

Let the Real Civil Society Please Stand Up!

**The Role of Membership Associations
in Shaping Decision-Making to Serve
the Public Interest**



Democracy for Development
Demokraci për zhvillim
Demokratija za razvoj

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Introduction

This study analyses the state of development and involvement of membership groups in public affairs. The major findings are that most associations in Kosovo do not have a real membership base, benefit little from volunteer work and are unable to influence the public agenda. With this paper and subsequent activities, D4D seeks to cultivate a sense of a civic duty in order to help activist groups to influence policies and improve public wellbeing.

In an adverse economic state with a high unemployment rate, citizens are detached from public life as they struggle to make ends meet. Civil society is not perceived as legitimate in serving “the real needs of the society and its constituencies.”¹

Few civil society groups influence policy – they struggle to widen their membership and engage in volunteer activism.

Civil society organizations “are not sufficiently involved and consulted in policy-making.”

NGOs command little clout as decision-makers have largely neglect their needs. Civil society organizations “are not sufficiently involved and consulted in policy-making,” and there is little cooperation between the civil society and the government.² Moreover, priorities of various civic groups have rarely found place in the party electoral programs. Civic groups will not be consulted upon until they manage to mobilize citizens.

The best *collocutor* that can reconcile the interests of citizens and politicians are membership groups. Membership groups have an interest to lobby and advocate for concerns that pertain to specific groups and associations, be they professional, hobby, industry, or other shared traits.

The interest and extent of international donor support after the war in 1999 led to massive growth in the number of NGOs, totalling over 6,000 NGOs. Most registered in the immediate post-war years, between 1999 and 2002. From the sample of organizations that we interviewed, more than half registered in this period.

NGO Registration Timeline (D4D sample)

Before 1999	1999-2002	2003-2008	2009-2012
4	14	13	3

Membership associations are the oldest form resembling civil society dating from the former Yugoslav system of governance. Some of the oldest NGOs in Kosovo are older than 20 years or more, but as in the past, they do not engage in advocacy or seek change.

Citizens generally do not sense that their contribution makes a difference in public life. A recent poll conducted by D4D Institute suggests that more than 45% of respondents feel that they *never* have a say in matters that concern their neighbourhood or village. The sense of powerlessness lowers one's readiness to seek active membership in a group. Recent studies indicate that fewer than 10% of NGOs in Kosovo are still active.³

In a democratic system, we depend on elected representatives to air our grievances, channel budgets accordingly and in return, get the vote from us for another mandate. However, it is difficult for politicians to grasp the concerns of the public. They must rely on civic groups to aggregate individual concerns. If civic groups are not organized, the voice of citizens goes unacknowledged.

The culture of activism remains weak in Kosovo as seems to be the case throughout the Balkans. In Albania, for instance,

there is no history of civic engagement as the country is still recovering from both an economic and social transition.⁴ The shared traditions clearly constrain a culture of participation which the region must discover anew.

Numerous factors, such as size of membership, cohesion, acuteness of the problem, asymmetry with agendas pushed by other groups, will determine the authority and the capacity of a given group to be coercive or to persuade decision-makers to follow their guidance. The paper examines the relevance of these factors and recommends how to boost the influence of membership groups in public affairs.

**Most registered associations in Kosovo
do not have a real membership base.**

The paper first lays out our research plan and methodology, followed by a review of relevant literature, clarification of terms. The gist of the paper is the typology of organizations, and the strategy for change in the following section. The paper is concluded by a set of recommendations for the authorities, donors, and above all, for the membership associations themselves.

Research Plan and Methodology

The research objective of this paper was to assess the capacities of membership associations and their influence in policy-making. This inside-out approach of the research examined the internal conditions of associations, and evaluated the extent of their involvement in advocacy and lobbying. The research process included a number of steps, desk research, field research and data analysis.

Desk Research

Desk research mostly focused on the review of comparative literature as well as analysis of the NGO roster as maintained by the authorities. A detailed study such as the one that D4D embarked upon needed to review relevant literature in order to understand more closely the relationship between civil society and policy-makers. The preliminary literature review helped delineate a roadmap where to specifically look for answers.

A source of introductory analysis was the database registry of all civil society organizations registered in Kosovo as maintained by the Registration and Liaison Office in the Ministry of Public Administration. For the purpose of this study, a random sample of 228 nongovernmental organizations was selected to examine their traits in greater detail.

Field Research and Focus Groups

D4D conducted three types of field research, interviews with important stakeholders, survey and focus groups. Interviews were conducted with representatives of a diverse group of membership associations. The sample was comprised of 37 membership associations and three foundations. To diagnose the situation on the ground, we used a semi-open

questionnaire which elicited answers regarding organizational capacities, internal management, membership, funding structures, area interests as well as their pursuit of advocacy and lobbying.

Prior to each interview, the team conducted background research to become familiar with organizations under scrutiny. Interviews were meticulously coded to compare the findings across all organizations. The list of respondents interviewed is included in Appendix 1. The sample of the questionnaire is included in Appendix 2.

Once the findings were collected from interviews, three focus groups were organized to assess and confirm the validity of the main findings. Organizing a focus group is an adequate method to probe and observe respondents in a more interactive setting.

In total, eight political representatives and nine representatives of membership associations participated in these workshops which discussed further advancement of cooperation between civil society and elected representatives. This participatory method provided the project with additional qualitative findings about experiences, perceptions from various stakeholders.

Public Opinion Survey

The research could benefit from a more quantitative method of measurement. Four questions were part of a larger omnibus public opinion survey. The sample was composed of 952 random respondents. Some of the questions include the following:

- ⇒ During the past 12 months, have you had any contact with a member of the Parliament in any way?
- ⇒ Do you have a say in matters that concern your neighbourhood?

⇒ Can you tell me whether you are currently a member or have been a member in any of the following organizations? Respondents were randomly selected across the country. The questions asked were written in plain language so that the wording was clear.

Our Rating

When research findings are numerous they cannot be presented to readers without codifying and summarizing them in meaningful form. In the section of ‘typology of organisations’, we have summarized data into codified and categorized form.

During research, we inquired about membership, internal structures, involvement, or level of advocacy. Membership ranges from several individuals to thousands. In the tables that we have generated, we codified them as small, medium or large. The potential for new members was rated as none (if all potential members are already in the group), low (if there are few members who can potentially join), or high (if the number of potential additional members is significantly higher than the number of current members).

How to transform donor-driven energy into a self-sustainable drive fuelled by membership?

We rated internal structures similarly. Based on our interviews, and from desk research, we did our best to rate organizations as dysfunctional, semi-functional, functional, or vibrant. This judgment was based on the level of involvement of members, number of staff, funding. Internal organization was similarly rated as low, medium, good and excellent. With the funding structure, we tried to assess the level of reliance largely on members. We codified as ‘members’ or ‘donors’, if reliance on either single category

was over 80% of total funding for the organization, or mix if it was under this percentage for a single source.

Human resources are similarly categorized as low, medium, good or excellent. Lobbying and advocacy is similarly assessed by looking at interest in lobbying or advocacy (rated with 'yes' for organizations who are interested to change public affairs and 'no' for those who are not). Institutions they target is explained by listing them (government, Assembly or municipality). Whether they contribute to public benefit is our assessment of the degree that the interest an organization pushes is aligned with the public interest (judged primarily by the number of people who benefit by the agenda they uphold).

Literature Review

The literature review summarizes theoretical and comparative contributions about the general role of membership groups in the political and policy environment. The purpose of the literature review was to serve as a starting point to inspire ideas and help design the rest of the research process.

Martha Chen, Renana Jhabvala, Ravi Kanbur and Carol Richards, *Membership-Based Organizations of the Poor* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007). Chapter 1: Concepts, experience, and policy, pp. 3 -15.

This book chapter draws a clear distinction between non-governmental and membership-based organizations or MBOs. Unlike nongovernmental organizations, MBOs have (1) internal accountability through electing its leaders, and (2) external legitimacy through having leaders represent their constituency.⁵ MBOs may range from political parties to funeral societies and self-help groups. They are engaged in collective actions to change the conditions of their members who elect and hold accountable their leaders to the general membership.

Amitai Etzioni, “Special Interest Groups versus Constituency Representation” (policy paper, 1985).

