Voice and access:

Political practices of European interest associations.

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This article examines to what extent European interest associations combine public political practices with seeking access to policy networks. We compare two theoretical approaches explaining the choice of political practices; one focusing on the nature of mobilised interest and another considering the institutional context in which mobilisation takes place. An important part of the EU-literature stresses resource-based explanations and the nature of the organized interest. This perspective considers access by specific interests as more relevant than public campaigning by diffuse interests. In contrast, we claim that some institutional features of the EU stimulate the use of public political practices by diffuse interests. In the empirical section we demonstrate that, although the institutional supply of access might favour specific interests, the EU contains important opportunities for those who aim to expand the scope of political conflict.

Are interest associations that use inside strategies less inclined to express their demands in public? Or do they combine public political practices, voice, with seeking of access to policy networks? Which associations are more likely to do this? And do those with access avoid public strategies? Few have systematically examined these questions; whether and how the seeking of access is combined with public political action has inspired only a relatively small set of, mainly American, researchers (Baumgartner and Jones 1991; Gais and Walker 1991; Kollman 1998). On the one hand, public policy analysts seldom take into account public campaigning. Most research is focused on inside lobbying or the exchange of information in

networks between societal interests and state representatives. On the other hand, scholars of social movements usually do not pay systematic attention to what they call 'routine forms of politics'. The aim of this article is to investigate whether the interests on whose behalf political mobilisation takes place and/or the institutional context wherein mobilisation is embedded, explain the choice of political strategies among Euro-level interest associations. In doing this we contrast two different theoretical understandings about political mobilisation.

To begin with, interest associations can be seen as organisations whose survival depends on their material resources, the size and structure of their constituency or their structural embeddedness. These are resource-based explanations emphasising the nature of the organised interest. Associations will mobilise resources that are useful in order to sustain support from their constituencies and to attract government attention. Costly and inefficient strategies are avoided. For instance, those with access to policy-makers capitalise on this and invest further in access strategies. They are less likely to invest in grass roots mobilisation or in public campaigns. Especially peripheral and marginal associations use public strategies more extensively. Because these actors do not gain access, they try to provoke a public debate on the issues they care about. Further, their peripheral position is reinforced by a predisposition among policy-makers to consider the supply of policy-relevant expertise rather than to listen to the voices of those making public noise.

This article shows the incompleteness of this model as it does not adequately explain the choice of political strategies. In general, this perspective depicts interest associations as prisoners of their own capabilities and does not account for the institutional environment in which they operate. An alternative theoretical perspective posits that the institutional environment shapes political strategies, or institutional variability leads to incentives and constraints factoring into the emergence of particular political practices. For instance, interest

associations rarely face one monolithic government. Especially in polities composed of different arenas and layers offering multiple access points for political demands, such as the European Union, each institutional actor plays a specific role. Then, different institutional actors are to a varying degree targeted by different sorts of interests and their respective influence strategies.

The first part of the article delves deeper into these two perspectives and the second part provides an empirical analysis based on an original dataset. The theoretical part connects different mobilisation strategies with a) the type of interest an association mobilises, b) the presumed nature of public policy-making and c) the multiple access points the EU provides. EU policy-making is a relevant case because, some recent exceptions notwithstanding, the literature on European policy-making has somewhat ignored public political practices as a potential influence strategy (exceptions include Imig and Tarrow 2001; Reising 1998). To some extent this ignorance is hardly surprising. Historical evidence suggests that most European institutions were intentionally designed to avoid public debates on any problem of European policy-making (Wallace and Smith 1995). And although the dominant schools in the field, early neo-functionalism and contemporary intergovernmentalism, disagree on many things, they share a rather technocratic conception of EU policy-making, a view which tends to downplay the relevance of public political practices (Haas 1958: 616; Lindberg and Scheingold 1970: 50-62; Moravcsik 1994: 54-57). In contrast to a substantial part of the literature, our analyses show that public political practices are quite important in the EU and that, in general, interest associations combine the seeking of access with public voice.

Voice and access

This section defines key concepts – voice and access – and establishes some propositions regarding how these political practices relate to each other. One problem is that the way the

literature has conceptualised voice as distinct from access differs widely. We restrict ourselves to two representative examples (Hirschman 1970: 30; Opp 1994: 385). Hirschman, for instance, defined voice as 'any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, an objective state of affairs... through various types of actions and protests, including those that are meant to mobilize public opinion'. In an article on 'Voice in a Future Europe', Opp equates voice with political protest and defines it as: 'non-institutionalized action carried out to put pressure on bureaucrats and politicians in order to attain political goals'. Hirschman's definition also includes so-called conventional political practices such as lobbying. Opp's definition is restricted to non-institutionalised forms such as demonstrating or blocking streets; it excludes inside strategies, but also conventional public strategies as petitioning or organising a press conference. Since the costs of public campaigning are high and the rewards low, voice is not, according to Opp, a viable strategic option for Euro-level societal interests and this presumed irrelevance of voice justifies an analytical disconnection of access from voice strategies. Voice and access are incompatible strategies, an idea that is quite widely held in the literature on European policy-making. But according to Hirschman's original conception voice and access strategies are parts of the same continuum. They are not necessarily mutually exclusive. If Hirschman's conception fits reality, then the distinction of voice and access as separate and incompatible strategies has to be rejected.

In order to explore the (in)compatibility of voice and access, we introduce both concepts as separate empirical categories relating to different political arenas and to different pieces of information processed within these arenas. Access strategies basically concern the venues where political bargaining and deal making are going on. This world of advisory bodies, technical committees, agencies and, to some extent, parliamentary committees is not or is only partially visible to a large audience. Contemporary political systems, and the EU in particular, contain an incredibly diverse number of such settings. Voice strategies relate to activities

taking place in various public spheres, an arena where the communication among societal interests, policy-makers and citizens becomes visible to a broader audience. It is here that political campaigns are reported, that actors try to attract attention from a broader public and that the public opinion or the dominant opinion is constructed.

We define access as the channelling or exchange of policy-relevant information through formal or informal networks with public officials. Access strategies are, compared to voice strategies, particularly useful for the transfer of operational and technical information. It is in closed settings such as expert committees, agencies or advisory bodies that the technical pros and cons of policies are scrutinised in detail. Actors seeking access to these arenas have to deliver credible and valid expertise. Of course, the crucial importance of technical expertise does not exclude the framing of information, the use of value-loaded arguments or considerations regarding potential support and opposition. In some sub-arenas, for instance a parliamentary committee, such information will presumably play more of a role than in a technical advisory body. Crucial, however, is that decision-making arenas are not predominantly driven by non-technical information; technical information is particularly important.

Voice strategies are political practices taking place in a public arena. These arenas are less well suited for the extensive and detailed scrutiny of technical and operational feasibilities. It is not that such information is irrelevant here or that it is impossible to make statements based on valid and reliable expertise. What is important is that this information tends to enter the public arena in relatively small bits and pieces. A television interview takes five to ten minutes or less, an opinion letter should be no longer than one page and demonstrators can shout only a few slogans. Therefore, public strategies almost inevitably force actors to select

and frame information in a way that fits with their values, and so voice is basically used for the public communication of these values.

