

**The lobby of a province
in the Committee of the Regions
and the effect of
the internal organisation**

Claudia van der Pol
5576687
European Governance
University of Utrecht
Masaryk University

Supervisors:
Prof. dr. S. Princen
Mgr. V. Havlík , Ph.D

Honest statement:

I, Claudia van der Pol, hereby declare that I have worked on this thesis independently and it is entirely my own work. It has not been taken from the work of others save to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work. All sources of information and referenced used in this thesis are listed at the end of the text.

In Nijmegen, 30-08-2015, Claudia van der Pol

Table of contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1 Background and introduction	5
1.2 Research question and sub questions	7
1.3 Social/administrative and scientific relevance	8
1.4 Reader's guide	9
2. Theory	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Effective lobby	10
2.3 Strategies for policy oriented lobby	14
2.4 Strategies for instrumental/network lobby	17
2.5 Internal organisation and lobby	18
2.6 Conclusion	21
3. Methods	23
3.1 General approach	23
3.2 Operationalization	25
3.3 Interviews	26
3.4 Document analysis	28
3.5 Overview	29
4. Empirical chapter	31
4.1 The Committee of the Regions and its mission	31
4.2 What goals would the province of Utrecht like to achieve in the Committee of the Regions?	34
4.3 Does the province attain its objectives in the Committee of the Regions?	37
4.4 To what extent have the activities of the province contributed to the attainment of the goals regarding the Committee of the Regions?	39
4.5 How is the Province of Utrecht internally organised?	41
4.6 What does the lobby strategy of the Province in the Committee of the Regions look like?	44

4.7 What are the styles/ways of communication within the province of Utrecht regarding their participation in the Committee of the Regions?	45
4.8 To what extent do the internal organization with the communication styles, and lobby strategy of the province contribute to the achievement of the provincial goals concerning the Committee of the Regions?	47
5. Conclusion	50
5.1 General conclusion	50
5.1.1 Goals	50
5.1.2 Activities	53
5.1.3 Internal organisation	54
5.2 Implications and recommendations for the Province of Utrecht	55
5.3 Implications for scientific debate and implications for our understanding of the role of the province in the EU	58
Bibliography	60
Appendix	61

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and introduction

Regions have become more and more important in the EU when it comes to implementing European policies. Nowadays they implement between 60% and 80% of policies stemming from the European Union (Moore 2008). The European Commission has not failed to notice this trend. The Commission has been a promoter of regional mobilization at the EU level. For this, there are several reasons. Firstly, the Commission emphasizes that regions may be able to enhance the relation of the EU and its citizens, since regions are more closely linked to the citizens. Also, regions can promote EU membership and its benefits towards citizens and bolster communication of these benefits in the process. Moreover, regional mobilization at the EU level accounts for more actors involved in the policy-making process, which adjusts the influence of the member states of the EU (Keating, 1998 and Cini & Borragán, 2010). Concepts as multi-level governance and Europeanisation come to mind to explain the increased importance and influence of the regions at the EU level.

The concept of multi-level governance stresses the idea that no longer only national executives monopolise European decision-making procedures, as states are not the exclusive link between domestic politicians and intergovernmental bargaining at the EU level (Marks et al., 1996 & Van den Berg, 2011). It stresses the changing relationships between local, subnational and national actors, both from the private and public sectors. Moreover, the perspective emphasizes that informal bargaining between numerous actors, irrespective of them being individuals, institutions, public or private at the various levels, is at least as decisive as formal power relations are. The multi-level governance perspective encourages a view that politics and administration are thought of as multi-level and as a co-production of the various actors included (Van den Berg, 2011). Closely linked to multi-level governance is the principle of subsidiarity, which emphasizes that decisions should be made as close to the citizens as possible. The principle safeguards that action at the EU level is justified with regard to possibilities at national, regional or local level (Van den Berg, 2011).

Europeanisation is a specific aspect of multi-level governance. It covers the domestic implications and impact of the European integration process. Europeanisation involves the interactions between the EU and its member states or third countries (Cini

& Borragán, 2010). Or as Bache and Jordan (2006) explain the concept:

“Europeanisation is the reorientation or reshaping of politics and administration in the domestic arena in ways that reflect structures, policies, and practices advanced through the EU system of governance”. Such an explanation implies that regions would change their structures, policies and practices in order to fit the EU structures of governance.

With the introduction of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 an important step was set towards institutional recognition of the functioning of multi-level governance in the EU, which increased the role of regions at the EU level (Van den Berg, 2011).

There are several ways for a region to represent their interests. Via channels like ministers, prime ministers, Members of the European Parliament or via the European Commission regions could try to get their interests across. Another channel is via the Committee of the Regions. In the Netherlands, representatives of the provinces and municipalities participate in the Committee of the Regions. This Committee solely represents the regions in Europe to let them have a voice at the European playing field. It is an advisory committee for the other EU institutions. However, since the Lisbon Treaty came into force in 2007 The Committee of the Regions has to be consulted on subjects that refer to regional issues before any legislation can be adopted that have an impact on the regions. These subjects are economic and social cohesion, trans-European networks, health, education and culture, employment, social policy, environment, vocational training, transport, civil protection, climate change and energy. Moreover, nowadays the Committee of the Regions has the competence to monitor compliance of the subsidiarity principle, and has the ability to go to the Court of Justice when the principle has been breached according to the Committee (COR).

The Committee of the Regions is an institutionalized forum for regions to represent their interests. A method of representing your interests is lobbying. The term ‘lobbying’ regularly holds a negative connotation. It is often associated with sneaky arrangements and deals behind closed doors. Mostly, lobbying is an activity that takes place outside direct publicity and therefore reinforces its image. Surely, lobbyists try to get their interests across to decision-makers and try to influence the policy process (Van der Vleuten, 2010).

Essential for lobbyists is to create networks and coalitions, and to determine which strategy will be enforced to gain influence. Other than these tasks it depends on

the subject, the opportunities of the region and whom they want to influence what lobby method is most effective (Van der Vleuten, 2010).

Regions try to wield their opportunities in the EU and in the Committee of the Regions as effectively and efficiently as possible. This raises the question how regions could do this. Different elements are of importance here like who is the member that takes place in the Committee, and what the lobby strategy looks like. The actors responsible for these elements are part of the organisation (region), which is represented in the Committee of the Regions. These actors contribute to the (effective) participation in the Committee. Yet, little is known about how different actors of a region could cooperate together in order to operate effectively in the Committee of the Regions.

This thesis will describe what is of importance in an organisation, or the internal organisation, to promote an effective operation in the Committee of the Regions. The region central in this research is the Dutch province, since all provinces are members of the Committee of the Regions. Six provinces participate in the Committee as full members, while the other six provinces participate as alternate members. However, an alternate member is still a member of a commission of the Committee of the Regions and therefore a member of the Committee itself.

1.2 Research question and sub questions

The research question central in this thesis is: *How can the internal organisation of the province contribute to operate effectively in the Committee of the Regions?*

The central concepts in this research are:

- *Internal organisation*: this concept entails the organisation of the province. Of special importance are the different actors involved with the Committee of the Regions, notably the deputy as a member of the Committee, the representative or lobbyist of the province, the EU representative at the House of the Province, and the different clusters/departments of the province
- *Province*: this denotes the Dutch province as an organisation
- *Effectivity*: the extent of goal achievement
- *Operating*: lobbying, networking, establishment of useful contacts, gaining information and exchanging information

In order to be able to answer the research question, first these sub questions will be answered.

The first sub question is: What is the mission or vision of the Committee of the Regions, and how does it relate to the goals of the province at the EU level?

The second sub question is: What goals does the Province of Utrecht want to achieve in the Committee of the Regions?

The third sub question is: Does the Province attain its objectives in the Committee of the Regions?

The fourth sub question is: To what extent have the activities of the province contributed to the attainment of the goals regarding the Committee of the Regions?

The fifth sub question is: How is the Province of Utrecht internally organised?

The sixth sub question is: What does the lobby strategy of the Province of Utrecht in the Committee of the Regions look like?

The seventh sub question is: What are the styles/ways of communication within the Province of Utrecht regarding their participation in the Committee of the Regions?

And the last sub question is: To what extent do the internal organisation with the communication styles, and lobby strategy of the province contribute to the achievement of the provincial goals concerning the Committee of the Regions?

1.3 Social/administrative and scientific relevance

The social relevance of this research expresses itself in the position of the province and the Committee of the Regions. The European Union is a partner of increased importance for regions and the EU receives more attention from media and citizens, in either a positive or negative way. Due to decentralisation of government tasks to decentralised authorities like the province, the EU comes closer to its citizens. The Committee of the Regions also brings the EU closer to its citizens by the inclusion of regional representatives in the EU decision-making process. The interactions between regions and the EU have changed, and this research will elaborate on what they look like at the moment

In addition, this research has an administrative relevance. This is expressed by the value for the province as an organisation. By means of this research the province will gain insights in the opportunities the organisation has to operate more effectively in the Committee of the Regions. The province of Utrecht has the ambition to seize the opportunities the EU offers them effectively (Coalitieakkoord Provincie Utrecht 2011-2015). Besides, recommendations will offer them the tools to employ the opportunities.

The scientific relevance of this research manifests itself in literature concerning the role of regional authorities in the EU, in the application of organizational theory and interdependency theory in a public organisation, and in literature concerning lobby strategies in the EU. Organizational theory and interdependency theory stem from the private sector and are used to describe what organizations should look like to be most effective in achieving their goals and underline the importance of cooperation between different actors of departments in an organisation to operate effectively. This research will employ these theories to a public organisation, a province, which has not been done before.

A new element regarding lobby strategies in the EU is the link of the lobby strategies with the internal organisation of the province. This link has not been offered in much literature yet.

The contribution to literature regarding the role of regional authorities in the EU is the analysis of how regional authorities can most effectively benefit from an operation in the Committee of the Regions.

1.4 Reader's guide

The second chapter will explore the theoretical framework of this research and will outline the relation between effective lobbying and the internal organisation of the province. First it will describe what effective lobbying encompasses, after which different strategies for lobbying will be specified. Lastly the relation between effective lobbying and the internal organisation of the province will be illustrated.

The third chapter will address the different methods that are used in this research. These include interviews and document analysis.

The fourth chapter contains the empirical results of the research and will assess what the relation between the internal organisation and effective lobbying looks like in practice.

The fifth chapter contains the conclusion of the research and recommendations for the province to employ in order to operate more effectively in the Committee of the Regions.

Chapter 2: Theory

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the theoretical underpinnings of the research concepts will be interpreted. To answer the research question literature will be consulted to identify the different concepts and describe the relationships between the concepts. Three concepts are central in this framework, which are related to the research question, which are 'effectiveness', 'operating' and 'internal organisation'. The emphasis in this theoretical framework is the relation of these concepts to lobbying.

First, in the second section the concept 'effective' will be examined, specifically in the context of what effective lobbying entails. A result will be that there are two types of goals for lobby activities. The two types of goals for lobby activities need strategies to accomplish their goals. These strategies will be discussed in the third and fourth section. The strategies are linked to the concept 'operating'.

Finally, the relationship between the 'internal organisation' and effective lobbying will be explained. The emphasis is on what the internal organisation of the province should look like to operate effectively in the Committee of the Regions.

The conclusion of the chapter will explain the key lessons learned from the theories and what insights, expectations or questions will return in the empirical research later on in chapter 4.

2.2 Effective lobby

One of the central concepts of this research is effectiveness. In the research question the term is linked to the concept 'operating'. Since this concept will be discussed in the next section, for now effectiveness will be linked to lobbying in general, because lobbying is the main form of operation in the Committee of the Regions.

When talking about some action being effective, it is usually meant that the action has accomplished the goal that was set for the action to be accomplished. Likewise, the dictionary explains effectiveness as 'producing the intended or expected result'.

The question arises if lobbying is only considered effective when the intended results/ the goals have been accomplished? Maybe effectiveness of the lobby activities depends on the goals that have been set, or are there other standards for lobby activities to be effective?

In light of lobbying in the Committee of the Regions, it can be said that there are two types of goals for lobby activities. The first type regards lobby activities aimed at influencing policy. In the context of the Committee of the Regions this means that lobby activities may be aimed at influencing the proposals or recommendations of the Committee. The second type of goals for lobby activities in the Committee of the Regions is more instrumental and relational in a way that it regards lobby activities as a way to build useful relations and networks, as well as gaining useful information and exchange this information in your networks. The accumulated knowledge and networks could be used for lobby activities elsewhere (Mastenbroek, 2013). In this research these type of goals will be called intermediate goals, as they are used for purposes beyond the Committee of the Regions. Figure 1 shows a graphic relation of the different types of goals and the input of the organisation.