This article was not directly used for this paper but it inspired our thinking about differentiating interest groups from constituency groups. The criteria for differentiating the two are the scope of the social base (narrow vs. wide), the scope of interests represented, and beneficiaries (members vs. non-members).⁶

Interest groups have a narrow social base and concentrate on a limited number of issues, and draw benefits only to their members. Constituency representation groups have a

broad social base, address a wide range of issues, and balance members' interests with a strong commitment of common wealth. The term "constituency" refers to "the social base: blacks, labor, business, ethnic groups, etc."⁷ Constituencies "are social categories (such as demographic, racial, ethnic, or occupational) that have some common or shared interest in the eyes of observers but not necessarily of their members."⁸

Kristen A. Gronbjerg and Patricia Borntreger, "Indiana Non-Profits: A Profile of Membership Organizations" (research paper #6 produced by Indiana University, 2005), pp. 2-75.

This report was the 6th in the series which was based on a major survey of 2,026 Indiana charities, congregations, advocacy and mutual benefit nonprofits as part of the Indiana Nonprofits: Scope and Community Dimensions project. The research distinguishes between six types of membership organizations and examines how they differ in service targets, size, age, funding profiles, dues structures, and legal status.

Fred Boehmke, *Business as Usual: Interest Group Access and Representation across Policy-Making Venues* (research study supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, August 2008).

Boehmke lays out a comprehensive study of lobbying across venues by "studying interest group registrations in both the legislative and administrative branches."⁹ This study is particularly interesting because it distinguishes legislative lobbying from lobbying the government bureaucracy in the United States.

Bob Smucker, *The Nonprofit Lobbying Guide* (Independent Sector: 2nd edition, 1999).

Smucker demonstrates many ways charitable organizations can use lobbying to advance their causes in state and local legislatures. This guide to advocacy can be very useful to MBOs that are engaged in policy work or want to get started.

Clarifying Terms

Associations vs. Foundations

The first step of our research was to assess the two possibilities for legal set-up of non-governmental organizations. According to the law, a new NGO may register either as a foundation or association. Most organizations registered as associations with the implication of membership (more than 96%, totalling 5,853 organizations in April 2012).¹⁰ The remaining 4% of organizations are registered as *foundations*.

Groups composed of membership usually register as associations, while non-membership ones as foundations. An association is defined as a membership organization established by at least three or more persons, at least one of whom resides in Kosovo.¹¹ Associations are held accountable to serving the needs of their members.

The difference between associations and foundations is puzzling, and both are usually referred to merely as NGOs.

The difference between associations and foundations is puzzling, and both are usually referred to merely as NGOs. Most of the NGO leaders we interviewed reported that this difference is an insignificant formality relevant only upon the completion the required documentation for registration.

One of the documents required for registration is the statute, which serves as a legal blueprint and reference on the internal governance, including for the election and dismissal of members. In practice, the statute is treated as less important. One of the founders of the organization Agro-Dev, Gëzim Hisaj, said:

A statute is more of a document that is required to have when opening an NGO. The fact is that statute is not updated by local NGOs in regular basis and it is not often requested by public authorities and donors.¹²

Most respondents representing various associations could not share their statute because they either did not have one or had not updated it.

Lobbying vs. Advocacy

Lobbying and advocacy are the two main means for non-governmental organizations to influence policy. *Lobbying* intends to

influence legislators to support or oppose a particular issue or piece of legislation.¹³

Direct and informal type of communication with the legislators in regular basis is the most common type of lobbying activity. Lobbying also include paid lobbyists, which is not part of our understanding for the purposes of this paper. Instead, *advocacy* is more broadly targeted and aims to

inform the community ... how public policy decisions impact service provision.¹⁴

Some advocacy activities involve technical assistance, research study, broad discussions, etc. All of these activities are legally allowed to be organized by non-profit organizations including membership associations.

Throughout the paper, we will be using the two terms interchangeably despite some difference between the two. The rest of the paper describes our assessment of the functionality of membership organizations, their legal set-up, organizational profile, membership, human resources and funding structure.

Typology of Organisations

Research yields several distinct profiles of membership associations. Each profile was labeled based on a set of shared traits and features that we generalized upon our study. There are four major membership groups that have been identified as in the following:

- ⇒ *Business or corporate*, associations that protect the interests of a particular sector, e.g. insurance companies, chambers of commerce, microfinance institutions;
- ⇒ *Regulatory*, occupational or professional type associations of groups, which seek to regulate the public sphere in a given field;
- ⇒ *Occupational or professional*, associations in any profession that seek to improve the legal and policy environment;
- ⇒ *Broad* economic and social groups such as human rights (women networks, disabled), recreational or hobby (alpinists), other types of membership associations (i.e. agricultural, cultural, environmental, etc.).

The remainder of this chapter analyses membership, funding structure, human resources and lobbying activities for each category of associations in greater detail.

Business/Corporate

The main associations that represent corporate interests have been formed by microfinance institutions and industrial type organizations. The members are private companies that are powerful and they have shown that they have the force to pressure politicians to act.

Political influence primarily remains in the hands of business oriented associations that are financially stable and successful. Their small membership is active and they are willing to pay substantial annual fees. Having few members and high benefits is a sufficient reason to join forces in the

first place.

When there was an indication that the price of flour will increase in the international market, Kosovo Association of Mills warned the public that price of bread would increase by 10 to 15 cents.¹⁵ This shows the degree of the power to also influence the public. Apart of adopting joint positions, members of corporate associations derive other benefits, from participation in trainings, workshops and fairs free of charge, as it is the case in the Association of Microfinance Institutions of Kosovo.¹⁶ These and other cases demonstrate that joining forces can be effective and delivers outcomes desired by their members.

Current and Potential Membership

Most of corporate associations have a narrow membership base composed of fewer than 100 members. The number of members registered in these groups range from 10 (e.g. the Insurance Association of Kosovo) to 120 members (e.g. the American Chamber of Commerce). The table below shows the breakdown of the membership for different associations.

Business Interest Groups	Membership		
	Size	Potential	Involvement
Insurance Association of Kosovo	Small	None - all but one insurance companies are members	High
Association of Microfinance Institutions	Small	None - most institutions already members	High
Sand and Gravel Association of Kosovo	Small	None - most institutions already members	High
Kosovo Association of Mills	Small	Low - most institutions already members	High
American Chamber of Commerce	Small	Low - membership not limited	Medium
Kosovo Association of Information and Technology Communication	Small	Medium - membership not limited	High

Associations which include all members of a certain category may acquire excessive power to control the market (e.g. insurance companies, banks, etc.). There is a fine line between legitimate undertaking to improve the business climate and fend off inadequate policies by the authorities, and engaging in inappropriate agreements to keep prices high. Some associations may have also prevented new companies from joining the market, effectively limiting competition.

The potential and attitude for an increase in membership must be examined carefully. The research findings show that these associations do not have a large potential for increasing membership indicating that they may have already reached their membership capacity. This is the case with the Insurance Association of Kosovo where only one insurance company in the market is operative outside the association, while the rest of the insurance companies are already members.¹⁷

Membership Fees and Funding Structure

Business associations have the highest membership fees of all types of membership groups. The fees are the highest in the Association of Microfinance Institutions, ranging from 6,000 Euros to 10,000 Euros, followed by the American Chamber of Commerce, ranging from 500 Euros to 3,500 Euros. For companies to pay such an annual fee, they must calculate that joining the bigger group indirectly brings more income in the company.

The financial stability of the corporate associations is largely due to their membership fees and all of them can prosper without donor support. More than 65% of the budget of the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce is contributed by its members.¹⁸ Reliance on membership fees is also an indication of the involvement of members, for the readiness to pay comes with general as well as specific expectations of

what membership brings.

In the table in the next section, we rated funding as reliant on members for all which depended on membership fees for more than 75% of their funding. Only STIKK was rated as having a mixed structure of funding, with a reliance of around 50% on donors.

Human Resources

Financially stable, business associations can recruit new employees and retain well performing staff. Most of these associations have more than three employees engaged in daily operations in order to help the organization serve the needs and interests of its members. A notable exception is the American Chamber of Commerce, which has more than five employees working full time in and outside Prishtina.¹⁹ The table below shows, in more detail, the level of internal organizational capacities.

