

Coping with Corporatism in Decline and the Revival of Parliament: Interest Group Lobbyism in Denmark and Norway, 1980-2005

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Scandinavian Corporatism at a Crossroad?

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Publications:

P. M. Christiansen, A. S. Nørgaard, H. Rommetvedt, T. Svensson, G. Thesen, and PO. Öberg:

Varieties of Democracy: Interest Groups and Corporatist Committees in Scandinavian Policy Making. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2010, 22-40.

PO. Öberg, T. Svensson, P. M. Christiansen, A. S. Nørgaard, H. Rommetvedt, and G. Thesen:

Disrupted Exchange and Declining Corporatism: Government Authority and Interest Group Capability in Scandinavia. *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 2011, 365-391.

H. Rommetvedt, G. Thesen, P. M. Christiansen, and A. S. Nørgaard:

Coping with Corporatism in Decline and the Revival of Parliament: Interest Group Lobbyism in Denmark and Norway, 1980-2005.

The traditional picture of Scandinavia: decline of parliaments and strong corporatist traditions

- Lord Bryce: Decline of legislatures
- Rokkan: Votes count, but resources decide
- Schmitter: Societal corporatism best exemplified by the cases of Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, **Norway and Denmark**

Corporatism and lobbyism

(Christiansen et al. in *Voluntas*, 21, 2010)

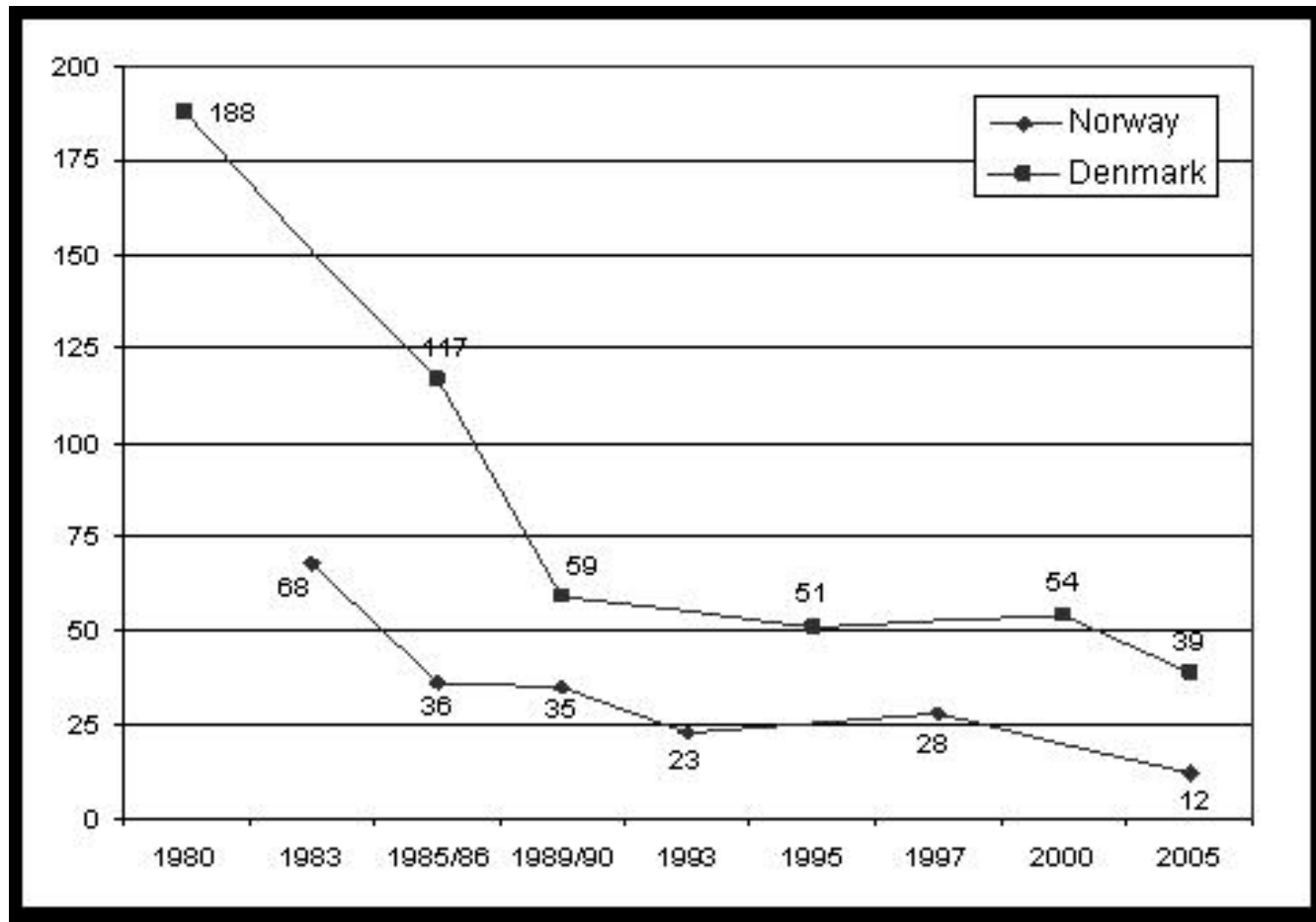
- *Political economy school*: corporatism as a variety of capitalism
- *Interest group school*: corporatism as a variety of liberal democracy
 - *Corporatism: institutionalized and privileged integration of organized interests in the preparation and/or implementation of public policies*
 - *Lobbyism: non-institutionalized and non-privileged participation in the preparation and/or implementation of public policies*

