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How do local government associations influence policy?

Assessing conditions for policy influence by interest groups in Brazil and the Netherlands.

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Rotterdam, November 2009

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Master Programme in International Public Management and Policy

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## Foreword

In recent years my academic life and professional experience have provided me with a strong orientation towards public management. The former was important to understand the theories, orientations and trends of public administration while the latter was crucial for applying the knowledge acquired. However, recently, my attention has been drawn to another important component of this field - the action of organized interest groups within the arena of public administration.

Within the *Confederação Nacional de Municípios* - CNM (National Confederation of Municipalities) I experienced, over almost two years, an amazing negotiating environment and conflicting interaction between them and the Brazilian government when it came to the influence of public policies on behalf of municipalities. Working for CNM made me aware of how powerful the municipalities are when acting together and when they feel they are being harmed by the central government. Immediately, I realized an interesting and still little-explored research field, local government associations as being a sort of an organized interest group that influences policy. Thus, the main question of this study arose: how, and to what extent, do local government associations influence central government policies?

Some scholars (Mahoney, 2007a and 2007b; Victor, 2007; Eising, 2007; and Michalowitz, 2007) argue that in order to influence policy it is necessary to know which factors are relevant to the process of influencing. Taking these factors into account I would like to explore them by testing and comparing them with the actions of two similar local government associations: the *Confederação Nacional de Municípios* (CNM) from Brazil and the *Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten* (VNG) from the Netherlands. The reasons for choosing these associations are: (a) the similarity between them; (b) the high degree of representation (the CNM represents 63% of all Brazilian municipalities and the VNG represents 100% of all Dutch municipalities); and (c) the facility for gathering data.

The main aim of this work is to understand which factors might determine influence of the local government associations studied and to formulate recommendations on the topic.

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## List of abbreviations

AAM                      Association of Municipalities

AGM	Goiana Municipalities Association
AMA	Association of Alagoanos Municipalities
AMAC	Superintendencies Associations of Acre
AME	Association of Municipalities from Ecuador
AMEAP	Municipalities Association of the Amapa State
AMM	Matogrossense Municipalities Association
AMM	Mineira Municipalities Association
AMMAC	Association of Municipalities from Mexico
AMP	Municipalities Association of Parana
AMR	Roraima Municipalities Association
AMUNES	Municipalities Association of the Espirito Santo State
AMUPE	Municipal Association of Pernambuco
ANAMM	National Association of Municipalities from Mozambique
ANMP	National Association of Portuguese Municipalities
APM	Paulista Municipalities Association
APPM	Piauiense Municipalities Association
APRECE	Municipalities and Mayors Association of the Ceara State
APREMERJ	Mayors and Municipalities Association of the Rio de Janeiro State
AROM	Rondoniense Municipalities Association
ASSOMASUL	Municipalities Association of Mato Grosso do Sul
ATM	Tocantinense Municipalities Association
CAF	Committee of Federal Articulation
CAPES	Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions



CGSN	Administrative Committee of the National Simple
CNM	National Confederation of Municipalities
CONSEA	National Council of Food Security
FAM	Federation of Municipalities from Argentina
FAMEM	Municipalities Federation of the Maranhao State
FAMEP	Federation of Municipalities Association of the Para State
FAMUP	Federation of Municipalities Associations of Paraiba
FAMURS	Municipalities Associations Federation of Rio Grande do Sul
FCM	Federation of Canadian Municipalities
FECAM	Catarinense Municipalities Federation
FEMP	Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces
FEMURN	Municipalities Association of Rio Grande do Norte
FLACMA	Latinoamerica Federacion of Cities, Municipalities and Local Government Association
FMM	Municipal Mobilization Front
IBGE	Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
NLC	National League of Cities
SALGA	South Africa Local Government Association
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UPB	Municipalities Union of Bahia
VNG	Association of Netherlands Municipalities

## **Abstract**

In recent years a considerable number of studies have been undertaken concerning the assessment of interest groups and their influence in the EU and USA. However, little can be acquired from the literature regarding this knowledge outside of both of these environments. Therefore, this study aimed to assess conditions for policy influence of local government associations in Brazil and the Netherlands.

This comparative case study carried out an exploratory research, based on interviews, a questionnaire, and document analysis. Specifically, this study looked at factors that according to the literature determine influence and scrutinizes these factors within the cases.

The findings showed that both associations are relatively successful in influencing technical aspects of certain policies. However, when they try to change the core of the policies they seem to be unsuccessful, since the presence of countervailing forces and the number of vested interests seem to be intensified.

(27,453 words)

## 1. Introduction

As the literature has pointed out, scholars have many problems in studying influence both inside and outside of the European Union, because of the difficulty in measuring it. This difficulty stems from the complex process of decision-making, where several actors try to influence policy outcome at the same time in different stages. However, most scholars who have studied this field have presented some important findings. Thus, taking into account the previous findings, this study intends to contribute towards a better understanding of such phenomenon by analyzing the determinants for policy influence of local government associations in Brazil and the Netherlands.

In Brazil the municipalities are mainly represented by the National Confederation of Municipalities<sup>1</sup>, with 63% of the municipalities in Brazil represented, while the Association of Netherlands Municipalities<sup>2</sup> represents 100% of the municipalities in the Netherlands.

To achieve their objectives the associations need to discuss the local interests with the central government, Parliament, and other organizations with the purpose of influencing policy outcome in favour of the municipalities. However, many factors have to be considered to succeed in this task.

According to the literature, the important factors to determine influence, lies in the resources of the association (*financial resources, size of the staff team, membership representation*), its lobbying tactics (direct and indirect), the type of influence used (technical and directional), and the issue characteristics (far reaching policy implications, significant number of vested interests, presence of countervailing forces, and high level of public awareness).

In order to increase the likelihood of gaining influence, interest groups need to employ different tactics and/or types of influence, besides investing personnel and monetary funds into an issue.

Taking into consideration these factors, this study intends to gain a better understanding as to what extent local government associations influence public policies in Brazil and the Netherlands. In other words, what factors might determine success in influencing policies? To

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<sup>1</sup> In Portuguese, *Confederação Nacional de Municípios* (CNM)

<sup>2</sup> In Dutch, *Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten* (VNG)

what degree do the financial resources, the staff size and the membership representation contribute to the association's success? In what circumstances are the direct and indirect lobbying tactics more likely to contribute to the success of interest groups? To what degree do the technical and the directional influence contribute to the success of influencing policy?

By attempting to answer these questions, this work seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the role played by local government associations in Brazil and the Netherlands, besides assessing conditions for policy influence in these countries.

## **2. The research**

### **2.1. Central research question, objective and relevance**

#### **2.1.1. Central research question**

In the policy-making process, different actors negotiate different interests in such a way that many variables have to be considered in order to attain policies (Howlett, 1995; Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993; Kingdom, 1995). In this study, two local government associations, the CNM and the VNG, are asked about their experience with regard to the necessary determinants to maximize policy influence.

Thus, considering their experience and taking into account the knowledge already produced by scholars, the main question of this study is:

*To what extent do interest groups representing the local governments influence public policies in Brazil and the Netherlands?*

#### **2.1.2. Research objective**

As a research objective, this work intends:

*To contribute to a better understanding of the local government lobbying influence by analyzing the determinants for decision-making influence of local government associations in Brazil and the Netherlands.*

#### **2.1.3. Relevance of this work**

In a struggle to answer the questions rapidly presented in the introduction (they will be presented in more detail later) it is important to keep in mind the academic and practical relevance of this work. The former is related to the scientific community contribution by means of new and relevant knowledge which is useful for other scholars to explore its limitations by filling out the gaps left in the work, besides providing recommendations to point out other possible ways for further explorations within the area of research. The latter, and no less important goal, is to collaborate with the understanding of such phenomenon by providing the local government

associations with relevant and organized information of their own practices, indicating what kind of practices might succeed over others, when it comes to influencing policies.

Municipalities are the primary level of government where most citizens come into contact with officialdom. Therefore, municipalities are increasingly acting as the driving force of policy development. However, it has been a crucial development to understand that it is much more effective to act as a group instead of acting alone, and that the local government associations are the most effective way in which to strengthen the governing capacity of the municipalities. In this sense, an important practical goal of this work is to provide these associations with relevant and organized data to better understand their actions with the central government.

It was realized that a comparative case study could fulfil the expectations of this work relatively well, since its purpose is to test relationships between variables (causal relationships) without controlling or manipulating subjects and conditions (Non-experimental design).

It is known that this kind of research design does not allow as much control for the researcher but, on the other hand, it might contribute to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon studied.

The political phenomena to be scrutinized will be derived from an analysis of relevant theories (a fact that strengthens the internal validity) and then followed by different data collection methods, such as interviews, document analysis and questionnaires.

With regard to the external validity, this study attempts to generalize by gathering data from eight more local government associations around the world. Thus, it would be possible to strengthen the findings regarding the cases to be compared (VNG and CNM) and then make generalizations.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

#### 3.1. Introduction

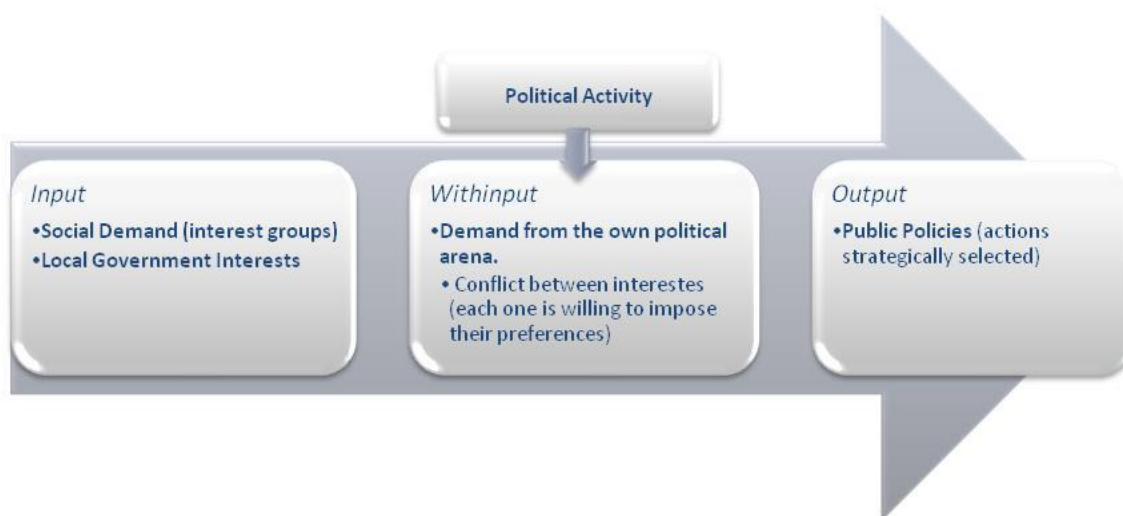
According to the literature, in order to be successful in influencing policy, interest groups have to consider a set of characteristics that might increase the possibility of success. Thus, they need to take into consideration many variables related to the internal and external environment to determine their strategies aimed at maximizing influence.

Therefore, in this section it is intended to present a general description of the process of decision-making and its actors by paying particular attention to the role played by interest groups. The latter is able to evaluate and choose where, when, and which tools most suit its needs to achieve its purposes within the policy-making process. Moreover, some approaches used to measure influence are presented, as well as the main variables of study along with the sub-questions derived from the literature, which will help this study to achieve its purpose.

#### 3.2. Process of decision-making

According to Easton (1970) the policy-making process represented by Figure 1 is comprised of three important stages, *input*, *withinput* and *output*.

Figure 1 - Policy-making process according to Easton (1970)



The *input* is understood as the moment in which the social demand presents its needs to the

political actors<sup>3</sup>; the *withinputs*, also known as “political activity”, consists of political actors, such as the executive and legislative powers. The latter is mostly responsible for deliberating demands originating from within their own political environment as well as those external to it. Finally, the *output* (public policy), attained by means of interaction among a wide range of different political, social and private actors who put many different issues and interests to be discussed on the table (Howlett, 1995; Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993; Kingdon, 1995).

In the first stage (*inputs*) described by Easton, policy-makers begin to define the agenda-setting by prioritizing issues that can be divided in two different types of agenda: the public and formal. According to Cobb *et al* (1976), the former is a list of issues which have achieved a high level of public interest and visibility, while the latter is a list of items formally chosen by policy-makers. Thus, in order to attain the formal agenda, four relevant factors which play an important role are: *problems*<sup>4</sup>, *politics*, and *visible* and *hidden participants* (Kingdon, 1995).

In the first stage (*inputs*) *problems* are identified because they may increase the importance of a subject on the agenda (Kingdon, 1995; and Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993).

Throughout the second stage (*withinputs*) *politics* as well as the *visible* and *hidden participants* are responsible for defining the formal agenda and thus the actions to be carried out by the government. *Politics*, in this stage, is considered a powerful agenda setter because it is filled by politicians, administrators, ideologies and interest groups of various descriptions which press their demands upon government, having an independent dynamic (Kingdon, 1995). The *visible participants* are those who have considerable public attention, such as the high level state actors (the President, Members of Congress, high-level appointees, the media and campaigners) while the *hidden participants* (academic specialists, bureaucrats, and congressional staffers) are those who support them. They do this by defining alternatives, proposals and solutions to problems.

However, according to Kingdon (1995) the *visible participants* affect the agenda while the *hidden ones* affect the alternatives. Thus, the agenda is defined when alternatives for policy

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to mention that the social demand can be represented in many different ways and one of the most expressive ones is by means of interest groups.

<sup>4</sup> While Lindblom & Woodhouse (1993) advocate that the policy agenda is comprised of a set of subjects that can be generated by problems, politics and visible and hidden participants, Subirats (1989) says that since problems are identified, governmental actions might be developed in order to solve those problems.



choices have been narrowed down.

Having the formal agenda at hand, the government can move this list of subjects into a discussion within the Parliament where all debates about the issues continue, and after scrutinizing them, it may perhaps be moved into a legislative enactment or presidential choice (Kingdon, 1995). After this, the implementation phase begins.

In an attempt to better understand the question of influence, this study limits its analysis to the influence wielded by local governmental associations in the several phases of the process of decision-making, trying to perceive where they exert influence, what resources, tactics and type of influence are used, and which external factors are considered before carrying out any action. This sequence of events might provide the right way to a better understanding of the probable extent of the local government associations' influence.

### **3.3. Interest groups in policy-making: the determinants of interest group influence**

Interest groups play an important role throughout the process of decision-making by seeking to influence policy outcomes through the bureaucracy, politicians, governmental officials and the population, warning them about problems, opportunities, and policy options (Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993; Kingdon, 1995).

Lindblom & Woodhouse (1993, p. 75) state that “(...) interest groups are helpful and perhaps necessary for bringing diverse viewpoints, factual information, and other ideas into the policy-making process”. On top of this, they might be important to society because citizens would sometimes prefer to rely on interest groups as another device to challenge government.

However, the question of whether they are successful in influencing this process or not, is another story. Studies try to address this concern, but tend to be overly careful in doing so because of the high complexity in defining the determinants and therefore the degree of influence of interest groups (Mahoney, 2007a and 2007b; Michalowitz, 2007; Dür & De Bièvre, 2007).

Most of the literature available concerning interest group influence stems from the USA and the European Union (EU) (Dür, 2008c). The more developed literature from the USA provided the

latter broad groups of determinants<sup>5</sup> already perceived in the EU cases: 1) issue characteristics, 2) interest group resources, 3) political institutions; and 4) interest group strategies.

The issue characteristics seem to be an important factor to understand when an interest group is more likely to be successful in its purposes. According to some scholars (Dur, 2008c; Mahoney, 2007a and 2007b), interest groups are *less likely to be successful* in their undertaking when the issue has far reaching policy implications. The reason for that is that issues with a big scope entail a significant number of vested interests and this situation might lead to so many different points of view that policy-makers would not be able to follow a single opinion.

In addition to that, a noticeable issue (highly salient) is likely to deliver a similar trend, when it comes to the lack of success of an interest group. It is justified, according to Mahoney (2007a and 2007b), because if this issue has a high level of public awareness then policy-makers will be more likely to follow the public opinion than the interest group opinion.