Business Interest Groups	Functional	Internal Org	Funding Structure	HR Capacity
Insurance Association of Kosovo	Functional	Good	Member	Good
Association of Microfinance Institutions	Functional	Good	Member	Medium
Sand and Gravel Association of Kosovo	Functional	Low	Member	Low
Kosovo Association of Mills	Functional	Low	Member	Low
American Chamber of Commerce	Functional	Excellent	Member	Excellent
Kosovo Association of Information and Technology Communication	Functional	Excellent	Mixed	Excellent

Based on our assessment, all the business associations seemed functional, while two could even be termed vibrant. Their internal organization was assessed as low to excellent. Organizations rated as low did not have clear internal structures set and staff were not as involved.

The boards of directors are most influential in the business type associations. They have the authority to determine the program of the organization and seek accountability from the organization’s executive director. They meet more often than it is required by the statute when developments require for the association to act standing up for its interest.

Lobbying & Advocacy

Business associations aim to promote shared interests through influencing policy outcomes. According to D4D’s field research, there are no interests more comprehensively and efficiently represented than those of the business sector. These associations engage in outreach and lobbying in various ways. They usually channel their interests through the government and municipal authorities. The most common activities that demand their lobbying focus is drafting laws that relate to the interests of their members.

Business Interest Groups	Interest			Capacity & Effect	
	Lobbying	Advocacy	Target	Lobb & Adv	Public Benefit
Insurance Association of Kosovo	Yes	No	Govt	Yes	Negative
Association of Microfinance Institutions	Yes	No	Govt	Yes	Negative
Sand and Gravel Association of Kosovo	Yes	No	Govt	Yes	Negative
Kosovo Association of Mills	Yes	No	Govt	Yes	Negative
American Chamber of Commerce	Yes	Yes	Govt	Yes	Low. May promote foreign investments
Kosovo Association of Information and Technology Communication	Yes	Yes	Govt	Yes	High. Promoted IT, which is positive

The table above compares the associations with regards to their lobbying interests and capacities. They all engage in

lobbying and less on advocacy. Unfortunately, their defence of their selfish interest rarely is in function of the public interest at the same time.

It is difficult for most of business associations to prioritize public interest over the interests of their members. They were established to serve their members and they and, at times, it is almost a given that this runs against the public interest.

Corporate associations strictly benefit the interests of its members of a particular industry, and by default they show less interest for the public interest. The Oilmen Association has frequently received extensive media attention for having its members engage in price fixing. Members allegedly meet in Macedonia from where oil is purchased and jointly decide and agree on a price quote to sell it in the Kosovo market.²⁰ A Member of Parliament, Berat Buzhala, said in September 2012:

Oilmen Association is a criminal organization and it must be refuted since it represents the personal interests of few businesses.²¹

Far worse, according to Mr. Buzhala, oil price remains very high even when oil price decreases in the international market. This shows the degree of the self-interest targeted by private oil companies, completely oblivious of the fact that consumers will end up paying relatively higher price.

Regulatory Groups

This may be the most atypical group that we saw little resemblance with international comparative literature. This is the oldest category of membership groups that has its origins in the pre-war Yugoslavia. Membership groups were then active although without aiming change. Some of them had regulatory functions in the form of quality control through peer licensing.

Some associations that D4D interviewed showed little interest to lobby or advocate. They operate as state-owned enterprises which aim to regulate either an industry or profession. The associations with such 'regulatory' functions include the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce, the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates, the Association of Certified Accountants and Auditors, the Kosovo Association of Municipalities, the Kosovo Hunters Association or the Association of War Veterans of Kosovo. These are membership associations that have a strong membership composed of either businesses or individuals that are already part of the decision-making process.

There is an upward trend of membership organisations receiving licences from the authorities to deliver a public function. Two newly created associations have received their licenses from the Ministry of Culture to collectively administer copyrights in the field of music and audiovisuals. These two associations are Association of Audioproducers and Interpreters of Kosovo (APIK) and Visual Artists Producers and Interpreters of Kosovo (VAPIK). Artists and other sceptics doubt that these two associations can protect copyrights due to lack of enforcement of the law.²² This trend has advantages and disadvantages.

Acquiring a public regulatory function will require competent civil society organizations. It is positive that organisations themselves acquire a role, but this may hamstring their capacity to advocate in their interest. Greater cooperation with authorities is also useful, but it may make its leaders more amenable to influence by the authorities and further erode their capacity to lobby and advocate for their joint interests.

Current and Potential Membership

Regulatory type associations have a large membership base composed of both individuals and organizations. Their

membership spans from 500 to over 40,000 members with the only exception of the Kosovo Association of Municipalities which has 24 municipalities registered.²³

Regulatory Function Groups	Membership		
	Size	Potential	Involvement
Kosovo Chamber of Commerce	Large	Medium	Low
Kosovo Chambers of Advocates	Large	None	Low
Association of Certified Accountants and Auditors	Large	High but open to students	Low
Kosovo Association of Municipalities	Small	Low	Mayors only
Kosovo Hunter Federation	Large	Low	Low
Association of War Veterans of Kosovo	Large	None	Medium

While the numbers differ, there are few organizations that could potentially add to the membership. While AKM has only 24 members, there are very few municipalities left outside its fold, so the potential for expansion remains low.

It is typical for such organizations to have low involvement of members. The members see a benefit to membership in these associations since it gives them legitimate influence in administering their rights in the form of license.

Membership Fees and Funding Structure

Membership fees vary across the organizations, for example, the annual fee to becoming the member of the war veterans' association is only 12 Euros.²⁴ In comparison, becoming a member of the certified accountants' and auditors' association ranges from 64 Euros to 144 Euros.²⁵ The fees are low as are the rewards that the members get by being part of the network. Compared to the business associations above, these bring fewer opportunities to their members, and leave more potential members outside their fold. It is important to note that regulatory types of associations get

some of their funding from international donors and the government.

Human Resources

These organizations are of mixed organizational type, and may range from less functional to vibrant and from having satisfactory to excellent internal organization. Human resources range from low to excellent as seen in the table below. Some of them are individually driven, while others have more collective leadership.

Regulatory Function Groups	Functional	Internal Org	Funding Structure	HR Capacity
Kosovo Chamber of Commerce	Vibrant	Good	Members	Medium
Kosovo Chambers of Advocates	Functional	Excellent	Members	Excellent
Association of Certified Accountants and Auditors	Functional	Excellent	Mixed but mostly donors	Excellent
Kosovo Association of Municipalities	Functional	Excellent	Mixed	Excellent
Kosovo Hunter Federation	Semi-functional	Medium	Members	Low
Association of War Veterans of Kosovo	Semi-functional	Good	Members	Medium

Some of these organizations are targeted by donors for project implementation.

Lobbying & Advocacy

Most membership associations are interested more in lobbying and less advocating. Similar to business associations, their target is usually the Government, but some of these groups—especially those with independent regulatory bodies appointed by—the Parliament—also target the legislature. Most have sufficient capacity for lobbying but rarely come to the defence of the public interest.

The primary goal of associations with regulatory function is to control professional certification and licensing and have few ambitions beyond that. These groups either have or aim to acquire a public role, typically to license newcomers to a profession. This interest prevents them from advocacy, for they would not want to challenge the partner institutions.

Regulatory Function Groups	Interest			Capacity & Effect	
	Lobbying	Advocacy	Target	Lobb & Adv	Public Benefit
Kosovo Chamber of Commerce	Yes	Low	Govt	Yes	Medium. Promotes overall business interest.
Kosovo Chambers of Advocates	Yes	No	Govt	Yes	Negative: keep the numbers low Positive: keeps high criteria
Association of Certified Accountants and Auditors	Yes	No	Govt	Yes	Some improves transparency
Kosovo Association of Municipalities	Yes	Yes	Govt/ Parl	Yes	Positive
Kosovo Hunter Federation	Yes	No	Govt/ Mun	No	Low
Association of War Veterans of Kosovo	Yes	Yes	Govt/ Parl	Medium	Low

Their contribution to the public interest is low. Regulating professions has the advantage of introducing some standards and criteria. The downside may be closing the professions to newcomers hence limiting competition.

In some of the regulatory membership associations, the board is composed of political figures. This shows that these associations can be influenced easily by politics and vice versa. For example, the association of municipalities has board members that come from all the registered political parties in Kosovo.