Changing relationships between organized interests and public authorities

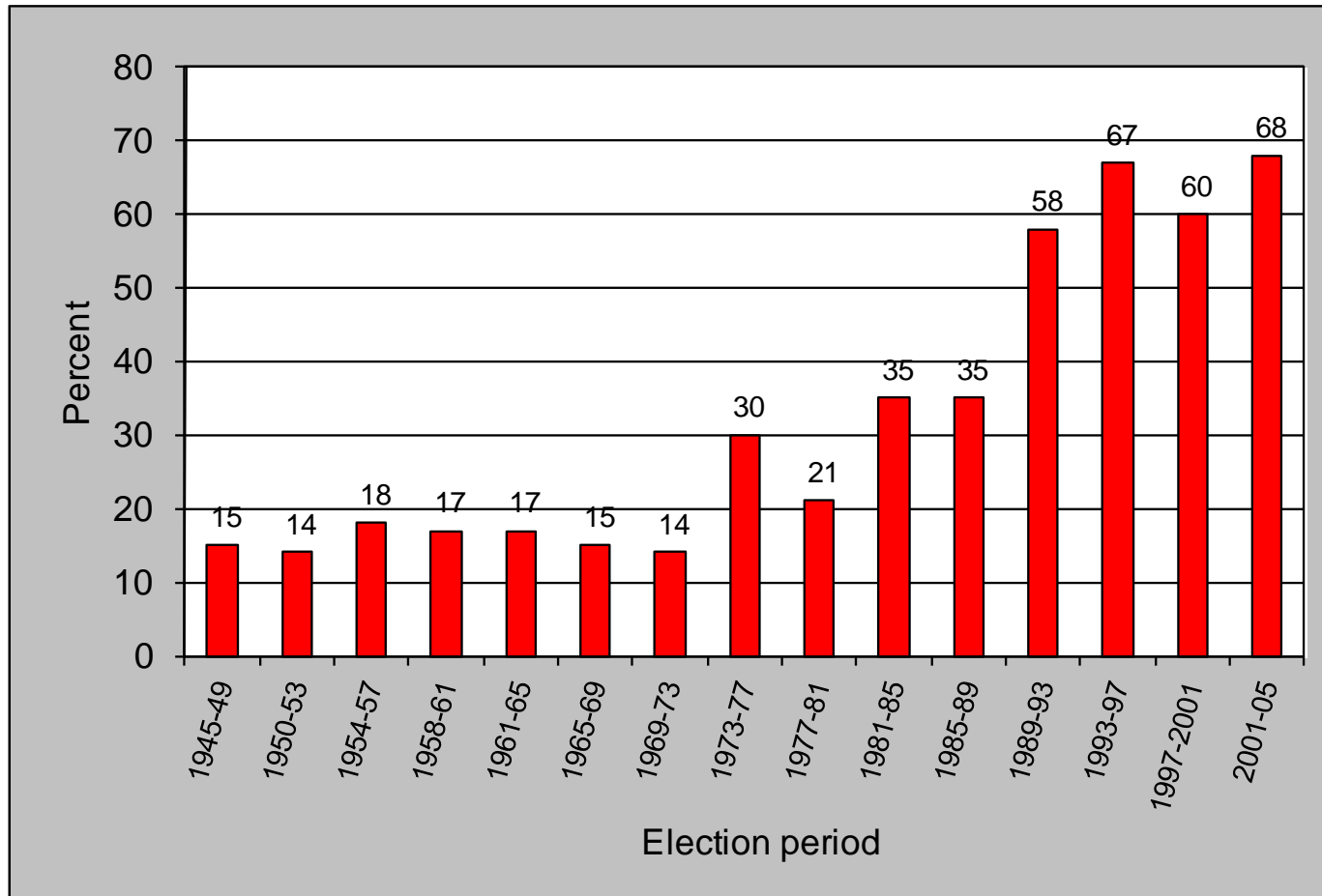
- *Push* factors are environmental changes that drive actors away from a strategy, e.g. by blocking previous channels of influence
- *Pull* factors are changes that draw actors in new directions because new promising venues for political influence are opened
- The *push* factor: *corporatism in decline*
- The *pull* factor: *revival of parliaments*



