

# My experience with submitting an ERC Consolidator Grant

Jan Beyers

# Overview

- something about my project
- why submitting an ERC CoG
- added value for my research
- tips and tricks

Understanding contemporary interest  
group politics: mobilization and  
strategies in multi-layered systems  
**iBias**

# UNDERSTANDING CONTEMPORARY INTEREST GROUP POLITICS: MOBILIZATION STRATEGIES IN MULTI-LAYERED SYSTEMS

IBIAS, ERC CONSOLIDATOR GRANT  
PROF. DR. JAN BEYERS

## BACKGROUND

1. Growing density of organized interests communities in all political systems.
2. A more complex, multi-layered institutional environment.



An organizational and contextualized perspective focusing on four key CONCEPTS

## RESEARCH PROBLEM

### PROBLEM 1

Organized interests are beneficial (de Tocqueville) and detrimental for democracy (Madison).

### PROBLEM 2: rivaling expectations

1. Scale shifting upwards increases diversity and limits representational bias.
2. Scale shifting upwards limits diversity and generates representational bias.

### PROBLEM 3

Representational bias understood as a problem of a) mobilization or b) strategic interaction with policymakers.

⇒ fragmented and non-cumulative understanding of interest representation.

Focus on interactions with policymakers  
⇒ A top-down perspective on strategies and influence seeking.

COALITIONS

STRATEGIES

ISSUES

ORGANIZATIONAL  
FORM

Focus on mobilization of societal interests  
⇒ A bottom-up perspective on collective action and organizational maintenance.

## DATA AND METHODS

Multiple in-depth studies of interest representation: three international and one national setting.

Each study has a similar research strategy

1. Mapping the population of mobilized groups (cf. bottom-up perspective).
2. Policy-centered sampling of policy issues.
3. Targeted policy-centered expert interviews on strategic interaction with policymakers (cf. top-down perspective).

## EXPECTED RESULTS

1. Cross-fertilizing empirical research and theoretical reflection:
  - ⇒ a refined characterization of representational diversity and bias
  - ⇒ a new conceptual understanding of interest representation.
2. Methodological innovation: combining content analysis with interviewing in a longitudinal design.

## PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Prof. Dr. Jan Beyers (Google Scholar 1563 cites, H-index 18), two PhD-students, one postdoc and one data-manager, integrated in ACIM ([acim.ua.ac.be](http://acim.ua.ac.be)) and an international network of researchers.



# Why submitting an ERC CoG (1)

ERC Consolidator Grants are designed to support researchers at the stage **at which they are consolidating their own independent research team or programme**. The scheme will strengthen independent and excellent new individual research teams that have been recently created.

# Why submitting an ERC CoG (2)

- odysseus II, plus various projects (ESF and FWO-V)
    - that enabled me to establish a research team, ACIM
    - but projects are coming to an end in 2014-2015-2016
- => consolidate what has be established
- build and strengthen a strong research profile
  - doing my own research myself and building a team around this

# Added value for my research

- flexibility of the ERC-grant
- resources for teaching replacement
- time to spend on the research
- technical support, data-manager
- postdoc
- plus two PhD-researchers
- extending and consolidating an existing team

# Tips and tricks (1)

- CV; knowing where do you stand
- time, time, time
- big plan; think big; vision
- ask advice; proofreading by colleagues (and others)
- budget; be realistic



# Tips and tricks (1)

- seek a balance, innovative and cumulative
- interview; be prepared for very big and broad questions
- luck, but much, much more chance than winning a lottery

# Questions?