The first type of goals, influencing policies, doesn't necessarily have the intention to lead to the removal of undesirable proposals, as it may as well achieve to lead in small amendments to the proposal, creating exceptions (for example when the costs for particular regions are disproportional high), or to postpone implementation of a policy to create more time for a province to prepare itself (Mastenbroek, 2013).

Mastenbroek (2013) recognises two forms of influencing EU policies: preventing regulatory constraints and creating opportunities. Regarding the prevention of regulatory constraint: according to Moore (2008) around 60% to 80% of local and regional policy is rooted in EU policy. Although it is difficult to estimate the precise influence, it is clear that Brussels to a great extent shapes the framework for regional authorities to operate in. These policies are not always favourable for regional authorities. Examples are adverse financial or administrative consequences.

The other form for influencing EU policies is to create opportunities. This may involve the manifestation of important themes for the province. Mastenbroek (2013) underlines the importance of proactive involvement on prioritised dossiers to help realise the desired policy. A specific example of creating opportunities concerns the influencing of policies regarding subsidies or funds (the goals, criteria and preconditions thereof), to maximize the possibility of attainment of these subsidies or funds.

The ultimate goal of a lobby activity is that a desired result, its objective or goal has been accomplished. Yet, in practice a lobbyist or lobby group may already be content with less than the desired result. For example, he may feel satisfied with a good

compromise from the EU. The substantive objectives could vary per actor and per situation. Though, the ultimate goal remains the desired result or outcome for the lobby activity and therefore success remains measured by the extent of the goal achievement. The best way to establish success is to confirm a causal relationship between the lobby activity and the EU outcome. It has to be noted that a lobby activity does not necessarily mean that an action has been undertaken or that something has been done, as it could also mean that nothing has been done and the lobbyist just waits and sees what happens. Be that as it may, this causality is always difficult to ascertain. Not in the least because of the factor time, as between the activity and the outcome time has passed which gave other stakeholders the opportunity to interfere and influence the situation. Also he will never know what the outcome would have been when he would refrain from actively interfering (van Schendelen, 2005).

As an alternative and second-best measurement approach, one can focus on plausibility instead of causality. In this way, some dependency of the EU outcome on the lobby activity may be ascertained. A way of doing this is to apply the 'before and after' method. To do so, first you compare the lobby targets with the EU outcome, and try to determine, as plausible and good as possible the relationship between the two. Secondly, you explain the outcome with the other stakeholder's targets. Subsequently, it will be demonstrated if a lobbyist plausibly served as a factor influence or not (van Schendelen, 2005).

When talking about how to measure success of a lobby activity it is essential to keep the goals of the lobby activity in mind, as success is measured in the degree of goal achievement. As stated above, a lobby activity aims to influence or make a difference as preferred. Still a lobby activity could also serve a different purpose.

The lobby activities could also serve more instrumental and relational oriented goals. These refer to the second type of goals for lobby activities in the Committee of the Regions. These goals are more instrumental in a way that they regard lobby activities as a way to build useful relations and networks, as well as gaining useful information and exchange this information in your networks. The accumulated knowledge and networks could be used for lobby activities elsewhere (Mastenbroek, 2013).

The information element stresses the importance for the Province to be up to date with what's new and happening in Brussels in order to avoid a surprise from Brussels, and know your working environment, the context. For these reasons, it is

favourable for a province to gain as much information and knowledge about the European policy process as possible. These are important resources and intermediate goals for the Province. An important motivator to gain information and knowledge is the ability to influence the European policy process more effectively. The EU policy process is known to be relatively opaque. Since the European Commission only has a limited staff of civil servants for support, the Commission is open towards ideas from diverse actors, which are able to propose recommendations on the various subjects (Mastenbroek, 2013).

Furthermore, gaining information and knowledge is important to set priorities. It's not possible for a province to be active and involved in and on every commission in the Committee of the Regions, thus it is best to select and focus on specific dossiers. To be able to do this, it's pivotal to know which subjects touch on the interests and competences of the province. Moreover, it is necessary to estimate the chance of success of influencing the policy process, taking into account the available resources and the development/ course of the policy process. Sometimes it may be better to not interfere and try to influence the policy process, but focus the available time and resources on a different dossier (Mastenbroek, 2013).

Lastly, the network element of the instrumental function of lobbying in the Committee of the Regions encompasses the acquiring and maintaining of contacts, which may be conducive to the interests of the province. These contacts may be with different regions in or outside of the Netherlands, with civil servants of the EU in Brussels, politicians or interest groups. For a province, having a good network is useful for several reasons. Firstly, a good network helps to fulfil the other function, as contacts may help each other to gain and share information, and to influence policies at the right time, in the right place (Huggins, n.d.). However, in practice a lobbyist may already be content with less than the desired result. For example, he may feel satisfied when he gained respect from stakeholders (Van Schendelen, 2005). This could be an intermediate goal as well. Secondly, a network may be wielded to exchange best practices and experiences. Moreover, cross border contacts could be useful to set up a transboundary network. These networks could subsequently be used for lobby activities elsewhere (Mastenbroek, 2013).

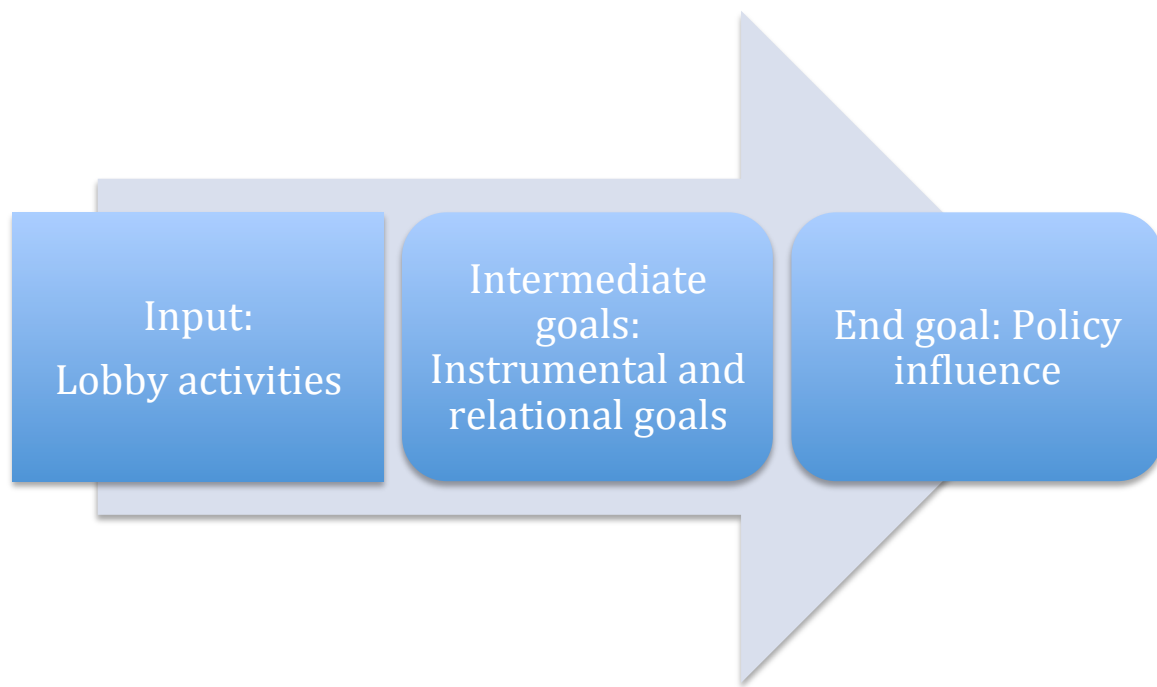


Figure 1.

The next sections will discuss the different strategies available to the province to operate in the Committee of the Regions. They will be divided in two different sections in line with the two different functions of lobby activities. _

2.3 Strategies for policy oriented lobby

This section as well as the next section will discuss the concept ‘operating’, which is one of the key concepts of this research. It focuses on how a province could operate in the Committee of the Regions. Lobbying is the method of operation in the Committee of the Regions. However, lobbying can be done in several ways. There are different lobby techniques a lobbyist can choose from when he wants to influence the EU environment. The best strategy to influence policy in the EU is direct lobbying (Coen, 2007). This is considered a better strategy in comparison to passively lobbying or anticipatory lobbying, because by direct lobbying the actors take action to influence the EU policy (Farnell, 1994). Van Schendelen (2005) identifies different techniques linked to the direct lobby (Coen, 2007). This research will elaborate on traditional lobby techniques and on new ones.

Van Schendelen (2005) identifies a couple techniques as traditional ones. The first technique is the use of ‘coercion’. An example is the European Commission through

EU legislation, as it coerces Member States to comply with EU law and thus could be coerced to change their national laws in favour of compliance. For the provinces this strategy could not be employed in the Committee of the Regions, as there is no hierarchical differentiation between the members of the Committee and it cannot force others to cooperate with the province.

A second traditional technique is 'encapsulation'. Encapsulation means that major stakeholders are more dependent, via nomination of their position as leader, or by giving them a budget. The stakeholders are also subordinates in this approach, similar to the coercion technique. Another method to keep them subordinate is to establish decision-making procedures, but it's a more subtle way. The EU uses the technique of encapsulation when subsidies are granted to organizations. It grants the subsidies and in return the organization gets things done the way the EU wants it being done (van Schendelen, 2005). Just as the first strategy, this strategy cannot be used by the province in the Committee of the Regions, as the members of the Committee are equals. Moreover, the Province has no subsidies to grant in the Committee to sway other members of the Committee.

'Argumentation' is the last one of the old techniques to influence the European environment. Argumentation as a lobby technique is often used when important stakeholders are undecided, or when stakeholders have not yet taken any position since the issue is still in its early phase, or the issue gets media attention and people want to hear arguments regarding their position, and lastly argumentation is used when the issue needs an upgrade in a sense that the issue is presented as a more public interest. Still, the effectiveness of the argumentation technique depends on the sales talk of the lobbyist. Through the use of logic and ostensibly intellectual reasoning, the lobbyist tries to make his case and convince the other with their arguments. Besides the quality of the sales talk the impact of the argument also depends on the credibility of it (van Schendelen, 2005).

Nowadays, the traditional techniques are still used in practice, but lobbyists realize they are no longer sufficient to achieve the EU outcomes they prefer. These techniques are based on the belief that one has the ability to coerce, encapsulate, overrule or convince others to do what you find desirable. The lobbyist would in a way be superior to the other lobbyists. New techniques have come to light in the name of public affairs management. It is the claimed answer to the so-called arrogant

attitude of the four traditional techniques. The public affairs of a lobbyist concern his external agenda. Simply put, the external agenda refers to the interests to be promoted and protected by influencing the EU environment. The objective of PAM is the same as for the other techniques, which is to influence the EU environment. The new elements of the techniques regard specific internal preparatory homework and the more subtle ways of influence (van Schendelen, 2005). The internal preparatory homework refers to the internal organisation element of this research, which will be discussed in section 2.5.

The specific internal preparatory homework is implied in these techniques for the external influence process. The assumption is that before the environment can be influenced, the organisation has to prepare itself for the game. Examples of doing this are constructing an arena analysis, or making a short list of priorities (van Schendelen, 2005).

The other new element of the PAM techniques is the more subtle ways of influencing the environment. They direct their influence attempts not only towards the environment, but they are also interactively intertwined with the environment. They go window-in and window-out (van Schendelen, 2005).

So, there are several ways for a lobbyist to lobby for their interests at EU level. Yet, these are general lobby approaches, though regarding lobbying to influence policy. For this research, we now take a look at what a province can do when they operate in the Committee of the Regions, with regard to policy oriented lobbying and with a focus on whom to lobby.

The province wants to influence EU policies, and through lobbying in the Committee of the Regions this goal could be realized, although the impact of the recommendations/ proposals of the Committee is questionable due to the legal status as a EU advisory body. Still influencing policy is a type of goal for provinces, and there are several ways to make this goal feasible. The best strategy is linked to the position of the person whom to lobby to for your interests. In the Committee of the Regions, there are positions with influence of the policy process.

The key people of the Committee of the Regions hold the position of (shadow) rapporteur, the coordinators of the political parties and the chairmen of the commissions, national delegations and fractions. These are the people with influence in the Committee because they are responsible for the proposals/recommendations of the separate commissions and the decisions in the plenary hearing. Their influence could

potentially lead to wider influence in the EU environment. A rapporteur has the opportunity to highlight a specific issue in its commission. Moreover, he has the opportunity to connect with other European institutions, could draw attention to the subject. For the province these are the most relevant actors to approach when the goal is to influence EU policy (Nanninga, 2011).

2.4 Strategies for instrumental/network lobby

Regarding strategies for the province to use when their goal is to gain useful information or establish useful relations for networks, it can be assumed that using coercion, encapsulation, advocacy or even argumentation are not the best techniques to use, because these strategies are aimed at convincing someone of your position to subsequently influence policies.