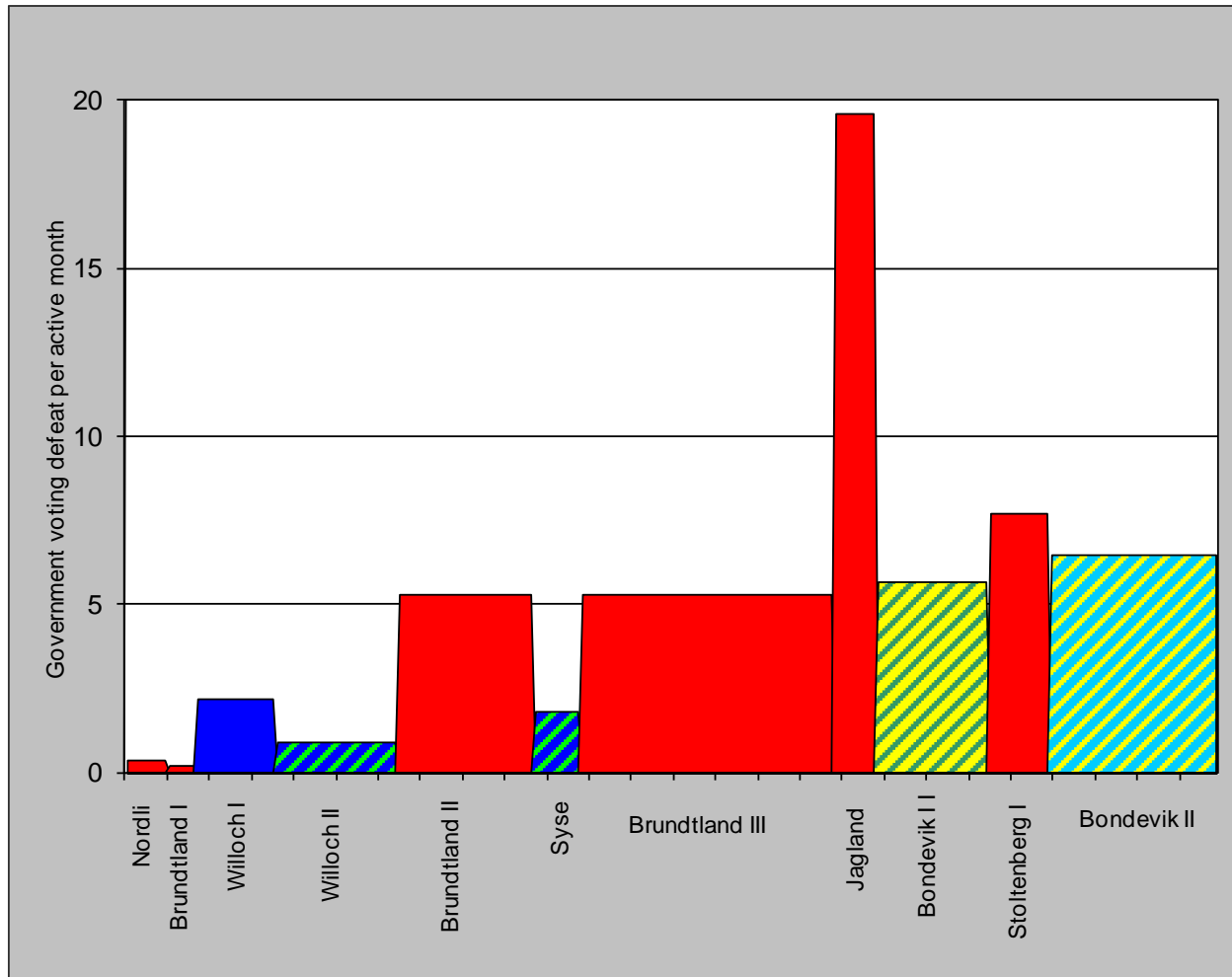
Figure 1. Corporatist policy preparation committees in Denmark and Norway (public committees with at least one interest group representative)