In practice, the public voicing of policy positions greatly differs and often such strategies are directed to different publics. For example, not all public political practices have a radical or disruptive character. In these differences we distinguish two manifestations: *information politics* on the one hand, and *protest politics* on the other. A key feature of information politics is the public presentation of information at strategic decision points. For instance, Greenpeace gives a press conference while the European Parliament (EP hereafter) debates the issue of GMOs. Although such practices may reach a large public, they are not always meant or designed to address the public at large. Often these practices signal information to key policy-makers or they reach specialised constituencies outside the decision-making arena. An opinion letter by the Chair of the European Roundtable of Industrialists (ERT) published in the *Financial Times*, for example, does not reach a very large audience, but it will be read by financial and business elites all over Europe. Protest politics usually also includes the public presentation of information. Yet protest politics is conceptually different from information politics in the sense that it implies the explicit staging and production of events in order to attract attention. In addition to information politics, protest politics aims to convince public officials that there are constituencies (e.g. by organising demonstrations or letter-writing campaigns) actively supporting the positions around which mobilisation takes place. Protest politics not only informs public officials about potential support and opposition, it is meant to impress them.

From the previous description it follows that the three categories of political mobilisation – seeking access, information politics and protest politics - are not easy to separate in practice, and that they often mutually reinforce each other. For example, in order to inform members or

sympathisers, a group can make inside strategies public. Sometimes groups stimulate a public debate while at the same time they participate in advisory committees. The question is whether and to what extent actors combine these three different categories. Below we discuss three models regarding how these three categories of political mobilisation may reinforce each other.[1]

INSERT OVERVIEW 1 HERE

The first model, resource expansion, postulates that actors cumulatively expand their mobilisation strategies. As they increase their access strategies, they gradually increase their use of information politics. Cumulatively, an extensive use of information politics results in the deployment of protest politics. In general, this model proposes, compared to the other models, less specialisation and a tendency to combine voice and access. The other two models suppose that the intensity of combining the three categories can differ substantially. To begin with, a substantial effect of seeking access on information politics (one unit change in seeking access leads to an almost similar increase of information politics) correlates with a weak (or even negative) effect of information politics on protest politics. This situation corresponds with the second model; actors combine seeking access with information politics and, if they do so, they minimise or avoid protest activities. In fact, there are two specialists in this model: the lobbyist spreading her ideas through the media and the protester eschewing both access and moderate forms of information politics. The third model considers a strong association between information politics and protest politics, but seeking access does not imply information politics. This model exemplifies another pattern of specialisation: the lobbyists endeavouring to keep things quiet versus the protester making an extensive and professional use of different media strategies.

Diffuse and specific interests

To understand the variable deployment of access and voice strategies, analysts have considered differences between the interests on whose behalf mobilisation takes place (Gais and Walker 1991; Kollman 1998). First, the distinction between diffuse and specific interests is briefly described and then we outline what is to be expected in terms of voice and access. The distinction of diffuse versus specific relates to the interests on whose behalf mobilisation takes place (Dunleavy 1988; Olson 1971; Pollack 1997). Some interest associations lack a well delineated and - in socio-economic terms - concentrated constituency; they defend so-called diffuse interests, interests linked to broad and general segments of society, such as consumers or future generations. Concrete examples are environmental groups, consumer groups and solidarity associations, NGOs or distant issue movements.[2] These groups primarily mobilise around norms and values by capitalising on public concerns over particular issues. The issues they raise are less tangible and less strategically linked to the material interests of their constituencies. Also the policy changes they promote accrue to people who did not take part in their realisation (Olson 1971; Salisbury 1969: 16). Specific interests, also called 'socio-economic' or 'producer interest groups', have a clear-cut stake in the production process and defend the interests of well-circumscribed and concentrated constituencies. Examples are sectoral trade unions, employers unions and associations related to a particular sector such as telecommunications, agriculture, and small and medium enterprises. Although diverse in different respects, these associations share as a common feature that they defend interests strategically linked to their constituencies. They are focused on the professional, economic, social and commercial interests of their members, and the issues they monitor are confined to policy questions that concern their members.

A key problem for diffuse interests is to link their political activities with their broad and scattered constituencies. Diffuse interests are usually less capable of delivering selective

incentives or private benefits. The diffuseness of their cause, the fragmented nature of their constituencies, in combination with the inability to produce incentives, make these interests, according to the Oslonian theorem, difficult to mobilise. However, the difficulty to mobilise is theoretically less conventional and plausible than often assumed and much empirical evidence demonstrates that mobilisation is not impossible (for an overview see Green and Shapiro 1994: 72-97). The supporters of diffuse interests have a taste for matters going beyond their private needs; they are sensitive to issues of public concern, a sensitivity often grounded in personal values or ideological views. Therefore, a successful diffuse interest must give *expression* to these values and views. So diffuse interests not only instrumentally pursue particular goals, for instance by exchanging resources with public officials. In order to attract sympathisers, diffuse interests will give public expression to the values and goals they pursue. By driving on controversies they try to gain media attention for creating a widespread perception that they are a worthwhile group mobilising in defence of a valuable public good. For this, it seems natural that diffuse interests focus on voice as main influence strategy and that they put less emphasis on access.

Traditionally, analysts have hypothesised that specific interests, compared to diffuse interests, use less voice and are more disposed to seek access (Gais and Walker 1991: 105-106; Schlozman and Tierney 1986: 117). This hypothesis finds in its origin several attributes ascribed to specific interests. In terms of exchangeable resources and expertise, specific interests are assumed to be quite well endowed and this provides them with better access to policy-makers. Considering the concentrated structure of their constituencies, these interest associations are more capable of collecting expertise that is unambiguously linked to well-circumscribed policy sectors and policy-problems. However, gaining access is not exclusively a matter of resources. Several other structural factors contribute to it. First, in many European countries their formal capacity as social partners implies institutionalised and privileged

access. Thus, they are used to realise their goals by acting within the decision-making arena. This situation reinforces their disposition to seek access, and so they feel less the need to mobilise publicly. On the contrary, usually it is to their advantage to operate in small and exclusive forums far away from public scrutiny. Second, because of their focused and specialised membership structure, they need less extensive public exposure than diffuse interest. Stated succinctly, the identity and size of their constituencies is easier to define and, therefore, extensive public campaigns for raising awareness among constituencies and policy-makers are less needed (Dunleavy 1988). Finally, a substantial literature on European policy-making (see below) assumes that contemporary policy-makers are basically interested in operational and technical expertise. Given the presumed ease with which specific interests are able to collect specialised and issue-specific information, it seems natural to expect less voice and more inside strategies.[3]

The EU and the use of voice

The EU, it is often argued, lacks full-fledged political parties, social movements or a pan-European media transmitting individual preferences to the political level. Therefore, input legitimacy, as Scharpf calls it, or the extensive involvement and participation of citizens and societal interests is quite weak and severely biased (Scharpf 1999). Instead of legitimising policies by widening the scope of participation, or input legitimacy, the EU seeks to increase its output legitimacy by promoting policy efficiency and effectiveness. Without challenging social movements or a political debate between government and opposition parties, political struggles are not publicly politicised, and attempts by interest associations to persuade broader publics remain largely peripheral and ineffective. Preponderant is the notion of network governance, which means that by drawing on expert knowledge and inclusion of various external actors, private and public, government becomes consensual and embedded in

horizontal networks without clear-cut centres and hierarchies (Coleman and Perl 1999: 701-703).