For example, the Hunters Association since July 2012 has been trying to convince the authorities at the Ministry of Internal Affairs to recognize their gun licenses.²⁶ In November, Hunters have said that they will organize a petition in response to the Ministry's demand for all of its 39,500 members to retake the exams and regain their licence.²⁷ Another demand is that the association licences weapons for hunting.

Kosovo Chamber of Commerce has been an avid supporter of the privatization process. Recently, they have advocated for the privatization of Post-Telecommunication of Kosovo (PTK) as they strongly believe that the private sector can best represent the public interest.²⁸ In early December 2012, the Chamber has sent 400 recommendations to the government and other relevant institutions in how to nourish and develop the small business sector.²⁹ The KCC exerts strong influence on policy-making, mainly attributed to the defence of its members.

Occupational or Professional

Occupational and professional associations have fragile membership mainly composed of individuals that are reluctant to contribute financially to their membership. The members usually include individuals who feel strongly about their profession yet have been unable to organize and collectively exert influence on politicians. The main associations that represent professionals include architects, judges, doctors, school directors, etc.

Professional associations are largely leader-driven by enthusiastic individuals who do not manage to bring other members along sufficiently. Having few or no staff, they can be termed as having no organizational structure. Their existence solely depends on their ability to protect and promote the interests of professionals who are active or not active in the workforce. Professional type associations strive

to protect the interests of their members who are tied to a particular occupation.

Professional associations lack competent staff and funding, and are far less organized than business associations. Consequently, they are insufficiently active in advocating and lobbying for the interests of their members and to promote public welfare. Despite the lack of funding, these associations are the category that is most likely to grow. Some will attempt to acquire regulatory role as ‘turf’ protection, while others will develop into full-fledged advocacy groups, although this is more in the long-term.

Current and Potential Membership

These associations are usually small in terms of current membership. However, there are thousands of professionals outside the current groups which suggest that they have great potential to grow. Our findings show that the number of members registered in these associations ranges from 12 (e.g. Association of Lawyers of Kosovo-NORMA) to 200 (e.g. the Union of Journalists of Kosovo). The table below shows the breakdown of membership in more detail.

Professional type associations are often voluntary associations that have a narrow membership. Their membership base is mainly composed of individuals that belong to a certain profession and that want to become part of a professional association.

In order to expand their membership, these associations must show they can bring benefits to their members. These range from a joint stance to push for standards, or regulation, to other benefits that members incur individually.

Professional/Occupational Groups	Membership		
	Size	Potential	Involvement
Association of Lawyers of Kosovo	Very small	Very high	High
Association of Dentists of Kosovo	Small	High	Medium (small lead) group
Association of Architects of Kosovo	Small	High	Very Low
Association of Publishers of Kosovo	Small	High	None
Association of Prosecutors of Kosovo	Small	High	Low
Union of Journalists of Kosovo	Large	High	Medium
Association of Independent Electronic Media	Small	High	Medium
Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo	Large	High	Medium

Funding Structure and Organizational Effectiveness

Professional type associations have only individuals registered as members. Sometimes they are able to attract members to pay a small annual fee.

These type of associations are neither financially stable nor sustainable because they lack donor support and do not generate little income from their members. While these organizations were previously heavily funded by donor support, this support has recently weakened. While associations now rely more on member fees, they are barely amounting enough to cover their expenses.

Professional type associations do not have the financial means to recruit more than two employees. They tend to recruit employees on temporary project basis. Short of volunteer engagement, this limits their ability to stand up for its members.

There are often cases that board members or the Executive Director did all the work voluntarily and without compensation. Interviews do not yield a clear process how

board members and the executive are elected. They do not meet very often though they do meet the requirement as per their statute.

Professional / Occupational Groups	Functional	Internal Org	Funding Structure	HR Capacity
Association of Lawyers of Kosovo	Dysfunctional	Low	Members	Medium
Association of Dentists of Kosovo	Dysfunctional	Low	Members	Medium
Association of Architects of Kosovo	Dysfunctional (leader-driven)	Medium	Members	Low
Association of Publishers of Kosovo	Dysfunctional (leader-driven)	None	Members	None
Association of Prosecutors of Kosovo	Dysfunctional	None	Members	None
Union of Journalists of Kosovo	Semi-functional	None	Donors	None
Association of Independent Electronic Media	Semi-functional	Good	Donors	Good
Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo	Functional	Good	Members	Good

Lobbying & Advocacy

Associations of professionals are driven by objectives to protect the interests of the members. This usually amounts to mean respecting professional standards, which often promotes public welfare. In this aspect, their activities serve the public interest more than the two previous categories.

Shortage of staff, volunteers and funding has implications on organization, and weakens advocating and lobbying. The public and political representatives do not grant them sufficient legitimacy and recognition. These organizations are relatively more neglected than others in both the political and policy-making environment. They are sometimes invited to participate in meetings at the national assembly committees, yet they are incapable of pushing forward their agenda when drafting laws that appeal to their interests.

Professional / Occupational Groups	Interest			Capacity & Effect	
	Lobbying	Advocacy	Target	Lobb & Adv	Public Benefit
Association of Lawyers of Kosovo	Yes	No	Govt	No	Medium
Association of Dentists of Kosovo	No	No	Govt	No	Largely positive
Association of Architects of Kosovo	Yes	Some	Govt/Parl	Yes	Low
Association of Publishers of Kosovo	Yes	No	Govt	No	Medium
Association of Prosecutors of Kosovo	Yes	No	Govt/Parl	No	Low
Union of Journalists of Kosovo	Yes	Yes	Govt/Parl	Medium	High
Association of Independent Electronic Media	Yes	Some	Govt/Parl	Yes	Medium
Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo	Yes	Yes	Govt/Parl	Medium	High

Architects, for instance, are a significant group with urgent common interests, but they lack the lobbying influence necessary to voice their needs. Legal prosecutors are a large group with common interests but they are not well organized and by its statute, they cannot engage in advocacy. Journalists make up a large group with obvious common interests. None of these professional type associations have adequate lobbying power to satisfy their interests as well as associations that are more industry or economic driven.

Human Rights and Other

The last category under review consists of various membership associations which focus on human rights, recreation, agriculture, environment, cultural heritage and socio-economic objectives towards promoting public wellbeing.

They have a narrow membership base, competent staff and sufficient funding almost exclusively by donors. They are well organized and do well in advocacy and lobbying. Their main downside is that they do not involve members sufficiently, and many of them are foundations in all but name.

They are active in participating in assembly meetings at both the local and national level and are very successful at pushing forward their agenda when drafting laws that relate to their interests. Their main functions are social, and they attract most of their members due to the social benefits they provide. Short of donor funding, these organizations would practically disappear overnight.

Current and Potential Membership

Few human rights associations have real membership. The membership base may include both individuals and/or other organizations in the case of network organizations. Their membership is financed in forms of annual fees. Their membership base is more composed of volunteers who are engaged for short stints. Membership ranges from 12 to 26,000 members as in the case of Association of War Veterans of Kosovo.

It is very difficult to estimate the potential for an increase in interest for this type of associations because it may involve different categories of members of different ages and occupations that are concerned about human rights. Potential implies other individuals with the same concerns, and it is impossible to assess this total number.

Other membership associations that are more recreational and are set to promote the broad public interest either do not have a real membership base or their membership is small. These include beekeepers, youth initiative, ecologists, etc.

Other Groups	Membership		
	Size	Potential	Involvement
Hobbies			
Association of Beekeepers of Kaçanik	Small	High	Medium
Kosovo Mountaineering and Alpinist Federation	Large	High	Medium
Human Rights			
DOWN Syndrome Kosovo	Large	Low	Low
Kosovo Association of the Blind	Large	Medium	Low
Broad Public Interest			
Youth Initiative for Human Rights	None	Yes, but not seeking	None
Kosovo Young Ecologists	None	Yes, but not seeking	Low
Association "Ec ma Ndryshe"	Small	Medium	High
Initiative for Progress (INPO)	Small	Medium	High
Kosovo Women Network	Medium	Small	High

Membership Fees and Funding Structure

These membership associations do not generate income from members. If any, membership fees are usually very small and organizations primarily rely on international donor support. Donor funding has been forthcoming and organizations with a focus on human rights are financially stable. Readiness to contribute with volunteer work and fees is picking up only slowly as few are ready to pay annual fees to see their interests represented.

