possibly could have done differently in the project, looking at several diverse approaches.

We have established that there are problems of transparency in the Danish legislative process and this lack can make the common man doubt aspects of the seemingly democratic processes. One can argue that something which is supposed to be one of the base pillars of our democracy - the making of our laws - can be shaken by external organisations. Granted, the organisations in this context are large and have had influence over a long period of time, but should that automatically allow them if they possess this opportunity? On the other hand the laws are, in theory, made for the betterment of society and the interest organisations represent parts of society. Also, if they are just “playing by the rules” of the legislative process, they should be able to use all the tools at their disposal.

A solution to the transparency problem, which could possibly shed more light to the black boxes, is to demand records of every meeting held in the Danish parliament. This solution would probably be met with disagreement from both the interest organisation and the politicians, and would be very difficult to enforce - not to mention it would increase the bureaucracy and thus actually lessening transparency further.

If we had had more time and resources, we would have interviewed government officials who are currently involved in the buffer zone case. Then we could possibly have had more aspects shedding light on the black boxes. Furthermore, we could have contacted representatives of the previous Liberal-Conservative government, and further investigate the reasoning behind the unusual process of the creation of the buffer zone law.

Early in the process of writing the project we decided not to spend time on possible connections between relevant political actors. We decided not to do so in order to confine our area of interest, thus making the project more manageable. What we could have done, had we chosen to focus on aforementioned connections, was to interview members of different Danish political parties, e.g. the agricultural spokesmen. In these interviews we would have enquired about their personal and political relation to agriculture, and subsequently the process of the buffer zones. From what we know, without having investigated this further, we would expect to find that political parties, originally tied to the Danish agricultural sector such as the Left, Liberal

Party, now has been replaced by the more radically nationalist political party, the Danish People's Party (in Danish: Dansk Folkeparti).

References

Appendix

Appendix 1: *EIU: Democracy Index Report*, 2013

Appendix 2: *Interview with Jacob Tilma*

Appendix 3: *Interview with Niels Peter Nørring*

Appendix 4: *Notes from Consultation*

Appendix 5: *The Buffer Zone Law*, 2011

Appendix 6: *Law on private contributions to political parties*

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