Yet, this does not imply that all societal interests are incapacitated to gain access or that European politics is completely insulated from external input. Rather, it means that access is skewed in a particular direction. Given the strong emphasis on output legitimacy, European public officials especially need expertise, technical knowledge and policy-relevant information. Organised interests that are able to deliver knowledge improving the understanding of specific regulatory problems are relevant interlocutors (Bouwen 2002). Because of their detailed professional or sectoral experiences, specific interests are supposed to be better equipped to supply valuable expertise. In contrast, diffuse interests face more difficulties in collecting the expert knowledge public officials need. Especially, those with radical demands and a lack of policy-relevant expertise face difficulties in, or even avoid, gaining access. In sum, interest associations capable of delivering useful expertise prosper, and those pursuing contentious and public forms of politics are excluded.

The view that diffuse interests are less mobilised, poorly adapted to European politics and seek and gain less access appears in numerous writings about European politics (Greenwood 1997: 16-17; Kohler-Koch 1997: 3; Moravcsik 1993: 473-524; Moravcsik 1999: 35-50; Opp 1994). However, this claim is not confined to the EU literature. Various scholars argue that diffuse interests are peripheral and that they use, in order to compensate for their structural weakness, public strategies, i.e. information politics and/or protests politics (della Porta and Diani 1999: 168-169; Gais and Walker 1991: 105; Kollman 1998: 107-108). Likewise, it is expected that those who gain access avoid public strategies and, in particular, limit the use of protest politics since this harms their reputation as trustworthy interlocutors. The less public someone makes her case, the more access already has been achieved since an actor not relying

on voice is more capable 'to get its needs met on the ''inside track'' of public policy-making' (Greenwood 1997: 16). Insiders should avoid public activism because this spoils their status or reputation. Connecting this to the alleged bias of public actors against diffuse interests, we should expect that diffuse interest associations gain less access, are less active in policy networking and, because of their inability to gain access, use voice extensively. If this scenario were true, diffuse interests remains marginal forever since voice strategies do not break open the boundaries of the decision-making arena. On the contrary, it only reinforces their peripheral status. If diffuse interests gain access, they gain it because they deliberately avoid information and protest politics.

We believe that this view is inaccurate as it rests on several questionable assumptions, namely that especially resources internal to an association affect political strategies, that routine access is the most valuable asset and that public officials prefer predictable, stable or quiet environments (Gais and Walker 1991: 105-106). Public officials avoid partisan struggles, provocative public debates or protests and they are unlikely to grant access to public campaigners. Thus, the institutional environment is considered as conducive to the internal features of associations and not as an external factor constraining or enabling particular forms of political mobilisation. However, is it plausible to assume that public officials invariably favour predictable, stable or quiet environments? What public officials decide depends on their evaluations regarding operational feasibilities, guesses about uncertainties and risks, and expected distributions of costs and benefits for various constituencies. Policy-makers are only partly informed about such issues and, therefore, they seek reliable, valid and trustworthy information. The affected interests – the stakeholders - themselves own information regarding these matters, but their information is inherently strategic and not preference-neutral. Public officials are not completely unaware regarding this uncertainty, the incompleteness and the strategic use of information they are provided with (Hansen 1991). Therefore, they may

attempt, despite their limited resources, to diversify the supply of access and to shape bias in a way that prevents them from becoming entirely dependent upon one single interest. For example, they stimulate openness via consultation through the media or bring together a diversity of competing interests in deliberative committees. Thus, it is not by closing the door for diffuse interests and by letting in only a few specialised interests that public officials reduce uncertainty.

Institutional context and political practices

The canonical model is also incomplete since it does not account for the existence of multiple institutional venues. Of course, the overall public actors' disposition towards interest associations may be biased so that some, in particular specific, interests gain easier access. However, the bias may differ considerably from institution to institution and the decision-making arena is often composed of multiple arenas and layers offering various points of access. Each institution plays a specific role in the legislative process which means that each institution is to a varying degree targeted by different interest associations and their practices (Bouwen 2002). This implies that, besides an overall assessment of seeking access, the strategy of seeking access must be decomposed into strategies towards the legislative institutions, the Council, the EP and the European Commission (EC hereafter), and, similarly, we consider the access actors gain to these institutions separately.

As initiator of legislation the EC drafts most legislative proposals. As a substantial part of European legislation touches upon new areas with a quite complex character, the EC is keen to gain expert knowledge. Non-elected politicians head the EC, Member-State executives select its President and, although the EP can sanction the EC as a whole, general parliamentary and public control over the individual Commissioners remains relatively weak. Therefore, it is expected that, compared to other institutions, the EC supplies less access to

diffuse interests; especially specific interests are likely to gain access here (Marks and McAdam 1999: 105). This in turn affects the strategies of interest associations; specific interests, and not diffuse interests, tend to approach the EC. Since the EC is less sensitive to public debates and characterised by a technocratic mindset (Meyer 1999), societal interests do not capitalise on the use of public strategies when they approach the EC. Therefore, the model of resource expansion (model 1) does not apply. It is more likely that actors specialise in seeking access; eventually they combine this with information politics (model 2), but they avoid protest politics (model 3 does not apply). Two further specifications are added here.[4] First, we expect substantial differences between DG's and cabinets, the private offices of the Commissioners. Commission DGs fit best into the picture sketched in this paragraph while cabinets function presumably somewhat more as political antennae sensitive to politicised input (Hix 1999: 34). Second, although the EC is key as an initiator of legislative proposals, we should not underestimate its importance during other stages of decision-making (Bouwen 2002). After having made a proposal, the EC can change or withdraw its proposal, as long as the Council and/or the EP have not taken a final decision. This implies that the EC is not completely immune to public pressures while the Council and the EP are considering legislative proposals.