Concerning the goal to gain information or establish useful relations, it's not necessary to convince people of your position. Thus, the best strategy is to use the public affairs management approach, which tries to influence the environment in a more subtle way, by interactively interacting with the environment and by undertaking window-in and window-out activities. The window-out activities concern the lobby for information, and the window-in activities concern the lobby for establishment of good relations to form coalitions, a network and the lobby for support (PARG, 1981).

A way to go window-out is to conduct an arena analysis as Van Schendelen (2005) stresses. It involves all stakeholders, including officials and involves their issues concerning a specific dossier at a particular moment. When the arena is described, it becomes clear who the stakeholders are, what the issues are with conflicting interests for the stakeholders, what the time span is for a dossier to be decided on, and what the boundaries of the arena are, which refers to the fact that arena boundaries are seldom fixed and new issues or stakeholders can be introduced in the arena.

To relate these activities to the lobby activities in the Committee of the Regions regarding gaining information or building relations, an arena analysis would refer to knowing whom to turn to for information (the stakeholders), and with what stakeholders it's most useful to build a relation with considering your own position and theirs.

Since it is time consuming to make an arena analysis alone, a recommendation is to share these costs in terms of time, people and money, with friends you already have

in the Committee of the Regions. For the province this means they could share this burden with other Dutch provinces or foreign regions with similar interests.

The window-in activities are conducive to building useful relations. All information the province has gained through the window-out activities it can now put in good use to make deals, exchange information and to gain support for your interests. Thanks to the preparatory work in the form of an arena analysis you have information on your friends and competitors, and you could use this information in favour of the choice for the stakeholders to build relationships with and exchange information with.

These strategies could contribute to effectively operating in the Committee of the Regions. Still there is an aspect that has not yet been covered. The arena analysis is necessary in order to operate effectively in the Committee of the Regions, but the preparatory homework is not sufficient. There is always a degree of uncertainty, since it's a complex environment, joined with a lack of completeness and reliability.

Another element is essential for effectively operating in the Committee of the Regions. This would be the role of the internal organisation of the province. The preparatory homework on the arena may be executed perfectly, yet when nothing is done with the preparatory homework in the form of input for strategies or tactics for the organisation, or the internal organisation is in bad shape and disorderly, the province is unable to achieve its goals in the Committee of the Regions. And when the organisation does not have the sufficient capacity for an arena analysis, does not define its targets, or lacks a clear strategy, it is a difficult position for the lobbyist to perform well. The next section will elaborate on the relation between the internal organisation of the province and effectively operating in the Committee of the Regions.

2.5 Internal organisation and lobby

Now that two of the three concepts have been discussed, it's time to focus on the role of the 'internal organisation' of a province in relation to an effective operation in the Committee of the Regions. It will review the best way to organise a province internally with the purpose to operate effectively. In this light the type of goals are considered and within this type the different activities the province engages in.

Organizations are structured in different ways. There are three elements in the definition of organizational structure. Firstly, organizational structure defines formal reporting relationships, including the number of hierarchical levels. Secondly,

organizational structure identifies the deployment of individuals into departments and identifies the arrangement of departments into the total organization. Thirdly, organizational structure encompasses system designs to safeguard effective communication, coordination, and integration of effort across departments. These components relate to both vertical and horizontal aspects of organizing. The first and second elements embody the structural framework of the organization, namely the vertical hierarchy. The third element refers to the pattern of interactions amongst organizational employees (Daft, 2001).

In order for an organization to achieve its overall goals, the organization should be designed in such a way to let information flow both vertically and horizontally. When there is a misfit between the organization structure and information requirements of the organization, employees will either have too little information or more information than is needed to perform their tasks, thereby reducing effectiveness (Daft, 2001). Notably, tensions always exist between vertical and horizontal mechanisms in an organization. Vertical linkages are intended foremost for control, where horizontal linkages primarily intend to promote coordination and collaboration, which frequently results in a decreased level of control. Organizations decide for themselves whether they focus on a traditional organization orientation, with accents on vertical communication and control to promote efficiency or lean towards a 'learning' organization, with accents on horizontal communication and coordination. Important to note is that organizations need a mix of horizontal and vertical linkages, so they have elements that are common in efficiency oriented organisations and elements associated with a learning organisation. A linkage describes the extent of coordination and communication among the different elements in an organization. Vertical linkages hereby define the coordinated activities between the top and bottom of an organization and these linkages are devised mainly for control of the organization. Horizontal linkages on the other hand pertain to the extent of coordination and communication horizontally across the different departments of the organization (Daft, 2001).

These linkages have an impact on the organization design, considering the different needs of the organization. When the organization's accent is a focus on efficiency regarding accomplishing its tasks and achieving its goals there's emphasis on the vertical linkages. Vertical linkages entail specialized tasks for the employees, there is a strict hierarchy and many rules, they make use of vertical communication and

reporting systems, there are few teams or task forces, and decision-making is centralised.

An organisation that is designed for learning has other characteristics in its internal organisation. Here, tasks are shared, the hierarchy is more relaxed, there are few rules, the communication style is horizontal and face-to-face, there are many teams and task forces, and decision-making is decentralised.

What does this mean for the province when it is operating in the Committee of the Regions? Regarding lobbying in the EU, the organisation of the Province is comparable to a learning organization. In addition, organisation design depends on the strategy (for achieving their goals), on the environment, technology, size/life cycle, and culture of the organisation. In this research besides the focus on strategy, there is also a focus on the technological element as a factor affecting organizational design.

Technology does not only refer to the tools and machinery, but also to work procedures. These will be discussed here, as they have an effect on the organisation design and relate to our research question. Work procedures involve the extent of communication and the amount of coordination required between the different actors involved in participation in the Committee of the Regions.

In theory, every department of the province may have to deal with the operations in the Committee of the Regions. When a specific issue comes up that's of interest to the province, it may have to communicate with the department that covers the issue. In a way we can say the lobbyist may be dependent on information from the home front to operate effectively as an organisation in the Committee of the Regions. Interdependency between different parts of the organization does not necessarily mean that they are dependent and supportive of each other in a direct way. Interdependency may also mean that each part has to perform adequately, since otherwise the total organization is jeopardized or isn't able to function effectively. Each part contributes to the whole organization and each part is supported by the whole (Thompson, 2003).

Thompson (2003) identifies three types of interdependence that influence organizational structure. The first type is called pooled interdependence, which is the lowest form of interdependence among departments. The different departments do not need each other to do their work. They are all part of the organization, but work independently from each other, while still contributing to the common good of the organization. An example of such an organization is McDonalds. Each restaurant works

independently, while working for the same organization. In this type of interdependence little day-to-day coordination is required among units, referring to standardization, rules and procedures and the different departments or actors don't need to interact actively (Daft, 2001).

The second type of interdependence Thompson identifies is sequential interdependence. This is the case when parts produced in one department become inputs to another department, hence create a serial form. It is necessary for the first department to perform correctly, in order for the second department to perform correctly. A higher level of interdependence exists in this type than in pooled interdependence, because departments exchange resources now and are dependent on another department. For this type, more coordination is required, regarding the linked departments or actors. For the type of coordination it means there are more plans and schedules for meetings and feedback is given to each other (Daft, 2001)

Thirdly and lastly, the highest level of interdependence is called reciprocal interdependence. According to this type, the output of department A is the input of department B, while the output of department B is the input at department A again, to close the circle. Outputs of departments influence other departments and so on. This type of interdependence usually occurs in organizations that offer a variety of services. An example of this type is hospitals. Intense coordination is necessary between the different departments and actors to be able to help and cure the patient in this case. It is the most complex form of interdependence for organizations to deal with. For this type of interdependency, it means more coordination is required in the form of teamwork, mutual adjustment and cross-departmental meetings (Daft, 2001).

The level of interdependence of the different actors or departments involved has an effect on the organisation structure. Subsequently, the structure has an impact on the lobby in the Committee of the Regions and therefore also an effect on operating effectively in the Committee of the Regions.

2.6 Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, different insights have surfaced that refer to the three central concepts of this research. Regarding effectiveness, the province should investigate the arena and make an arena analysis with window-in and window-out activities. This allows the lobbyist to be well prepared for the job, as he knows the arena, knows whom

to lobby and so on. Knowing where to lobby for relates to the goals the province sets for their participation in the Committee of the Regions. These goals for the lobby could relate to influencing policies or to establishing useful relations and gaining knowledge the province could wield for lobby activities elsewhere.

For these different types of goals, there are different strategies the province could apply. Although there is no literature available that links the different types of goals with the different strategies it is advised to use PAM for the instrumental function, since the other four traditional techniques are based on an assumption of superiority.

Another element central in this research is the status of the internal organisation of the province. For the lobbyist to be able to perform its task, the internal organisation has to be orderly and in good shape. This means that the internal structure has to be designed to fit the goals of the organization. When the organization is designed for efficiency, there should be more strict hierarchy and vertical communication styles with reporting systems. Yet when the organization is designed for learning, there is relaxed hierarchy and few rules, with face-to-face horizontal communication. The province should never only focus on one type of structure, but implement elements of both.

Another factor with an effect on the organisation design is the level of interdependence between different actors and departments of the province. There are three types of interdependence identified by Thompson (2003), which refer to three different styles of communication and coordination. For the province this means that when there is need for coordination and communication, the organisational design should reflect it to match the organisational needs to operate effectively.

Chapter 3: Methods

3.1 General approach

There are many ways to conduct a research, with the ultimate goal to 'find out' what a certain relation looks like in real life and what theory suggests it should look like (Babbie, 2010). The ultimate goal of this research is to find out how the relationship between the internal organisation of the province and effective lobbying in the Committee of the Regions manifests itself and where there are opportunities to improve the effectiveness of the lobby in the Committee for the province as an organisation.

The methods that have been chosen for this research are document analysis and conducting face-to-face interviews. These methods have been chosen for several reasons. Firstly, documents express the goals of the province regarding their participation in the Committee of the Regions and what their strategy should be to achieve their goals. Documents express the province's preferred position at the EU playing field.

Secondly, documents grant an overview of the organization structure of the province and how the different actors within the province (with regard to the participation in the Committee of the Regions) relate to each other on paper.

Thirdly, the interviews have been conducted to study the relationships between the different actors involved, what an effective operation in the Committee of the Regions entails according to the different actors, and what could be improved to generate a more effective operation in the Committee of the Regions for the province. Also, the objectives of the province that have been established in the Strategy for Europe and the Coalition Program of the province may differ from the involved actors' understanding or interpretation of those objectives. Most activities and relations between actors are not written down in documents. The interviews will unveil those relations and activities. The interviews will also reveal what strategies are used to achieve the goals of the province and what the communication patterns are among the actors.

All research methods have strengths and weaknesses. These have to be addressed so the research will acknowledge them. The qualitative research methods used here also have distinct strengths and weaknesses (Babbie, 2010).

The strengths of these methods express themselves in terms of subtle nuances in attitudes and in terms of flexibility. Interviews have the distinct feature of educating subtle nuances in attitudes, as the interviewer has the opportunity to elaborate on specific issues that come up during the interview, which aligns with the flexibility advantage. Face-to-face interviews allow the interviewer to modify questions or ask in more detail about a specific subject that comes up during the interview, with relevance to the research (Opdenakker, 2006).

The weaknesses of this qualitative research display themselves in terms of scale (Babbie, 2010 and Opdenakker, 2006). Since the research focuses on how a province could enhance its effectiveness when operating in the Committee of the Regions, it's not referring to an overall operation/participation in the Committee of the Regions, as also municipalities represent themselves in this Committee.

Moreover, this research does not include all provinces and their participation in the Committee. It will focus on four provinces, with special attention to the province of Utrecht, as the recommendations will concern the province of Utrecht only. The choice for these provinces is due to the research for the province of Utrecht and their close cooperation with the other three provinces in the Randstad cooperation. This cooperation involves collaboration at the EU level, which involves and goes beyond the Committee of the Regions. It is for this reason this research focuses on these provinces, as they cooperate and could maybe learn from each other in terms of effectively operating in the Committee of the Regions and the organization structure where they have similar interests. Due to the choice for these provinces, it means the conclusions of this research cannot be ascribed to other provinces, as they are no subjects of this research.

Another weakness of the qualitative research method, concerning the interviews regards generalization options of the research. Face-to-face interviews allow for an in-depth interview, but the weaknesses of it are the subjectivity and personal character of the interviewees. It reveals their opinions and motivations when answering the questions, which makes the reliability of the research more challenging (Babbie, 2010 and Opdenakker, 2006).

Yet, the combination of documents and interviews allows for a broad study of what the preferred goals and strategy of the province is, and how these desires display in reality. They reveal what the province would like to achieve and how it wants to

achieve its goals. The interviews will reflect on the documents and reveal what the daily practice is.