Another relevant issue characteristic also closely related to the others already mentioned should be also taken into consideration, the presence of countervailing forces. The latter gives rise to an increasing number of opposed visions (highly conflicting environment) that diminish the probability of success in influencing policy.

When it comes to the interest group resources, the literature (Dur, 2008c; Eising, 2008; Mahoney, 2007a and 2007b) points out that financial resources, size of the staff team, membership representation, the tactics employed (direct and indirect), and the type of influence exerted should play a role. In other words, a well funded association might employ more tactics, put more money into an issue and/or even assign more specialists to a case. Thus, with these characteristics it is more likely that interest groups succeed in influencing policy (Mahoney, 2007a; and Mc Carthy & Zald, 1978).

The staff size, according to Mahoney (2007a) might be a strong indicator of the level of financial resources, as well as the membership size that can indicate the level of legitimacy of an interest

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<sup>5</sup> These characteristics provided by Dur (2008c) can be confirmed. When Lindblom & Woodhouse (1993) asked interest group representatives in Washington how their group's time and resources are spent in order to be successful in influencing policy, they cited three important activities: 1) contacting government officials directly to present the group's point of view; 2) testifying at hearings; and 3) presenting research results or technical information.

group. Therefore, a well endowed association with a high degree of legitimacy is more likely to influence policy outcome than another interest group with small representation and scarce financial resources.

In order to succeed in influencing policy, interest groups rely on different lobbying tactics, direct<sup>6</sup> and indirect<sup>7</sup> (Victor, 2007; Marroney, 2007a). According to Victor (2007), interest groups are more likely to spend their efforts by means of direct lobbying rather than indirect lobbying. The reason for this may be explained by the fact of direct lobbying giving the opportunity to deal with some debates face-to-face. This is done by increasing the possibility of influence with the presentation of reliable information that might lead to the free access to political institutions (Eising, 2007). Thus, it can be understood from the literature that is more likely to succeed in influencing policy by means of the direct lobbying rather than the indirect one.

Another interesting point related to the resources of interest groups has to do with the level of conflict between interest groups and policy-makers. Michalowitz (2007) argues that a potential conflict may arise when interest groups exert directional influence. It means that if they try to change the political core of a legislative act the level of conflict might increase, becoming more difficult to influence policy. However, when interest groups exert influence without touching the core content of a legislative act (technical influence), then the level of conflict tends to be lower and it therefore becomes easier to influence. Thus, the likelihood of attaining influence is higher when interest groups exert technical influence.

The political institution characteristics cited by Dür (2008c) should play a role in this influence process, affecting the degree of interest group influence. According to Mahoney (2007a) the degree of democratic accountability of a political system might have a significant impact in the level of influence attained. This author points out that the more accountable the political system, the higher the likelihood of the political institutions taking into consideration the organized

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<sup>6</sup> Presenting research or technical information, contacting government officials to present viewpoint, helping to draft legislation, speaking to congressional leaders, lobbying members of the committees to which the bill was referred, making financial contributions to candidates, and supporting candidates with work or personnel.

<sup>7</sup> Engaging in protests or demonstrations, engaging in grassroots lobbying, running advertisements, speaking with the press, setting up congresses, mobilizing public awareness, publicizing a candidate's voting record, and making public endorsements of candidates likely to favour your position.

group’s opinion. The less accountable the political systems, the lower the likelihood of the political institutions taking into account the voice of society.

In addition to that, before trying any attempt at influence, all the stages of the policy-making process (external environment) and also the resources available to interest groups to wield influence have to be considered strategically. Victor (2007) believes that interest group’s strategy is quite relevant in order to be successful and affirms that “groups spend their resources strategically” (2007, p. 842), therefore, the likelihood of influencing policies is higher when interest group’s resources are spent strategically.

As a result of the theories presented so far, this study intends to analyze the role played by some of these factors within the local government association’s reality, trying to understand which of them contribute to the success, or not, of the local government associations and in which stage of the process of decision-making they may play this important role. Thus, the variables that this study defines as crucial are defined as seen in Table 1 directly below.

Table 1 - Variables of Research

Dependent variable	Independent variables
Influence policy	<b>Internal</b>
	Interest group's resources - financial resources; - staff size; - membership representation; - tactics - direct lobbying - indirect lobbying - type of influence - directional - technical
	<b>External</b>
	Issue characteristics - far reaching policy implications; - a large number of vested interests; - high level of public awareness; and - the presence of countervailing forces

The variables of Table 1 and dynamics observed in the literature are very important to this study because they challenge it by stimulating the exploration of some particular situations experienced

by the local government associations which can show how, why and when these associations exert influence by carrying out a combination of tactics and/or type of influence.

After understanding the theoretical dynamics and presenting the most important variables of this study it is important to present the sub-questions of this study.

### **3.3.1. Sub-questions**

Keeping all the dynamics and main variables presented in the previous sub-section in mind it is time to present some sub-questions that will guide this study in answering the main research question: a) To what degree do the financial resources, the staff size and the membership representation contribute to the association's success? b) In what circumstances are the direct and indirect lobbying more likely to contribute to the success of interest groups? c) To what degree do the technical and the directional influence contribute to the success in influencing policy?

By trying to answer these sub-questions it is expected to gain more knowledge of the way in which local government associations in Brazil and the Netherlands act. This will then lead to the recognition of the factors that contribute to the success of these associations.

We must now establish how influence can be measured.

### **3.4. Measuring influence: is it complicated?**

Measuring interest group influence is quite difficult, since it has only been addressed by a few studies (March, 1955; Mahoney, 2007a; Michalowitz, 2007; Dür & De Bièvre, 2007). These difficulties, intrinsic to these types of measuring, make scholars pay enormous attention to the methodology of influence measurement. The concern over measuring influence started to be discussed seriously about 50 years ago by March (1955). The author stated the importance of defining, first of all, the term "influence" and then the way of measuring it.

According to March (1955), the "operational definitions of influence for research purposes tend to be markedly divergent and their relationship to the general concept at best vague" (1955, p. 432). Therefore, in this study "influence" is considered a behavioural change in Y by means of a behavioural action by X (Dahl referred to in Schendelen, 2002).

Thus, now that the term has been defined, the real challenge is to find the most appropriate methodology to measure influence.

### **3.4.1. Difficulties of measuring influence**

According to Andreas Dür (2008a), measuring influence is very challenging because it might involve at least three problems. The first would be the diversity of channels of influence used by interest groups. Examples of this are that interest groups can engage in *direct* and *indirect lobbying* (Victor, 2007; Hojnacki & Dimball, 1999; Hansen, 1991), aiming at directly influencing bureaucracy, political parties, public officials and/or congressmen or even by means of public opinion. Interest groups can also choose to influence policy only in technical aspects or directionally. When it comes to the latter, interest groups try to influence policy by changing the political core of public policy, creating much more conflict with policy-makers. In the former aspect, the level of conflict with policy-makers is supposed to be lower (Michalowitz, 2007).

The second difficulty is the occurrence of counteractive lobbying, or rather, “[e]ven if an interest group does not manage to move an outcome into a preferred direction, this does not necessarily mean that the group lacked influence.” (Dür, 2008a, p. 561).

Thirdly, interest groups can influence several stages of the policy-making process such as the agenda setting by means of influencing decision-makers, through influencing final decisions taken by them, or even when decisions are being implemented (Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993; Dür, 2008a).

### **3.4.2. How to measure influence? An overview of the literature**

This is the most challenging part of this section because according to the literature there are a few complicated ways of measuring influence<sup>8</sup>. In this sub-section the numerous ways in which to address the main strengths and weaknesses of each methodological approach will be discussed.

*“Attributed influence” approach*

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<sup>8</sup> A major part of the literature used in this study is related to studies on the interest groups influence within the European Union.

James G. March (1955) contributed with one of the first attempts of defining a way of measuring influence with “An introduction to the theory and measurement of influence”. In this study March (1955) tried to define a consistent concept of influence.

“Attributed influence” consists of asking the members of a group studied to provide a self-evaluation of its influence or “a peer assessment of the influence of other groups” (Dür, 2008a, p. 565).

This approach is considered to be simple; however there may be difficulties in designing a good questionnaire whilst guaranteeing a high degree of responses. One positive however, is that this method might be able to gather all the aspects of influence (Dür, 2008a).

On the other hand, what can be considered as a disadvantage is the possibility of inaccurate estimation of the self-evaluations provided by the respondents, (March, 1955) furthermore the assessment might be shaped by specific prominent cases (Dür, 2008a).

#### *Process-tracing approach*

This approach was undertaken by many scholars in the EU (Dür, 2008a; Dür & De Bièvre, 2007; Cowles, 1995; Warleigh, 2000; and Michalowitz, 2007). According to Dür (2008a), the process-tracing approach allows “scholars to scrutinize group preferences, their influence attempts, their access to decision-makers, decision-makers’ responses to the influence attempts, the degree to which groups’ preferences are reflected in outcomes and groups’ statements of (dis)satisfaction with the outcome” (p. 562).

This approach is interesting for researchers who intend to complete a small-N study that gives the opportunity of acquiring in-depth knowledge about the factors that influence policy. The data gathered by primary and secondary sources can be complemented by data gathered through the use of semi-structured interviews.

Regarding the weaknesses, Dür (2008a) highlights that 1) it might be possible that the underestimation of influence occurs because of the difficulties in gathering enough empirical data to complement the interview gaps, 2) the research would tend to rely heavily on interviews; 3) the level of influence is difficult to achieve because most of the time it is understood that

influence means the “complete achievement” of the interest groups’ purpose in order to be considered influential and what is not; and 4) there are difficulties in generalizing the findings.

#### *The degree of preference attainment approach*

This approach consists of measuring the policy outcome by calculating the distance between the desired point of influence and the interest group’s real achievement (Dur, 2008b; Mahoney, 2007; Schneider & Baltz, 2005).

One of the strongest advantages of this approach is related to the possibility of evaluating large-N cases and also detecting influence in various channels. However, as a disadvantage the large-N cases can be problematic when it comes to explaining the difference between preferences and outcomes, as well as in which channel influence was exerted. The last important disadvantage closely linked to the study of large-N cases is seen in the difficulty in identifying, controlling and measuring the importance of issues in large-N case studies (Dür, 2008a).

#### *Using more than one approach*

Besides the presentation of the aforementioned approaches, as well as the presentation of some advantages and disadvantages, Andreas Dür (2008a) advocates that in order to measure influence it would be better to use more than one approach, aiming at balancing the measurement of influence by the annulment of the disadvantages of one approach with the advantages of another one. Building on this concept, he mentioned that the *methodological triangulation* was successfully used by numerous scholars (Coen, 1997; Dür & De Bièvre, 2007; Arts & Verschuren, 1999; and Schneider and Baltz, 2005).

When it comes to the most suitable approach to be applied in this study, it is recognized that it deals with a comparative case study, so the “degree of preference attainment” approach would not suit this case.

Therefore, considering the whole debate along the advantages and disadvantages of each approach, it seems to be that the best approach is to make use of the methodological triangulation between the attributed-influence and the process-tracing because together the approaches are capable of gathering as much detailed information as possible related to the interest groups’ actions and external characteristics. On top of this, both fit the limitations of this research by



relying on a small-N studies, questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews, moreover there is the possibility of annulment of the disadvantages by means of the advantages of each one (see Table 2).

Table 2 - Methods of Measuring Influence: advantages and disadvantages

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Single methods		
Process-tracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small-N studies: possibility of good knowledge on factors leading to influence</li> <li>• Rely on semi-structured interviews: possibility of complementing missing data analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering very precise empirical data in order to check the evidences provided by interviews;</li> <li>• Defining what “influence” means: sometimes interest groups do not need to be completely dominant to be very influential;</li> <li>• Difficulty in generalizing findings for being based on small-N studies.</li> </ul>
Attributed-influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplicity: designing questionnaire, establishing the population, and ensuring a relative high response rate;</li> <li>• It is likely to cover all channels of influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-estimation can be biased towards an over or underestimation of influence;</li> <li>• Expert observer opinion might be unconsciously based on specific prominent cases or on academic studies;</li> <li>• Measuring of influence perceptions rather than actual influence.</li> </ul>
The degree of preference attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detecting influence even if nothing visible happens;</li> <li>• Large-N studies, allowing generalizations of the findings when cases selected appropriately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determination of preferences: it has to be established empirically for each issue;</li> <li>• Difficulty in controlling alternative factors which explain a coincidence between preferences and outcomes;</li> <li>• When considering different channels of influence it is very difficult to determine which channels influence is exerted;</li> <li>• Likelihood of overestimation of interest group influence.</li> </ul>
Combined methods		
Methodological triangulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility of combining two or more methods;</li> <li>• Possibility of solving problems that one method alone would not.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disadvantages are compounded instead of solved;</li> <li>• Possibility of competing results. How to reconcile them?</li> </ul>

*Source:* Dur, 2008a and 2008b; Mahoney, 2007; Schneider & Baltz, 2005; March, 1955; Dür & De Bièvre, 2007; Cowles, 1995; Warleigh, 2000; and Michalowitz, 2007

### 3.5. Definition of key concepts

This study has drawn on some key concepts as defined below:

#### *a. Municipality*

It is an administrative entity comprised of a defined territory and population, which is typically governed by a mayor and a city council or municipal council.

In Brazil, the states (*estados*) are divided into municipalities (*municípios*) while in the Netherlands municipalities (*gemeente*) are part of a province (*provincie*).

#### *b. Local Government Association*

This is usually an association which has municipalities as affiliate bodies. The purpose of this kind of association is to strengthen the governing capacity of the municipalities by discussing the local government interests with the central government, Parliament, and other organizations. Most of the local government associations aim at representing the municipalities politically, as well as providing technical assistance to civil servants through capacity building programmes.

#### *c. Interest group (also known as lobby group and pressure group)*

This is an organization whose aim is to influence the policy-making process at any stage in order to attain the desired policy outcome.

#### *d. Characteristic of the interest group*

As for the characteristics of the interest groups, or rather, the characteristics of the local government associations, some authors (Michalowitz, 2007; Mahoney, 2007a, 2007b; Vitor, 2007; and Eising, 2007) advocate that the level of financial resource, membership size, type of advocating and the generation of policy information are the most important characteristics of an interest group in order to be successful in its task of influencing policies.

#### *e. Influence*

It might be considered a behavioural change in Y by means of an X's behavioural action. However, X can also influence Y without any behavioural action (Dahl in Schendelen, 2002).

*f. Lobbying*

According to Schendelen (1993), lobbying is “(...) the informal exchange of information with public authorities (...) trying informally to influence public authorities”.

*g. Direct lobbying tactic*

According to Victor (2007) and Hojnacki & Dimball (1999) direct lobbying tactic consists of more specialized lobbying techniques, such as: presenting research or technical information; contacting government officials to present a viewpoint; helping to draft legislation; speaking with congressional leaders; lobbying members of the committees to which the bill was referred; making financial contributions to candidates; and contributing work or personnel to candidates.

*h. Indirect lobbying tactics*

Still according to Victor (2007) and Hojnacki & Dimball (1999) indirect lobbying tactics are techniques that can be listed as follows: engagement in protests or demonstrations; engagement in grassroots lobbying; running advertisements; speaking with the press; organizing congresses; mobilizing public awareness; publicizing a candidate’s voting record; and making public endorsements of candidates likely in favour of their position.

*i. Institutional structure of the political system*

Mahoney (2007a; 2007b) advocates that the degree of democratic accountability of a political system will have an impact on the level of lobbying success. In accordance with the author, policymakers that are accountable to the public will be more responsive to civil society organisations because they depend on civil society in order to be re-elected, thus it is more likely to consider the population opinion. The opposite could also be true. On the other hand political systems which are not electorally accountable may be less responsive to the pressure of society because policy-makers will tend to keep their position anyway. Thus, interest groups will probably not be successful, since policy-makers have already had their position shaped.

*j. Directional influence*

This occurs when interest groups try to influence policy by changing the political core of the public policy. This process often creates much more conflict with policy-makers.

*k. Technical influence*

This pertains to interest groups ability to influence policy by changing only technical points in the public policy.