The growing legislative role of the EU forces its members (MEPs hereafter) to consider basic factual and technical expertise and some have argued that MEPs are increasingly becoming professional experts who have internalised the technocratic mindset of the EU (Kohler-Koch 1997; Norris 1999: 96-102). However, can we *a priori* minimise the fact that MEPs are elected officials and form a forum for public debate? Since MEPs are politicians they should, to some extent, be sensitive to political arguments and presumably they should take into consideration broader political perspectives. Especially the fact that Brussels' MEPs are often geographically far away from their constituencies reinforces their incomplete knowledge

about the preferences of those constituencies and, in particular, the intensity of their preferences. And even if a close link between constituencies and the European legislators would exist, information confined to local and regional concerns is not always sufficient for evaluating legislative proposals from a broader European perspective. For these reasons, it is expected that MEPs show openness towards a broad range of mobilised interests and interests demonstrating preference intensities by using voice. Therefore it is hypothesised that, if diffuse interests gain substantial access to Europe, this access is to be located in the realm of the EP (Greenwood 1997: 254-261; Marks and McAdam 1996: 105-106). As a consequence, diffuse interests approach the EP more extensively than specific interests, and in order to attract attention from MEPs they make extensive use of public strategies. This, however, does not imply that specific interests do not seek or gain less access to the EP. On the contrary, it is likely that the probably successful mobilisation of diffuse interests towards the EP forces specific interests to not neglect this institution, to increase their efforts and to expand their contacts on every front. In sum, the EP leads interest associations to broaden the mobilisation of their resources and we expect that diffuse interests do this according to the extensive resource expansion model (model 1) while specific interests combine the seeking of access with information politics (model 2).

The Council is the body via which national polities interact with the EU. Like the EC it is often considered a highly bureaucratised institution. At the ministerial level the Council largely acts as a rubber-stamping body where decisions taken by bureaucrats at the level of the working groups or COREPER are ratified (Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 1997). Some argue that the Council makes it fairly easy to 'depoliticize issues by keeping citizens ignorant' and that 'governments mobilize bias' (Moravcsik 1994: 12-14). Indeed, the Council is neither a forum for public debate nor is it a body directly representing citizens. Despite this, we believe that the Council is much more vulnerable to political pressure than the EC. Council decision-

makers are closer to the domestic arena where the consequences of European policies are felt, and, although national executives are rather weakly controlled by national parliaments, they are composed of electoral accountable politicians. Although we hypothesise that interest associations especially seek access to the EC and the EP, we believe that the Council does not only attract domestic interests, but that it is susceptible to public pressures as well. Before an issue arrives in the Council it already received attention from the EC, the EP, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and, not unimportantly, the press. Its agenda is not secret; its insulated and somewhat opaque operating procedures contrast with the publicity of its agenda. In addition, the Council is not only the supreme decision-maker; in many instances it is the final decision-maker (together with the EP under co-decision). Often it is the last or ultimate resort to exert pressure. And although it might be too late to mobilise at this stage, outsiders who lost the battle in the earlier stages may take the opportunity to challenge this institution by media-initiated strategies. Because the input of expert knowledge from specific interests takes place at the level of the EC and because diffuse interests have difficulties in gaining access in the earlier stages, it is likely that especially diffuse interests utilise this strategy. On the one hand, it seems plausible to expect a situation that corresponds to the second and the third model. Given the difficulty of gaining access to these settings, interest associations specialise in combining information politics with protest politics rather that investing their resources in inside strategies. On the other hand, it might also be possible to observe a more extensive resource expansion. Most European interest associations are organisations grouping national associations, and it is likely that their domestic networks are mobilised in order to put pressure on national executives.[5]

Research design

Within the framework of a broader research project a sample of 192 Euro-level public officials and interest associations was drawn. For this, a positional sampling procedure relying

on various public sources and databases listing actors that were *potentially* consequential for European policies in the first pillar was used.[6] In the course of 1999, officials of the selected associations and institutions were contacted and interviewed face-to-face with the help of a standardised questionnaire. In each case, an official with sound experience and involvement in the organisation and its political activities (e.g. the public affairs manager, the director et cetera...) was interviewed. The interviews focused on the actor's policy interests, involvement in policy events, opinions and ideas about political action and policy networks at the domestic and the European level. Finally, 157 Euro-level actors were interviewed (see table 1).

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Before the fieldwork started, 29 policy events were chosen independently from the sample of actors; this prior selection was based on systematic screening of multiple sources, i.e. newspapers, event data-sets and various expert interviews. Because evidence would be collected by means of interviewing actors, the events were situated in the period between 1993 and 1998; a reconstruction of actors' involvement should be limited in time due to the phenomenon of temporal distortion. Every event could be linked with recent consequential policy debates within the first pillar and, with the exception of three events, all referred to policy proposals initiated by the EC. During the interviews these events were presented in the form of a list containing 29 different policy options. Interviews probed into the actors' factual involvement in three salient policy events interviewees selected out of a list of 29 events. The data reported here concern the evaluation of different actor-event interactions by respondents representing interest associations. In observational terms, this means 187 evaluations by Euro-level associations, 109 by specific interests and 78 by diffuse interests. The analyses start with a description of the networks actors initiated in response to these concrete policy events. Then

we focus on the combined use of voice and access strategies. Finally, we examine whether and how gaining access to different institutions affects the use of influence strategies.

Seeking access, information and protest politics

Respondents were asked to indicate their seeking of access for each event they selected. First, a description of access strategies was given, namely: '*In order to impact on policies organisations often consult other actors. In such contacts, exchange of information is vital. We define "information" fairly broadly. It may include advice on the best political strategy to be used, knowledge about others' strategy, as well as a range of, sometimes confidential, technical and scientific findings.*' Five institutional actors - the EC, the EP, the Member-States Representatives, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee - were then presented and the interviewees were asked to mention whether or not they had sought contact with one of them. Table 2 compares the results of diffuse and specific interests. In general, the EC and the EP are the institutions to which most access is sought and, as expected, the access sought to the Council and the advisory bodies is lower. Specific interests make more use of inside strategies, but it has to be added that the differences are not very big. Only regarding the Economic and Social Committee, not the most powerful institution, the differences are substantial. And importantly, the evidence substantiates neither that diffuse interests seek more access to the EP than to the EC nor that specific interests search more access to the EC. On the contrary, the findings suggest that *both* specific and diffuse interests seek access to the EP.

For each event it was asked to indicate whether or not a particular public activity had been undertaken (see table 3). Information politics, including media strategies in different forms, is very often used and, somewhat against conventional wisdom, such practices are slightly more used by specific interest than by diffuse interest associations. Nonetheless, the differences are

not tremendously significant, but they point into an unanticipated direction. Furthermore, the overall use of protest activities at 12% is far below the use of all other practices, a finding consistent with the literature on domestic interest mobilisation (for an overview see Baumgartner and Leech 1998: 151-157; della Porta and Diani 1999: 168-169). Although protest is, as expected, higher among diffuse interests, establishing meaningful inferences from the reported protest activities is not easy since the frequencies for *both* specific and diffuse interests are very small. In general, most interest associations invest more in seeking access and information politics, than in protest politics.