3.2 Operationalization

This research consists of several central concepts, which are derived from the central research question and the theoretical framework.

Firstly, the concept 'effectiveness' in relation to lobbying in the Committee of the Regions will be examined through document analysis and via the interviews. The documents will assess the goals that are set for the participation in the Committee of the Regions. As mentioned earlier, effectivity generally refers to the level of goal achievement, which would be measurable as it could be determined if the goal has been achieved or not. This would then determine the effectiveness of an operation. But only if the activities of the province have contributed to the achievement of the goal, the operation can be called effective. When the goals of the province have been achieved, without or despite activities of the province to contribute to this realization, the operation cannot be called effective. In this research, it gets even more complex to measure effectivity, as effectiveness can also refer to relational settings or the gaining and sharing of information. The realization of these goals will be examined via the interviews. Establishing useful relationships and gaining information are less concrete goals, but the interview questions will be constructed carefully as to consider the particular goals and the extent of goal achievement. The next section will elaborate on the questions asked during the interviews and how the answers are analysed.

Regarding effectiveness of the policy oriented goals of the province in the Committee of the Regions measurement of this type of goal is in addition to the interviews also determined through document analysis concerning the level of influence the province has had on a specific proposal or recommendation of the Committee of the Regions. Influence is measured in terms of causality between the activities of the province and what the actual outcome is (Kiers, 2014).

The first question that will need an answer to establish effectiveness is what type of goal the province pursues. The second question is: has the goal been achieved? And the third question refers to what extent the activities of the province have contributed to the achievement of the goal.

The difference in the type of goals the province could pursue in the Committee of the Regions is established through the document analysis and the interviews together. The difference conveys itself in the ultimate goal of the province. When that goal refers to using the Committee of the Regions as a channel to influence a certain proposal, the ultimate goal is a policy-oriented goal, as the province wants to influence a certain policy in its favour. Yet, when the intention is to use the opportunities of the Committee of the Regions for purposes outside the scope of the Committee, the type of goal in the Committee is of an instrumental nature. Thus, the policy-oriented type of goal refers to the recommendations and proposals in the Committee of the Regions, and the instrumental type of goal refers to employing the Committee of the Regions and its opportunities to use in other fields at the EU level.

The concept 'operating' is also analysed in this research. The operationalization of this concept refers to lobbying in the Committee of the Regions and the activities the Province executes in the Committee. To lobby in the Committee of the Regions different strategies can be employed. These strategies are linked to the different type of goals for the lobby in the Committee of the Regions, and are examined through document analysis and interviews that discuss the lobby strategies of the Province of Utrecht. Regarding 'operating' in the Committee of the Regions referred to the activities of the Member of the Executive acting in this Committee, the concept is examined through the interviews.

Regarding the operationalization of the concepts the 'internal organization' and the level of 'interdependency' that relate to the organizational structure, it is important to establish the type of organizational structure the province needs to enhance its effectiveness as a total organization when operating in the Committee of the Regions. This will be examined through documents that reveal organizational communication styles and the level of interdependence the province attributes to the different actors involved. Moreover, interview questions will explore the actual communication style and what the actors encounter in terms of need for back-up from the other actors when they engage in activities relating to the Committee of the Regions.

3.3 Interviews

The interviews have been conducted with different actors within the provincial organisation of the four provinces of the Randstad cooperation. In total, nine persons have been interviewed (Appendix I). These include among others the Member of the

Executive of the Province, as a member of the Committee of the Regions. He has the opportunity to vote on the proposals in the Committee as representative of his region and contributes to the recommendations of the Committee in the specific commission the Member of the Executive is a member of.

The second actor is the lobbyist, or also known as the EU representative of the province. He may reside in Brussels for most of the time and is the facilitator for the Executive and his activities concerning the Committee of the Regions. Furthermore, the EU representative lobbies for the interests of the province at the EU level.

The third actor that has been interviewed is the Europe representative or member of the Europe team/department of the province at the respective provincial capitals. All provinces have a team, which focuses on Europe and EU affairs. The choice for a member of the EU team or Europe representative is made on the premise that he will be the first colleague/contact to be contacted for issues regarding the Committee of the Regions. This team already deals with EU affairs, and in this line also deals with the participation of the province in the Committee of the Regions.

For this research these actors are chosen for the interviews, as they all are an adjunct to the participation of the province in the Committee of the Regions.

Moreover, they relate to the three concepts in this research. The concepts of effectively operating in the Committee is lobbying, which relate to the activities of the lobbyist in a sense that the lobbyist tries to get the interests of the province across and he facilitates the activities for the Executive. Also, the Executive operates in the Committee of the Regions, as he is the member of the Committee and has the opportunity to lobby for the interests of the province when he votes on the proposals and contributes to the proposals in a specific commission within the Committee of the Regions.

Regarding the internal organisation of the province, the three actors are also relevant, as they are a part of the total organisation that is the province, and hence the internal organisation. They have to cooperate as elements to contribute to an effective operation in the Committee of the Regions. The interviews could contribute to a better understanding of the relationship and cooperation between these actors.

The questions for the interview focused on two elements. The first element concerns an effective operation in the Committee of the Regions. Questions referred to the (perceived) goals of the province regarding the Committee of the Regions and what

their respective roles are in this context. Moreover, questions were asked about possible improvements for the province to enhance its effectiveness when operating in the Committee.

The second subject the interview questioned referred to, is the communication style of, and the extent of coordination concerning activities with regard to participation in the Committee of the Regions of the actor with the other actors involved. The questions made it possible to examine the extent of their communication, as to how much they communicate and in what way they communicate, so the form of their communication style was also investigated. Also for this subject the actors were asked for possible improvements in communication style and interaction with the different actors involved as well as their interactions and communication with the departments/ teams of the organization. Together with questions related to the extent of coordination, and the relation of the actors to each other with regard to operating in the Committee of the Regions these questions refer to the organizational structure and level of interdependency between the various actors.

The answers to the questions and the posed suggestions are used to bolster the recommendations for the province and they are used to pinpoint to specific elements the actors encounter in their contribution to the participation in the Committee of the Regions, which refers to the recommendations for the province to enhance their effectiveness as an organization when operating in the Committee.

3.4 Document analysis

The other method central in this research is the analysis of documents. Several documents have been examined to conduct this research. First of all books and scientific articles have been studied to set the theoretical framework for the research, regarding the effective operation in the Committee of the Regions and what the implications of the level of interdependence implies for the organizational structure of the province.

Policy documents of the province are explored to reveal the goals of the province regarding their participation in the Committee of the Regions and what the strategy of the province looks like to achieve those goals.

Websites of both the provinces and the Committee of the Regions have been explored to assess the mission statements of the organizations. These mission statements or visions give an overview of the desires of the organizations and these will

be compared to the actual state of affairs according to the different actors that have been interviewed. This comparison allows the research to pinpoint the challenges the actors face and could establish methods to improve these difficulties as the theories prescribe.

3.5 Overview

To conclude, the methods which will be used for the empirical observations are face-to-face interviews and document analysis. These methods will support the answering of the research question and the preceding sub questions.

The first sub question will be answered through the review of policy documents. The mission or vision of the Committee of the Regions and the goals of province directed at the EU level are written down in these policy documents. This sub question is of a descriptive nature, and is necessary to answer in order to set the standard.

The second sub question deals with the goals of the province regarding their participation in the Committee of the Regions and how they would like to achieve that. This question deals with the lobby strategies of the province. It's also a descriptive question and will be answered using the policy documents, which reveal these goals. Besides the policy documents, the interviews will shed a light on the provincial goals for their participation in the Committee as well.

Sub question number three, which deals with the internal organisation of the province will also be answered by using policy documents and the interviews.

The fourth sub question deals with the lobby strategy of the province, in terms of the actual lobby strategy. This question will be answered via the conducted interviews. The actors deal with the lobby strategy and can explain how this strategy displays itself.

The fifth sub question refers to extent of goal achievement of the province and will be examined through the use of policy documents, which are able to define what goals have been accomplished, and also through the use of interviews. The actors that have been interviewed could elaborate on specific examples of when the province did and did not achieve its goals and objectives.

For the sixth sub question, which involves the relation between the internal organization and the lobby strategy as factors for the goal attainment of the province, also the interviews and the documents are used to answer this question.

Lastly, the seventh sub question contains recommendations for the province as to how the internal organization and lobby strategy could be improved to operate more effectively in the Committee of the Regions. These recommendations will be derived from the interviews and the documents.

Chapter 4: Empirical chapter

4.1 The Committee of the Regions and its mission

To start the empirical chapter, an introduction of the Committee of the Regions is essential, since the Committee of the Regions is a cornerstone of this research. It needs to be clear what the competences of the Committee of the Regions are and with what vision the Committee of the Regions presents itself. Then it becomes apparent what provinces could achieve in the Committee of the Regions.

The Committee of the Regions represents the interests of local and regional authorities in the EU. It is one of the EU's advisory bodies, another being the Economic and Social Committee. Their mission is to 'involve regional and local authorities in the European decision-making process and thus to encourage greater participation from our fellow citizens' (Committee of the Regions, 2009). The Committee of the Regions offers advice on issues that concern local and regional authorities. In some cases, the European Commission is obliged to consult the CoR before they can make a decision (Committee of the Regions, n.d.).

The Committee consists of representatives of local and regional authorities of the EU Member States and is supported by a secretariat in Brussels. The 28 Member States select the 353 members and there are also 353 alternates members. The members are nominated by the Member States and their term in office is five years. Then the Council of Ministers adopts a decision to determine the composition of the CoR (Art. 305 TFEU). Member States do not all have the same number of members, since this depends on the size of the Member States (Committee of the Regions, n.d.).

Before each meeting of the Committee, the Dutch delegation meets to discuss the perspectives of the regions with respect to the items on the agenda of the CoR meeting. The Dutch delegation consists of 12 representatives of the provinces and municipalities, and 12 alternates. They are officially supported by the IPO (Interprovinciaal overleg) and the VNG (Verenigde Nederlandse Gemeenten), which form the secretariat of the delegation. These institutions are the umbrella organisations for the Dutch provinces and the Dutch municipalities respectively. The IPO and the VNG propose members to the Minister of Interior, who shall submit the recommendation to the Council of Ministers (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken, n.d.).

The members of the Committee of the Regions are active in six specialized committees that study the proposals in detail for which the Committee is consulted. The six committees are COTER, CIVEX, ECON, ENVE, NAT and SECED. COTER is the Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget. CIVEX is the Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs. ECON is the Commission for Economic Policy. ENVE is the Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy. NAT is the Commission for Natural Resources. And SEDEC is the Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (Committee of the Regions, n.d.). One of the committees will be designated to write a report when the Council, the Parliament or the Commission wish for an opinion of the CoR. It is also possible for the CoR themselves to initiate an opinion, without being consulted for such an opinion. A rapporteur will be appointed in the specialized committee by the members of that committee to prepare the opinion. Also Dutch CoR members are sometimes appointed as rapporteur (Committee of the Regions, n.d.).

The rapporteur looks into the proposal of the European Commission and examines in what respect the CoR can accept the proposal, and what changes the CoR deems necessary. Also, they consider whether the proposal should be adjusted to reduce the burden or impact of the proposal on local and regional level. Once the draft version of the opinion is approved by the commission it is on the agenda of one of the six plenary sessions of the Committee. When passed by the CoR plenary via majority voting, the opinion shall be sent to the Commission, Parliament and Council (Committee of the Regions, n.d.).

The Committee is supported by a Bureau (Art. 306 TFEU). It organizes the activities of the Committee. The Bureau is the executive committee of the CoR and consists of the Chairman, one Vice-President per Member State, the four presidents of the political groups and twenty-seven other members (Committee of the Regions, n.d.).

The political groups in the CoR represent the main European political families: the Party of European Socialists (PES), the European People's Party (EPP), the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) and the European Alliance (EA) (Committee of the Regions, n.d.).

According to the EU Treaties, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers are obliged to consult the CoR on new proposals in areas with repercussions at regional or local level (Art. 307 TFEU).. These concern

economic and social cohesion, trans-European networks, public health, education, youth and culture, employment, social policy, environment, vocational training, and transport (Committee of the Regions, n.d.).

Nonetheless, the Commission, Council and European Parliament are free to consult the CoR in other areas when one considers the proposal to have important implications for regions and municipalities. Also, as stated before, the CoR can issue an opinion on its own initiative, to put issues on the EU agenda (Committee of the Regions, n.d.).

In addition, the CoR has the right to bring a case before the European Court of Justice regarding breaches of the subsidiarity principle or when the right to be consulted on relevant issues is not respected (Art. 8 Protocol No.2 TFEU).