Human Resources

The abundance of donor funding enables human rights associations to hire adequate staff. Some of them have also managed to recruit volunteers. This is very different when comparing it with other types of associations above, which

are poorer financially but have higher member engagement.

Other Groups	Functional	Internal Org	Funding Structure	HR Capacity
Hobbies				
Association of Beekeepers of Kaçanik	Semi-functional	Bad	Members	Bad
Kosovo Mountaineering and Alpinist Federation	Semi-functional	Bad	Mixed	Bad
Human Rights				
DOWN Syndrome Kosovo	Functional	Good	Mixed but mostly donors	Good
Kosovo Association of the Blind	Functional	Good	Mixed but mostly donors	Good
Broad Public Interest				
Youth Initiative for Human Rights	Functional	Medium	Donors	Low
Kosovo Young Ecologists	Functional	Medium	Donors	Low
Association "Ec ma ndryshe"	Functional	Medium	Donors	Excellent
Initiative for Progress (INPO)	Functional	Medium	Donors	Good
Kosovo Women Network	Vibrant	Excellent	Mixed	Excellent

While Prishtina-based project-oriented organizations focusing on human rights are well-equipped with staff and funding, organizations outside Prishtina face an uphill battle. For example, the Association of Beekeepers of Kaçanik has no office and does not have staff to help their mission evolve.³⁰ After all, such associations should not rely on staff but on the volunteer engagement of their members. To mobilize members, they need the sense that jointly they can do more, and this motivation will persuade them to give their free time to seek higher goals together.

Lobbying & Advocacy

Human rights associations are strong in pushing forward

their agenda. But this power does not emanate from their membership but due to their level of expertise, funding availability, and media exposure. As full-time committed activists, they participate in meetings at the national assembly and monitor local authorities.

Other Groups	Interest			Capacity & Effect	
	Lobbying	Advocacy	Target	Lobb & Adv	Public Benefit
Hobbies					
Association of Beekeepers of Kaçanik	Yes	No	Municipal	No	Low
Kosovo Mountaineering and Alpinist Federation	Yes	No	Govt/Mun	No	Medium
Human Rights					
DOWN Syndrome Kosovo	Yes	Yes	Govt/Parl	No	Positive
Kosovo Association of the Blind	Yes	No	Govt/Parl	Yes	Positive
Broad Public Interest					
Youth Initiative for Human Rights	No	Yes	Parl	No	Positive
Kosovo Young Ecologists	No	Yes	Govt/Parl	No	Positive
Association "Ec ma ndryshe"	Yes	Yes	Govt/Parl	Yes	Positive
Initiative for Progress (INPO)	No	Yes	Govt/Mun	Yes	Positive
Kosovo Women Network	Yes	Yes	Govt/Parl	Yes	Positive

Assumptions and Strategy for Change

This section discusses the logical underpinning and the motivation of individuals to form and be part of groups. One of the key reasons why an individual joins a group is the perception that together they can change the reality. To demonstrate such power, the groups need to be successful in interacting with authorities and bring about benefits to their members.

How do groups motivate members to join?

Membership associations serve a key role in advanced democracies. In Kosovo, NGOs are a synonym of international donations, and often more an opportunity for funding than for societal change. Consolidated democracies rely on professional or neighbourhood groups which bring individuals together to influence the public agenda.

Theoretical Considerations

The natural presumption is that individuals join groups when it is in their self-interest. They remain part of a group and may decide to pay for membership or volunteer their time if they see their interests represented.

No one is surprised when individual businessmen seek higher profits, when individual workers seek higher wages, or when individual consumers seek lower prices. The idea that groups tend to act in support of their group interests is supposed to follow logically from this widely accepted premise of rational, self-interested behavior.³¹

The very nature of a representative system implies that political representatives cannot reach all voters and require intermediate filters that aggregate the issues of concern. In

rapidly changing society, expectations mount along with frustration.

Coupled with the advent of a competitive democratic system, associations are bound to proliferate. Membership groups are the very intermediary that funnel individual interests into collective form to make them appealing for vote-gatherers. To complete the circle of representation, political representatives must take notice of growing group concerns.

Membership groups are the very intermediary that funnel individual interests into collective form to make them appealing for vote-gatherers.

Taking notice of concerns should not be seen as the moral thing to do, but as something in the very interest of political representatives to seek the vote of the citizens. Politicians running for office have few better options than to reach out to particular voter groups clustered around associations.

Broad Range of Association

Modern democracies have developed complex network governance with multiple stakeholders included. As it has been indicated,

Simple societies have no associations (in the technical sense of the term); as they grow more complex, i.e., as highly differentiated institutionalized groups increase in number, societies evolve greater numbers of associations.³²

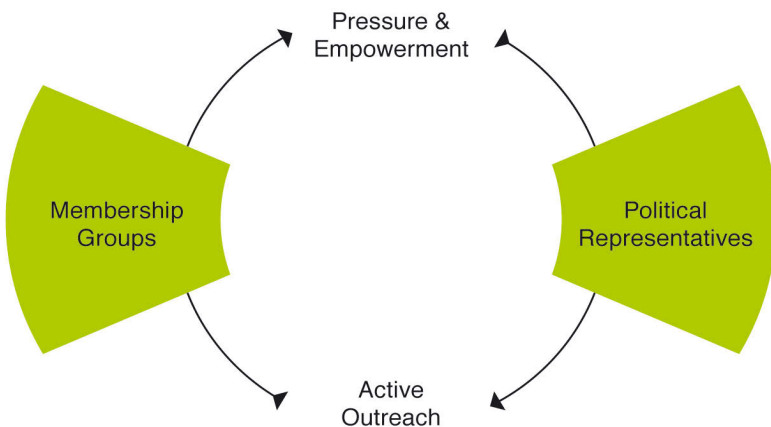
This complexity of membership indicates the multitude of relationships and functional networks that define the power relations in a society that becomes less hierarchical and nurtures partnership.

This paper works with the assumption that representation is served when each individual has a wide range of interests that s/he pursues. Individuals rarely tend to pursue the broad interest for the benefits they incur are very small. By default, the wider the interest, the lower the benefit for an individual and the motive to engage is low.

It is given that individuals will primarily engage to maximize their own benefit. But if individuals belong to a multitude of networks, as described above, the collection of interests is likely to see alignment of personal interest with the public interest and to defend the latter too.

Representation & Participation

The assumption is that rational representatives defend the interest of groups they represent. Elected politicians will primarily defend the interests of those exercising pressure on them. If the pressure on elected representatives is not diverse, the decisions they will defend will be one-sided. If all the groups stood for their interests, the public interest will have been served best. As a result, the allocation of resources in a country (budget, laws and decisions) will favour the largest and more active groups.



It is important to emphasize two important assumptions that have been indicated by Etzioni:

Political process of a pluralistic democracy is and ought to be based on to a large extent on group processes, not individual actions; and

If all interest groups are involved in the formation of public policy, a “consensual” policy can be evolved because these interest groups represent the major segments of the society, their needs and values as well as their power.³³



The diagram above identifies the process of one’s involvement in policymaking. It begins with individuals independently perceiving a problem. Through interaction

with other individuals with similar interests, they begin to realize that joining forces allows them to enhance their leverage to influence policy. They will disagree on various matters, but if the joint interest is strong enough, they will find ways to harmonise their positions. Formalizing coalitions will eventually prevail as a tool to aggregate their power and attract interest from elected representatives.

After a theoretical framework, the discussion returns to a more specific topic about what is possible for such organizations in the Kosovo context.

A Path Well-Trodden

It is not difficult to foresee a similar potential role for membership organizations in Kosovo. Three key ingredients have been met to set this process in motion. First, the funding has started to dry up, filtering motivated activists from opportunists. Secondly, this has led to disillusionment with the political culture, which instigates change.

Thirdly, fewer Kosovars believe that sudden miracles will improve their outlook. As they can no longer rely on others, they will eventually step up their own efforts. When the realization that no one will improve our lot and there are no shortcuts to development, like our peers around the world, Kosovars will roll up their sleeves and do their bit.

When we realize that no one will improve our lot and there are no shortcuts to development, like our peers around the world, Kosovars will roll up their sleeves and do their bit.