INSERT TABLES 2 AND 3 HERE

So far we considered whether an influence tactic was used or not. One can also assume that a combination of the tactics indicate the *intensity* with which a specific category of influence strategies has been employed. For instance, an actor who has organised only a press conference pursues less intensive information politics than someone who combined this with several other media strategies. Or, an association that only sought access to the EC is less intensively seeking access than an actor seeking access to all institutions. If actors combine different tactics in a systematic way, we can assume that their political practices are affected by a latent and stable disposition formed independently from the idiosyncratic issues in which they were involved. Such a stable behavioural pattern can be interpreted as a Mokkenscale substantiating an underlying logic among different political practices (Molenaar and Sijtsma 2000: 12). As almost all Loevinger H-values are above .50, the three sets of items considerably approximate the requirements of a Mokkenscale. Nonetheless, for advanced multivariate analyses we have to be careful with the protest politics scale, as its total score is not satisfactorily distributed across all observations. Since few associations applied protest politics, we observe a pile-up at the endpoint of the scale. Therefore, we re-analysed all voice

tactics and tested whether they form a joint scale. As the results in the last column of table 3 show, these eight items can be considered as a valid and reliable joint scale assessing the intensity with which voice strategies were used. That all voice tactics fit into one strong scale suggests that actors tend to combine protest politics with information politics or that a mobilisation model which separates protest politics from information politics is not the dominant mobilisation practice.

Combining influence strategies by diffuse and specific interests

In order to explore the combination of political practices further we carried out two separate analyses. First, we consider whether the intensity with which influence strategies were employed varies significantly among interests associations. Then, we explore whether diffuse and specific interests combine influence strategies in a different way.

INSERT TABLE 4 AND 5 HERE

Table 4 compares the intensity with which access and voice were used. A high score corresponds with an intensive usage. We can briefly report that, contrary to the conventional hypothesis, it turns out that the intensity with which interests associations use different influence strategies cannot be systematically explained by the difference between diffuse and specific interests. Not one category of tactics produced significant differences between the two types of interest associations.

More interesting are the results in table 5. Panel *a* shows the correlations between the different influence strategies. Because of the skewed distribution of protest politics, we consider three, not two, scales for voice: information politics (IP), protest politics (PP) and the joint scale, i.e. information politics plus protest politics (VOICE=IP+PP). The higher the correlation, the

more intensively associations combine different categories in an overall influence strategy; a weak or no correlation indicates that the different categories are indeed quite distinct. In general, there is strong evidence that both specific and diffuse interests combine their efforts in seeking access with extensive information politics and, remarkably, this effort in combining the two strategies is more outspoken among specific (r=.65) than among diffuse interests (r=.51). Furthermore, we find a weaker combination of information politics with protest politics among specific interests (r=.27) than among diffuse interests (r=.46). This observation suggests that among diffuse interests the use of protest, although not extremely important in terms of occurrence, has more potential to become part of an overall influence strategy. This means that, in terms of the models outlined in section two, diffuse interests tend to follow a strategy of resource expansion (model 1), while specific interests combine seeking access with information politics (model 2).

Panel *a* demonstrated that access strategies do not contradict the use of voice. Still, a general measure of seeking access is rather crude and, as outlined above, we should consider different institutional actors playing a different role in attracting societal interests and their political practices. To recap, voice strategies should be less used when seeking access to the EC. Especially diffuse interests should use voice when approaching the EP, but the Council should also, although to a lesser extent, attract some voice. Panel *b* shows that the correlation of seeking access to the EC with voice is indeed substantially lower than the correlation for the Council and the EP. Thus, associations do not increase voice extensively when they seek access to the EC. Regarding the other two institutions, the EP and the Council, the research outcomes are somewhat puzzling. While approaching these institutions actors combine information politics with efforts to seek access. Interestingly, the risky claim of the Council as an institution capable of attracting substantial public pressure can be substantiated. Although we expected that specific interests would expand their mobilisation efforts in response to the

access diffuse interests gain to the EP, we did not anticipate that this would result in a more extensive combination of access strategies *and* voice among especially specific interests.

Gaining access and combining influence strategies

In this section, we further expand the analysis by considering access gained as an additional independent variable and we provide a more stringent statistical test for some of our hypotheses. For assessing the gaining of access, public officials were asked to screen a list of individual associations corresponding to all associations under investigation. The wording of the question was similar to the wording of the question related to the network strategies of associations, but some aspects made the questioning different from the interview schedule described above. To begin with, the questions were not confined to a specific policy event; they referred to what the public officials considered as regular communication networks during the past five years.[7] Therefore, respondents were asked to strike out those actors with whom they had *never, seldom* or *only very rarely* discussed European policies. Interviewers indicated that the remaining actors were to be considered as those with whom one has *regular* contact. Every association in the sample could be assigned with a score corresponding to the number of public actors showing an interest, a score interpreted as the supply of public actors' access to a specific association. This score which measures the access an association gained, corresponds to what network analysts call the *indegree* (Wasserman and Faust 1998: 125-126).

INSERT TABLE 6 HERE

Table 6 compares the access granted to specific and diffuse interests. Although a comparison of the last row supports the proposition that diffuse interests gain less access than specific interests do, an F-test on the means suggests that differences regarding overall access

associations gain should not be overvalued (F=3.77, p=.0556). The heterogeneity within the two groups of specific and diffuse interests is still quite large. Yet, for our purposes it is important to know how the gaining of access differs among institutions and associations. As expected, it is easier for diffuse interests to gain access to the EP than to the EC. Conversely, for specific interests the ability to gain access to the EC, more in particular the DG's, is substantially higher than the access gained to the EP. For diffuse interests the EP is the most important entry point, while the Commission DG's are least important. The situation is, on average, completely reversed for specific interests. In addition, a statistical comparison of the means yields that the differences between specific and diffuse interests are most noticeable regarding their access to the EC (F=5.47, p=.0218) and, especially, the access to the DG's (F=6.23, p=.0146). By contrast, it appears that access to the EP is more equally distributed (F=.25, p=.6159). In this respect, it is relevant to note that access to the cabinets of the Commissioners is less biased (compare row 1 with row 2) than the access to the DG's. This confirms that cabinets as political antennae and less technical expertise-based bodies are, compared to DG's, more receptive to the mobilisation of diffuse interests, an observation pointing to the political counterbalancing role they may fulfil vis-à-vis the experts in the DG's.

Does gaining access affect the use of public strategies? To reiterate briefly, the canonical model supposes that if an actor has gained access, she should not use voice as this obstructs future attempts to gain access. In contrast to this model, we stated that public officials are not *a priori* insensitive towards or invariably biased against the use of public strategies by interest associations. We expect that public officials vary their supply of access and that the use of voice and its combination with seeking access is stimulated by such inclusive dispositions. To be more specific, this should be the case for the EP and, to a lesser extent, the Council. In order to test these hypotheses, we proceed in two steps. Table 7 correlates gaining access with

the use of public strategies separately for diffuse and specific interests. Table 8 tests the hypotheses regarding the combination of voice and seeking access for the access gained and the moderation effect of diffuse versus specific interests.

INSERT TABLE 7 HERE

For specific interests (table 7), gaining access does not correlate positively with the public strategies. The only meaningful correlation confirms that specific interests with access to Commission DGs refrain from protest politics. This finding fits into the view of DGs as expertise-based and less publicly politicised bodies. To some extent, the results about diffuse interests confirm this characterisation of the Commission DGs. Diffuse interests gaining access to the DGs use voice, but their use of voice is less intense and outspoken than voice used if access is gained to the Council or the EP. Still, it is significant that diffuse interests who gain access to the Commission are using some voice, a finding that clearly nuances the canonical model. Contradicting the canonical model is that access gained to the Commission cabinets, the EP and the Council has a strong correlation with the use of voice among diffuse interests.