The implication of the position of the Committee of the Regions for this research is that while the Committee is an advisory body for the other EU institutions, its position has been strengthened in the Lisbon Treaty. The strengthened position affects the position of the province in the European arena. The Committee of the Regions is the institutional entrance to the EU arena. It has an extensive amount of members, thus the opportunity to network is considerable. For the lobby strategies of the Province this means that there are numerous divisions of the overall organisation of the Committee of the Regions to lobby for its interests.

The Committee is seen as a market where all regions and local authorities are represented. There is an opportunity to connect with people from different regions, municipalities and with different nationalities. This allows you to find partners that have similar interest as you have, or face similar problems in their region as yours. With these partners you can draw attention to your interests in the Committee of the Regions or towards members of the European Parliament and European Commission. Thus it gives you the opportunity to represent your interests.

Yet, the position as advisory body influences the prospect of influencing policies. An opinion of the Committee of the Regions does not have to be shared by the other EU institutions, and they could put the opinion aside. This could influence the attainment of the end-goal of the province, to influence policies.

4.2 What goals would the province of Utrecht like to achieve in the Committee of the Regions?

This research distinguishes two types of goals the Province sets for their participation in the Committee of the Regions. First, there are the intermediate goals. These relate to instrumental goals and relational-oriented goals. Secondly, the end-goal of the province according to the literature is to influence policy. This section will address the goals of the Province of Utrecht for their membership in Committee of the Regions.

In a Strategy for Europe the Province of Utrecht stresses what it would like to achieve at the EU playing field. This strategy sets the goals of the province for European policy, thus the goals of the Province regarding the Committee of the Regions are an element of their strategy. The strategy is based on the coalition program of the Provincial Council, which is created after provincial elections. For the Province of Utrecht Europe is considered an integral component of the core tasks of the Province and not as a separate policy area.

As the strategy describes, Europe is becoming more and more important for the province as a partner in terms of policy, cooperation and resources. The goal of the province is to grab opportunities and seize the chances Europe offers and with this goal in mind the province seeks to actively draw attention to the Province of Utrecht. Cooperation and coordination with the other provinces in the Randstad will increase the likelihood of becoming known at the European playing field. Cooperation and coordination with the provinces of the Randstad makes the province stronger in Europe. In the context of this goal, the Committee of the Regions is the institution that is specifically mentioned in the strategy, as the province strives to include the Committee of the Regions as a resource for their goal to grab opportunities and seize the chances Europe offers.

Furthermore, the strategy emphasizes that the Province of Utrecht will join European networks with goals related to the core tasks of the province. Also the Province strives to optimally employ opportunities to obtain subsidies the European Union offers, preferably in cooperation with businesses and knowledge centres.

The vision of the Province of Utrecht is for the European Union to maximise their input when realising the goals of the province. The strategy used for this ambition is to 'give and take'. This means the opportunities the EU presents should be wielded optimally ('take') and the province will make a contribution to the EU ('give').

Ambitions for the Province of Utrecht are to attract as much European funds with strategic partners as possible. Also to participate actively in European networks to realise their core tasks. In these networks knowledge could be obtained and exchanged. Another ambition is to influence upcoming EU policy, with regard to the goals set in the Coalition Agreement. Focus is on an optimal EU contribution for the province in relation to the realisation of the goals of the Province via lobbying. Ambitions are to position the Province of Utrecht in the EU corresponding with the priorities set in the Coalition Program and the Strategy for Europe. And to abide by European law to implement EU policy and make sure the Province of Utrecht will continue to do so.

For the administration and organisation of the Province, the Strategy emphasizes to be 'Europe proof' and 'Europe wise'. This means the administration and organisation is up to date with European law and policy and is able to apply it, to be able to detect opportunities the EU presents and to know what contribution the Province of Utrecht could make to the European Union.

As becomes clear in the Strategy for Europe the Province of Utrecht established, there are no clear-cut goals related to the Committee of the Regions. The goals and ambitions that have been established in the Strategy cover the entire EU arena. The Committee of the Regions is an element of the EU arena and a channel for the Province of Utrecht they could use to try achieving their goals.

According to several interviewees (4, 5, 6, 8) , despite there being no clear-cut goals for the participation of the Province of Utrecht in the Committee of the Regions, there are still ambitions or objectives for their participation related to the ambitions of the province regarding the entire EU arena. As the Member of the Executive of a province, he/she is a representative of a region in the advisory body of the EU. He or she represents the interests of the Dutch regions, as they are given a mandate from IPO, which represents all Dutch provinces. In this role they are able to attain their provincial goals. These include try to influence EU policy in line with the desires of the province, join or create networks with similar interests, attain and/or exchange information and knowledge, and promotion of the region, which is linked to the other three goals. These objectives are linked to the two types of goals distinguished in this research. The end-goal is to influence EU policy, and the intermediate goals are to

network and attain and/or exchange information and to promote your region. These networks or contacts and knowledge will then be used for other purposes.

The Committee of the Regions is an instrument that could be used to achieve the goals for Europe in general. These goals are on the one hand linked to obtaining money from the EU (Interview 3, 5, 6). The Committee of the Regions is then used to influence policies to attract funds for the projects of the Province (Interview 5, 6). Another interest of the Province of Utrecht is to create legislation that they are able to implement (Interview 5, 6). This objective also relates to the end-goal, to influence policy. These interests are not solely the interests of the Province of Utrecht, but for all provinces of the Netherlands (Interview 3, 5). The subjects discussed in the Committee of the Regions are considered broad and abstract, and the provinces share the interests in this Committee. However, there is an interest for the Province of Utrecht that involves peri-urban regions in the EU. Peri-urban regions are regions with rural areas that surround urban areas. This concerns not only Utrecht, but also the other Randstad provinces. The ultimate goal regarding peri-urban regions for the Province is to obtain funds for these regions, and to influence policies to attract those funds (Interview 5, 6).

On the other hand, the Committee of the Regions is an instrument to make contacts with other representatives of other regions, to build your network. This network could then be used to obtain other goals of the Province (Interview 1 to 8). the Province of Utrecht has not set specific goals to make use of these contacts for other purposes (Interview 3,7). These objectives refer to the intermediate goals of the province in the Committee of the Regions.

Although these goals have been mentioned in some interviews, they have not been written down in a document. Interviewees (3,7) have mentioned the lacking of clear goals regarding the Committee of the Regions as a point of critique towards the Province of Utrecht. Goals are established to inform the organisation about the desired outcomes. In this case, the specific goals for the Committee of the Regions are implied or unknown to the involved actors and not rooted in the entire organisation of the Province of Utrecht (Interview 5, 6, 7). For the actors of the Province involved with participation in the Committee of the Regions the objectives for this participation were unknown (Interview 3, 7). One interviewee (3) even noted that membership of the Committee of the Regions was just “part of the job, and everyone else is a member, thus so are we”, but he missed the substantive component of his membership. If this has any effect on the

overall participation of the Province in the Committee of the Regions will be discussed in the upcoming sections.

The Member of the Executive acting in the Committee of the Regions did set a goal for himself. His goal was to become a rapporteur on a subject of importance for the Province of Utrecht (Interview 3). This way you are more substantially involved in a subject, you have great influence on the proposal of the Committee of the Regions since you write them, and you're able to draw attention to your region. Thus via the position of rapporteur multiple goals of the Province can be attained. First, there is the opportunity to influence policy. And secondly, you could use the proposal for your lobby directed towards Members of the European Parliament and at Commissioners. In this way, the position of rapporteur and the opportunities it creates are wielded for the intermediate goals of the Province in the Committee of the Regions. Being a rapporteur is considered to be of added value for your region by every interviewee (Interview 1 to 8).

4.3 Does the province attain its objectives in the Committee of the Regions?

When there are no concrete goals for the participation in the Committee of the Regions, it makes it harder to conclude if objectives have been attained. Yet, several interviewees mentioned that the Committee of the Regions is a vehicle to attain the goals their province has set concerning European affairs. This way, the Strategic Agenda for Europe can be seen as the goals the province would like to achieve in Europe and for which they make use of the Committee of the Regions as a vehicle for these goals.

For the province of Utrecht, all three interviewees of the province had difficulty to interpret or describe what the role the Committee of the Regions would have to be in regard to the goals set in the Strategy for Europe. There is a considered lack of ambitions in the sense that no concrete goals have been set and the importance is unacknowledged on both administrative parts as on the officials' part. Furthermore, in the context of Utrecht, the Strategy for Europe was called a 'useless piece of paper', as there were no concrete goals and the Province of Utrecht did not use their full potential to achieve the goals mentioned in the Strategy with regard to their membership in the Committee of the Regions. The province could use its full potential when you know what the Committee of the Regions should mean to the province, and how or in what way the province can make use of the Committee of the Regions.

Although no concrete goals are set in relation to the Committee of the Regions, next to the goals in the Strategy for Europe, also the ability to network, influence policies and obtaining information have been mentioned as being implied goals for participation in the Committee of the Regions. The Committee is seen as a market where all regions and local authorities are represented. There is an opportunity to connect with people from different regions, municipalities and with different nationalities. This allows you to find partners that have similar interest as you have, or face similar problems in their region as yours. With these partners you can draw attention to your interests in the Committee of the Regions or towards members of the European Parliament and European Commission. Thus it gives you the opportunity to represent your interests.

Only one of the interviewees explicitly mentioned that the Committee of the Regions is the only institutionalized advisory committee for regions and municipalities.

The personal goal of the member of the Provincial Executive in the Committee of the Regions was to become a rapporteur. This way you are more substantially involved in a subject, you have great influence on the proposal of the Committee of the Regions since you write them, and you're able to draw attention to your region. Furthermore, you could use the proposal for your lobby directed towards Members of the European Parliament and at Commissioners. Being a rapporteur is considered to be of added value for your region by every interviewee. The Representative of Utrecht has not been a rapporteur in a commission, but has been a faction coordinator in the COTER commission, which is one of the six commissions of the Committee of the Regions. This way the Representative was able to draw attention to himself, the province and his faction. You create visibility, which is of importance in the Committee, as there are 353 members and 353 alternate members in order to find partners and do business with other regions. When you're visible and people know you, they are more likely to do business with you. The value of the position as coordinator has nonetheless resulted in no concrete effect for the Province of Utrecht.

The opinions of the interviewees on the repercussion of the type of membership in the Committee of the Regions deviate. For some, it doesn't matter whether the Member of the Provincial Executive is a full member with a vote in the plenary hearing, or if he/she is an alternate member. They say as an alternate member you're still able to operate effectively in the Committee of the Regions, since you can still obtain a position as

rapporteur through which you can represent the interests of your region, and you're able to network, influence proposals and obtain information in the commission you're a member of.

Others find it rather difficult to operate effectively in the Committee of the Regions as an alternate member. They point to the difficulties in scheduling a trip to Brussels for a plenary hearing when a full member is not able to attend the plenary meeting. The option to go to the plenary meeting oftentimes presents itself close to the date of the plenary hearing. This makes it hard for the alternate member to create time for the trip to Brussels, as their agenda usually is full weeks in advance. Also they note the importance given to an alternate membership is of less significance. Since every Member of the Provincial Executive has a portfolio concerning different sectors, they tend to focus on other elements of their portfolio.

One of the ambitions of the province is to attract funds to the province, which could be used for the projects they are running. The Committee of the Regions could play a role in this ambition by being the institution where the province could find partners and initiate a proposal. The Committee of the Regions sends it to the European Commission, and the Commission could decide to consider it to be a European problem, or in need of European policy, including funds. Thus, via the Committee of the Regions the Province could look after their interests relating to European Affairs. And by doing so, you share knowledge and experiences with regions, as you need partners for your proposal.

4.4 To what extent have the activities of the province contributed to the attainment of the goals regarding the Committee of the Regions?

The Member of the Executive was a member of the Committee of the Regions from 2011 until 2015, acting as a member in the commission COTER, Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget. As mentioned in the interview, the importance of Europe for the province was not shared among the Members of the Executive Council in Utrecht, and the portfolio Europe was conceived as a rest portfolio.

During his membership of the Committee of the Regions, the Member of the Executive was also the coordinator of the ALDE faction in commission COTER. This role as a coordinator gave the Member of the Executive Council the opportunity to speak on behalf of his faction in commission COTER.

He was advised to take place in this commission, as COTER is known to be the most prestigious commission of the Committee of the Regions, because it deals with structural funds, economic, social and territorial cohesion, and local and regional finances alongside the multi-annual financial framework of the EU. This is the commission in which funds and finances are discussed. Furthermore, it is most viewed as being of most influential regarding the European Commission and European Parliament. These factors make it a commission of importance for the province.

The Committee of the Regions represents the regional and local interests in the EU. Within the Committee, the political factions as they are known to be in the European Parliament are also active in the Committee of the Regions. Because of this set-up, the members have different roles to play. They are members of a particular political faction, and they are representatives for their region or municipality. The member has to consider the sometimes-conflicting interests of their region and their political faction.