## **4. Municipalities and the local government associations: an overview**

### **4.1. Introduction**

In the previous section, the debate around the influence exerted by interest groups in the policy-making process, the way of measuring influence, the research purposes and research questions of this study were presented and discussed. Now, this section will cover the importance of municipalities to the population and public administration in both Brazil and the Netherlands, focusing on the problems faced by municipalities and highlighting the creation of the local government associations as a tool to overcome those problems.

### **4.2. The importance of municipalities**

As in many countries, municipalities in Brazil and the Netherlands are the primary level of government where most citizens come into contact with officialdom. For being the most visible level of government and for having a close relationship with the citizens, the more effective the municipal government operates the more effective the government as a whole can function, contributing significantly to the good performance and image of public administration. Thus, the municipality has increasingly become the driving force of policy development.

In order to provide suitable services and policies to the citizens, the municipalities need to also focus their efforts on their financial capacity and this is, most of the time, a significant problem since they have a singular and crucial dilemma: growing responsibilities without the corresponding transfer of financial resources. As in Brazil, the municipalities in the Netherlands have suffered at the hands of low budgets when required to carry out their responsibilities (CNM, 2008; and Association of Netherlands Municipalities, 2008).

#### **4.2.1. The municipalities in Brazil**

Brazil is a *Presidential Federal Republic* and has a population of about 190 million inhabitants<sup>9</sup> spread over the 5,562 municipalities and 26 Brazilian States, including the Federal District. Roughly 90% of them are small municipalities. See Table 3.

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<sup>9</sup> Data retrieved from [www.ibge.gov.br](http://www.ibge.gov.br).

Table 3 - Brazilian Municipalities by Size

Size of municipality	Number of inhabitants	Number of municipalities	% of municipalities
Small	Up to 50,000	5,037	91%
Medium	Between 50,001 and 350,000	475	8%
Large	Above 350,001	50	1%
Total		5,562	100%

*Source:* Confederação Nacional de Municípios (2008).

Since 1988, with the promulgation of the Brazilian Federal Constitution, municipal governments have been playing an important role in the services offered to the whole population. This was the result of the municipal autonomy, granted by the new Constitution, in which both the Central (the Union) and State Governments transferred most political and administrative responsibilities to the municipal government. However, this was done without the corresponding power over financial resources

In fact, the Federal Constitution of 1988 financially strengthened the municipalities by means of constitutional transfers (from the Union and States to Municipalities) in order to minimize the concentration of the National Tax Burden from the central level. However, the central government still has most of the financial control – 70%, while the States have 25.5% and the Municipalities have only 4.3%, according to Arretche (2004).

Local government's autonomy for taking decisions stems, to a certain extent, from the autonomy over the financial resources based on the increasing demand of the population. Thus, in accordance with Arretche (2005), local governments are taken hostage by the Central Government which has the control of such fundamental resources.

Taking into account the descriptive scenario mentioned directly above, it becomes clear that serious debates are needed regarding the strengthening of the Federative Pact, which requires a clear definition of attributions for each federate entity alongside the necessary allocation of resources to those entities that have the responsibility of providing suitable policies to the population.

According to the CNM (2008), the basic principles to be strengthened in order to improve the Federative Pact are the following:

- “Constitutional sharing of jurisdictions between the Union, State-members, Federal District and Municipality;
- The need of each federated entity to have a level of tax jurisdiction which will assure its self-income [the municipalities own revenue represents only 11.7% of the national revenue];
- Power of auto-organization of the State members, Federal District and Municipalities, giving them constitutional autonomy;
- Exceptional and Categorical Constitutional Possibility of Federal Intervention, in order to maintain the federation balance;
- Participation of States in the Federal Legislative Power, allowing the interference of their will in the federal legislation;
- The possibility of creating a new State or modifying the territory of an existing State, depending on the population’s acquiescence from the affected State; and
- The existence of a body in the judiciary power for the interpretation and protection of the Federal Constitution”.

#### **4.2.2. The National Confederation of Municipalities (CNM)**

The CNM is a local government association created in February 1980, and since then it has been working with the purpose of strengthening local governments. As time went by, it became a strong support to state and micro-regional organizations from municipalities which, with the representation of all States in its group, form the CNM.

In 2009, according to the CNM, the number of affiliates peaked at 3,500 municipalities, giving the association the legitimacy to speak on behalf of all Brazilian municipalities. This condition made CNM struggle for the strengthening of municipal autonomy by means of political and technical solutions.

The most important aspect of the association is focused on: the political action, representing its members in public and private bodies; following and intervening in the legislative; executive and judiciary actions in order to guarantee the local government interests; discussing public policy with the central government by participating in several Councils and Committees like the



Committee of Federal Articulation (CAF - Secretariat of Institutional Relations of the Presidency of the Republic); Administrative Committee of the National Simple (CGSN – Ministry of Finance); National Council of Food Security (CONSEA – Ministry of Social Development and Combat Against Hunger); National Council of Sustainable Rural Development (CONDRAF - Ministry of Agrarian Development); among others (Confederação Nacional de Municípios, 2008).

Besides these activities, the CNM also carries out ‘The March’ - an annual Congress where more than 4,000 mayors assemble. This event has taken place in Brasilia since 1998. Furthermore, it is a member of international associations such as the United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) and the Latin-American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Local Government Association (FLACMA).

Finally, the CNM is comprised of a i) Board of Directors, a ii) Fiscal Council, a iii) Regional Representation Council, and iv) several small organizations (Confederação Nacional de Municípios, 2008):

a) Board of Directors

“The board of directors is renewed every three years. It is elected by the Mayors and the Regional Representation Council and its members consist of, the Board of Directors from the Municipalities State Entities, in addition to Mayors, and four Vice-Presidents, two Secretary-Directors and two Finance-Directors” (Confederação Nacional de Municípios, pp. 9-10, 2008).

b) Fiscal Council

“The Fiscal Council consists of two effective members and three substitutes.”

c) Regional Representation Council

“The Regional Representation Council consists of two representatives from each of the five regions of the country.”

d) The CNM is comprised of the following organizations:

Superintendencies Associations of Acre – AMAC; Association of Alagoanos Municipalities – AMA; Municipalities Association of the Amapa State – AMEAP; Association of Municipalities – AAM; Municipalities Union of Bahia – UPB;

Municipalities and Mayors Association of the Ceara State – APRECE; Municipalities Association of the Espirito Santo State – AMUNES; Goiana Municipalities Association – AGM; Municipal Mobilization Front – FMM; Municipalities Federation of the Maranhao State – FAMEM; Matogrossense Municipalities Association – AMM; Municipalities Association of Mato Grosso do Sul – ASSOMASUL; Mineira Municipalities Association – AMM; Federation of Municipalities Association of the Para State – FAMEP; Federation of Municipalities Associations of Paraiba – FAMUP; Municipalities Association of Parana – AMP; Municipal Association of Pernambuco – AMUPE; Piauiense Municipalities Association – APPM; Mayors and Municipalities Association of the Rio de Janeiro State – APREMERJ; Municipalities Association of Rio Grande do Norte – FEMURN; Municipalities Associations Federation of Rio Grande do Sul – FAMURS; Rondoniense Municipalities Association – AROM; Roraima Municipalities Association – AMR; Catarinense Municipalities Federation – FECAM; Paulista Municipalities Association – APM; Tocantinense Municipalities Association – ATM.

#### 4.2.3. The municipalities in the Netherlands

Basically, the Netherlands is a relatively small and densely populated country with about 16.5 million inhabitants spread over 441 municipalities and 12 provinces (Association of Netherlands Municipalities, 2008). According to data gathered these municipalities are predominantly small (see Table 4) and governed by a *Parliamentary Democracy and Constitutional Monarchy* which means that the monarch has no direct political power as Head of State. Thus, ministers manage their respective ministry, being accountable to the Parliament.

Table 4 - Dutch Municipalities by Size\*

Size of municipality	Number of inhabitants	Number of municipalities	% of municipalities
Small	Up to 25.000	260	59%
Medium	Between 25.001 and 300.000	160	36%
Large	Above 300.001	21	5%
Total		441	100%

**Source:** Association of Netherlands Municipalities (2008).

\* The numbers were deduced from the data provided in the interview.

It is important to highlight that the municipalities have had an increasingly strong position in the creation and implementation of policy in this decentralized unitary state. Similar to what occurs

in Brazil, the country is based on three levels of government (central, provincial, and municipal) and on the separation of powers wherein the government develops policy, the parliament verifies and the judiciary, as an independent entity, verifies and judges both government and parliament.

Another point, which is also very similar to Brazil, is the fact that the central government has control over the national tax revenue, being totally responsible for about 85% (roughly 40% Earmarked Fund plus 45% General Grant) of the municipal revenue (Derksen & Linze, 2004). As can be seen, apart from the central government's transfer, the municipalities have a very limited financial resource (about 15%) from their income (Association of Netherlands Municipalities, 2008).

As well as in Brazil, the municipalities are financially dependent on the central government, which creates the necessary conditions for the VNG to act.

#### **4.2.4. The Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)**

The VNG is a local government association which was created in 1912, sixty-eight years earlier than the Brazilian association. Its purpose is to strengthen local governments in order to guarantee quality in the services provided to the population. Thus, it is necessary to have financial resources available to deliver good services to the citizens.

As already seen, the Dutch municipalities are financially dependent on the central government. This leaves them in need of a strong institution to represent them at the national level. Thus, the VNG is the most important local representative with a hundred per cent of the municipalities in its affiliated basis.

Moreover, in the Netherlands there is no legislation concerning local governments which can be passed without the municipality contribution through the VNG. This procedure is foreseen in the Code of Inter-administrative Relations signed on November 9<sup>th</sup> 2004 by “[r]epresentatives from the three administrative layers (...) the Cabinet, on behalf of the State, the Association of Provincial Authorities (IPO) on behalf of the provinces and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) on behalf of the municipalities” (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 2005, p. 6). The primary goal has been for administrators and officials from all

administrative layers to contribute to optimal relations between government and its citizens. Administrators and officials support government processes that enable citizens to take care of themselves when necessary. This Code consists of three core elements: 1) problem-oriented working; 2) a clear division of responsibilities and tasks; and 3) administrative freedom for decentralised governments.

The VNG does not only promote the municipal interests, it also offers advice on all kinds of topics. It also organises symposiums, study conferences, workshops and numerous other activities, to inform members and offer a platform for exchanging knowledge and experience.

Similar to the CNM, the VNG is an active member of many important institutions as the European representative organisation of local governments, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the world organisation of local governments, the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) (Association of Netherlands Municipalities, 2008).

### 4.3. Conclusion

As could be seen throughout this section, Brazil and the Netherlands are very different countries when it comes to size, population, density, area, and type of government. According to Table 5 below, it is clear the huge proportions of Brazil in comparison to the Netherlands, with 11.5 times the number of the Dutch population, 205 times the land area size and with 5,121 more municipalities. However, despite the fact that it is larger than the Netherlands, Brazil is sparsely populated, while the Netherlands is very densely populated.

Table 5 - Demographic Characteristics of the Countries

Countries	# of Municipalities	# of Inhabitants	Density (Km <sup>2</sup> )	Total area (Km <sup>2</sup> )
Brazil	5,562	190,241,714	22	8,514,877
Netherlands	441	16,500,156	396	41,526

*Sources:* [www.ibge.gov.br](http://www.ibge.gov.br); Association of Netherlands Municipalities (2008).

When it comes to the political characteristics it is noticeable in Table 6 that both countries still carry fundamental differences related to the type of government. While Brazil has adopted the Presidential Federal Republic, the Netherlands has adopted the Parliament Democracy and Constitutional Monarchy. The latter has a monarch which represents the Head of State and with

a constitution alongside a decentralized democratic and unitary entity whereby the central, provincial and municipal governments (three levels of government) cooperate to organize society. Each of the three levels of government has its own responsibilities, with the central government provides unity through legislation and supervision. The former is also a decentralized democratic entity with the same three levels of government (Central government, State government and Municipal government) followed by their own responsibilities. This decentralized entity has as Head of State a President elected by universal suffrage.

Table 6 - Political Characteristics of the Countries

Countries	Type of Government	Levels of Government	Separation of Powers
Brazil	Presidential Federal Republic	3 levels*	Trias politica
Netherlands	Parliament Democracy and Constitutional Monarchy	3 levels*	Trias politica

**Sources:** Association of Netherlands Municipalities (2008) and Confederação Nacional de Municípios (2008)

\* Central Government; State Government; and Municipal Government

It is important to mention here that in spite of the different forms of government the functioning of both forms of government are very similar, facing most of the same problems of coordination among the three levels of governments. This problem, as already discussed at the beginning of this section, is related to the degree of autonomy of the local governments when it comes to the growing transfer of responsibilities without the corresponding transfer of financial resources.

Thus, “different structures of government” with similar behaviour allowed the formation of two similar associations concerned with local government issues without knowing anything about each other. Such associations developed similar functions, with similar aims and results, becoming the most successful interest groups (related to the local government interests) in their own countries.

Setting aside the differences between countries and considering the constraints of time and data collection, this study seeks to analyze the performance (behaviour) of these two interest groups, the CNM and VNG, in order to try to understand how and to what extent both associations might influence policies

## **5. Research design and methods**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This section addresses the way in which the crucial concepts of the theoretical model, presented in section 2, will be treated in the local government associations' reality. Furthermore, it will also present the methodology used in this study in order to complete the analysis of the cases studied. The exploratory characteristics are presented, based on four different techniques of collecting data and the development of each of them: bibliographical research, document research, questionnaires, and interviews

### **5.2. Crucial concepts of this study**

In the last section the relevant theories and variables which probably play an important role in this study were presented.

First of all, it was possible to see that the process of decision-making is comprised of three important stages (input, withinput and output) in which interest groups can act according to their own characteristics and the characteristics of the issue at hand.

Secondly, the literature also covered the determinants of interest groups influence. Or rather, according to some scholars specialized in the study of interest group's behaviour, factors such as issue characteristics (far reaching policy implications, large number of vested interests, high level of public awareness, and presence of countervailing forces), interest group's resources (financial resources, staff size, and membership representation), as well as tactics employed (direct and indirect lobbying) and type of influence exerted (directional and technical), all of them are very likely to play a relevant role in influencing policy outcome.

Thirdly and not less important, the theories related to the measurement of interest group's influence were also presented. In accordance with the theories analyzed, there are some important ways of measuring influence (attributed influence, process-tracing, degree of preference attained, and the methodological triangulation); this study intends to use the methodological triangulation by combining the attributed influence and process-tracing approaches.

Finally, it is time to deal with the operationalization of these concepts.

### 5.3. Operationalization

In order to show how it will be possible to describe the variables and the measurement of influence of local government associations in Brazil and the Netherlands, it is interesting to follow Table 7 on page 43. In this table, the methodology to be applied to the case study besides the aim of each one of the procedures and the main sources of data can be identified.

Therefore, when it comes to the data regarding the main variables of study connected to the lobbying activity of interest groups, the questionnaire and interviews would play a role in gathering data related to the successful, partially successful, and non-successful cases. These cases will be responsible for providing details about the factors that may or may not increase the likelihood of the local government associations' influence-gaining. Moreover, the aforementioned methods might also contribute to a better understanding about where, in the process of decision-making, local government associations exert influence.