The contribution of every single Kosovar will come through a like-minded group. It takes association to discover that there are fellow Kosovars who think alike and share the

same grievances. In the receiving end, it takes a responsive system to instil the belief that something can be done by gathering with others.

Other countries went through a similar stage of development centuries ago. Economic growth and industrialization created a more influential middle class. It is the working and the middle which serves as the backbone of growing demands for a democratic and a lawful society.

The theoretical assumption is that middle-class working Kosovars should gather to defend various aspects of their interest by joining forces. The rate of association, and the multitude of groups that an individual on average belongs to, is an indicator of the vigour of the society.

The government and the assembly at both local and central level need to cooperate more effectively with membership civil society groups. The figure above illustrates how membership groups can exert pressure on the political representatives in order to gain support. Such cooperation will only occur if both sides discover that they can pursue their own self-interest better through cooperation.

The more individuals belong to organizations, the more political parties can have an impact with specific promises. There is a clear need for individuals to belong to numerous associations and develop a multi-layered identity.

Very few Kosovars belong to a membership organization. A recent poll conducted by the International Foundation of Electoral Systems indicates that nearly 73% of respondents are not a member of any of the organizations.³⁴ Accordingly, membership groups that have the highest number of members are political parties (22%), syndicates (15%), youth groups or student unions (8%), religious groups (7%), charity organizations (5%), NGOs (5%), and professional/artists associations (4%).

Kosovo may be a simple society today, but its complexity will grow, and needs to be matched by a more involved citizenry. Group pressure need to emerge to help citizens fulfil a diverse variety of their needs.

With more specialization and social complexity, more associations are needed, and more will arise, because it is a basic characteristic of social life that associations emerge to satisfy the needs of society.³⁵

The degree that the political system becomes more responsive and how can membership groups influence it depend to a large degree on the policy environment.

Policy Environment

Little progress has been observed by the European Commission with regards to the development of civil society organizations. It has been indicated in the EU progress report that “civil society is subject to undue political pressure and intimidation.”³⁶ Its activities do not meet the interests of public authorities.

In addition, since all associations and foundations are registered as NGOs, they have to fulfil their financial reporting obligations at the NGO Registration Office in the Ministry of Public Administration. This reporting, according to the EC assessment, is not systematic, which is a matter of concern.³⁷

The political party scene in Kosovo is very divisive. As a result, civic groups are reluctant to associate and openly place their bets with any of the parties. The introduction of open lists in 2007 introduced voting for individual candidates. Such individual association enables civic groups to target individual Members of Parliament and can stay away from the ‘radioactive’ parties. The current unresponsive system has created an environment which is not favourable to membership groups.

Many Kosovars believe that to transform Kosovo's political culture, we need to exercise pressure on the party system, enhance individual MPs to see a realignment of agendas to represent the grass-root level.

Kosovo's parties are driven by their leaders, and this could damage the whole party system. In the years after the war the system has enabled individual MPs to retain their mandates even if they change party. As it has been indicated in the survey conducted by D4D, 51% of Kosovars have an individual or a leader in mind when they go out to vote compared to 43% of those that think of a party.

Being a single electoral district, Kosovo is conducive to non-geographic lines of representation. Individual MPs can pool votes of various profiles from across the country, which is conducive to de-territorialize the vote and make it less parochial. Membership associations can improve accountability between voters and elected representatives that cut across the regions, and which are based on specific agendas.

It is important to analyze lobbying activities from different stakeholders. The government and the international community are by far the largest recipients of lobbying. While the government is in the end the policy implementer, the legislature in democratic countries "plays the central role in the policy process."³⁸ This study aims to reduce the level of lobbying to the government and the international community and expand lobbying to the other channels, including the national assembly and the municipal assemblies.

A part of the policy environment is the omni-presence of narrow interests and the weakness of representation of the public interest. This was taken as a hypothesis but was also confirmed by this research and with another paper that D4D is to publish in May 2013 on the state capture and mobility.

Public vs. Narrow Interest

Kosovo is not unique in the fact that disproportionate power is wielded by small and privileged groups that are exclusively concerned with their self-interest. This is a feature of transition of young democracies that are yet to discover and realize that participation as key to governance.

An initial political clique has quickly expended its control over the economy. Initially absent, there are now numerous powerful organizations that defend the interest of few members and have the financial capacity to exert political pressure to achieve their objectives. Some of these groups include microfinance institutions, the tobacco industry, insurance companies, banks, etc.

As all membership groups, they are accountable to their members, and not to the wider public. These membership associations are naturally concerned with particular policy outcomes that are to their benefit only. There is evidence that business interest groups lead to a decline of overall economic growth. More specifically, associations hurt competition as they do not allow new business competitors to enter the market.³⁹

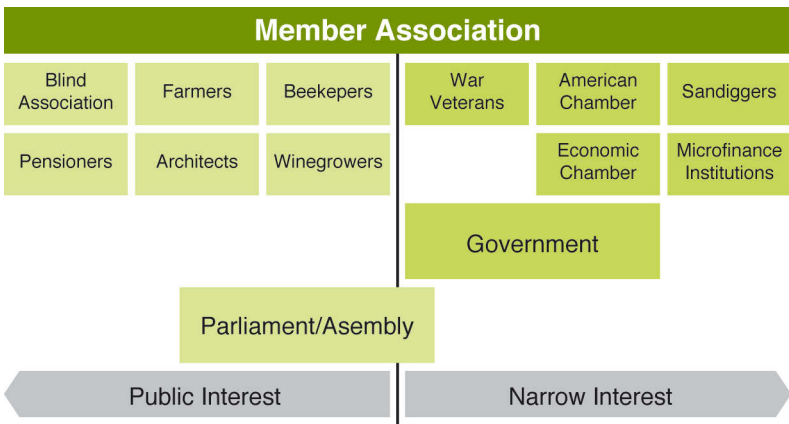
A positive example below illustrates how business groups engaged for generally more favourable conditions for doing business. The two leading business associations in the country, the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce and the American Chamber have together submitted a list of 400 recommendations on how to create better conditions for businesses in Kosovo.⁴⁰ Both examples show that business associations can easily cooperate with each other and act on behalf of their members.

The power imbalance between business associations and other types of associations may persist for a considerable period of time until the latter mobilizes broad public

interests to compete with the corporate interests. The fear is that short of activism by other groups, Kosovo's public purse will be excessively controlled by organized interests and their political cronies.

The figure presented below illustrates the distribution of organizations based on how wide or narrow is the interest they represent. On the left are typically organizations with wide membership but composed of weak members with little influence, e.g. wine growers, pensioners. On the right are organizations with few but powerful members, such as chambers of commerce, micro-finance institutions and membership groups that regulate or license professions or business.

Broad-based interest associations usually channel their interests through the legislature, whereas narrow interest groups already have influence in the executive. The same was indicated by the interviews conducted (and described in the previous section).



The electoral power of membership groups usually corresponds to their numbers—this can be thought of as their “strength in numbers”. However, it is almost always the case that more powerful organizations (often not

determined by numbers) usually defeat less powerful interests in the country.

Massive organizations have many members who are weak, and who are tied to their organizations with weak glue. As a result, they lack cohesion and collective action is difficult to mobilize. On the other end, there are small organizations with powerful members. Their voting power is small, but they can mobilize resources, and influence in a cohesive collective action that mobilizes its members.

As a result, special narrow interests defeat broader collective interests, especially if the given policy environment is not a proper democracy. That being said, given a longer period of democratic governance, the interest of the larger number should trump minority interests. This will definitely bring more stability in terms of relations between the government and civil society.⁴¹

What the first category lacks in action, it has in numbers. The votes it can muster are a boon for politicians and this must be utilized. The narrow groups must act below the public radar for what they advocate is rarely appreciated by the public.

How successful the two major profiles are in lobbying and advocacy will ultimately depend on the degree of transparency of the system. The more open the governance, the wide-interest groups should be able to fare well, and the less transparent decision-making, narrow groups would be more successful.

The Road Ahead

Kosovo currently has super-dominant party structures, with strong discipline and little involvement of ordinary citizens. As the diagram in the next page suggests, Kosovo needs to move away from MPs with strong ties to their geographic electorate to more cosmopolitan MPs who stand for

particular ideological and issue-specific agendas.