Before any plenary meeting regarding the Committee of the Regions, the Members meet with their faction, their national delegation and with their commission in advance. As a coordinator in a commission, there is also a meeting with the other coordinators of that commission. As a member of the Committee of the Regions, you have to put time and effort in your membership to be most effective. Nevertheless, because of the several meetings and roles you can play in the Committee of the Regions, it is possible to meet numerous people. It gives you the opportunity to network, find partners and lobby for your interests.

The role of faction coordinator in commission COTER made it possible to create visibility of the representative and of the region. Yet, a function in a political faction is more likely to create more visibility for your faction than for your region as has been pointed out in an interview. Still, because of this function the province's interests could be represented, since every proposal that came across the commission was in need of voting advice, which could be given favouring your own interests. It is up to the Member of the Executive you weigh the interests of the province and of his faction.

Besides, the missing link of the portfolio and the subjects in the commission in the Committee of the Regions has been noted a shortcoming regarding the membership in the Committee of the Regions. The subjects and areas in the commission didn't match the activities and portfolio of the Member of the Executive in the province. And because of this missing link, the effort for a lobby to become a rapporteur decreased. This is

linked to the lack of substantial knowledge of the subjects and is linked to lack of support on the home front, considering the political climate in Utrecht regarding European affairs. It is hard to gain support for a lobby to become a rapporteur on a subject you do not have to deal with on provincial level. Although you are able to initiate a proposal, time and effort have to be supported by the Provincial Council. This support is difficult to get when the importance of a position as rapporteur in the Committee of the Regions is not recognized, and when the subject doesn't match the subjects within your portfolio in the home region.

As a province, you need to find partners that share your interests, deal with a similar problem or share your regional profile, to create influence in the European field, including the Committee of the Regions. A coalition increases your prospect to achieve your goals.

The Province of Utrecht closely cooperates with the other Dutch provinces and especially the Randstad provinces. The Randstad encompasses four provinces: Flevoland, Noord-Holland, Zuid-Holland and Utrecht. They collaborate closely for their interests predominantly align. Moreover, interests oftentimes align in the Dutch delegation, thus with all twelve provinces. This is due to the subjects and contents the Committee of the Regions covers. They are considered to be generic and politically less sensitive than they are in national politics.

4.5 How is the Province of Utrecht internally organised?

Now the sub questions regarding the concept effectiveness have been analysed, it is time to cover the sub questions that deal with the internal organisation of the province of Utrecht. For the organisation structure discloses what the mutual relationship of the different parts of the organisation (should) look like, first a description will be given of the organisation structure in Figure 1, and also it shows the mutual relationship in terms of hierarchy.

This organogram displays the Province of Utrecht as an organisation in which choices are made regarding the set-up and relationships between the different components of the organisation.

The Provincial Executive oversees the daily administration of the Province, and the King's Commissioner serves as chairman of the Provincial Executive. Members of the

Provincial Executive prepare proposals and execute decisions of the Provincial Council. Each member has their own portfolios for which they are accountable. The Provincial Council appoints members of the Provincial Executive once every four years, following the Provincial Council elections (Provincie Utrecht).

The highest administrative authority in the Province of Utrecht is the Provincial Council. Its members are directly elected every four years and thus representatives of the people of Province. Their main tasks are to make decisions concerning provincial policies and supervise the implementation process of policies by the Provincial Executive.

To make a link between the organisation structure presented in Figure 2 and the Provincial Council and Provincial Executive, we take a look at the Executive Board. The Executive Board consists of the Managing Director and the Director concerning Policy and Implementation. The Managing Director is the chairman of the Executive Board serves as a linkage for the Provincial Executive and the civil servants working for the Province. The Managing Director acts as supervisor of the provincial organisation, in this case the civil servants (Provincie Utrecht).

The Province of Utrecht considers the European Union as an integral component of their tasks, as Europe is intertwined with the core tasks of the provinces. Additionally, there is also a team Europe, which is a part of the department of Administration and International affairs and they deal with EU affairs as the name suggests. As the Committee of the Regions is a part of EU affairs, participation of the Province in the Committee of the Regions is part of their policy area.

As mentioned earlier, there are several actors involved with the participation of the province in the Committee of the Regions. Firstly, one of the actors is the member of the Committee of the Regions: the Provincial Executive, who holds the Europe portfolio. The second actor is the EU representative for the Province: the lobbyist. The lobbyist prepares meetings for the Executive regarding his participation in the Committee of the Regions. The third actor is a member of the EU team of the province, as they are involved in EU affairs and act as connection of EU affairs with core tasks of the Province.

The relationship of the three actors is characterised by their role in the organisation of the Province. The EU representative and members of team Europe are civil servants of the Province, while the member of the Committee of the Regions is a member of the Provincial Executive.

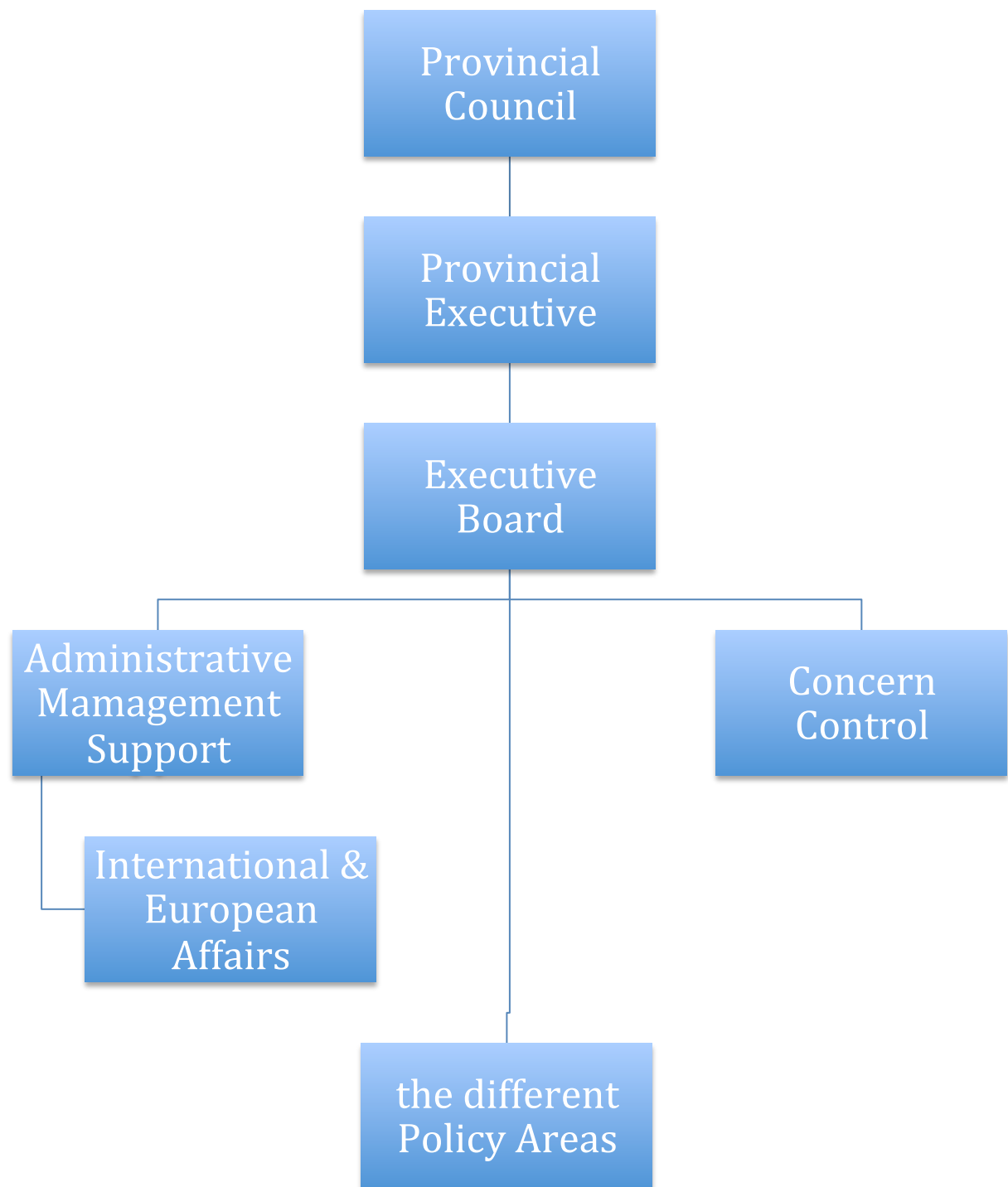


Figure 2

4.6 What does the lobby strategy of the Province in the Committee of the Regions look like?

As mentioned before, of great importance is the formation of coalitions or partners in the Committee of the Regions in order to gain influence on the proposals and amendments of proposals. The Committee of the Regions is an advisory body consisting of many regions. Because of it the province will not be able to achieve its goals on its own in the Committee. It is important to not only be present in the Committee, but also be actively present. This way people get to know you, you get to know them and it becomes easier to do business with members of the Committee from other regions. It takes time and energy to operate effectively in the Committee of the Regions.

The Province of Utrecht is part of the Dutch delegation and of the Randstad collaboration in this regard. It is part of their lobby strategy to coordinate the voting recommendations and annotations with each other to have a bigger influence than one province could have on their own. Also, the collaboration with the Randstad provinces enhances their visibility. The Randstad is more recognizable than the individual provinces are.

The initiator of such contacts could be the Member of the Executive, as he is the executive of the Agenda for European Affairs of the Provincial Council, including their objectives. The Member of the Executive as a member of the Committee of the Regions then can find partners that align with these objectives, have similar tasks and goals. Though, the objectives of the Province should include a need to cooperate with other regions, for otherwise there will be no support from the Provincial Council to invest time and effort into establishing these partnerships.

The role of the lobbyist of the province in this respect is to support and facilitate the meetings of the Member of the Executive alongside the role to signal opportunities and to offer advice. This could be done by facilitating several meetings for the Member of the Executive for when he comes to Brussels to employ these occasions as effective and efficient as possible. These meetings alongside the meetings concerning the Committee of the Regions offer the opportunity to lobby and make contacts to represent the interests of the Province of Utrecht at different fronts during the visit in Brussels.

Various interviewees mentioned the importance of expressing your interests in the early stages of an opinion being drafted. In this stage, you are more likely to be

listened to and the content of the opinion is still open to discussion. It is in this phase, members should try to form collaborations to get support for their interests, as it is the phase where the province is most likely to have an influence on the opinion or proposal.

In Utrecht the interviews showed that the province is in reality mainly focused in keeping up to date with European affairs and does not invest in trying to get their interests across via the Committee of the Regions in an agenda setting manner. Their approach is rather reactive than proactive in this regard. This could be due to several accounts. Firstly, because the importance of Europe and with it the Committee of the Regions is not yet recognized in the organisation of the province. And secondly, there are no concrete goals linked to the membership of the Committee of the Regions.

As the Strategy for Europe states, the Province of Utrecht should be 'Europe wise' and 'Europe proof'. The importance of Europe for the province should be made clear and shared in the organisation. When the importance is recognized, the lobby in Brussels could get the support and awareness of the organisation in Utrecht. Interaction between the organisation and Brussels is needed for the lobby for the interests of the province. The lobbyist in Brussels and Team Europe need to be up to date with the activities of the different departments or sectors in Utrecht, and the departments need to know what the European Union could offer them. When European affairs are an integral part of the organisation as the Strategy for Europe suggests, the interests of the province and how to lobby for them become more apparent. There is support from the organisation and they are aware of the opportunities the EU offers them. The interaction between the different departments and team Europe allow for room for improvement.

4.7 What are the styles/ways of communication within the province of Utrecht regarding their participation in the Committee of the Regions?

Once every two weeks, there is a portfolio meeting of team Europe with the Member of the Executive. During these meetings, the activities concerning the Committee of the Regions are also discussed. Mostly these activities involve preparations for the upcoming meeting of the Member of the Executive in Brussels. These could refer to meetings for the plenary meeting of the Committee, commission meetings, national delegation meetings and faction meetings, all relating to the Committee of the Regions.

During these meetings it is difficult to discuss the contents of the reports that are discussed in the Committee of the Region, because the reports are obtained shortly

before the Committee meetings due to necessary translations of the reports, which takes time. The reports then are obtained a few days in advance before the meeting takes place. In the meanwhile, annotations and voting recommendations are written, taking the interests of the province into account. Team Europe picks up the interests of the province in the organisation and its departments which are conveyed in the annotations and voting recommendations for the Member of the Executive. Considering the short time span between the obtainment of the reports and the meeting discussing these reports, there is little time to discuss the reports with the organisation in Utrecht. And as several lobbyists for provinces revealed, when asked for information and interests from a particular department of the province linked to the subject, it never reached them.