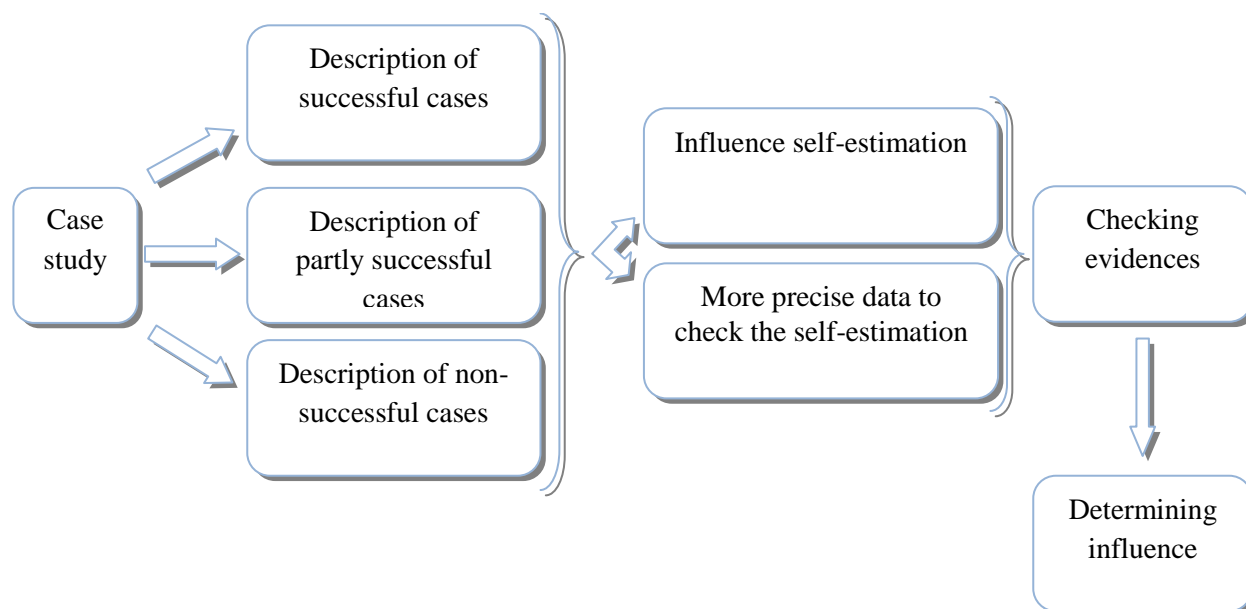
Regarding the degree of influence attained by local government associations, this will be measured by taking into consideration the methodological triangulation approach that is, in this case, the combination of the process-tracing and attributed-influence approaches.

This methodological triangulation increases the possibility of gathering more precise data about all channels of influence by means of scrutinizing the description of the cases provided by the interviewees. Thus, it might be possible to build a good knowledge of the factors which led to influence or not and in which phases of the process of decision-making the attempt of influence was exerted. In addition to that, this approach might allow comparing what interest groups tried to achieve and what they got, allowing for degrees of success.

This very precise data may be used to check the likelihood of an under or overestimation of the interest group's influence provided by the self-evaluation of the interviewees based on an ordinal scale of: *very low*, *low*, *medium*, *high*, and *very high* success.

Following these steps, translated in the Figure 2 directly below, this study intends to provide a more realistic picture of the influence exerted by the local government associations analyzed in this study.

Figure 2 - Strategy to determine a more realistic degree of influence of the Local Government Associations



## 5.4. Research methods

### 5.4.1. The method and its peculiarities

In order to obtain new knowledge about the study of the determinants of interest groups influence, it was decided to scrutinize two specific interest groups, the CNM and VNG. The former represents the Brazilian local governments while the latter the Dutch municipalities. In fact, a study with more than two cases would be greatly welcomed; however, it would not be feasible to undertake a piece of research like that with such a constraint of time and financial resources. Hence, it was decided to scrutinize only these two interest groups considering their convenience, relevance and purpose (see Table 7). Nonetheless, an e-mail questionnaire was sent to eight<sup>10</sup> more local government associations in an attempt to strengthen the external validity, aiming at generalizing the findings of the two main cases to be scrutinized by this study<sup>11</sup>.

Thus, taking into account the large number of types of research and their peculiarities, in this section the research methodology is organized by using two basic criteria provided by Vergara

<sup>10</sup> Associação Nacional dos Municípios de Moçambique (ANAMM); Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) – Canada; South Africa Local Government Association (SALGA) – South Africa; Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias (FEMP)– Spain; Federación Argentina de Municipios (FAM) – Argentina; Asociación de Municipios de Mexico (AMMAC) – México; Asociación de Municipalidades Ecuatorianas (AME) – Ecuador; and Associação Nacional de Municípios Portugueses (ANMP) – Portugal.

<sup>11</sup> As of, 01 July 2009, only the AMMAC from Mexico responded to the questionnaire.



(2005): regarding the means and regarding the end. When it comes to the latter, as can be seen in Table 7 this work is based on a comparative case study which carries exploratory characteristics. This means that in this study there is a process of matching what the literature states with what actually happens within the cases. According to the literature, little is known about the influence of interest groups in the policy-making process; therefore, this study is intended to contribute to a better understanding of this phenomenon.

As for the means, Table 7 quickly allows the reader to follow the research techniques used by this study in order to be effective in achieving its purpose. Thus, it is possible to see four main techniques carried out: i) bibliographical research; ii) documental research; iii) interviews; and iv) questionnaires.

- i) The *bibliographical research* was carried out with the purpose of obtaining the most relevant discussion on the topic studied (interest group influence and policy-making process) by taking into consideration books, theses, journals, and dissertations.
- ii) The *documental research* was carried out similarly to the bibliographical one. The only difference is regarding the nature of the source. The latter is based on subjects already treated by several scholars, while the former is still in its “original state”, or rather, it was not analytically treated. There are two ways to do document research: primary source (official documents, newspaper, letters, contracts, and records, so forth) and secondary sources (research reports, reports, statistical tables, and so forth).

In this study the document research was comprised of two special reports from each local government association (VNG and CNM). It was important because they provided the main characteristics of these associations, complementing the other techniques carried out here.

Table 7 – Main Points of Methodology Applied to the Case Study

Procedures	Aim	variable(s) involved	sample (nonprobability)	criterion
With regard to means				
Document analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To analyze the local government association characteristics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the local government association’s history;</li> <li>• activities developed;</li> <li>• main available links with bureaucracy, legislative, and executive powers;</li> <li>• scope of its activities; and</li> <li>• local government association’s structure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Confederation of Municipalities - CNM; and</li> <li>• Association of Netherlands Municipalities - VNG;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purpose; and</li> <li>• convenience</li> </ul>
Bibliographic analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify and analyze the main sources of knowledge regarding the influence of interest groups in the policy-making process; and</li> <li>• To build strong internal validity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interest group influence;</li> <li>• policy-making process;</li> <li>• characteristics that mean success in influencing policy; and</li> <li>• measuring influence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal Citation Reports - ISI Web of Knowledge;</li> <li>• Books;</li> <li>• Theses;</li> <li>• Dissertations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relevance</li> </ul>
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify important points that might complement the data gathered and analysed by previous procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the local government association’s history;</li> <li>• activities developed;</li> <li>• main available links with bureaucracy, legislative, and executive powers;</li> <li>• scope of its activities; and</li> <li>• local government association’s structure; and</li> <li>• successful, partially successful, and non successful cases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three policy specialist in the CNM; and</li> <li>• Three policy specialist in the VNG;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relevance</li> </ul>
Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify important points that might complement the data gathered and analysed by the previous procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the local government association’s history;</li> <li>• activities developed;</li> <li>• main available links with bureaucracy, legislative, and executive powers;</li> <li>• scope of its activities; and</li> <li>• local government association’s structure; and</li> <li>• successful, partially successful, and non successful cases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other local government associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purpose</li> </ul>
With regard to end				
Exploratory research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• local government associations;</li> <li>• policy-making process;</li> <li>• interest group influence;</li> <li>• municipalities;</li> <li>• inter-relation among private, public and civil actors; and</li> <li>• politics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Confederation of Municipalities - CNM; and</li> <li>• Association of Netherlands Municipalities - VNG;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purpose;</li> <li>• relevance; and</li> <li>• convenience</li> </ul>

iii) *The questionnaire* was one of the most difficult tasks and was responsible for most of the data gathered, as it was also used to support the interviews.

The questionnaire was comprised of 43 questions, among them, 17 were open-ended questions based on the self-evaluation of the association's specialists and, therefore, on the "attributed influence approach" presented in the sub-section 2.4.2, while 26 were closed-ended questions (half of them were related to successful, partially successful and non-successful cases). Clearly the number of the latter was a little larger than the former because there are advantages which stem from closed-ended questions: easy to gather and transfer data to the computer; taking little time to organize data; and the willingness of the respondent to respond to the questions is higher. These advantages were taken into account because of the scarce amount of time to develop this study.

When it comes to the open-ended questions, it was unavoidable to offset the disadvantages of the closed-ended questions with the advantages of those which were open-ended. According to Johnson (2005), critics of closed-ended questions advocate that it forces a respondent to choose an answer category that may not accurately represent his/her position, trying to compensate this possible disadvantage, it was asked that the respondents provide details on some cases in order to validate the data gathered by means of the closed-ended questions.

This questionnaire was e-mailed to eight local government associations in eight different countries around the world with the purpose of properly supporting the findings regarding the associations studied in this research.

It was also possible to use the questionnaire as a guideline for the interviews.

iv) *The interview* is one of the most used research techniques within the social sciences (Gil, 1999). It represents a simple way of collecting data and is quite suitable to obtain information about what people know as well as their explanations or reasons regarding events.

In this piece of research it was decided to use a structured interview. The questionnaire that had already been developed was used as a model.

The greatest advantage of this kind of interview is that it can be quickly carried out without taking too much time from the interviewee. Thus, the willingness of the interviewee to answer the questions increases.

The interviews were performed face-to-face with the two policy specialists from CNM and two from VNG. The other VNG policy specialist was interviewed by email, or rather, the questionnaire was emailed and he answered it, besides clarifying some doubts.

#### **5.4.2. Data gathering**

After describing the importance of all research techniques that make up this study it is crucial to explain how the data was collected.

From the outset it was clear that in order to study the factors which determine influence of interest groups interviews would play an important role, since the data needed is deeply related to the behaviour of interest groups in different political systems. To complement the data from the VNG and CNM a questionnaire was emailed to eight other local government associations in an attempt to strengthen the external validity. However, for a questionnaire to be effective, it needs to cover all relevant variables related to the research problem and asking accurate questions is the most effective manner in which to deal with this.

#### ***Questionnaire and its content***

The questionnaire is important because it may be used either to refer to what people know (facts), or to what they think, feel or prefer (beliefs and attitudes) or even to what people do (behaviour). According to Gil (1999), in general, good questionnaires have questions referring to more than one of the mentioned categories and often a single question involves more than one aspect of each category.

As far as the questionnaire developed for this study is concerned, many factors were considered, such as: i) including questions strictly related to the research problem; ii) including questions whose answers could not be obtained from a different and more precise procedure or source; and iii) taking into account the disadvantages provided by Johnson (2005), that is, to avoid questions that could intimidate the interviewee.

Furthermore, the length of the questionnaire could potentially become problematic. Concern was then shown regarding reducing the number of questions, as well as paying more attention to the way the questionnaire should be presented. It is important to highlight that in the questionnaire it was required that the respondent provided examples of two successful, two partially successful and two non-successful cases.

When it comes to the e-mailed questionnaire, it was prepared as an excel file which facilitated the way that the respondent could answer the questions.

### ***Pre-test***

The improvement of the questionnaire was only possible because of the pre-test. Throughout this important phase the opportunity to fix some crucial mistakes raised significantly. Therefore, mistakes such as inaccurate writing, complex questions, unnecessarily repetitive or even exhausted questions could be identified and then repaired or withdrawn.

The improvement was possible because it was discussed with the research supervisor and an important CNM research coordinator<sup>12</sup>. These individuals helped a great deal with comments and technical advice to improve the questionnaire. Taking into account all these factors, it is plausible to say that all necessary steps to avoid pitfalls were followed throughout the pre-test.

### ***E-mailing the questionnaire***

The next step to the completion of the questionnaire was to decide to whom it should be e-mailed. Thus, by means of a talk with Mr. Gustavo Cezario, CNM's international coordinator, it was decided to email the questionnaire to eight other local government associations, as referred to earlier. However, a question arose: why should it be sent only to eight local government associations? Why not more or even less?

This number was decided upon after discussing the possibility of contacting other local government associations with Mr. Gustavo Cezario. It was thought that the likelihood of having a higher rate of respondents through the support of Mr. Cezario would occur when compared to sending the questionnaires without his backing. Hence, the CNM's international coordinator presented and discussed the possible institutions that might be willing to respond quickly (within

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<sup>12</sup> João Antônio Krebs.

the constraint of time) and then provide the associations' names and their respective directors or coordinators, as can be seen in Table 8.

With a good number of respondents the external validity could be strengthened.

Mr. Cezário was very generous in providing the names and institutions, since they were to be contacted on behalf of his name. From this moment onwards, the efforts were focused on the preparation of e-mails in three different languages (English, Portuguese and Spanish) which were comprised of an overview, a description of the purpose of the research and its relevance, and the instructions to complete the questionnaire.

Table 8 - List of Local Government Associations which Received the Questionnaire

Local Government Association	Contact	Position	Country
Asociación de Municipios de México (AMMAC)	Mr. Rubén Fernández Aceves	Executive Director	Mexico
Asociación de Municipalidades Ecuatorianas (AME)	Mr. Pillar Maldonado Mancheno	Cooperation Technocrat	Ecuador
Federación Argentina de Municipios (FAM)	Mr. Juan A. Matteo	Executive Secretary	Argentina
South African Local Government Association (SALGA)	Mr. Xolile George	Executive Secretary	South Africa
Associação Nacional dos Municípios de Moçambique (ANAMM)	Mr. Francisco T. C. Mabjaia	General Secretary	Mozambique
Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias (FEMP)	Ms. Juana López Pagán	International Director	Spain
International Centre for Municipal Development Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)	Ms. Micheline Caron	Regional Coordinator - Latin America	Canada
Associação Nacional de Municípios Portugueses (ANMP)	Mr. Landri Pinto	International Affairs Director	Portugal

Finally the questionnaire was e-mailed on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 with a month and five days to be returned. However, unfortunately only the Mexican local government association (AMMAC) fully responded the questionnaire, becoming impossible to strengthen the external validity.

### *Defining the interviewees*

In order to gather data about the way in which VNG and CNM are involved in the policy-making process and also their particular types of actions to influence policies in their respective countries, it was decided to arrange interviews with some key individuals.

It was clear at the very beginning that it would not be possible to organize enough interviews. The time for carrying out this study was too short and it was very difficult to find professionals within VNG and CNM which were available to be interviewed.

Professionals within CNM were very busy because they were organizing the most important congress on local governments from Latin America, the XII March (March to Brasilia in Defense of Municipalities). As a result, it was very hard to find policy specialists that were directly involved in influencing policies and were available for an interview.

A similar situation occurred within VNG, since they stated in advance that it would be very difficult to schedule any interview because they were busy with their own activities.

Even with so many difficulties it was possible to schedule five interviews, three from VNG and two from CNM (see Table 9).

Table 9 - List of Persons Interviewed

Name	Organization	Position	Method
Mr. Eduardo Stranz	National Confederation of Municipalities (CNM)	Researcher	Face-to-face interview*
Mr. Augusto Braun	National Confederation of Municipalities (CNM)	Former General Director (Advisor)	Face-to-face interview*
Mr. Jeconias Rosendo da Silva Junior	National Confederation of Municipalities (CNM)	Technical Director	Face-to-face interview
Mr. Philip van Veller	Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)	Chief Administrative Officer	Face-to-face interview
Mr. Christiaan de Vlieger	Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)	Senior Legal Advisor	Interview by email
Mr. Richard van Vliet	Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)	Senior Policy Board Officer	Interview face-to-face and by email
<i>*Mr. Stranz and Mr. Braun were interviewed together (one interview)</i>			

## **6. Presentation of the data**

### **6.1. Introduction**

The methods used in this study and the details on how people and institutions were chosen have been described in the previous section. In this current one the interviews and questionnaire outcomes which stem from the professionals, of the local government associations directly involved in influencing the policy-making process will be presented. At the end of each case description, the factors that most likely affected the result of each case will be presented. This is in order to highlight the important points provided by the interviewees and respondents.

### **6.2. Lobbying and Influence of CNM**

#### **6.2.1. The interviewees**

Mr Jeconias Rosendo da Silva Junior, Technical Director, is one of the sources. He is responsible for the technical areas<sup>13</sup> and the political representation of the CNM by coordinating studies/researches with the purpose of providing relevant information to support the CNM's claims within the government.

This interview dealt with issues linked to the political action of the CNM and general aspects regarding the main activities and characteristics of the association.