Norwegian Parliament: Committee recommendations with dissent



Norwegian government defeats in parliamentary voting (number of defeats per active months in Parliament 1979-2005)

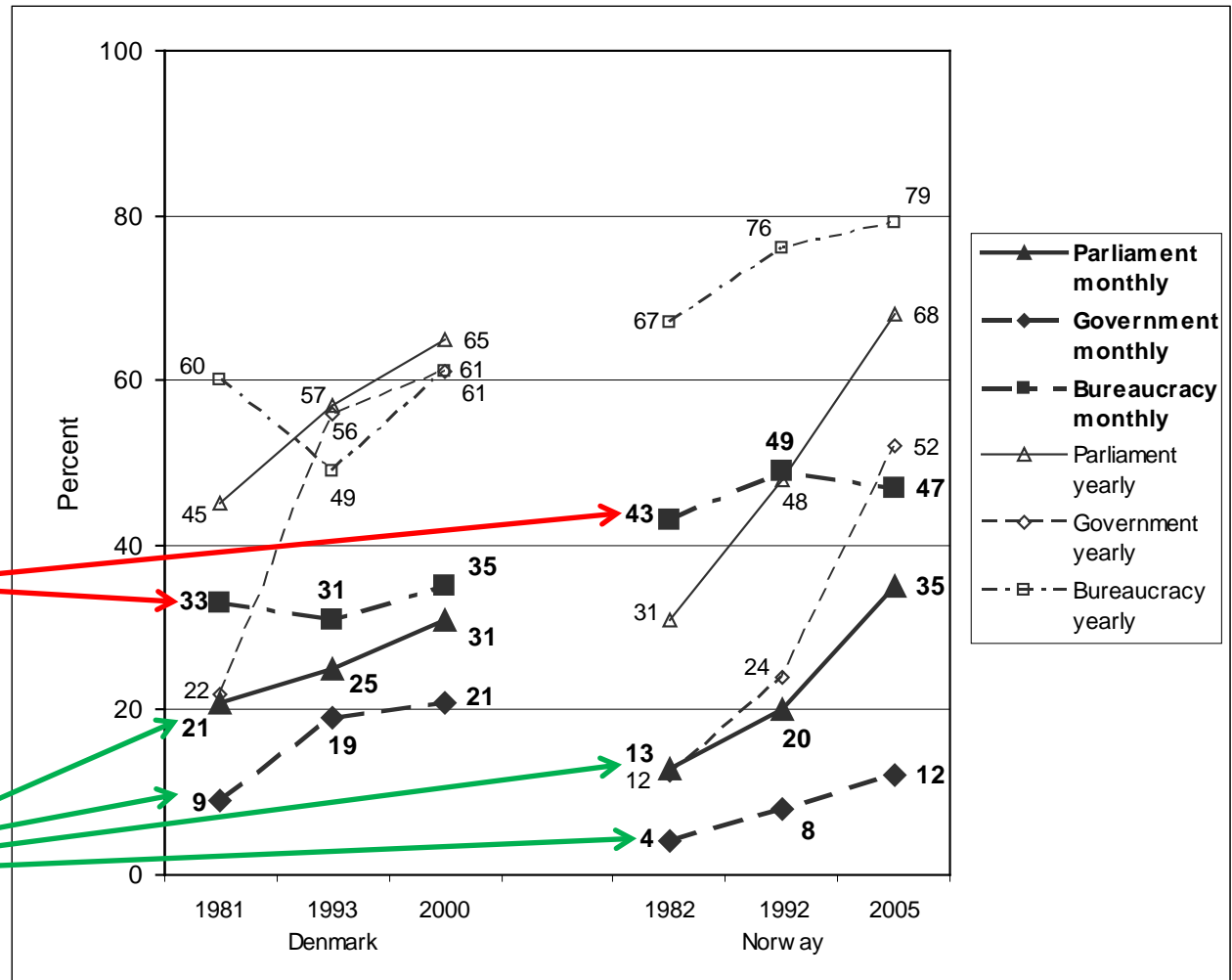


How do Danish and Norwegian interest groups cope with the combined effect of push and pull ?

(decline of corporatism and revival of parliaments)

- P_1 : *due to the decreasing number of policy preparing committees with interest group members, interest groups will increase their lobbying efforts vis-à-vis public authorities.*
- P_2 : *interest groups will compensate for the decline in corporatism by increasing their lobbying of civil servants in the government bureaucracy.*
- P_3 : *lobbying efforts vis-à-vis civil servants will drop when corporatism declines, either in absolute terms or, at least, relative to political lobbyism, i.e. lobbyism directed at government and/or parliament.*
- P_4 : *interest groups will increasingly lobby both the government and members of parliament.*
- P_5 : *parliamentary lobbyism will increase more than governmental lobbyism.*
- P_6 : *the trend towards more parliamentary lobbying will be stronger in Norway than in Denmark.*