The connection, teamwork and interplay of the departments within the province and team Europe are necessary for the lobby and activities regarding the Committee of the Regions. The Province of Utrecht considers European affairs to be an integral component of their tasks, as the European Union is intertwined with the core tasks of the province. The effect should be that the departments are up to date with opportunities the EU offers and are able to indicate their interests at the European level towards team Europe. The Province of Utrecht is then Europe wise and Europe proof. Though, the interviewees miss the acknowledgement of importance for European affairs in the organisation.

For now, they see a need to communicate the importance of Europe and the opportunities it can bring to them (in terms of funds for their projects or favouring policies to their interests) as their foremost priority. The Member of the Executive is a member of the Committee of the Regions for the province, to represent the interests of the province. The Member of the Executive needs support from the province in order to fulfil this role. To do so, the interests of the organisation have to be revealed via communications between the different departments and team Europe and the Member of the Executive.

Team Europe of the Province of Utrecht nowadays consists of three people. Especially the Member of the Executive mentioned that this team is too small for the organisation to cover the elements of European Affairs. Especially a member specialized in legal and financial administrative aspects of the EU would be welcomed they notice. At the moment, every department runs their own European programs. Knowledge on how to apply for programs and how to run them is dispersed

in the organisation. Moreover, as the organisation has shrunk due to budget cuts expertise on these programs have to be brought from outside the organisation. The expertise then is not available in the organisation, and the expertise that is there, is dispersed in the organisation.

There are reasons for this design, as in this approach the departments choose to put effort into this program. It is their responsibility to apply for and run the programs. Knowledge and importance of European affairs is generated within the departments in this approach, while with a permanent member of team Europe focusing on this aspect support may be less from the departments. Yet, with an extra team member, expertise and experience increase within the organisation.

In the Province of Zuid-Holland, the members of team Europe are each responsible for several departments covering particular policy areas in the organisation. Their team consists of six people and each act a link between European affairs and particular departments or policy areas and their interests. Moreover, a member of team Europe working in The Hague (capital of the province of Zuid-Holland) joins the lobbyist in Brussels for a couple of days to keep up to date with each other's activities. The lobbyist in Brussels is informed of the interests of the province on the subjects the member of team Europe covers, and he/she is informed on the activities and the opportunities for the province, what's new, happening and talked about in Brussels at the moment. This information is brought back into the organisation of the province, to facilitate interplay between the interests and activities of the organisation in The Hague and the activities at the European level. Also for Zuid-Holland, the Committee of the Regions is used as one of the channels available to them to represent their interests.

4.8 To what extent do the internal organization with the communication styles, and lobby strategy of the province contribute to the achievement of the provincial goals concerning the Committee of the Regions?

The Committee of the Regions is the institutionalized platform for regions to represent their interest at the European level. The Province of Utrecht considers the Committee of the Regions as one of the channels through which their interests could be expressed, where they could find partners and try to influence European policies. The objectives of the province concerning European affairs are written in the Strategy of Europe, based on the coalition program of the Provincial Council. The Member of the Executive enforces

the objectives and makes use of the Committee of the Regions to express the interests and objectives of the Regions.

As the Member of the Executive holds other portfolios alongside the portfolio of Europe, he gets support and advice from the lobbyist in Brussels. The lobbyist or representative of the province signals opportunities for the province regarding their objectives and interests.

Since the various departments or policy areas of the organisation apply and run their own EU programs, the members of team Europe located in Utrecht serve as a link between European opportunities and interests of the departments. This means that every department should be aware of the European component of their policy area.

The communication and interplay between these actors is there, but could be intensified. Especially for subjects that affect multiple policy areas, like the Urban Agenda of the European Commission at this moment, interplay between the different policy-areas of the province would generate an interest that is supported by those departments, which then can be lobbied for in the Committee of the Regions.

First things first, establishing objectives for the membership of the Committee of the Regions would support awareness for the Committee in the organisation. Awareness is necessary to create support and to see the opportunities the Committee could offer, being an instrument to express their interests. Thus, for the internal organisation of the province it's pivotal that the importance of Europe is recognized. The different policy areas or departments share their interests regarding Europe with team Europe, while team Europe signals opportunities for the organisation in the EU. The interplay allows the organisation to be up to date with European affairs and even be agenda setting, for the possibility to lobby for the interests of the organisation and its departments. When the interests and objectives of the organisation are transparent, the lobby in Brussels and the Committee of the Regions has a focus and is supported by the organisation.

A focus is required, as the Committee of the Regions covers a lot of subjects and produces a multitude of reports. It is advised to focus within the commission you're a member of on subjects which the Committee can make a difference. With difference is meant that the opinion is likely to be taken seriously in the European Commission or in the European Parliament. As the Committee is an advisory body, the content and

support you generate for your opinion are critical for your lobby on this subject towards the European Commission and/or European Parliament.

Concrete objectives also help to create support for networking and exchanging information. The Committee is a market, but the agenda should include objectives for which collaboration with other (foreign) regions is necessary, otherwise support from your Council may hold you back due to lack of support for such collaborations. The Agenda for Europe contains the objectives regarding the EU. These could be linked to regions with similar problems, objectives or tasks. It creates the opportunity to network and exchange information with other regions.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The European Union is becoming more and more important for provinces, due to multi-level governance and Europeanisation. Regions nowadays implement around 60% to 80% of EU laws and policies. The European Union has recognized the increased importance of regions and enforced institutional recognition of the functioning of multi-level governance in the EU via the Lisbon Treaty. For the Province of Utrecht this means the Committee of the Regions is their institutional entrance to the European arena. The Province recognized the increased importance of the EU for them by stating in their Coalition Programme 2011-2015 that the EU is a partner of increased importance regarding policies, collaboration and resources. Their ambition is to seize opportunities the EU offers them. The Committee of the Regions is a channel that offers the Province opportunities to represent their interests.

5.1 General conclusion

The main question of this research is: *How can the internal organisation of the Province of Utrecht contribute to operate effectively in the Committee of the Regions?* The several elements of this question have been highlighted in this research to come to a final answer of the main question. Now, to conclude the research, these sub questions will be answered on the basis of the three main components of this research: 1) the goals of the province regarding the Committee of the Regions, 2) the activities of the province related to their participation in the Committee of the Regions, and 3) the internal organisation of the Province and the effect of the internal organisation on the participation in the Committee of the Regions.

5.1.1 Goals

The Committee of the Regions is an assembly of regional and local representatives in the European Union. The mission of the Committee of the Region is to involve regional and local authorities in the EU decision-making process, and its political legitimacy provides institutional representation for those regional and local authorities. It is an advisory body for the other EU institutions.

For the Province of Utrecht, the Committee of the Regions is one of the channels they can employ to represent their interests in the EU. It is the only institution with

political legitimacy for the provinces to represent their interests in directly. Via the Committee of the Regions, the province can try to influence policies, create networks, and exchange information with other regions. A way of representing your interests is to lobby for them. Lobbying in the Committee of the Regions could mean to achieve a goal regarding the Committee of the Regions, or to use the Committee as a channel with intermediate goals to serve an end-goal outside of the Committee of the Regions. Thus use the Committee of the Regions to serve other EU interests.

The goals of the Province of Utrecht regarding the Committee of the Regions are not concrete or written down in a document. However, the Committee of the Regions is an institution or an instrument the Province uses for its opportunities to advance its EU Agenda.

In this research two types of goals are considered in relation to an effective participation in the Committee of the Regions. These are goals related to influencing policy, and goals related to the creation of networks and the attainment of information for purposes outside of the Committee of the Regions.

Within the Province of Utrecht, concluding from the interviews, the goals of the province regarding the Committee of the Regions are not generally known and shared by the different actors involved in the participation of the province in the Committee. One interviewee of the Province of Utrecht referred to the two type of goals discussed in this research, while another interviewee referred to his/her own goals regarding the participation in the Committee, and for the third interviewee the goals regarding the Committee of the Regions are not evident at all.

Concluding from the interviews, no province of the Randstad has established or documented concrete goals regarding their participation in the Committee of the Regions. The subjects discussed and opinions issued cover broad and general interests of the Committee of the Regions. Moreover, for the province the Committee of the Regions is a small component and instrument to employ for the overall EU Agenda of the province. These factors can account for the absence of concrete provincial goals for participation in the Committee of the Regions.

Interests of the province of Utrecht generally align with other Dutch provinces. The implied goals of the Province of Utrecht in the Committee of the Regions are on the one hand to influence policy to attract funds. This is identified as their end-goal. And on

the other hand the goals are to network in the Committee, to gain and exchange information and knowledge with other regional representatives, and to promote your region. These goals are identified as intermediate goals, and are instrumental and relational-oriented.

For several interviewees being effective in the Committee of the Regions refers to and depends (among other things) on the position of the Member of the Executive in the Committee; whether he/she is a full member or an alternate member, which commission he/she is a member of, and if he/she is a rapporteur of a report. The position in the Committee contributes to achieving the goals of the province. Especially the position as rapporteur creates visibility in the Committee, and opens doors for the rapporteur to lobby towards the Members of the European Parliament, European Commission and other regions. The position as rapporteur then serves the goal to influence policy and to network or lobby towards other EU institutions for the interests of the province.

Regarding the achievement of the goals of the Province, they have been partly achieved. The goal of the province to influence policy with regard to peri-urban regions has been achieved. The Randstad Provinces were able to include their interests in a report on this subject, and via this report attract funds for these regions in the provinces.

The personal goal to become a rapporteur has not been achieved. However, a function as coordinator of the political group ALDE in commission COTER has been acquired. The position of a coordinator created more visibility for the Member of the Executive and in this line visibility for the province. In this way, the position of coordinator is an instrument to achieve the goals of the Province, to promote the region and to broaden its network, thus the relational-oriented and instrumental goals.

For the other intermediate goals of the Province, it can be concluded that the province has extended its administrative network, yet the interviewees of the Province noted that the Province has not yet achieved its potential in this regard. The same goes for the attainment and exchanging of information and knowledge. Reasons for this are related to the (lacking of) goals of the Province, and the link of these goals with the internal organisation of the Province, which will be discussed in section 5.1.3. For now, the activities of the Province to achieve their goals will be considered.

5.1.2 Activities

Concerning the intermediate goals for participation in the Committee of the Regions, the Province of Utrecht works closely together with the other Dutch provinces and especially with the Randstad provinces. Together they have more influence than the provinces individually would have. Also, the Randstad provinces share information with each other, such as annotations. This cooperation not only applies to the Committee of the Regions, but to the EU arena in general, as they share an EU Strategy together.

Moreover, the activities of the Province contribute to the attainment of the provincial goals to the extent that whenever the Member of the Executive travels to Brussels for meetings regarding the Committee of the Regions, more rendezvous are scheduled during his visit. These rendezvous relate to the intermediate objectives to network and gain information, as these include meetings with Members of the European Parliament for instance.

Acting as coordinator of ALDE in COTER the Member of the Executive of the Province of Utrecht was in a position that created more visibility to himself and for the province. the activities that accounted for that were the reports discussed in commission COTER. As coordinator, the Member of the Executive was able to introduce amendments on behalf of his political group on all reports, and thus all reports picked up in COTER needed voting proposals from the lobbyist. This resulted in meetings with other coordinators of other political groups. The contacts made with other members of the Committee of the Regions have not brought concrete benefits for the Province of Utrecht.

With regard to the end-goal, the activities of the Province were directed at attracting funds for the region. At the time, the Member of the Executive of Utrecht was a rapporteur on the subject 'rural development' and via this position he was able to include an interest of the Randstad provinces. The position of rapporteur made it possible to achieve the two types of goals of the Province. It is an instrument that generated influence on a policy that affected the Province, and it offered the opportunity to extend its network, gained information, and promote the region.

The first strategy of the Province of Utrecht to achieve their goals is to find partners with similar interests of problems. The Province of Utrecht alone is not able to influence policies when it doesn't have partners with shared interests. These partners mainly

include the Randstad provinces and/or other Dutch provinces. This strategy serves the objective to influence policies, and to network, and exchange information.

The second strategy employed is to represent your interests as soon as possible. Several interviewees of the Province of Utrecht mentioned that in Utrecht this strategy has the potential to be more developed. At the moment the Province mostly reacts to reports instead of being pro-active and agenda-setting to represent their interests.

The lobby strategy at this moment involves a lobby in the organisation of the Province of Utrecht. It is directed at the various departments covering policy areas of the organisation to create awareness of the opportunities the EU and the Committee of the Regions offer them. In accordance with the public affairs management techniques the organisation has to prepare itself before the external environment can be influenced. This means that at this moment the Province of Utrecht is not yet able to influence policies in the Committee of the Regions to its full potential according to PAM literature. The interviewees of the Province of Utrecht share this notion.