When it came to the technical characteristics which were much more connected to the cases, the responsible persons for providing data were Mr. Augusto Brawn and Mr. Eduardo Stranz. The former is currently Advisor of the CNM and had been Technical Director for several years before this. Regarding Mr. Stranz, he is the researcher responsible for most of the data used in the studies carried out by the CNM and also responsible for yielding technical interviews to the media.

The second interview was performed with Mr. Braun and Mr. Stranz at once because they had worked together for many years and both knew several aspects of the cases. While Mr. Braun knew in-depth political factors because he was in charge at that time, Mr. Stranz was also aware of technical aspects because he had developed studies and provided data to the cases.

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<sup>13</sup> The areas are Social Development, Education, Judiciary, Environment, Finances, Health, and Social Security.



### 6.2.2. CNM's general aspects

The literature presented in section 3 highlighted some important interest groups' characteristics that might play a role in the process of influencing policy outcome. Thus, in this sub-section there will be an attempt to provide the CNM' internal characteristics with the purpose of identifying the role played by these factors in its lobbying process.

#### *The resources of CNM*

Scholars advocate that interest group resources such as the *financial resources*, the *staff size*, the *membership representation*, the *tactics* employed (direct and indirect), and the *type of influence* exerted should play a role in defining the degree of success of an interest group. Thus, from this moment onwards this study will focus on the presentation of these characteristics and the way in which the CNM uses its resources in order to increase its chances of influencing policy outcome.

According to Mahoney (2007a), the staff and membership size are strong indicators of financial power, since a high level of legitimacy might lead to an increase of the association's revenue. Consequently, this could help the association increase and improve its services by putting more specialists on a case or even putting more money into an issue. Thus, the likelihood of success could increase.

When it comes to the membership size, as can be seen from Table 10, the CNM, as the main representative of municipalities in Brazil, has a considerable degree of legitimacy with 62% of all Brazilian municipalities being members in 2008. It means that from the 5,562 municipalities, 3,500 municipalities are CNM's members. From the 3,500 municipalities 65% of all small municipalities in the country are being represented by this association, as well as 38% of all medium municipalities, and 63% of all large municipalities. However, in accordance with the total members in 2008, 91% of its members are small municipalities.

Table 10 - Percentage of CNM's Representation

Size	# members 2007	%	# members 2008	%	# municipalities in the country 2008	%
small	2,610	91%	3,150	91%	4,839	65%
medium	174	6%	210	6%	556	38%
large	87	3%	105	3%	167	63%
total	2,871	100%	3,465	100%	5,562	62%

Regarding the number of personnel, the CNM in 2008 had 4% less employees (Table 11) when compared to the VNG with 260 employees. However, it has to be taken into account that the VNG manages 441 members and the CNM 3,500, it means that if you spread the number of members through the number of the CNM's employees, each staff member should be responsible for 14 municipalities that is 823% higher than the VNG's workload in which a single employee would be responsible for 1.7 members only. Thus, it is difficult to say what number of staff is appropriated to handle adequately certain number of members. Therefore, keeping this question in mind it was decided to look inside the organization to seek out any other evidence that could complement the idea of financial power of an association.

There followed an attempt to try to figure out the percentage of the personnel expenditure as compared to the total expenditure of the association. This figure could give an idea of the importance given to this resource, besides suggesting the presence of well-paid and qualified staff that might lead to a high quality of the work developed, increasing the likelihood of success.

As can be seen from Table 11, from the total of the CNM's expenditure in 2008, 62.34% was concentrated in the payment of its personnel. This figure is quite reasonable when compared to the VNG with 46.65% (see Table 14 on page 62).

Table 11 - CNM's Personnel Characteristics

Year	# Employees	Personnel Expenditure US\$	% of Total Expenditure
2007	279	2,589,505,39	44.55%
2008	250	3,741,027.11	62.34%

Despite the good percentage of the personnel expenditure, it was discovered that 38% of the CNM's personnel in 2007 were interns which represented only 11% of all personnel expenditure of the association (Table 12). According to other sources within the CNM, most of the roughly 44% of the personnel expenditure is concentrated on a few well-qualified employees (these

employees are responsible for the development of studies, technical notes, and direct lobbying). Perhaps for this reason, when asked whether or not the CNM pays its personnel according to market value, the source replied negatively. As an attempt to save money with a cheap and qualified workforce the interns were highly relied upon to carry out administrative activities. However, from 2008 onwards, the percentage of interns slumped from 38% to 9.2%, representing 1.5% of the total personnel expenditure. This is explained by the enactment of a new legislation in Brazil which awarded new rights to interns, making them much more expensive to organizations, leading to the dismissal of some of them and the hiring of others.

Table 12 - CNM's Personnel Characteristics

Personnel			
Year	Employee(s)	Intern(s)	Total
2007	174	105	279
2008	227	23	250
Personnel expenditure US\$			
Year	Employee(s)	Intern(s)	Total
2007	2,300,338.29	289,167.10	2,589,505.39
2008	3,685,307.60	55,719.50	3,741,027.11
Personnel expenditure %			
Year	Employee(s)	Intern(s)	Total
2007	88.83%	11.17%	100%
2008	98.51%	1.49%	100%

To complement the data regarding the role played by the staff in the definition of the financial power of the association the average salary was calculated and the figure found was US\$ 1,247. However, there is a problem in this figure, since within the CNM there is a very uneven salary distribution in which 62.84% of all personnel expenditure is concentrated in 90% of the staff team and the remaining 10% of the staff stay with 37.16% of the personnel expenditure. It means that the average salary of these 10% can reach US\$ 4,634 (56% less than the VNG's average salary) while the remaining 90% of the staff has an average salary about US\$ 870. Or rather, most of the administrative staff has a very low salary while the well-qualified staff members, linked to the lobbying tasks, has the highest salaries.

In order to verify how much it represents Brazilian society, according to the Ministry of Labour<sup>14</sup>, the average national income of a Brazilian citizen with bachelor degree in 2007 can

<sup>14</sup> Data retrieved from [http://www.rais.gov.br/RAIS\\_SITIO/oque.asp](http://www.rais.gov.br/RAIS_SITIO/oque.asp).

reach US\$ 1,672. It means that a policy specialist who works to the CNM can earn roughly three times more than an ordinary citizen. However, an administrative professional in the same organization may earn 92% less than the national average income.

These highly-qualified policy specialists, with the support of their teams, are also responsible for the following services (technical and/or political) provided to the members: political representation, technical programmes, and technical training to civil servants and main streams of the organization comprising of the following items: a) creating guidelines to the municipal movement; b) representing its members in public and private bodies; c) following and checking the actions of the legislative, executive and judiciary powers; d) intervening when necessary if the municipal interests are threatened; and e) seeking strategic partnerships.

In addition to this, when it comes to the tactics employed by the association it is important to mention that these policy specialists are much more engaged in developing direct lobbying rather than indirect lobbying. The reason why they rely mostly on the former is because they focus their work on presenting research or technical information to the parliament or central government in order to present a viewpoint, help to draft legislation, speak with congressional leaders, and lobby members of the committees to which the bill was referred; when it comes to the activities related to the latter, speaking with the press, and setting up congresses<sup>15</sup> are mostly done by ordinary staff.

When asked to evaluate (through a scale of *very low*, *low*, *medium*, *high*, and *very high*) the importance and use of both tactics (direct and indirect), Mr. Jeconias said that the importance and use of direct lobbying is prominent, giving to this tactic the highest grade, *very high*. However, he emphasized the importance of indirect lobbying, despite being less used by the association. His evaluation of indirect lobbying was still *high*.

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It is important to mention that the values were represented in local currency (R\$). However, it was exchanged to US\$ by using the currency exchange rates from 20/07/2009 from the Central Bank of Brazil (<http://www4.bcb.gov.br/?TXCONVERSAO>).

<sup>15</sup> The March is the main event of the Brazilian municipalities and whose purpose is to address important questions that affect directly and indirectly the municipalities and their community. Annually roughly 4.000 people, among municipal secretaries, mayors, senators, governors, congressmen, State ministers and also the President of Republic of Brazil are present.

Furthermore, Mr. Jeconias mentioned that among the activities within direct lobbying, the most important is the development of studies that give the necessary support to defend its arguments within the government. Thus, the CNM has been monitoring the legislative activities of the House of Representatives and the Federal Senate, aiming at identifying proposals regarding the municipalities and with the purpose of developing studies to support or even attack it. By means of these activities the CNM seeks more efficiency and efficacy in its influence over the legislative, in order to correspond to the demands and claims of the municipal movement.

As for the type of influence, Mr. Jeconias stated that the CNM makes use of both the *directional and technical influence*. However, he said that there is no way to separate the directional from the technical influence, since in the former there might be many technical aspects to be discussed and in the latter the change in technical aspects might lead to directional influence. According to the director, the level of use is very high for both.

Now, after knowing a little bit of the CNM's internal characteristics it is important to see how this association uses its resources with the purpose of influencing policy and which are the factors that might increase or decrease the likelihood of success.

### **6.2.3. The CNM in action**

In 2003, the Brazilian president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, proposed a Tax Reform which started to be discussed in the House of Representatives. As the result of this proposed reform, all main points defended by the municipalities were not accepted, such as the transference of 100% of the ITR<sup>16</sup> (Tax on Rural Territory) to the Municipalities alongside the responsibility for the collection of that tax and the percentage raise in the FPM<sup>17</sup> (Municipalities Participation Fund).

This situation generated a strong mobilization of the CNM which was very much supported by the Mayors, whose expectation was that these demands would guarantee a larger amount of resources to the Municipalities.

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<sup>16</sup> In Portuguese ITR means "Imposto Territorial Rural".

<sup>17</sup> In Portuguese FPM means "Fundo de Participação dos Municípios".

One of the main ways used by the CNM to keep the Mayors aware of the entire discussion was the March to Brasilia in Defense of the Municipalities. This congress is held in the capital city every year (centre of political power) and helps the CNM to spread the results of its actions. At that time it helped to spread knowledge about the consequences of the Tax Reform and also the positive points of its claims.

The CNM's policy specialists were responsible for generating reliable data about all the consequences of the Tax Reform and also about the positive results that the CNM's could claim. This work was crucial to gather about 3,500 unhappy Mayors that were welcomed by the shock troops of the Military Policy at the "Palacio do Planalto" (President's official residence) when they tried to have a session with the President of the Republic in 2003.

All this mobilization did not convince the central government in the early stages of the policy-making process but did convince the Parliament to a greater extent. Thus, through the Parliament it was possible to generate pressure over the executive that accepted to negotiate with the association and the deputies. This situation suggests that the CNM is not usually successful in influencing policy outcome in the early stages of the process of decision-making but rather in the stage that the discussion is already in Parliament. It can be noticed in the description of the cases.

#### *Municipalities Participation Fund (successful case)*

First of all, when it comes to the FPM claims, the CNM had the opportunity of negotiating with the central government only through Parliament because the Tax Reform had been already presented by the central government in the Nacional Congress. There was no negotiation in the early stages of this proposed reform and the CNM then had to go to the Parliament to struggle for changes. Here the influence was only possible through Parliament.

Through the congresses set up by the CNM (from 2003 to 2008) to discuss this issue, it was possible to create the Mayors' commitment around the issue and therefore to get the support of the Parliament (Deputies). Then, with this powerful support the CNM asked for a raise of 5% to the Municipalities Participation Fund (it is the main revenue source of around 80% of municipalities in Brazil). However, as a result of all negotiation, it was possible to get 1% that

guaranteed an amount of R\$ 2.2 billion a year<sup>18</sup> (€ 818 millions) to the municipalities. According to Mr. Braun and Mr. Stranz, they tried to ask for much more than needed and, therefore, even getting only 1% was more than expected.

In this successful case, which finished only in February 2008, it was possible to perceive that the *level of conflict* was *very high* and the reason for that was based on the far reaching policy implications and the significant number of vested interests.

Despite these characteristics, the CNM was able to handle that so well that its likelihood of influence increased considerably, guaranteeing to the municipalities the financial resources needed.

Another important point responsible for this victory was the work developed by the CNM's personnel that generated high quality studies to present and discuss with Mayors, Parliament and central government the complex implications of the Tax Reform. Despite the *very high level of conflict* it was possible throughout 5 long years of discussion to change the constitutional transference law and increase the municipalities' revenue.

In this case it could be noticed that the staff and the level of legitimacy played an important role within the whole process of lobbying, *increasing the likelihood of success*, since the support of all members, and some of those which were not, also helped to strengthen the movement.

When it comes to the tactics chosen, direct and indirect lobbying (when combined efficiently) can generate a strong impact, increasing the probability of influence. Or rather, from this successful case it could be noticed that the CNM had to rely on its direct contact with officials by presenting the results of its studies, besides setting up its most important congress with the purpose of making sure that Mayors would fully support its claims. This approach was responsible, according to the interviewees, for guaranteeing the Parliament and Mayors support, *increasing significantly the likelihood of influence*.

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<sup>18</sup> Data provided by the CNM.

Regarding the type of influence, the interviewees mentioned that only the technical influence was exerted, and affirmed that the level of conflict was very high because of the issue characteristics rather than the type of influence. Therefore, it suggests that the type of influence did not play the same as the literature's trend. Once again, according to the literature, the likelihood of influence is increased when the technical influence is exerted, but the reason for that is because this type of influence would generate a low conflict level with decision-makers. In this case the trend was not confirmed.

To summarize this case, it is important to emphasize the following important points that increased the likelihood of the CNM's success:

- a) full Mayoral support played an important role (it was obtained by means of indirect lobbying – through congresses, letters, and regional discussions);
- b) full Deputy support led to a negotiation phase with the executive (it might depend on the Mayors' support within the Parliament);
- c) very good policy specialists to discuss the points requested with the Parliament and the central government (it suggests well-qualified policy specialists with experience - probably they are more expensive);
- d) developing high quality research to support the debates (it depends on the level of the policy specialists hired);

#### *Tax on Rural Territory (partially successful)*

Regarding the ITR case it was also included in the Tax Reform, hence the CNM had no opportunity to discuss this subject in the early stages of the policy-making process, being only possible the negotiation within the Parliament with the help of the Deputies. Therefore, the influence was exerted only through the Parliament.

In this case the CNM aimed to transfer 100% of this tax collection to the responsibility of the Municipalities, however, what they got was the transference of 100% only if the municipality opts in to signing a contract with some obligations required by the central government. The text enacted in the EC 42/03 (Constitutional Amendment) of the Tax Reform keeps the contribution



as a jurisdiction of the Union, but it allows the municipalities to increase their participation from 50% to 100%.

This case did not take so much time to be solved because the central government already had a strong position on this issue and also because the Mayors did not fully support this claim. When it comes to the opposition of the central government, this tax was considered an important instrument of land policy. Therefore it could not be decentralized without some negotiated requirements. As for the Mayors' support, they knew that the decentralization of 100% of this tax would be great for their finances, however they were aware that they could create many conflicts with the richest people of their municipalities (most influential people responsible for some important local business) because now it would be easier to apply a fair tax to all large farm lands by means of a more efficient municipal inspection<sup>19</sup>.

The CNM tried to convince the Mayors about the importance of this tax decentralization by means of the indirect lobbying (the March to Brasilia in Defense of the Municipalities - 2003). However, the local business farmers were able to make the CNM less influential, through their influence over those Mayors concerned with the local businesses. This action generated less support in the Parliament, because the Mayors are mostly responsible for the CNM's support in the Parliament. Thus, it was easier for the executive to build up a strong coalition in order to weaken the CNM direct lobbying.

Despite the fact that the CNM worked very hard in lobbying the members of the Congress with reliable data about the benefits of such a change, it was not possible to get all the points desired. Then the CNM was obliged to negotiate the decentralization with some negotiated agreements. Or rather, if a municipality does not show its desire in getting this 100% of taxation plus the responsibility for the inspection and collection then everything will continue as it does now.

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<sup>19</sup> The central government was responsible for the ITR tax collection and had only 5 inspectors to cover all the Brazilian territory. Thus, this situation collaborated to an unfair land taxation in which many big farmers do not pay the real tax of their huge lands, while ordinary people pay the real tax amount. Taking this situation into account, it is possible to see the willingness of many Mayors to change this situation by charging the real tax and then raising the tax revenue, while many others would not like to negatively affect these very important business men because they are extremely important to the local economy. This is the reason why not all Mayors supported this claim.