Multiple-group analysis in LISREL was used for testing whether the type of interest association significantly moderates the combination of voice and access (Baron and Kenny 1986; Holmbeck 1997; Jaccard and Wan 1996).[8] The conceptual model matches a simple regression analysis with two independent variables, gaining and seeking access, and one dependent variable, voice (see panel *a* in table 8). Multiple-group analysis tests whether the size of predictors differs significantly for, or is moderated by, diffuse and specific interests. To phrase it differently, can a similar model or parameter equality be supposed for the two groups, and if not, which parameters should be freed for an improved fit? In other words, if

the relation between seeking access to the EP and voice is not similar for diffuse and specific interests then we may consider freeing this parameter in order to obtain a better fit. Freed parameters point to an interaction effect exemplified by a distinction between diffuse and specific interests. If parameters are to be freed for obtaining a better fit, this suggests that the intensity of combining voice with seeking access differs substantially for the two types of interest associations.

INSERT TABLE 8 HERE

Table 8, panel *b*, reports five separate models. One model includes the overall seeking and gaining of access as predictors and the other four models specify seeking and gaining access to the Council, to the EP and to the EC - cabinets and DG's - as predictors. A close investigation of these models rejects the claim that voice and access are usually not combined. Rather, the evidence suggests the reverse, namely that these influence strategies are systematically combined independently from the distinction between specific or diffuse interests. Furthermore, the idea that voice is an alternative strategy for diffuse interests who are less capable of gaining access receives no support at all. On the contrary, the evidence suggests the opposite, namely that in particular well-embedded diffuse interests, those who gain substantial access, use more extensively voice (third row table 8, panel *b*). With the exception of the Commission DG's, there is no effect from gaining access on voice among specific interests (fourth row table 8, panel *b*). Specific interests gaining access to DG's significantly avoid voice, a finding resembling the observations made above.

Regarding gaining access, the proposition that the supply of access by the EP has a significant effect on voice is confirmed. And although the strong bivariate effect for gaining access to the Council reported above cannot be reproduced in the multivariate analysis, it remains

noteworthy that the Council as a rather insulated arena attracts considerable public political pressure. Also, the hypothesis of differences between cabinets of Commissioners and DG's echoes in the analysis; diffuse interests with access to the cabinets used more voice than those gaining access to DG's (.50 versus .39). This finding, albeit somewhat less strong, is repeated for seeking access. Even if actors are, on average, disposed to combine voice with seeking access, they are less inclined to do so when they approach the EC DG's.

An additional result reinforces the claim that voice is more important than usually assumed. It was expected that if voice and seeking access were combined in a joint strategy, this linkage would be stronger for diffuse than for specific interests. Yet, the analysis does not confirm this proposition. In four out of five models this parameter could be constrained as equal, which suggests that varying effects in the data are caused more by random fluctuations than by corresponding realities. In the case of access to the EP (fourth column), the difference between specific and diffuse interests was even too large to constrain parameters to be equal ($\bullet^2$ for constrained model = 7.44, p=0.02424), which means that specific interests use significantly more voice, not less, than diffuse interests when they seek access to MEP's.

Conclusion

This article presented two understandings of the use of influence strategies by interest associations; one focused on the interests on whose behalf mobilisation takes place and one considered the institutional context wherein political activities are embedded. We distinguished two main influence strategies, seeking of access and voice; voice being further subdivided into information politics and protest politics. The most compelling finding is that voice and access are not only widely used, but also quite intensively combined. The claim that interest associations avoid public activism because this does not fit with the presumed technocratic nature of the European regulatory polity has been clearly rejected. Although the

seeking of access by diffuse interests is slightly less extensive, the overall differences between diffuse and specific interests remain rather small. Furthermore, the evidence does not substantiate the supposed different network strategies towards the EC and the EP by the two association types scrutinised. With respect to the use of voice, we observe only small differences between the two sorts of interests, and the data further suggest that specific interests are much more active in the public sphere than was hypothesised.

The evidence shows that institutional factors have a significant effect on whether and how voice strategies are linked to access strategies. Regarding gaining access, it is observed that diffuse interests gain more access to the EP than to the EC; this situation is, on average, reverse for specific interests. In addition, some notable differences between the Commission cabinets and DG's were observed; the access to the latter is more biased than the access to the former. Also, a multivariate control for the access gained leads to a rejection of the supposed incompatibility of voice and access. Especially the finding that well-embedded – and not peripheral - diffuse interests employ public strategies confirms the robustness of our findings. The hypothesis that gaining access to the EP has a strong positive effect on voice finds support. The notion of considerable differences between cabinets of Commissioners and DG's echoes appears from different analyses. Technocratic features of European policy-making arise when the position of the DG's is investigated; actors are less disposed to combine voice with seeking access to the EC and, in addition, when specific interests gain access to DG's they avoid voice. Interestingly, the Council attracts, in contrast to what is commonly supposed, considerable public pressure.

Our data cannot substantiate whether voice is nowadays more used than previously, nor did we demonstrate whether it is less used at the European level than domestically. Protest politics does happen, but remains limited and, in this respect, our evidence fits into what other

researchers have observed so far (Imig and Tarrow 2001; Reising 1998). Our analysis adds to this that if protest politics emerges, it usually takes place within a broader strategy of information politics and the seeking of access. More importantly, the observed frequencies with which political practices occur do not tell everything about their importance. It might have been that our evidence somewhat overestimated the use of information politics, protest politics or voice. Even then, it cannot be ignored that public strategies are systematically combined with the seeking of access and, perhaps most crucially, that in the case of diffuse interests such strategies are strongly, not weakly or negatively, correlated with the granting of access by public officials.

These findings also have more general political consequences. We showed that even if groups represent different constituencies – diffuse or specific – they adapt their strategies according to the institution on which they put pressure. A corollary is that institutional reforms enabling or constraining gaining access shape the political practices of societal interests. A substantial part of the European political elite believes that increasing openness and participation in EU policy-making processes, granting of more access, will redress the so-called democratic deficit and the presumed distrust in the EU (cf. the EC's White Paper on Governance and the Declaration of Laeken). Although democratising the EU can take several forms and is normatively justified, our framework and the related empirical evidence demonstrates the likelihood that this will lead to more public, politicised and even contentious forms of mobilisation. In this respect, the EC White Paper on Governance claim that 'Participation is not about institutionalizing protest' sounds as a myth. One might also argue that more public political mobilisation stimulates transparency and that it makes the system less biased. On the basis of what has been reported here, we hesitate to make such far-reaching normative statements. In the short run, a growing importance of the public sphere may contribute to more democratic legitimacy, but from a wider perspective it remains unclear if this leads to equally

efficient and effective forms of government. Instead of equalising access opportunities, conflict expansion in the public sphere transforms the bias of mobilisation, not its complete disappearance, in the sense that existing conflict structures are displaced by other conflict structures.