5.1.3 Internal organisation

The actors of the Province of Utrecht directly involved with participation in the Committee of the Regions are the Member of the Executive and the lobbyist, based in Brussels and part of Team Europe of the Province of Utrecht. Support and input regarding the interests of the Province are derived from Team Europe in Utrecht and from the subsequent policy areas. This set up, linked to operating in the Committee of the Regions reveals a focus on a learning organisation, as it highlights horizontal communication styles and coordination. For the organizational structure, this means that hierarchy is more relaxed, and the communication style is horizontal and face-to-face. This is in line with the results from the interviews, as the interviewees all mentioned the face-to-face meetings once every two weeks where activities concerning the Committee of the Regions are discussed. Furthermore, informal ways of communication were also mentioned in the interviews. This is also in line with a learning organisation.

Within the organisation, all policy areas may have to deal with the Committee of the Regions, because the Province of Utrecht considers Europe an integral component of the organisation. The level of interdependency between the actors engaged with activities in the Committee of the Regions and the actors within the organisation of the

Province that offer support and input for these activities, is called reciprocal interdependency. For the Province of Utrecht, this means cross-departmental meetings and teamwork to bring about intense coordination.

The internal organisation of the Province of Utrecht contributes to their participation in the Committee of the Regions to the extent that European affairs are considered an integral part of the organisation, which means that also participation of the Province in the Committee of the Regions is an element of every policy area in the Province. To achieve the goals of the province, to influence policies and create networks or gain information, the interests of the province are expressed towards the lobbyist who lobbies for those interests via amendments and voting proposals, and via networking with others to find partners with similar interests. Finally, the Member of the Executive votes in the Committee of the Regions and proposes the amendments. This interaction between the different departments of the Province, the member of Team Europe involved with participation in the Committee of the Regions (the lobbyist), and the Member of the Executive who participates directly in the Committee of the Regions makes the internal organisation an element of influence with regard to an effective participation in the Committee of the Regions.

Present-day, the interests of the policy areas concerning the Committee of the Regions have not been expressed to Team Europe. This influences the agenda-setting role of the province with their strategy to express their interests as soon as possible with the purpose to find partners that share their interests to influence a report in its early stages. Following this line of thought, the internal organisation has an influence on the intermediate goals and end-goal of the Province with regard to the Committee of the Regions, to influence policies. This influence can be used to contribute to an effective operation in the Committee of the Regions.

5.2 Implications and recommendations for the Province of Utrecht

The conclusions have implications for the Province of Utrecht, for which recommendations are presented to operate more effectively in the Committee of the Regions.

To start off, several interviewees perceived the lack of concrete goals regarding participation in the Committee of the Regions as a point of critique. They see a need to set goals in order to operate effectively in the Committee. However, none of the

Randstad provinces have set concrete goals for their participation in the Committee of the Regions, yet not all see this as a point of critique.

Several reasons could account for and relate to this discrepancy. The first one being that the Committee of the Regions encompasses a small part of EU affairs. In addition, EU affairs are one of several other subjects the Member of the Executive covers in the Province. His/her portfolio consists of multiple subjects. And importance given to the Committee of the Regions differs from one province to another.

Another reason refers to the interactions within the province regarding their participation and interests concerning the Committee of the Regions. The Randstad provinces have different organizational structures with regard to their EU affairs. The different setups refer to their cover of the different policy areas in their organisational structure. In one Province the members of team Europe each represent specific policy areas and communicate the interests to link them with opportunities in the EU. In this set-up, specific goals for participation in the Committee of the Regions is not deemed necessary, as the policy areas communicate their interests to the EU. Thus, the goals of the Province are represented in the Committee of the Regions, though they have not been documented or implied. The organisational set-up relates to the on-going debate within organisations to regard EU affairs as an integral part of every policy area or to regard EU affairs as a specific policy area. Though, this debate is open-ended and it is not the intention of this research to recommend an alteration in this regard.

Within the applied organizational structure the Province of Utrecht possibilities to improve their overall operation in the Committee of the Regions can be proposed.

The first recommendation is to increase the interactions of Team Europe with the several policy departments of the Province. This recommendation refers to the dynamic of the organisation. When EU affairs are considered an integral part of the organisation, interactions between the different departments concerning EU affairs are necessary to reveal their interests, fine-tune them, and discuss what the EU (in this case the Committee of the Regions) could offer them as a platform to represent their interest. According to the structure of the province, the different departments should interact with Team Europe to exchange interests and opportunities. When the interests of the of the different departments are expressed, the lobby for these interests has objectives. The strategy to lobby for your interests as soon as possible in the Committee of the Regions also applies in this context. There are objectives or interests to lobby for, and

for which partners may be found that share these interests. Following this line of thought, the opportunity to influence a report increases, since influence is most likely in the early stages of a report, when it has not been written yet.

Secondly, the Province of Utrecht could be more agenda-setting. This relates to the first recommendation. Being agenda-setting connects the expression of interest of the different departments to the lobby strategy for their interests in the Committee of the Regions. The strategy is to represent your interests as soon as possible to gain influence on a report, and eventually influence EU policy. Via an agenda-setting approach the province creates the opportunity to focus on issues important to their region. The interaction between the components has not yet reached its full potential.

A third recommendation is connected to an agenda setting approach, as it regards networking with other members of the Committee. Individually, the Province of Utrecht is not able to influence policies, it needs partners and information to do so. These partners should have similar tasks, objectives or interests as the Province of Utrecht. In the Committee of the Regions, it is important to be visible, actively present. Then other regional or local representatives know you and are more likely to partner up on an amendment or report. There is a potential to utilize the forum of the Committee to network with other European regions. For the Province of Utrecht, this potential has not been fully reached. Experiences and information could be exchanged concerning a common problem or objective.

The fourth recommendation is to focus on the commissions and subjects in the Committee of the Regions that are deemed important to the Province of Utrecht. This focus is there already in the sense that the Province is aware of the commissions that deal with the core business of the Province. Yet, the focus could be linked with the interests of the policy areas. Moreover, linked with an agenda-setting organisation, a position of rapporteur may be beneficial for the Province. The position of rapporteur offers the Province the opportunity to focus on a specific subject important to the Province. With the report the Province is able to lobby towards Members of the European Parliament and/or the European Commission. It creates visibility for the Province and much influence on the report. In this way it influences the extent of effectivity regarding the participation in the Committee of the Regions.

The fifth and last recommendation for the Province of Utrecht is to consider the portfolio of the Member of the Executive when lobbying for a position in a specific

commission of the Committee of the Regions. Coupling the commission within the Committee with the portfolio of the Member of the Executive in Utrecht increases the link of the Committee of the Regions with the portfolio in Utrecht. Hence, the Member of the Executive is substantively involved with the subjects discussed in the commission.

5.3 Implications for scientific debate and implications for our understanding of the role of the province in the EU

According to literature covering multi-level governance and Europeanisation the role of the European Union is becoming more important for regional and local authorities across Europe as they are more involved with EU laws and policies. This research explored if regions, in this case a province of the Netherlands shared this belief. In fact, it did express the increased importance of the EU for the province and their need to seize the opportunities the EU offers while also contribute to the EU in terms of knowledge. The increased importance of the EU for the province and the institutionally recognized importance of multi-level governance in the EU are illustrated in the position of, and membership of the provinces in the Committee of the Regions. The Committee is the only institutional advisory body for the other EU institutions which represents regional and local interests.

This research shows that provinces consider the Committee of the Regions an instrument to employ for their EU agenda. The importance of Europe is recognized in the Coalition Programme, but has not yet been acknowledged throughout the entire organisation. Despite or due to the position of the Committee of the Regions, it is not recognized to be a committee through which concrete goals can be achieved.

The political component of operating in the Committee of the Regions must not be underrated. The members in the Committee are not only representatives of their region or municipality, but are also members of a specific political group. The members of the Committee combine these roles while acting in the Committee. Further research is needed to study the effect of the political role of the members of the Committee on the representation of regional/local objectives in the Committee.

A new element has been introduced to literature regarding lobby strategies. This research has incorporated a link between the internal organisation and lobby strategies, and has shown that the internal organisation has an effect on the lobby strategy. Van Schendelen (2005) has introduced the need to prepare the organisation internally

before the external environment can be influenced. This research discussed the various elements of the internal organisation that have to be considered and prepared, as they influence the lobby strategy. These include the organizational structure and the level of interdependency between the departments. Theories regarding lobbying in the EU discussed in this research assume the lobbyist knows what to lobby for, yet this research showed that is not always the case. In this case, the lobbyists did not know the goals of the Province. This implies that before a lobby in the EU can occur, the lobbyist has to go a step back, and discover the interests in the organisation.

Another new element this research introduced is the application of literature regarding interdependency to a public organisation. Theories analysing the level of interdependency between different departments of an organisation have been applied to private, quasi public organizations. This research applied the theory to a public organisation. It analysed the relationships of the actors involved and what the implications of these findings were to the lobby strategy. The implication is that this research has shown what the organisation structure with communication styles should look like to operate effectively. Also, it has shown that the level of interdependency between the different actors is an element of the organisation to consider when operating in the EU arena.

Bibliography

Babbie, E. (2010). *The Practice of Social Research*. Belmont: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning

Bache, I. & Jordan, A. (Eds.) (2006). *The Europeanisation of British Politics*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan

Cini, M., Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, N. (2010). *European Union Politics*. Oxford: University Press

Coalitieakkoord 2011-2015 (2011). *Focus, Vertrouwen, Oplossingsgericht*. Provinciale Staten van Utrecht

Coen, D. (2007). Empirical and theoretical studies. *Journal of European Policy*, 14:3

Committee of the Regions (2009). *Mission Statement*. Retrieved from <http://cor.europa.eu/en/about/Pages/mission-statement.aspx>. Visited on 12-08-2015

Committee of the Regions (n.d). *Key Facts*. Retrieved from <http://cor.europa.eu/en/about/Pages/key-facts.aspx>. Visited on 13-08-2015

Committee of the Regions (n.d). *CoR Commissions*. Retrieved from <http://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/commissions/Pages/commissions.aspx>. Visited on 13-08-2015

Daft, R. (2001). *Organization Theory and Design*. Cincinnati: South-Western, Thomson Learning

Farnel, Frank J. 1994: *Am richtigen Hebel. Strategie und Taktik des Lobbying*, Verlag Moderne Industrie, Landsberg/Lech

Huggins (n.d.). Researching local and regional government transnational networking in multi-level Europe. Centre for European and International Studies Research, University of Portsmouth

Keating, M. (1998). *The new regionalism in Western Europe: territorial restructuring and political change*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar

Kiers, M. (2014). *Er zijn meerdere wegen die naar Brussel leiden: Strategie en doelbereiking van Nederlandse provincies in Europa*. Enschede: Ipskamp Drukkers BV

Marks, G., Hooghe, L. & Blank, K. (1996). European integration from the 1980's. *Journal of Common Market Studies*. 34:3.

Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties (n.d). *Europa en Decentrale Overheden*. Kennisbank Directoraat-generaal Bestuur en Koninkrijksrelaties.

Retrieved from <http://kennisopenbaarbestuur.nl/thema/europa-en-de-decentrale-overheden/>. Visited on 25-08-2015

Nanninga, S. (2011) *De Randstad in het Comité van de Regio's*.

Opdenakker, R. (2006). Advantages and Disadvantages of Four Interview Techniques in Qualitative Research. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*. 7:4

PARG (1981), *Public Affairs Offices and Their Functions*, Boston: Public Affairs Research Group, Boston University

Provincie-utrecht.nl (n.d.). *Directie*. Retrieved from <https://www.provincie-utrecht.nl/organisatie/directie/>. Visited on 11-08-2015.

Provincie Utrecht (2012) *Randstad Strategie 2012-2015: Deel II Utrecht Strategie Europa 2012-2015*

Thompson, J.D. (2003). *Organizations in Action: Social Science Bases of Administrative Theory*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers

Van den Berg, C. (2011). *Transforming for Europe: the reshaping of national bureaucracies in a system of multi-level governance*. Leiden University Press

Van der Vleuten, Binnema, H., Block, L. (red.) (2010). *De bestuurlijke kaart van de Europese Unie: Instellingen, besluitvorming en beleid*. Bussum: Coutinho:

Van Schendelen, R. (2005). *Machiavelli in Brussels: the art of lobbying the EU*. Amsterdam: University Press

Appendix 1

Interview 1 Europe coordinator & lobbyist of the province, Noord-Holland, 23-03-2015

Interview 2 Member of the Executive, Zuid-Holland, 25-03-2015

Interview 3 Member of the Executive, Utrecht, 07-04-2015

Interview 4 Europe coordinator, Zuid-Holland, 13-04-2015

Interview 5 Lobbyist, Utrecht, 07-05-2015

Interview 6 Europe coordinator, Utrecht, 12-05-2015

Interview 7 Lobbyist, Utrecht, 12-05-2015

Interview 8 Lobbyist, Flevoland, 26-05-2015