Once again the *level of conflict* was *very high* not because of the type of influence exerted (technical influence) but rather because the political position of the CNM and the central government was not aligned.

In this case the CNM was less likely to influence policy outcome because of:

- a) the lack of the Mayors' support led to the lack of support within the Parliament; and
- b) the strong opposition of the central government led to a coalition in the Parliament. That might increase the likelihood of losses in influence-gaining.

*Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Primary School Education and the Valorization of Primary School Teaching – Fundef (non-successful case)*

This programme had the purpose of guaranteeing the universalization of primary education (from 7 to 14 years old) and improves the teacher's salary by redistributing financial resources from the central government to the States and municipalities and also from the States to the municipalities. It was created in 1996 and its end was supposed to end in 2006.

A few years before the official end of the programme (2006) the debates about how the new programme could be, started within the central government. As noticed, in this case the CNM was able to participate in the discussions in the early stage of the policy-making process but the central government proposal was not defeated. The central government defended the creation of a single fund to support the entire basic education (primary and secondary education level 1 and 2) and the CNM was totally against proposal, presenting the creation of three new funds, one to each level of study.

According to the interviewees, the governors of the States were against this CNM's proposal because it would take more money from the States to the municipalities. Thus, the governors supported the executive proposal because it was very good to them and they together were able to get the support of the Parliament. As the issue was very technical, the Mayors did not understand very well what was good for the municipalities. Hence, this lack of the Mayors' support and the coalition between the central government and the governors weakened the CNM's influence.

As a result of this situation it can be perceived that the CNM seems to be less likely to influence policy outcome when:

- a) there is a strong opposition formed by the central government and the governors (presence of countervailing forces). When they act together (coalition) against the municipalities they become strong enough to avoid the municipalities' influence;
- b) there is a lack of the Mayors' support that led to the lack of support within the Parliament;
- c) there are a lack of arguments which do not allow the Mayors to understand the issue discussed (even exerting the direct and indirect lobbying intensely the CNM was not able to make the Mayors understand the highly technical issue);
- d) there is an attempt of directional influence (CNM's proposal was totally different from the executive proposal)

### **6.3. Lobbying and Influence of VNG**

#### **6.3.1. The interviewees**

In this sub-section three important sources were interviewed: Mr. Philip van Veller (Chief Administrative Officer), Mr. Richard van Vliet (Senior Policy Board Officer), and Christiaan de Vlieger (Senior Legal Advisor).

Mr. Veller was responsible for providing a face-to-face interview focused on general aspects of the VNG such as the type of actions taken, the linkages with executive and legislative branches, the activities carried out by the association and so forth. Regarding Mr. Vliet, a face-to-face interview was also carried out plus some e-mailed questions to clarify some points regarding the technical aspects of the VNG cases.

Concerning Mr. Vlieger, he complemented the technical aspects of the cases analyzed.

It is important to mention that it was very hard work to talk with these policy specialists because they were not available all the time and when they were, it was for a very short period of time,

making the data much less detailed. For this reason it will be difficult to provide a very consistent picture of the VNG in action, but an attempt will be made.

### **6.3.2. The VNG's general aspects**

The VNG has a comfortable position within the central government, according to Mr. Veller, because all the 13 ministries are obliged<sup>20</sup> to deal with issues regarding the municipalities by discussing it with the VNG, the major municipalities' representative. As already discussed in section 3, this obligation is a result of the Code of Inter-administrative Relations that gives the VNG at least the possibility of being heard by the government at the earlier stage of the policy-making process. By means of this Code the VNG can negotiate all questions regarding the municipalities, focusing mainly on those with financial impact<sup>21</sup>.

#### *The resources of VNG*

As for the literature, interest group resources matter in order to increase the likelihood of influence-gaining, therefore characteristics such as financial resources, staff size, membership representation, tactics employed (direct and indirect), and type of influence exerted should play an important role in influencing policy outcome. Taking this into consideration, now some important factors about the internal characteristics of the VNG will be presented.

When it comes to the staff and membership size, the VNG might be considered a strong association that has the maximum level of legitimacy (100%), being that this constitutes the full representation of the municipalities (see Table 13).

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<sup>20</sup> There are still two other lobby organizations that the government is obliged to discuss. These concern the labour market: the employee (labour) organization and the employer organization.

<sup>21</sup> According to Mr. Veller, 99% of the issues in discussion with the government are concerning financial matters. The reason for that is that only around 10% of the revenue of municipalities comes from taxes; the other 90% come from state level transfers. This is the reason why the municipalities cannot afford to increase financial responsibilities without the necessary transfers.

Table 13 - Percentage of VNG's representation

Size	# members 2007	%	# members 2008	%	# municipalities in the country 2008	%
small	240	54%	240	54%	240	100%
medium	170	38%	170	39%	170	100%
large	33	7%	31	7%	31	100%
total	443	100%	441	100%	441	100%

Regarding the staff size, according to Table 14, the VNG had 260 employees which are responsible for 46.6% of all VNG's expenditure. These employees carry out services to 441 members in 2008.

When it comes to the average salary in the VNG, as mentioned before it is 56% higher than the top salaries in the CNM, roughly US\$ 7,230 a month.

In order to have a real picture of the VNG's average income, it was decided to compare it to the national average income of the Netherlands. It was noticed that people aged between 25 and 45 have an average income of US\$ 6,109<sup>22</sup>. Or rather, the VNG pays roughly 20% more than the national average income. It suggests that the VNG deems personnel as one of its main keys to success and that the staff size is definitely an important factor to determine the financial power of the association.

Table 14 - VNG's Financial Features

Year	# Employees	Personnel Expenditure US\$	% of Total Expenditure
2007	252	21,150,000.00	44.78%
2008	260	22,560,000.00	46.65%

When asked about the most often-used tactic to influence policy, Mr. Veller affirmed that direct lobbying is the prominent tactic. The VNG usually presents research or technical information when contacting government officials to present its point of view. According to him, this happens because they usually try to influence the beginning of the process, before the issue is in Parliament. This technique is achieved by helping officials to draft legislation and by discussing issues with special committees comprised of aldermen, Mayors and other VNG members. Regarding these committees, as soon as the issue is discussed, a delegation is set up in order to

<sup>22</sup> Data retrieved from the CBS statistics Netherlands on 24/09/09 (<http://www.cbs.nl/en-GB/menu/themas/inkomen-bestedingen/publicaties/artikelen/archief/2007/2007-2215-wm.htm>).

hold a meeting with the Minister or the Secretary of State to discuss the matter based on their findings. When the contact with the executive fails, it is then necessary to lobby members of Parliament.

Regarding indirect lobbying, it was said that it is very important to the association when they intend to keep society aware of some issue, but at the same time it works more as publicity action, therefore not important for some policies.

When it came to the type of influence, Mr. Vliet did not provide much information. He only affirmed that the organization uses both the directional and technical influence, grading the former with a *high* degree of importance and use, while the latter with a *very high* degree.

### **6.3.3. The VNG in action**

Before starting the description of the cases, it is important to mention that the VNG, differently from the CNM, discusses issues regarding the municipalities always in the early stage of the process of decision-making. This condition, as already mentioned, is guaranteed by the Code of Inter-administrative Relation. However, it does not mean that the association is always successful or that it does not discuss certain issues with the Parliament.

#### *Hazardous material (successful case)*

In 2003 the VNG started discussing an environmental issue related to the transportation of hazardous materials that had to be transported from the producers to the consumers. These materials carry several risks to the population (explosion and pollution) mainly because they have to be transported by roads that go through inhabited areas.

This issue was considered very complicated because it combines many different and powerful interests such as the chemical industry, the economy, safety, and transport interests (far reaching policy implications, the significant number of vested interests, and the presence of countervailing forces). However, despite the fact that these characteristics seem to play a negative role in the VNG's influence-gaining, the VNG was able to overcome the obstacles in order to succeed in its primary goal, to guarantee a safe transportation of these hazardous materials through the cities.

First of all, the central government was divided in two: the Department of the Environment was on the VNG's side, while the Department of Infrastructure was more or less on the side of the manufacturers. Thus, within this situation of conflict the VNG exerted its influence over the Department of Environment and took advantage of this, in order to increase its likelihood of influence-gaining. This hard situation forced the central government to moderate between safety and the economy.

Secondly, the negotiation phase was very hard in the early stage of policy-making process because the central government was not willing to consider the points suggested by the VNG, regarding safety, and then drafted the bill in partnership with others. When the bill arrived at the Parliament in order to be discussed, the VNG was already there with the total support of the Mayors, the Parliament, and the population. This positive support allowed the VNG to discuss, once again, the issue with the central government and other parts and then incorporate the points required. As could be seen, despite the "advantage" of discussing issues in the early stages of the process of decision-making, the VNG was able to exert influence in the second stage in which the bill is already in the Parliament being discussed by everyone.

According to the interviewees, the VNG was very successful in this case because its aim was parallel to the population and Mayoral interest. Therefore, it suggests that the *VNG is more likely to influence policy when its aims are fully support by the Parliament, the Mayors and the population.*

Thirdly, when it comes to the tactics employed by the VNG, it is prudent to say that direct lobbying played a very important role in this process by means of discussions with officials and by lobbying members of the Congress, however, they did not develop any sort of research or data in this case because all studies were developed by advisers paid by the departments (central government) that were shared among all parties involved.

Regarding indirect lobbying, the VNG tried to keep the population aware of the issue by means of articles in national newspapers and letters to the Parliament. These initiatives seemed to be important but less important than the direct contact that was very much emphasized by the interviewees.

As for the type of influence, the VNG only exerted technical influence that led to a high level of conflict. Once again the reason for the level of conflict was not the type of influence exerted by interest groups but rather the political position. That is to say that it was not aligned with the central government.

To summarize this successful case it seems to be prudent to affirm that the VNG is more likely to influence policy outcome when:

- a) there is full Mayoral support concerning the issue in question;
- b) there is full Parliamentary support;
- c) there is division of opinion within the national government;
- d) the VNG's interest is parallel to the population interest; and
- e) direct lobbying is well employed.

#### *European Environmental Measures (partially successful)*

This case was a problem to the municipalities because the central government did not pay attention to this subject when it was passed in Brussels. The obligations of this new legislation had to be applied in the Netherlands and the central government passed on the responsibility to the municipalities.

It was a very difficult issue because the biggest cities of the Netherlands have serious air problems and the standard measurement defined by the European legislation was impossible to be applied in such a short period of time.

Therefore, the VNG solution was twofold: first of all, the VNG complained to Brussels about this situation by saying that one of the main parties responsible for this situation was the car producers. Or otherwise, Brussels should obligate them to develop less harmful cars; and secondly, the association tried to show that this responsibility was the central governments'. For the VNG the central government had to recognize at least a shared responsibility in improving the air quality in the Netherlands.



Thus, by lobbying the members of the Parliament directly, the VNG was able to get its support, making it possible to define a suitable way of measuring it (spreading the measures throughout the country and taking into consideration a one year period – it was a way to balance the measures of a very polluted area and a less polluted one), besides sharing the responsibility with the central government.

This case was considered partially successful because the VNG aimed to transfer all responsibility to the central government, as well as defining a suitable way of measuring the air quality. What the VNG achieved was the replacement of the way to measure the air quality and share the responsibility in measuring it.

In this unusual case the VNG was able to influence the Parliament rather than the central government.

The reasons why the VNG was partially successful can be expressed in the following factors:

- a) partial support from Parliament;
- b) lack of support among the population;
- c) partial support from the Mayors; and
- d) the strong opposition of the central government.

In this case the opposition of the central government seemed to play a strong role against the VNG's aims. Besides this, the lack of support of the population, plus the partial Mayor's support, weakened the VNG. This only allowed for a partial success. Therefore, the VNG seems to be less likely to succeed when there is no support from the population plus a partial support of the Mayors in the Parliament.

#### *Zoning laws (non-successful)*

The VNG aimed to keep the task of regulating the use of land under municipal responsibility. However, the central government, and even many members of the Parliament, thought that these tasks and responsibilities should belong to another level of government, at the provincial level.

In order to guarantee this power to the municipalities, the VNG exerted only direct lobbying by trying to convince the central government, the members of the Parliament and the front leaders of the political parties that the municipalities are the most suitable government level to carry out this sort of task. They were unsuccessful in this endeavour.

According to the interviewees, the VNG faced many important countervailing forces such as politicians in Parliament and policy-makers in the central government.

In this subject, it would be very difficult to get the populations' support because it is not a simple issue to understand and even to get the support from those who knew the importance of this subject in-depth would be difficult. In addition to that, the Mayors' support was not enough to guarantee the VNG's victory, however, the only small success possible by the VNG was the Mayors' support to keep some tasks and responsibilities regarding the subject of public transport.

To summarize this unsuccessful case, it is important to see the factors that might have contributed to this result:

- a) lack of the population's support;
- b) lack of Parliament's support;
- c) lack of the Mayor's support; and
- d) the strong opposition of the central government.

It is interesting to notice that when the VNG has a lack of support from all its possible partners then it is less likely to influence the policy outcome.

#### **6.4. Lobbying and Influence of other Associations**

As for the questionnaire e-mailed to the eight local government associations, as described in section 4, on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 with the deadline foreseen as July 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, unfortunately only two local government associations from those chosen replied with a positive response, the AMMAC from Mexico and the FEMP from Spain. However, only Mr. Ruben Fernandez of the AMMAC e-mailed the completed questionnaire. Regarding Mrs. Juana López Pagán of the FEMP, there were many other attempts to contact her, but with no success.

The remaining institutions were also non-responsive, with the exception of Ms. Micheline Caron from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities that stated in her reply, on June 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, that everyone in the institution was too busy to be able to respond to the questionnaire.

Thus, in the next sub-section it will not be possible to considerably strengthen the external validity by adding many cases to support the findings of the comparative study between Brazil and the Netherlands.

#### **6.4.1. The Association of Municipalities of Mexico's general aspects (AMMAC)**

##### *The resources of AMMAC*

The AMMAC is a very young local government association founded in 1994 in Mexico, whose degree of representation is quite modest.

Very differently from Brazil and the Netherlands, the AMMAC's legitimacy is very much small, representing only 16% of all municipalities within Mexico. However, the majority of its members are medium and large municipalities rather than the small ones. According to Table 15, 48% of all medium municipalities are represented by the institution as well as 54% of all large municipalities. When it comes to the percentage of all small municipalities represented by the institution the figure is quite small, only 11%.

Table 15 - Percentage of AMMAC's Representation

Size	# members 2007	%	# members 2008	%	# municipalities in the country 2008	%
small	191	51%	199	52%	2,079	10%
medium	140	37%	141	37%	295	48%
large	44	12%	44	11%	81	54%
total	375	100%	384	100%	2,455	16%

Regarding the staff size it is also relatively small when compared to the CNM and VGN, with only 28 employees in 2008 (it represents roughly 10% of their employee size).

When it comes to the financial characteristics, the association does not have its own facility and the personnel expenditure represents only 31% of the total of the organization's expenditures.

Thus, if you calculate the average salary it is possible to verify that it is about US\$ 1,571 per employee per month (see Table 16). This figure shows that the AMMAC pays roughly two times the national average income<sup>23</sup> that was US\$ 736 in 2008. It means that this association might be also concerned about the quality of its works and then invest in personnel in order to have good results.

Table 16 - AMMAC's Personnel Characteristics

Year	# Employees	Personnel Expenditure US\$	% of Total Expenditure
2007	19	502,000.00	30.57%
2008	28	528,000.00	31.05%

As well as the other local government associations studied so far, the AMMAC also provides political representation, technical programmes and technical training to civil servants and political actors to its members.

As for the *direct lobbying*, the association usually develops research or technical information, contacts government officials to present viewpoints, and helps officials or the members of Parliament to draft legislation. Regarding *indirect lobbying*, the most important activities chosen by the respondent were: running advertisements, setting up congresses, and raising public awareness.

As far as the evaluation of this issue is concerned, the respondent showed that direct lobbying has a high level of importance while the indirect was judged as having a very high level.