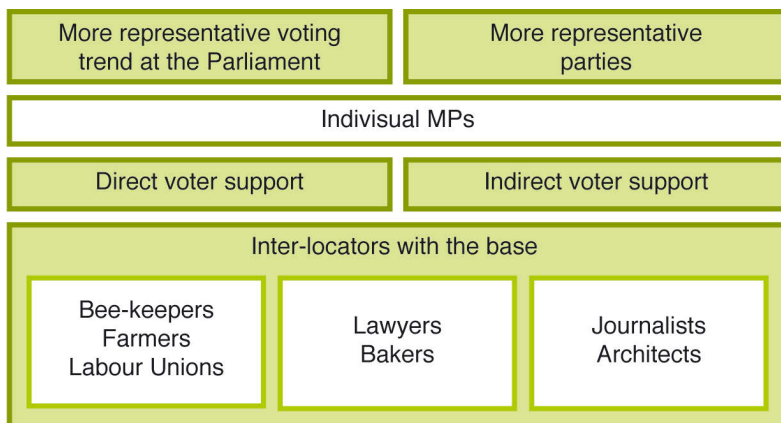
Parties should move away from targeting their militants only, and need to seek new voter groups. Moreover, they should begin to develop party policy that addresses the interests of such groups. By integrating their concerns and priorities, the parties may see a chance to have more members embrace them as the party of choice. Eventually, they may manage to align political party interests with those of membership associations. This will give votes to political representatives from various regions, based on the collective interests of members who vote.

Parties are currently seen as leader-driven with tight discipline. While the link with the grass-root is thin, open lists provide a chance to encourage individual MP candidates to reach out to new voters defined by specific interests. The parties should not only seek to cover geographic areas but also to seek to advertise the qualities of individual MPs beyond the areas where their families come from. This is the way parties can develop issue positions and gradually also to begin to build up an ideological profile.

Current Situation	Diagnostics	Objective
Dynastic Party Leadership	No MPs or parties seeking new voters	Representative & Dynamic Party Leadership
Tight party discipline with strong control of MPs	No MPs or parties representing ideological profiles	Shape party interest from below
Little link with the base		Powerful individual MPs
Open lists created an opportunity	No MPs or parties representing public interest	Grant legitimacy to individual MPs who represent their interest
Now mainly MPs with specific geographic support		Broad-based membership interest groups

Shaping party interests from below may be challenging but will be very rewarding. Individual MPs may currently have little sway over decision-making, but if they did, and go back to their voters to sell the outcomes they accomplished, the MP as well as the party will have gained new voters. Membership associations are the main vehicles to target new voter groups and parties should seek to reach out to membership associations.

The diagram below illustrates how political representatives can gain direct voter support from different membership associations. This illustration describes the way different membership groups can be useful for participation and representation. On the very left are groups with numerous but weak members (e.g., bee-keepers, farmers, and labour unions). These groups are useful to politicians due to their size and winning over the loyalty of so many members can have a major impact on the electoral result.



On the right are groups with fewer but more powerful members (e.g. journalists and architects). Their small numbers cannot decide an electoral battle, but their influence extends far beyond their numbers. They can have an indirect effect on the elections, given that they have large

networks and significant influence even as individuals.

How MPs and parties interact, persuade and deliver back to such groups is essential for the electoral contest as well as for the well-being of the members. The overall public interest depends on the multitude of such relationships, the number of groups and members.

The logic is similar to match-making. There is a host of activities that parties and membership groups can do in their end to maximise their interest. Membership groups can do much to ensure that they are not just used for an electoral purpose, but that their interest is truly defended.

First, it is important to draft a platform. If interests and positions are concisely drafted, and there is wide consensus among members, it is easier to seek support from decision-makers. It is also more difficult from policy-makers to merely make general supportive statements but do little in reality.

Second, membership groups can contact many MPs and target a mix group from various parties. This defends the groups against accusations that they have sided with a particular party as bias.

Third, the desired outcome is to match the interests of both groups. Appealing to self-interest makes a more honest and open relationship that is based on specific positions.

Fourth, defending positions in the Parliament and basing one's relationship on the platform helps the leaders of the association to mobilise more members, and to persuade their members to plump for a particular candidate or party.

Fifth, succeeding to have one's interests represented helps internal functioning, collect membership fees, recruit volunteers, and overall reliance on own forces to lobby and represent oneself. The media become more interested and small successes feed into bigger ones.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It did not require an in-depth study to conclude that there is no culture of membership in Kosovo. This paper presents the state of development of current membership groups, analyses the policy environment in which they operate, and sets out important steps towards developing a more interest-based cooperation between citizen groups and power holders.

In this paper, we examined various associations (including business) for three purposes: (a) examine the motivations that make them work and see if similar logic can be applied to motivate other groups to associate more closely, (b) to illustrate the nature of a governance system that pays significantly more attention to the narrow than to the public interest, and (c) to highlight the importance of balance in legislature through the clash of a multitude of interests.

Unfortunately, there is little interest among membership associations to change the status quo. Large or latent groups such as professional associations have few incentives to voluntarily act to further their common interests. They lack a sense of empowerment that they can improve their lot, which discourages them from seeking allies to exercise pressure on politicians to represent vital common interest.

Promoting membership advocacy is a difficult task, but this paper at least gives a roadmap to consider and discuss. There is a need to raise public awareness, ambition, and the belief among different membership associations that more can be done. The ultimate goal is to help these associations become more influential and impactful in the policy environment – particularly more able to bring their policy concerns to the municipal and national assembly.

The challenge to boost advocacy and lobbying among activists critically depend on voluntarism and influence.

While broad-based groups are dormant, small business associations have mobilized and are lobbying successfully. They pursue a narrow array of mission and target their services based on the needs of their particular group. If their clout becomes more apparent, it may mobilize groups that can compete with these narrow interests in their battle to influence policy-making.

The size of existing and potential membership is a key indicator of strength of a grass-root organisation. While NGOs in Kosovo are used to rely on external funding, grass-root organisations need to learn to depend more on their members. Most likely, new groups will spring up, often ad hoc. Neighbourhood groups seeking to fix a broken pipe should be able set aside several hours, and gather jointly to show their power to the authorities. Some mayors will learn how to use them, and others will lose elections as a result of pressure.

While business associations are well organised and have a clear purpose of their existence, which enables them to act on behalf of their members, organisations with wider interests are the opposite. Business associations find it easy to forge a unified position to push their interests, others find it difficult even to realise they have a joint interest, leave along to forge coalitions, or to develop sufficient union to take on the authorities.

The more open the governance, the wide-interest groups should be able to fare well, and the less transparent decision-making, narrow interest groups would be more successful.

There is a need for professional type associations to create an advocacy strategy to advance their cause in both the political and policy-making environment. Membership

associations will need to improve their internal working in order to gain “a seat at the policy table” at the municipal and national level.

The introduction of open lists in 2007 introduced voting for individual candidates which may be under threat. Open lists enables civic groups to target individual Members of Parliament and can stay away from the parties which are seen as ‘radioactive’.

The following recommendations may improve governance in a sustainable fashion:

Make Membership Associations a Priority. Donors, authorities and the rest of the civil society should seek to promote membership in Kosovo. Citizens should belong in as many groups and developed a multiple-layered identity, as a way to develop accountability and participation in our society.

Boost Membership Base. Membership associations must develop membership that is consulted and involved. This will enable to also improve collection of membership fees to develop a sustainable financial base. They should attract more members in order to become politically stronger. Increasing membership can be best achieved when a vision is shared by many members. Volunteers go to the organizations with whom they share their vision, and not to those that have the funds. Strengthening the internal structures has to also be prioritized in order to organize the work better and become more professionalized. They should depend less on donor support and consider to gradually depending more on membership fees. One of the techniques to boost membership is drafting of joint platforms, where members are asked to contribute and are part of the whole process.

Pair up with elected politicians. Each membership group should seek to identify its representative, at all elected

levels. They should find ways to establish cooperative relations that are public and enable them to have their grievances aired through the podium.