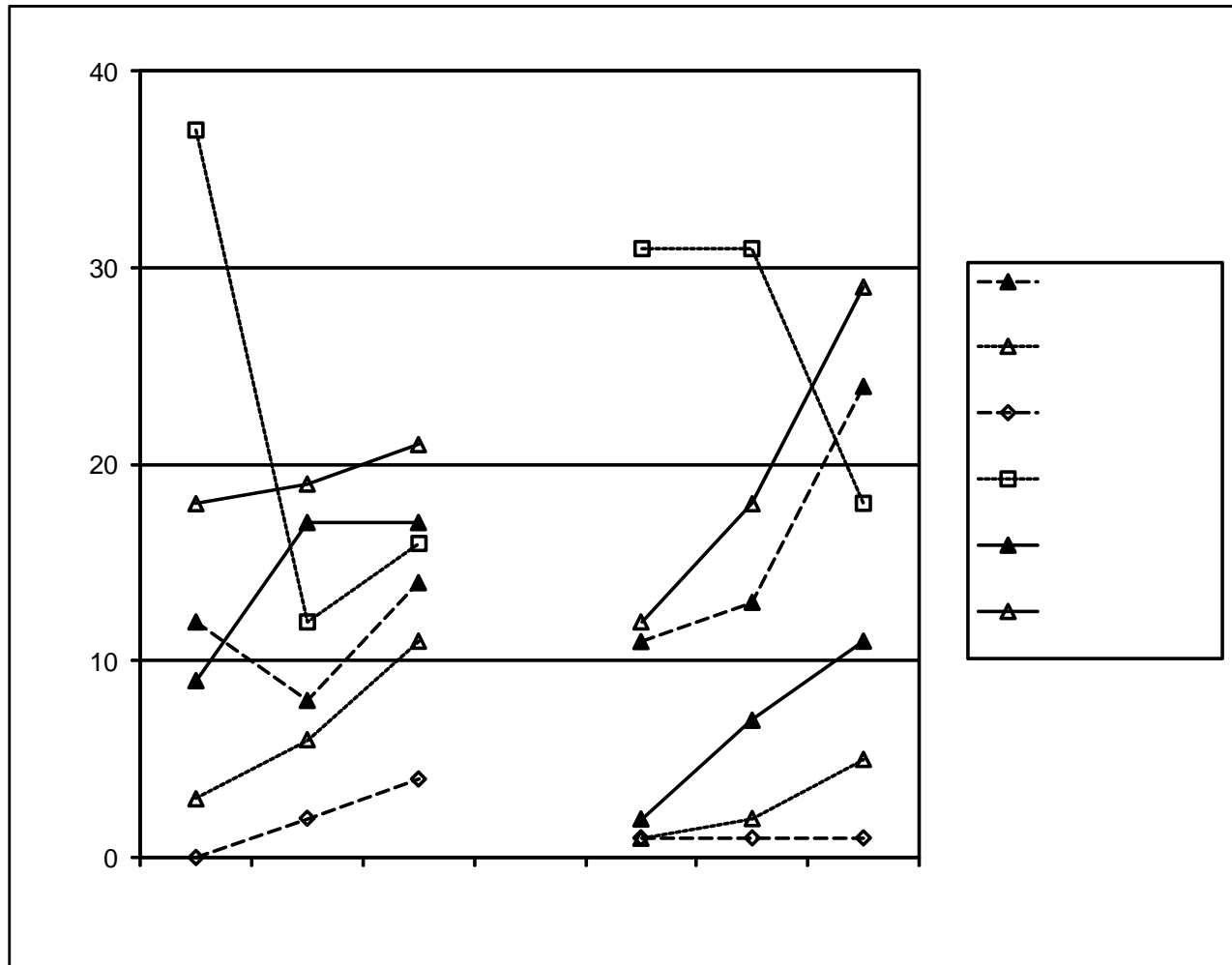
Figure 2. Danish and Norwegian interest groups with at least monthly or yearly contacts with public authorities. Per cent



P2 not supported

P1, P3, P4, P6 supported
P5 mixed support

Figure 3. Selected combinations of at least monthly contacts with public authorities in Denmark and Norway. Per cent of all interest groups in each country