Following the same trend of both VNG and CNM, the AMMAC also uses the *directional* and *technical influence*, however, the former is assessed as *very high*, while the latter *high*.

#### 6.4.2. The AMMAC in action

The data gathered in this section stems from a questionnaire in which the respondent did not provide extensive detail, therefore, the picture of AMMAC in action will be very brief but with

<sup>23</sup> Data retrieved from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography on 24/09/09 (<http://dgcnesyp.inegi.org.mx/cgi-win/bdiecoy.exe/537?s=est&c=13065>)

the purpose of providing all relevant factors that increase, or not, the likelihood of the AMMAC's influence.

*Tax Reform (successful case)*

In this case the AMMAC aimed to get more financial resources from the central government to the municipalities by means of new transfers. The reason for this is that the municipalities in Mexico also suffer from scarce financial resources.

The far reaching implications of this issue led to countervailing forces, most notably the central government. However, the AMMAC objective was supported by the Mayors and the majority of the Congress.

The support of both Mayors and Members of Parliament increased the likelihood of the AMMAC's success and it was enough to face the central government opposition and to get what they aimed to achieve. It is important to mention that the AMMAC was not able to exert influence in the early stage of the policy-making process, but rather within the Parliament.

According to the respondent, direct lobbying was the main lobbying tactic used by means of direct contact with members of the Parliament and Mayors.

Therefore, the following factors increased the likelihood of the AMMAC's success:

- a) support from a majority of the Parliament;
- b) support from the Mayors; and
- c) the use of direct lobbying played an important role.

*Public Security (successful case)*

Once again in this case, the objective of the association was to increase financial transfers from the central government to the municipalities.

Despite the issue characteristics (far reaching policy implications, significant number of vested interests, and presence of countervailing forces), according to the respondent, the central

government was aware of the problem faced by the municipalities as well as the Parliament. Therefore, it was easy to obtain this new financial source. As could be noticed here, even with the state level against the proposal, the level of conflict was low and by means of the support of the Parliament and also of the central government the likelihood of success was considerably increased. Thus, in this case the AMMAC was able to influence the issue already in the early stage of the policy-making process.

*Political Reform (unsuccessful case)*

The AMMAC would like to change the constitutional law in order to allow the Mayor's re-election. However, the parties that supported the central government in the Parliament (very strong opposition) were successful in avoiding this AMMAC's purpose (presence of countervailing forces).

Therefore, even with the Mayor's support and through exerting direct lobbying in the central government and in the Parliament, the political parties were able to lessen the likelihood of the AMMAC's influence.

*Federal taxation (unsuccessful case)*

In this case the AMMAC aimed to end the cases of federal taxation exception. However, the central government was totally against this measure (presence of countervailing forces) and by means of a strong coalition in the Parliament, the AMMAC was not able to achieve its aim.

Here, the presence of a powerful countervailing force (central government) plus the lack of support of the Parliament led to the AMMAC's failure, regardless of the support of the Mayors.

From these two unsuccessful cases the following factors might play a role to determine the influence-gaining level:

- a) lack of the Parliament's support; and
- b) the opposition of the central government.

## **7. Data analysis**

### **7.1. Introduction**

Considering the process of decision-making, whereby a wide range of actors and factors are important variables to define policy outcome; considering that the local government associations analyzed here seek to influence policy through bureaucracy, politicians, governmental officials and the population, warning them all about problems, opportunities, and policy options (Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993; Kingdon, 1995); and by considering that in order to operate efficiently these associations need to make a wise use of their knowledge and assets, this section will analyze the data gathered in the light of the theory dynamics, trying to show in which conditions local government associations are more or less likely to influence policy outcome.

### **7.2. Common trends and differences**

In this section most of the attention will be given to the comparison between VNG and CNM, since this is the main purpose of this research and the questionnaire triggered, unfortunately, did not succeed in strengthening the external validity<sup>24</sup>. However, despite some of the inconveniences involved with the process of gathering data, the interviews and questionnaire provided useful information concerning the reality of lobbying in three different countries.

One of the most surprising findings observed in the cases studied was that most of the factors considered important to succeed in influencing policy outcome and also, the factors that negatively affect influence-gaining in the European Union, play a role within different countries with different political and cultural contexts.

First of all, it is interesting to take into consideration the interest groups' resources presented by Table 17.

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<sup>24</sup> The questionnaire provided too few results to be regarded as an important source of data for the research. As can be seen, the Mexican local government association (AMMAC) is considerably weak to be considered in-depth within the analysis, since it is too young with a low degree of legitimacy, a small staff size, among other characteristics that would not contribute to strengthen the external validity.

Table 17 - Local Government Associations' Resources

Characteristics	VNG	CNM	AMMAC
Degree of legitimacy	100%	62%	16%
Staff size	260	250	28
Percentage of personnel spending from the total of expenditure	46.65%	62.34%	31.05%
Average salary	US\$7,230	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% = US\$870</li> <li>• 10% = US\$4,634</li> </ul>	US\$1,571
# of members	441	3,500	384

According to the literature the interest groups' resources play a role in the influence-gaining, therefore, the degree of legitimacy, the staff size and the financial resources are important to increase the likelihood of influence-gaining.

As for the resources of the three local government associations, it is noticeable from Table 17 that the VNG seems to be a well-endowed association compared to others and is able to put more resources into a case or even employ more tactics or hire more qualified professionals to its staff team. This is because the VNG carries 100% legitimacy and the highest number of staff when compared to the other associations.

The CNM bears 62% of legitimacy that, in fact, it is a high percentage as well as the highest percentage of personnel expenditure that reaches 62.34% of all CNM's expenditure; however, the average salary is substantially lower than the VNG even when compared to the 10% highest salaries of the CNM. On the other hand, a policy specialist at the CNM can earn almost three times the average salary in Brazil, while at the VNG the same specialist usually earns only about 25% more than the average professional in the Netherlands.

When it comes to the staff size, the CNM has nearly the same as the VNG, however it has substantially more members to provide services to. Thus, it suggests a lack of resources that might negatively affect the CNM's performance.

Regarding the AMMAC, this association is the youngest with only 16% of representation and 28 employees. Its personnel expenditure reaches only 31% of all expenditure and its average salary is far below the VNG average and the highest 10% of the CNM's average, besides having to



provide services to 384 members. Therefore, the AMMAC seems to face major problems regarding its resources.

These data suggest that the VNG is more likely to plough resources into its cases, becoming more likely to influence policy outcome when compared to the other associations studied here.

As for the CNM, this association seems to be less likely to influence policy outcome when compared to the VNG, but more likely to be successful when compared to the AMMAC.

Despite the dearth of resources, the CNM still seems to be able to provide high salaries to its key policy specialists responsible for the main lobbying activities. Therefore, it increases the possibility of influence-gaining mainly because these associations rely heavily on direct lobbying.

Now, after comparing the associations' resources, it is interesting to take a look within the cases described so far and see how these resources are employed and which factors might indicate a high or low likelihood of gaining influence.

When it comes to the positive factors that increase the likelihood of influence-gaining, Table 18 mentions some of them.

Table 18 - Positive factors that might contribute to the influence-gaining

CNM	VNG	AMMAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full support of the Mayors;</li> <li>• Full support of the Parliament;</li> <li>• Combination of direct and indirect lobbying; and</li> <li>• Employment of Technical influence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full support of the Mayors;</li> <li>• Full support of the Parliament;</li> <li>• Association's interest parallel to the interest of the population;</li> <li>• Combination of direct and indirect lobbying; and</li> <li>• Employment of Technical influence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full support of the Mayors;</li> <li>• Full support of the Parliament;</li> <li>• Combination of direct and indirect lobbying; and</li> <li>• Employment of Technical influence.</li> </ul>

As can be noticed from Table 18, the factors that positively affect the likelihood of influence are the same in all associations, excepting the necessity of the VNG's interest being parallel to the interest of the population.

As far as the associations' cases are concerned, the full support of the Mayors and of the Parliament seems to play an important role in the influencing process. Or rather, according to the

interviewees, when the associations have this kind of support and exert direct and indirect lobbying properly (one action must complement the other one) then they are more likely to influence policy outcome even when the degree of conflict is very high.

With regards to the VNG, if their interests are also parallel to the interest of the population, their likelihood of influence-gaining increases.

Furthermore, in the cases analyzed in this study the level of conflict was always either high or very high, despite the technical influence exerted. This condition suggests that the type of influence exerted in the successful and partial successful cases does not follow the same literature's dynamic. Or rather, the technical influence did not provide a low degree of conflict between the central government and the associations. Conversely, it seems that what defines the degree of conflict between both might be the political position when unaligned.

The data suggests that when all factors in Table 18 happen together, then even with a high degree of the central government's opposition, the likelihood of influence is still high.

However, when there is a lack of Parliamentary support, then the likelihood of a coalition between the central government and the Parliament increases and the associations become less likely to influence the policy outcome (Table 19).

In situations in which the associations do not have the Parliamentary/Mayoral support and also face the opposition of the central government then the associations might be less likely to influence policy. Keeping this in mind, it is prudent to say that issue characteristics (presence of countervailing forces and significant number of vested interests) seem to play an important role in defining the degree of influence-gaining of the associations.

Another interesting fact to be considered is that the directional influence was exerted in all unsuccessful cases studied so far. In these cases the level of conflict between interest groups and central governments was very high and thus it might suggest that the directional influence, in this moment, could lead to the high degree of conflict and hence it becomes the associations less likely to influence policy outcome. This dynamic is the same as in the literature.

Table 19 - Negative factors that might affect the influence-gaining

CNM	VNG	AMMAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of support of the Mayors;</li> <li>• Lack of support of the Parliament;</li> <li>• Central government opposition;</li> <li>• Governors opposition;</li> <li>• Parliamentary opposition; and</li> <li>• Employment of directional influence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of support of the Mayors;</li> <li>• Lack of support of the Parliament;</li> <li>• Central government opposition;</li> <li>• VNG’s interest is not parallel to the population interest;</li> <li>• Governors opposition;</li> <li>• Parliamentary opposition; and</li> <li>• Employment of directional influence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of support of the Mayors;</li> <li>• Lack of support of the Parliament;</li> <li>• Central government opposition;</li> <li>• Governors opposition;</li> <li>• Parliamentary opposition; and</li> <li>• Employment of directional influence.</li> </ul>

By going through this data it is possible to see that the associations are very similar in their lobbying dynamics. Or rather, all of them tend to exert influence mainly by means of the Parliament rather than in the early stage of the policy-making process. This condition does not mean that it is an option of the associations but rather that it is very tough to influence the central government at the beginning. In order to have an idea, almost the majority of the cases studied in this research influence were reached only through Parliament, after not being considered by the central government at the beginning of the policy-making process.

Taking into account this remark and considering the information from Table 19, it is reasonable to say that most of the influence shown by these cases might be considered small to be changes (technical influence) rather than substantial ones (directional influence), since in the Parliament the changes are hardly substantial.

Another interesting fact to be mentioned is that despite the fact that the VNG has the Code of Inter-administrative Relations which gives it the possibility of discussing all subjects related to the municipalities with the central government in the early stage of the policy-making process, it does not guarantee influence at the beginning of the process of decision-making. For instance, the VNG was able to exert influence only in the Parliament, rather than in the early stage when discussing the issue with the central government.

According to one of the interviewees, this situation might be a consequence of a lack of the VNG’s agenda: “we follow the central government too much, we have to set up our own agenda (...) we can always lobby in the earlier stage but it is also a passive way”.

### **7.3. The local government associations and their linkages with executive and legislative branches**

According to the analysis undertaken in this study, the VNG and CNM, in order to achieve their purpose, firstly have to operate in accordance with their respective country's peculiarities such as the political system (type and levels of government and separation of powers), the laws, and the stages of the process of decision-making. In doing so they are able to use and spend their knowledge and assets wisely.

In the CNM's case, all the aforementioned factors have led to a strong linkage between the association and the legislative branch. The latter usually gives support to the CNM, partially because of those deputies who believe in the municipal movement (former mayors) and partially because of the quality of information provided by the association to them.

When it comes to the CNM's relationship with the executive, it seems to be a little bit conflicting because of the CNM's political position that sometimes runs against the central government. Hence, when negotiations are not going well with the executive, the CNM exerts its influence over the legislative. (CNM works mainly in the second stage of the policy-making process).

Regarding the VNG, it has a strong relationship with the executive, having the possibility to discuss issues at the beginning of the policy-making process. This favorable condition is granted by the *Code of Inter-administrative Relations* that obliges the executive branch to discuss issues related to the municipalities in the early stages of the policy-making process. On the other hand, this condition does not mean that VNG is able to exert influence mainly over the executive, or rather, again according to the data its influence is exerted mainly over the legislative.

In addition to that, the VNG's relationship with the Parliament is more likely to occur when things are not going well between VNG and the central government. Otherwise, all can be defined in the first stage.

### **7.4. What really matters in influencing policy outcome?**

## *Resources*

As presented in the previous section, the associations' resources seem to play an important role in influencing policy just because interest groups, through their available resources, are able to define their strategies to face, efficiently, the external challenges stemming from the issue characteristics (large number of vested interests, presence of countervailing forces, far reaching policy implications, and high level of public awareness).

According to the literature (Mahoney, 2007a; and McCarthy & Zald, 1978), a well-endowed association might employ more tactics, put more money into an issue, involve more specialists in a case and/or even hire specialized professionals. Thus, it is more likely that interest groups succeed in influencing policy outcome.

In fact, interest groups' resources seemed to increase the likelihood of influence-gaining of the associations studied because by means of their staff the discussions around the issues might be effective. Rather, in the successful and partially successful cases it is possible to see that the associations worked hard on the preparation of congresses and papers to the media (indirect lobbying), besides preparing speeches, presentation, and information (direct lobbying) to present to Mayors, Members of Parliament, and also to officials. This work was responsible for clarifications that led to the strengthening of the associations' support.

## *Tactics*

Another important and interesting fact that suggests the importance of the associations' resources can be noticed from the length of time of the successful cases analyzed. Or rather, these cases took more than 4 years to be concluded. It means that the associations employed all necessary tactics, putting forth their best team and even hiring more of them to succeed. These actions, applied during about 4 years, might suggest that the expenses were high in order to achieve their goals.

When it comes to the tactics employed by the associations, what can be seen is that in the successful and partially successful cases the associations were able to apply both tactics, getting

the support of the Mayors and the Parliament. This dynamic suggests that the tactics when applied together (direct and indirect lobbying) the likelihood of influence-gaining is increased.

When analyzing the unsuccessful cases it is possible to notice that interest groups relied only on direct lobbying, decreasing their probability of influence.

Despite the fact that in order to be more influential interest groups tend to employ both tactics, it is important to say that according to the interviewees the prominent tactic is direct lobbying.

### *Type of influence*

As far as the type of influence is concerned, what could be noticed from the cases is that the technical influence played a prominent role in the successful and partially successful cases. However, it did not follow the same trend described by the literature. Or rather, the literature advocates that it is more likely to influence policy outcome when technical influence is exerted and the reason for that is that the technical influence leads to a low degree of conflict between interest groups and policy-makers. However, what was noticed is that even in exerting technical influence the interviewees affirmed that the level of conflict was always either high or very high.

Therefore, the causes of the high degree of conflict could not have been the technical influence but rather the political position of the associations that were not aligned to the central government, as mentioned by the interviewees.

On the other hand, it was noticed that in the unsuccessful cases the directional influence exerted might have followed the same literature's trend, increasing the level of conflict and therefore diminishing the likelihood of influence-gaining of the associations.

Taking into consideration all data analyzed so far, it is prudent to say that the associations' resources matter and therefore play an important role in influencing the process.

### *Issue characteristics*

According to the literature, interest groups are less likely to influence policy outcome when an issue has some characteristics such as the far reaching policy implications, a significant number of vested interests, a high level of public awareness, and the presence of countervailing forces.

These characteristics in the cases analyzed seem to play a role in influencing the process. However, it was noticed that in the successful cases it does not seem to be a very crucial issue. Or rather, when interest groups are able to convince Mayors and then get their support it seems to be easier to get the support of the Parliament. Therefore, when the associations have support guaranteed from both parties, then the likelihood of influence-gaining seems to be significantly higher. The data suggested that even with highly complex issue characteristics, by mean of guaranteed support, the associations are more likely to face the challenges and then succeed in their undertakings.