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Notes

[1] Two situations are *a priori* excluded. First, one might postulate that seeking access goes together positively with protest politics. However, it is implausible that this does not coincide with the use of information politics as an intervening strategy. To put it differently, it is unlikely that actors using expertise in seeking access (e.g. lobbying) employ protest politics (e.g. dumping surplus crops in the streets) without some form of information politics (e.g. disseminating policy positions through the mass media). Second, there is the possibility that actors specialize in *either* seeking access *or* information politics *or* protest politics. We think that this possibility without any mutual reinforcement of different practices is rather unlikely. Given the uncertain nature of influence (e.g. shifting alliances, multiple points of access...), actors do not concentrate on only one tactic and they will spread their efforts over different tactics. Research on influence strategies suggests that specialisation by tactic is rare and that actors use a wide range of tactics (for an overview see Baumgartner and Leech, 1998: 153-157).

[2] The literature contains numerous labels such as 'non-producer interests', 'public interest groups', 'social movement organizations' or 'social movements' all referring to similar, but not exactly the same, phenomena. We deliberately avoid the use of 'social movements' or 'social movement organizations'. Although many associations in our sample fit within this category, it was difficult to label all included associations as 'social movements'. For instance, a consumer association such as the *European Consumers' Organisation* is difficult to categorize under this heading, but they clearly belong to what we consider as diffuse interests. In general, our

units of analysis are organizational entities, and organizational entities are somewhat too narrow to be qualified as a 'social movement'. In addition, the conceptual debate has not established a straightforward conclusion whether full-fledged social movements do exist at the European or international level. We also prefer the prefix 'diffuse' instead of 'public' because this captures better the diffuseness or fragmented nature of constituencies. The use of this concept should not be confused with the fact that most of these actors have, in order to increase their overall public visibility, a specialized and topical focus (e.g. saving tropical forests or debt campaigning).

[3] It bears noting that some specific interests are quite active in the European public arena. Think about the protests by agricultural lobbies, skippers and truckers, all specific and concentrated occupational interests. Such cases are less an anomaly than they appear to be. The hypothesis states that, compared to diffuse interests, specific interests use *less* voice and seek *more* access, which is not the same as '*only* seeking access and *not* using voice'. There are indeed reasons to expect that specific interest associations deploy some, although to a lesser extent, public strategies. We are dealing with interest associations, not with their constituents and associations are often created for not keeping things quiet, but to deal with issues of public controversy, precisely because the constituents do not like to become publicly involved in such issues. Often CEOs feel that some issues are too sensitive to deal with on their own and that they are - as a business - quite vulnerable in controversial public debates. For instance, firms who seek limits on environmental or consumer protection, ask their trade association to engage in a dirty public debate and to defend a tough and unpopular position. Specific interest associations regularly experience internal pressures from their members to take a tough position and actions. For example, an official of a major association within the food industry told the author that they were, during one of the latest crises, pressed by some of small member companies to drop foodstuffs before some official buildings in Brussels, but that they faced counter pressure from major multinationals not to do so because this would severely harm the public reputation of their well-known brands. Although it is supposed that diffuse interests employ more voice, it will not surprise us that specific interests also use some public strategies. Information politics rather than protest politics can be an especially relevant tool for them, a situation resembling the second model.

[4] The hypotheses introduced apply for the three legislative bodies *on average*. It is well known that within the EC different Directorates-General adopted a different administrative culture and that this relates to different clienteles. As this paper deals with the three legislative institutions simultaneously, we have chosen not to overcomplicate the argument by extending our focus to the 'turf battles' taking place within the institutions.

[5] Elsewhere it has been demonstrated that the Council infrastructure is the main entry point for domestically mobilized interests (Bouwen, 2002).

[6] Based on Landmark's *European Public Affairs Directory* and *The Directory of EU Information Sources* we constructed a list of about 100 European interest associations. With respect to the large group of associations representing employers, employees, entrepreneurs and the agricultural sector, it was decided to include major peak associations such as UNICE, ETUC, CEEP and COPA. In addition, we identified nine economic sectors: chemical industry, biotechnology, metal, car industry, rubber and plastics, agriculture, food industry, trade and services, and SMEs. For each sector, we selected up to three interest associations. The selection of diffuse interest associations was far less complicated because the amount of such associations is considerably lower. Most of the social movement associations mentioned in the above named sources were included in the sample. Qualitative information collected before the fieldwork resulted in our *a priori* classification of interest associations into diffuse and specific interests. An open-ended question probing into the association's political program and a quantitative measure of its scope of policy interest including information on its members, further validate this *a priori* coding.

[7] Therefore, it is not expected that 'gaining access' and 'seeking access' correlate. 'Gaining access' refers to the actor's ability to gain access while 'seeking access' refers to access strategies in a specific case.

[8] The advantage of multi-group analysis is that in contrast with analysis of variance (ANOVA) or traditional OLS regression, assumptions concerning variance homogeneity do not distort outcomes. Furthermore, controls for one-way effects, which usually interfere with interaction effects and cause problems of multicollinearity, are not needed. For all models error variances were fixed to be equal between groups. Some drawbacks of the data should be reported. Because of the skewed distribution of protest politics, it was decided to analyse the evidence with the joint scale for voice. As several measures are ordinal or dichotomous, the use of polychoric correlations, the covariance matrix and weighted least squares estimates (WLS) would be more appropriate. However, WLS yields only stable outcomes if the sample size is sufficiently large and, therefore, the input for all analyses was the traditional correlation matrix instead of a co-variance matrix.

TABLES AND FIGURES

Overview 1. Interrelation between different political practices

	Seeking access	Voice	
		Information politics	Protest politics
Model 1: Resource expansion	SA —strong→	IP —strong→	PP
Model 2: Combining seeking access with information politics	SA —strong→	IP —weak→	PP
Model 3: Combining information politics with protest politics	SA —weak→	IP —strong→	PP

Index: SA = seeking access, IP = information politics, PP = protest politics

Table 1. Sample of public officials and interest associations

	Sample	Response	
	N	N	Response %
1. European specific interest associations	42	40	95%
2. European diffuse interest associations	40	35	88%
Total: interests associations (sum of 1 and 2)	**82**	**75**	**91%**
3. DGs of the European Commission	27	24	89%
4. *Cabinets* of the European Commission	20	15	75%
5. MEPs in the European Parliament	45	25	56%
6. Advisory bodies (Committee of the Regions/Economic and Social Committee)	2	2	100%
7. Council (Permanent Representations and Council Secretariat)	16	16	100%
Total: public officials (sum of 3 to 7)	**110**	**82**	**75%**
Total: public officials plus interest associations	**192**	**157**	**82%**

Table 2. Seeking of access to public officials (percentages and Mokken Scale Analysis)

	Specific interests (N=109)		Diffuse interests (N=78)	Loevinger's H= .71 Rho= .83
	%		%	H_i
1. The European Commission	65%	> (ns)	56%	.67
2. The European Parliament	63%	> (ns)	56%	.80
3. The Council (member-states representatives)	41%	> (ns)	40%	.63
4. The Economic and Social Committee	42%	> (Chi^2 = 9.650, p= .002)	21%	.70
5. The Committee of the Regions	12%	< (ns)	15%	.78
Was access sought in some way or another?	**68%**	> (Chi^2 = 6.085, p= .014)	**50%**	

Index: N = number of actor-events interactions evaluated during the interview.