Package Interests as Vote-winning Issues. Active political parties should see an interest to reach out to membership groups. Interest groups may see their concerns addressed by political representatives if this affects the interests of a larger group of citizen who are in practice not organized to raise their voice. Alternatively, political representatives should discover an interest to speak on their behalf in return to gaining votes. MPs should strengthen relations with membership associations, organize more often public meetings, and include the requests of membership groups in their agenda. They should also insist that their political parties start defending the interests of associations.

Build Coalitions & Networks. Creating networks with similar organizations would also boost their image and make them more appealing vis-à-vis MPs. Coalitions tend to water down one's request but it makes the requests over key issues more powerful and more likely to be accomplished. Leaders of various groups should find ways to play down the differences with their counterparts and find common language in joint interests.

Open Laws and Policy to Scrutiny. Although few draft laws have become public, consulting civil society is more a formality and suggestions are not taken into account. Politics and civil society could benefit from a joint report in which both sides will give their contribution.

Appendices

Appendix I: List of Individual Interviews

#	Name	Organisation / Association	Date
1	Arben Lila	Kosovo Mountaineering and Alpinist Federation	2-Apr-12
2	Luan Hasanaj	Liria	4-Apr-12
3	Edona Xhambazi	Association of Microfinance Institutions of Kosovo	18-Apr-12
4	Bujar Kadriu	Kosovo Association of the Blind and Appartially Sighted People	18-Apr-12
5	Adem Selmani	Insurance Association of Kosovo	18-Apr-12
6	Gëzim Hisaj	Agro-Dev	23-May-12
7	Rexhep Shkodra	Kosovo Hunter Association	23-May-12
8	Daut Demaku	Association of Publishers of Kosovo	23-May-12
9	Sazan Ibrahimimi	Kosovo Association of Municipalities	29-May-12
10	Fatmir Asllani	Sand and Gravel Association of Kosovo	4-Jun-12
11	Igballe Rogova	Kosovo Women Network	4-Jun-12
12	Valdet Osmani	Association of Architects of Kosovo	5-Jun-12
13	Muharrem Xhemajli	Association of War Veterans of Kosovo	7-Jun-12
14	Ardiana Bunjaku	Association of Certified Accountants and Auditors	14-Jun-12
15	Anonymous	Hasi i Blenishtit	22-Jun-12
16	Albert Cecilia	Kosovo Chamber of Commerce	23-Jun-12
17	Mynir Dema	Association of Beekeepers of Kaçanik	25-Jun-12
18	Gani Lluga	Association for Social Training, Research and Advocacy	27-Jun-12
19	Ali Gashi	Association of Dentists of Kosovo	5-Jul-12
20	Guri Shkodra	Kosovo Young Ecologists	10-Jul-12

21	Valbona Salihu	Association of Lawyers of Kosovo - NORMA	11-Jul-12
22	Driton Bajraktari	Association of DOWN Syndrome Kosovo	12-Jul-12
23	Hajrulla Ceku	Association 'Ec ma Ndryshe'	12-Jul-12
24	Raba Gjoshi	Youth Initiative for Human Rights	13-Jul-12
24	Drita Hajdari	Association of Prosecutors of Kosovo	17-Jul-12
26	Arben Ahmeti	Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo	17-Jul-12
27	Alban Zeneli	Union of Journalists of Kosovo	19-Jul-12
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29	Ardita Zejnullahu	Association of Independent Electronic Media	24-Jul-12
30	Muhamet Farizi	Kosovo Association of Mills	25-Jul-12
31	Selatin Kaçaniku	Organization "Konsumatori"	4-Sep-12
32	Afrim Maliqi	Handikos	5-Sep-12
33	Yll Zekaj	Kosovo Chambers of Advocates	5-Sep-12
34	Ardi Shita	American Chamber of Commerce	10-Sep-12
35	Shaban Kajtazi	Association of Pensioners	14-Sep-12
36	Eqrem Hoxha	Association of Wine-growers	14-Sep-12
37	Avni Bytyqi	Initiative for Progress	14-Sep-12

Appendix II: Questionnaire

Legal Status of the Organization

- ⇒ When were you established as an organization?
- ⇒ What is your legal status? Are you a foundation or association?
- ⇒ How did you decide to register as a foundation or association? What is the difference? Would you change your status?
- ⇒ You refer to what other laws (besides the NGO law) for the management and overall functioning of your organization?
- ⇒ How do you refer to your organization – association, federation, club, network, and institute?

Mission and Vision of the Organization

- ⇒ What are the objectives of the organization? What were the objectives for the establishment of the organization? Have they changed in the last 5 years? How? Why?
- ⇒ Have you been established to protect the interests of your members, the Board, or the overall public?
- ⇒ What interests does your organization protect? Do you represent a certain group?
- ⇒ Who benefits mostly from the activities of your organization?
- ⇒ How do you characterize your organization – professional, voluntary, media-concentrated, advocacy, public information, etc.?

Activities of the Organization

- ⇒ Can you briefly describe your major activities? (e.g. conferences/regional, seminars, presentations, etc.)

Membership Base

- ⇒ How many members are registered in your organization?
- ⇒ Do you have a list with all the names of the members? Where is the list? Who keeps it? How often is your list updated?
- ⇒ Is there a potential for other new interested members to join your organization?

- ⇒ How many types of membership does your organization have (e.g. individual, company-based, etc.)? How many of those are paid and at what level?
- ⇒ How much membership fee costs? Do the members pay anything else besides the membership fee (e.g. training activities, site visits abroad, etc.)?
- ⇒ What is the average age of the members of the organization? How about gender?
- ⇒ Could you tell me about the members' professional profile? What is their professional belonging?

Organization Meetings

- ⇒ In what form do the members meet? Formal meetings? Or meetings in coffee shops or restaurants? (Tips: Is there an office or some other official place for the meetings? What is their exact location?).
- ⇒ How many collective meetings are held within a year? How many times within a year more than 50-60 percent of members meet/gather?
- ⇒ How many times a year does the Chairman or Executive Director meet with other members?
- ⇒ Does the Statute of the organization require that the Board and the Assembly meet in regular basis? How?
- ⇒ Is there any written platform of the organization? If yes, who wrote the platform? How many members were included in the writing process?

Human Resources

- ⇒ Do you have competent staff members that can help you achieve the mission of your organization?
- ⇒ What is the internal structure of your organization?
- ⇒ How many people work at your organization?
- ⇒ Are all workers paid for the work delivered/completed?
- ⇒ Are the volunteers paid? Interns?
- ⇒ Do you have a permanent office with available network connection in internet?

Funding Sources

- ⇒ Do you have enough funds to cover your expenses? What is your annual income? What are your expenses incurred within a year? (Tips: Ask for year 2011 as an example).
- ⇒ What is your main funding resource – donor or membership? How much funding you get from both?
- ⇒ If your organization has XX members and the payment for one person is XX, does this mean that you receive XXX Euros from the membership?

Position of the Organization and What Members Say?

- ⇒ Have you discussed any general topic (besides those related to the mission of your organization) with members of your organization? How often? What kinds of topics?
- ⇒ Do you discuss topics that are not directly related to your organization, like general topics that are mostly related to your interests? Something specific?

How does your Organization Function?

- ⇒ Do you have internal elections of the members? When did you have your last elections? How many people have voted? How many people had the right to vote?
- ⇒ How were they informed for the election?
- ⇒ For how long does the Executive Director hold the position?

Advocacy and Lobbying

- ⇒ Are you engaged in any form of advocacy? If yes, in what form?
- ⇒ How do you promote your interests? (Meetings, editorials, protests?) (Tips: How do you push your interests?)
- ⇒ Who do you contact to promote your interests? Is it more at the municipal or central level?
- ⇒ Do you promote your interests to the government, parliament, municipal assembly, or the mayor?
- ⇒ If your organization promotes or protects certain interests, can you please explain some of the issues or groups with which your organization deals the most?

- ⇒ Is the mission of your organization to make changes in the public sphere?
- ⇒ To make changes in the law? Or in other legal decision? What are those laws?
- ⇒ Do you send recommendations for any legal decision that may affect your field of activity?
- ⇒ How often do you meet with government officials? Are these meetings formal or informal?
- ⇒ Is there any politician that protects your interests or similar interests?
- ⇒ Is there any journalist who covers issues that concern your organization? Does he/she call you? Do you call him/her?

List of Documents to obtain from Respondents

- ⇒ List of members
- ⇒ Statute

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