Regarding the partially successful and the unsuccessful cases, what can be noticed is that when an association has a lack of Mayoral support, then it is harder to get full Parliamentary support. With this lack of support it is likely that the association does not succeed completely when facing an issue with a significant number of vested interests and with the presence of countervailing forces. It might happen because the central government can make coalitions, taking advantage of the lack of the association's support. However, in cases with a high level of public awareness in which the association's purpose is parallel to the population, this characteristic seems to fill the lack of the Mayoral support and consequently it becomes more likely that the association gets full Parliamentary support in order to increase its likelihood to influence. This trend can only be witnessed in the VNG's cases.

Getting back to the coalition subject, it was noticed that by means of coalitions (with governors, Parliament, or with both at the same time) the central government seems to be able to avoid the association's influence. Thus, taking into consideration these scenarios (partially and unsuccessful cases) it is likely to affirm that the likelihood of the associations' influence-gaining is decreased.

It is apparent that the factors defined by the literature as important to influence policy outcome are also important to the associations analyzed; however, the findings suggest that most of the

factors alone do not seem to play an important role in determining influence in Brazil and the Netherlands, but rather a set of combined characteristics and challenges that should play a very important role in determining the degree of influence of the associations.

### *Stages of the policy-making process*

As for the influence exerted by the associations, it was noticed that in the majority of the cases the associations were not able to exert influence in the early stage of the policy-making process. As perceived, the central government seemed to be in very strong opposition when the aim of the associations was not aligned to the central government's aim.

As a consequence of this, what was clearly noticed was the associations' action in the Parliament. Through the Deputies and the Mayoral support they seemed to be more likely to exert influence mainly in technical details.

However, if full Mayoral support is not available, the likelihood of full support in the Parliament seems to be affected, decreasing the possibility of influence-gaining. It suggests that they can influence, but only small aspects of an issue that can be considered to be, to some extent, a big achievement at the local level.

Another factor that can strengthen this argument is that in all unsuccessful cases analyzed, the associations might not have been successful because they tried to exert directional influence. Or rather, they were not able to convince Mayors, Parliament, and central government that such a kind of structural change was needed.

Therefore, the associations seem to be more influential when they are dealing with small political aspects and less influential when dealing with large political aspects.



## **8. Conclusions**

### **8.1. Research questions**

#### **8.1.1. Central question**

- *To what extent do interest groups representing the local governments influence public policies in Brazil and the Netherlands?*

Both local government associations seem to face similar challenges to keep municipalities well prepared in dealing with their growing responsibilities and at the same time with their scarce financial resources. This picture summarizes the dimension of the associations' challenges and their responsibilities.

What could be seen from the data analyzed so far is that the associations often seemed to struggle against their main opposition, the central government. The latter, according to the findings, has almost the entire control of the countries' financial resources and does not want to transfer it so easily to the local level.

The VNG and CNM act very similarly but the former focuses its activities on the executive branch while the latter on the legislative branch.

When it comes to this condition, the Code of Inter-administrative Relations seems to offer an explanation. This gives to the VNG the possibility of discussing all policy related to the municipalities in the early stages of the process of decision-making. However, it might lead to a very problematic situation; the VNG might find itself entrapped so deeply in the central government that it seems not to be able to exert influence over the executive. According to an interviewee's statement, the VNG seems to be very much part of the policy process and therefore they do not really influence it (interviewee's statement).

Taking into consideration the data analyzed so far, this statement is likely to be very consistent, since the VNG only was able to exert a small amount of (technical) influence over the legislative rather than the executive. This might be a warning concerning all the enthusiasm in trying to influence policy in the early stage of the policy-making process.

Regarding the CNM, its environment seems to be much more conflicting, having to rely mainly on the Parliament for its activities, the main area in which it is possible for them to influence the policy outcome, is through members of Parliament and former Mayors.

Interviewees advocated that both VNG and CNM are very influential, however the findings suggest that both associations are relatively successful in technical aspects, while in directional aspects they are not so successful.

Through the data analyzed it is possible to perceive the associations' struggle for succeeding in influencing technical aspects of some issues. Sometimes they succeed fully, sometimes partially. However, when it comes to the directional influence what is noticed is that they usually fail in doing so.

Therefore, this study suggests that the local government associations might be mostly successful in technical aspects; however, regarding very complex issues in which they see the necessity of changing the core of such policy, then they are not very successful.

### **8.1.2. Sub-questions**

*a. To what degree do the financial resources, the staff size and the membership representation contribute to the association's success?*

As could be seen from the data analysis, the associations' resources seem to be very important to define the degree of influence-gaining.

First of all, if an association is not well-endowed then it is less likely that it hires well qualified professionals, spends more time trying to influence policy, and employs as many activities as possible to convince central government and Mayors and Parliament that they are correct regarding a certain subject. Therefore, this condition suggests that the association will be less likely to influence policy outcome.

However, when the association is able to hire well qualified personnel, to put more staff in an issue, to spend more time trying to influence, and to employ more activities to influence policy, then the likelihood of influence is increased.

According to the data analyzed in this study, the association's resources played an important role in gathering Mayoral support by discussing the issues and clarifying doubts. This process seems to be important in weakening the central government opposition by building up the associations' opposition.

In the successful and partially successful cases it was possible to see that when the associations are able to spend their resources strategically, a gain of Mayoral and Parliamentary support is noticed. By means of this support, the associations are more likely to influence the central government.

However, when there is a lack of the aforementioned support, a partial success or even a failure is seen. Moreover, the partially successful cases did not take so long and perhaps it could have led to a lack in the use of the associations' resources due to the length of time.

To conclude the answer to the first question, based on the cases analyzed so far, the data suggest that the resources seem to be very important to define the level of success of the associations, since they depend on it to gain support to face their challenges.

*b. What are the circumstances in which direct and indirect lobbying seem to be more likely to contribute to the success of interest groups?*

When it comes to the circumstances in which the direct and indirect lobbying is more likely to contribute to the success of the associations, what stemmed from the data was that when direct and indirect lobbying were employed at the same time, the likelihood of influence was increased. This trend can be perceived in the successful and partially successful cases. If one regards the unsuccessful cases, it can be seen that the associations usually employed only the direct lobbying.

Direct lobbying seems to be very important because the associations are able to present viewpoints based in real facts (research) by means of this tactic. Therefore, the data related to the issue of interest can be discussed in meetings to convince Members of Parliament and also officials of the central government.

Information generated by direct lobbying is also used through indirect lobbying. By means of the latter it is possible to spread information over the Mayors and population through congresses, symposiums, media, journals, letters and so forth.

The indirect lobbying seems to be more important to the VNG and CNM to keep Mayors aware of several municipal issues.

*c. To what degree do the technical and the directional influence contribute to the success in influencing policy?*

According to the findings, the technical influence seems to better contribute to the success of the associations, when compared to the directional influence. The reason for that assessment is related to the analysis of the successful and partially successful cases in which the influence exerted was only the technical one.

By means of the technical influence small and useful changes can be done in favour of the municipalities, contributing to their strengthening. However, when it comes to the directional influence, it could only be found in the unsuccessful cases, but why?

Directional changes in a policy means to change the core of the policy. When an association requires a significant change in the core of a policy then the situation seems to become much more complex, increasing the presence of vested interests and countervailing forces mainly when the content bears far-reaching policy implications.

Taking into consideration these findings, it seems to be prudent to say that the employment of only directional influence diminishes the likelihood of the association's influence.

### **8.1.3. General assessment**

Interest groups seem to be an important tool to the entire society, since they might deliver an effective opportunity for participation, for the latter, in the process of decision-making. This participation, in an organized way may be stronger and perhaps more efficient than acting alone, increasing the possibility of exerting influence on the topic desired.

However, it is quite difficult to completely understand how interest groups might influence policy outcome, mainly, when it might be exerted throughout the whole process of decision-making. Perhaps the most challenging task is not to understand how they influence, but rather to what extent they influence.

The search for understanding such phenomenon led to the study of local government associations in Brazil and the Netherlands and the reason for that choice was based on the growing importance of municipalities in the policy development (decentralization of public services).

Municipal lobbying has become a crucial activity because there are not enough resources to effectively carry out the necessary activities to guarantee the quality of life of the population. Therefore, by means of an organized representation run by specialists, municipalities are able to provide reliable information regarding the difficulties faced by the municipalities by means of discussions and presentations to the central government and Parliament, with the purpose of spreading their difficulties to stimulate the search for solutions.

The findings from this study suggest that local government associations in Brazil and the Netherlands do matter and are responsible for enhancing, to some extent, the managerial conditions of municipalities and, consequently, the quality of life of the population. This means that they are able to influence policy in certain technical aspects, in favour of the municipalities.

Unfortunately, for being a case study, the findings are not strong enough to be generalized. They are however important to contribute towards a better understanding of the influence of local government associations.

In conclusion, this research shows that local government associations in Brazil and the Netherlands are relatively successful in influencing technical aspects of policy outcome, despite the structural differences within their respective countries.

#### **8.1.4. Recommendations**

##### *Lobby groups*

This project identified that interest groups might make use of a conflicting situation within the national government in order to influence policy outcome more effectively, as highlighted in

section 5. Despite the fact that the literature of this project does not cover this situation, it seems to be reasonable to affirm that when there is a conflict between departments about the same subject, interest groups have its likelihood of influence-gaining increased significantly and interest groups thus have to make use of this opportunity to lobby those on their side.

Another important remark to be made is related to all enthusiasm about the early involvement in the policy-making process.

According to the interesting statement of the VNG's policy specialist, the VNG seems to be so much entrapped in the national government that they are no longer able to influence policy in the early stages. Although the VNG has the Code of Inter-administrative Relations which oblige the national government to discuss topics related to the municipalities in the early stage of the policy-making process, the VNG was only able to influence policy in the second stage (in the Parliament).

Therefore, it is important to warn interest groups regarding the consequences of the early involvement in the process of decision-making.

#### *Further research*

- a. In the literature, consulted studies on the contribution of lobbying to municipalities were not found. It seems to be an exciting field not yet explored. Perhaps studies focusing on the analysis of a few broad areas (for example: education, environment), aiming at gathering data from many local government associations could strengthen the possibility of generalizations;
- b. This work was based on a comparative case study and therefore its findings could not be generalized. Thus, a large-N case study would provide interesting findings which would allow the researcher to make generalizations.
- c. Finally, some scholars (Ames, 1995 and 2000; Geddes, 1994; Lamounier, 1991; Mainwaring, 1997 and 1999) advocate that members of parliament (Brazil) are interested in local issues because they focus on their re-election. Thus, a case study with the purpose of verifying whether or not this argument would be the answer for the strong support that the CNM has in the Parliament could provide very interesting results.

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## 10. Appendix

### 10.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire presented in this section is identical to the ones e-mailed to the eight local government associations and the one used in the semi-structured interviews.

#### A. Country`s characteristics

a) *Number of municipalities*

b) *Average size of municipalities*

Size of municipality	Number of inhabitants (thousands)	Number of municipalities
Small	Up to (...)	
Medium	From (...) to (...)	
Large	Above (...)	

c) *Political system*

Presidential Republic

Presidential Federal Republic

Parliamentary Republic

Parliamentary Democracy and Constitutional Monarchy

Constitutional Democracy

Other

#### B. Characteristics of the local government association

a) *When was it created?*

b) *Financial resource (budget of the last 2 years)*

Please, specify the currency

	2007	2008
Total of Expenditures		
Total of Revenue		

c) *Member revenue from the last 2 years (percentage of the budget)*

Please, specify the currency

	2007	2008

Member revenue		
Percentage of the budget		

d) *Professional staff expenditure (from the last 2 years)*

	2007	2008
Personnel expenditure		

e) *Has the local government association its own premises? (If so, please specify)*

f) *Is the remuneration compatible with the labour market? (Please, explain your answer)*

g) *Number of members from the last 2 years (municipalities)*

Data on membership	2007	2008
Percentage of <b>small municipalities</b> among members		
Percentage of <b>medium municipalities</b> among members		
Percentage of <b>large municipalities</b> among members		
Total of members		

h) *Number of employees (from the last 2 years)*

Employees	2007	2008
Number of employees		

i) *Sector domain*

- a. Public sector
- b. Private sector
- c. Cross-sector (both)
- d. Other \_\_\_\_\_

j) *Services available to members*

- a. Political representation
- b. Technical programmes
- c. Technical training to civil servants and political actors
- d. Other \_\_\_\_\_

### C. Advocate tactics

- *What is the most commonly used tactic in influencing public policy?*

The degree of use of these lobbying tactics can be evaluated by using the scale indicated:  
very low; low; medium; high; very high

*C..1. Direct lobbying*

presenting research or technical information;  
contacting government officials to present viewpoint;  
helping to draft legislation;  
speaking with congressional leaders;  
lobbying members of the committees to which the bill was referred;  
making financial contributions to candidates; and  
supporting candidates with work or personnel.  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation:

*C..2. Indirect lobbying*

engaging in protests or demonstrations;  
engaging in grassroots lobbying;  
running advertisements;  
speaking with the press;  
setting up congresses;  
mobilizing the public awareness;  
publicizing a candidate's voting record;  
making public endorsements of candidates likely to favour your position; and  
Others

Evaluation:

- *Type of influence*

C..1. Which type of influence is used most, institutionally?

C..1.1. **Directional influence** (when the association intends to change the political core of the policy)

C..1.1.1. If this is the case, is the degree of conflict with decision-makers high? Please, explain your answer.

C..1.2. **Technical influence** (when the influence is only related to technical aspects of the policy). Please, explain your answer.

C..1.3. **Both directional and technical** (Please, explain your answer)

**D. Understanding how the association operates.**

- Describe *two* cases in which the association has **fully** succeeded in achieving its aim
- Area of the case:  
Education/finance/infra-structure/labour/environment/other (specify)
- Characteristic of the issue at hand:
  - Far reaching policy implications: yes or no
  - A large number of vested interests: yes or no
  - High level of public awareness: yes or no
  - The presence of countervailing forces: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other
- Aim of the local government association:
- Explaining the necessary linkages to the executive, legislative, bureaucracy, and local governments, if any:
- Activities undertaken in order to achieve its aims:
- Determining the level of conflict with policy-makers, according to the association's viewpoint:  
Very low; low; medium; high; very high
- Outcome:
- What were found to be the necessary conditions when attempting to determine the success of policy influence?
  
- Describe *two* cases in which the association has **partially** succeeded in achieving its aim
- Area of the case:  
Education/finance/infra-structure/labour/environment/other (specify)

- Characteristic of the issue at hand:
  - Far reaching policy implications: yes or no
  - A large number of vested interests: yes or no
  - High level of public awareness: yes or no
  - The presence of countervailing forces: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other
- Aim of the local government association:
- Explaining the necessary linkages to the executive, legislative, bureaucracy, and local governments, if any:
- Activities undertaken in order to achieve its aims:
- Determining the level of conflict with policy-makers, according to the association's viewpoint:
 

Very low; low; medium; high; very high
- Outcome:
- Which factors led only to partial success?
  
- *Describe **four** cases in which the association has **not** succeeded in achieving its aim*
- Area of the case:
 

Education/finance/infra-structure/labour/environment/other (specify)
- Characteristic of the issue at hand:
  - Far reaching policy implications
  - A large number of vested interests
  - High level of public awareness
  - The presence of countervailing forces: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other
- Aim of the local government association:
- Explaining the necessary linkages to the executive, legislative, bureaucracy, and local governments, if any:
- Activities undertaken in order to achieve its aims:

- Determining the level of conflict with policy-makers, according to the association's viewpoint:  
Very low; low; medium; high; very high
- Outcome:
- What were the factors which obstructed the achievement of the intended aims?

#### **E. General questions**

- Could you estimate how successful the Association is and under what conditions?
- Under what circumstances was it hard to achieve its aims?
- In general, how would you evaluate the influential success of the association in the policy-making process?
- What is the role of the local government association in influencing policy?
- What are the links of the local government association with the parliament, the government and the bureaucracy? How does the pursuit of influencing start, by Parliament, Executive or Bureaucracy?