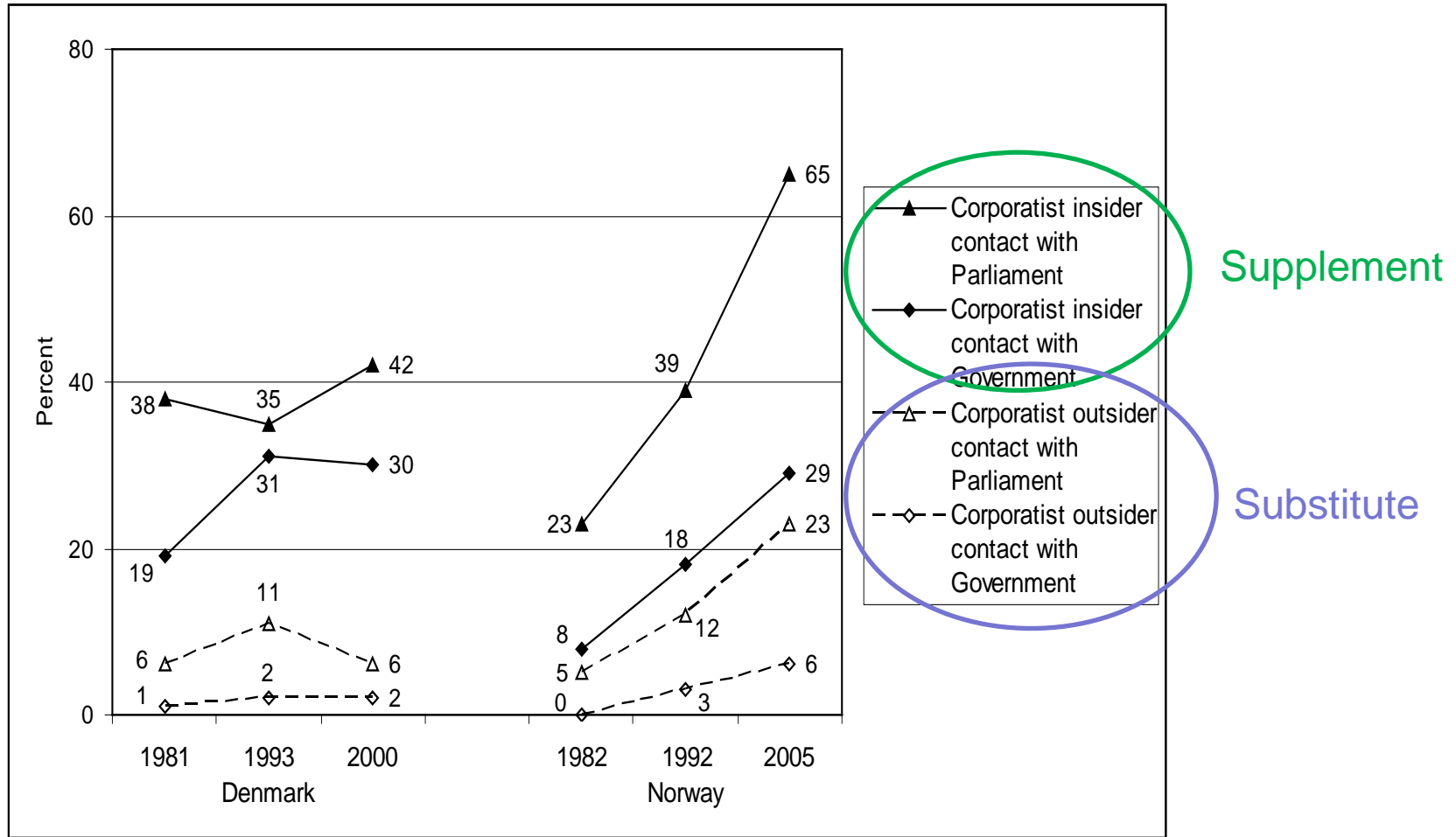
Parliamentary lobbying:

- *substitute* for the lack of corporatism?

or

- *supplement* to corporatist representation?
- Substitute: only corporatist 'outsiders' (*not* represented in committees) lobby parliament
- Supplement: corporatist 'insiders' (represented in committees) lobby parliament

Figure 4. Interest group contacts with parliament and government among 'corporatist insiders' and 'corporatist outsiders' in Denmark and Norway. Per cent with at least monthly contact



Supplement

Substitute

Conclusions

- Interest group participation in corporatist policy preparing committees has declined dramatically since the early 1980s.
- In the period we have analysed (1980-2005) the Danish *Folketinget* and the Norwegian *Stortinget* became politically more powerful.
- The decline of corporatism and revival of parliaments have changed the strategic terrain in which influence-seeking interest groups operate.
- Bureaucratic lobbyism has been supplemented, and in some cases substituted by political lobbyism.
- The strengthening of parliaments has pulled interest groups in the direction of more parliamentary lobbying.
- But governments normally have the policy initiative and are therefore still politically important for interest groups.
- Highly institutionalized corporatist policy making privileges have been replaced by a more pluralist policy making pattern in which interest groups compete for influence.
- However, insiders in both countries are considerably more active in the lobbies of parliament and government than outsider interest groups.