Table 3. Use of voice (percentages and Mokken Scale Analysis)

				Separate scales	Joint scale for voice
Panel a. Information politics	Specific interests (N=109)		Diffuse interests (N=78)	Loevinger's H= .59 Rho= .76	Loevinger's H= .57 Rho= .80
	%		%	H_i	H_i
1. Organising press conferences	49%	> (ns)	47%	.51	.57
2. Disseminating views by publishing folders and brochures	49%	> (Chi^2 = 4.879, p= .027)	33%	.60	.60
3. Participating in debates in the press	34%	> (ns)	29%	.63	.62
4. Involving well-known personalities in public campaigning	16%	> (ns)	6%	.69	.50
Was information politics used in some way or another?	**68%**	> (Chi^2 = 6.085, p= .014)	**50%**		
Panel b. Protest politics				Loevinger's H= .55 Rho= .70	
	%		%	H_i	
5. Organising manifestations/demonstrations	9%	< (ns)	11%	.66	.55
6. Staging a street action	4%	< (ns)	8%	.54	.49
7. Organising a petition	5%	< (ns)	6%	.46	.58
8. Disruptive activities	3%	< (ns)	4%	.52	.57
Was protest politics used in some way or another?	**9%**	< (ns)	**17%**		
Overall use of voice in some way or another?	**68%**	> (Chi^2 = 6.085, p= .014)	**50%**		

Index: N = number of actor-events interactions evaluated during the interview.

Table 4. Intensity of seeking access, information politics and protest politics (z-scores and F-tests on differences between means)

	Specific interests (N=109)	Diffuse interests (N=78)	F-test
	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	df = 1
1. Seeking access	.09	-.12	F= 1.99, p= .1602
2. Information politics	.10	-.14	F= .268, p= .1031
3. Protest politics	-.05	.06	F= .053, p= .4672
Joint scale for voice (combination of 2 and 3)	**.06**	**-.08**	**F= .80, p= .3737**

Index: N = number of actor-events interactions evaluated during the interview.

Table 5. Combination of different influence strategies by diffuse and specific interests (Pearson product moment correlations)

	Specific interests (N=109)			Diffuse interests (N=78)		
Panel a. Overall combination	IP	PP	VOICE	IP	PP	VOICE
1. Seeking access (SA)	.65	.26	.64	.51	ns	.48
2. Information politics (IP)	-	.27	.97	-	.46	.97
3. Protest politics (PP)		-	.47		-	.47
4. Joint scale for voice (VOICE=IP+PP)			-			-
Panel b. Seeking access institutions	IP	PP	VOICE	IP	PP	VOICE
1. Seeking access to the European Commission	.34	(ns)	.35	.35	(ns)	.33
2. Seeking access to the European Parliament	.59	(ns)	.59	.42	(ns)	.38
3. Seeking access to the Council	.45	.27	.48	.51	(ns)	.46

Index: Only correlations significant at the $p \leq .05$ level are shown, N = number of actor-events interactions evaluated during the interview.

Table 6. Gaining access of the interest associations sampled (z-scores, F-tests on differences between means)

Gaining access to...	Specific interests (N=42)	Diffuse interests (N=40)	F-test
	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	df = 1
1. The DG's of the Commission (N=24 respondents)	.26	-.27	F= 6.23, p= .0146
2. The *cabinets* of Commissioners (N=15 respondents)	.17	-.18	F= 2.51, p= .1169
Overall access to the European Commission (combination of 1 and 2)	**.25**	**-.26**	**F= 5.47, p= .0218**
3. The European Parliament (MEP's, N=32 respondents)	-.05	.06	F= 0.25, p= .6159
4. The Council infrastructure (PR's and SG, N=16 respondents)	.16	-.17	F= 2.32, p= .1315
Overall access to European public actors (combination of 1, 2, 3 and 4)	**.21**	**-.22**	**F= 3.77, p= .0556**

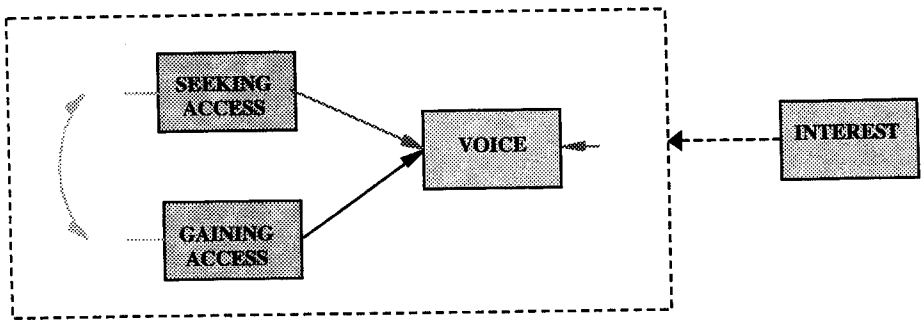
Table 7. Gaining access and the use of voice by diffuse and specific interests (Pearson product moment correlations)

Gaining access to...	Specific interests (N=109)			Diffuse interests (N=78)		
	IP	PP	VOICE	IP	PP	VOICE
1. The DGs of the European Commission	(ns)	-.26	(ns)	.28	.26	.30
2. The *cabinets* of Commissioners	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)	.41	(ns)	.41
Overall access gained to the European Commission	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)	.36	.27	.38
3. The European Parliament	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)	.47	.34	.50
4. The Council infrastructure	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)	.52	.29	.53
Overall access gained to European public actors	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)	.45	.30	.46

Index: Only correlations significant at the $p \leq .05$ level are shown, N = number of actor-events interactions that were evaluated during the interview.

Table 8. Seeking access, gaining access and voice moderated for interest type (standardised path coefficients and model fit)

Panel a. Conceptual model



Panel b. Results

	Overall model	Council-model	EP-model	EC cabinet-model	EC DG-model
Seeking access -> voice					
Diffuse interests	.62[c]	.57[c]	.49	.48[c]	.45[c]
Specific interests	.62[c]	.57[c]	.77	.48[c]	.45[c]
Gaining access -> voice					
Diffuse interests	.43	.36	.55	.50	.39
Specific interests	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)	-.24
Model fit					
$\bullet^2$, p	3.82, p=.144 (df=2)	3.89, p=.143 (df=2)	.025, p=.874 (df=1)	3.99, p=.136 (df=2)	0.64, p=.726 (df=2)

Index: [c] = path coefficients fixed to be equal for diffuse and specific interests, only coefficients significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level are shown.