Explaining interest group success in European climate action policies

A quantitative content analysis measuring the influence of interest groups in the context of the European Commission

Sofie Kvalsund-Grødahl

Thesis submitted for the degree of Master's in Political Science

Department of Political Science

Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Oslo

Spring 2022

Wordcount: 34.685

Explaining interest group success in European climate action policies

A quantitative content analysis measuring the influence of interest groups in the context of the European Commission

Sofie Kvalsund-Grødahl

May 23rd, 2022

Abstract

Interest groups have traditionally been considered powerful actors in terms of influencing the European Commission in their policymaking. This has been particularly true for commercial interests, and the European Commission has been dubbed a "friend of business groups". In recent years however, the Commission has worked hard to appear transparent and democratic, which should in theory clear them of this label.

This thesis sets out to demonstrate which interest groups have been able to influence the Commission in recent years within the policy field of climate action and determine which characteristics might explain their success. Hypotheses were deducted based on a rational choice theoretical framework. Quantitative content analysis was used to create an original dataset used as the basis for an OLS regression analysis. Explanatory factors related to issue-, interest group- and context characteristics are explored in the analysis.

Results indicate that commercial interests continue to be the most likely to achieve their preferred outcome when lobbying the European Commission. Factors such as resources, issue salience, coalition, country of origin and location of office in charge of EU relations are all discussed in terms of their level on influence within the field of climate action policy. I find support for one of my hypotheses regarding the effect of issue-salience on interest group influence, but the analysis uncovers relationships that should be given academic attention in the future.[1]

[1] You will find the dataset as well as my *R*-code at: https://github.com/SofieKG/Master-thesis

Acknowledgements

I have spent the past six years in Oslo and the University, and the list of people I have to thank is, consequently, long. Professors and fellow students I have had throughout the years have helped me grow on a professional and personal level and I would not be without a single good or bad experience. Having written both my bachelor and master thesis during a pandemic has been a challenge I hope I have learned more than suffered from. I am forever thankful for the things I have learned, the incredible friends I have made, and all the opportunities that have come my way as a result of me being at the University of Oslo.

Thank you to my supervisors, Lise Rødland and Vibeke Wøien Hansen, for your reassurance and thorough academic knowledge. Working with the both of you has been a pleasure, and I would not have been as proud of this thesis without your guidance. I would like to thank my parents, Ellen and Pål, for your constant support no matter the circumstances. Thank you to Sivert for being encouraging on an academic level and comforting otherwise. Thank you to William for proofreading and helpful conversations. Thank you to the people from my International Studies-bachelor, most of whom I consider friends for life. Finally, thank you to my fellow students in the Masters' program for making the past two years intense, yet fun.

I take responsibility for all faults hereafter.

Table of Contents

Tables

Figures

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Background and research question

Environmental issues have increasingly gained attention from the world's inhabitants and political actors. Climate action in particular, the efforts to mitigate climate change, has received a great deal of consideration and is a frequent topic at international conferences. Of the most important conferences is the 21st Conference of Parties, which led to the Paris Agreement in 2015 – a universal, legally-binding document in which countries aim to avoid the worst consequences of climate change by limiting global warming to a 1.5°C increase. The current trend in the reduction of green-house gases is insufficient to reach this goal. The world's major economic powers, reliant on emitting a substantial amount of green-house gases, now need to be at the forefront in fighting the climate concern they have created (Climate Action Tracker, 2021).

The urgency of the climate crisis is also of political importance in the European Union (EU), the 27-member, supranational political and economic union which enjoys legislative power over 500 million people (Coen et al., 2021, p. 5). The EU has claimed a leadership role ever since the urgency of climate change entered the international agenda (Torney, 2014, p. 1359). Although this has been contested by some scholars, there is consensus that the EU has led the way for more ambitious goals when it comes to climate change mitigation. This is reflected in its international efforts, but the Union has received more praise regarding its internal market regulations and limitations (Liefferink & Wurzel, 2017).

The general issue of climate change is also important to a large part of the European population. This issue salience is reflected for instance by major climate strikes across European cities in recent years (Gehrke & Tamma, 2019). This has also led to an increase in organized interests aimed at raising this issue on a political level (Binderkrantz et al., 2021, p. 472). The level of contestation becomes clear when looking at the vast variety of interests involved in the decision-making process of climate action legislation in the EU.

Traditionally, it has been asserted that interest groups representing business in the EU have been the most powerful external interests (i.e., able to have their preferred outcomes translated into official policies).[2] Commercial interests typically have plentiful resources to

[2] Please note that the terms "business" and "commercial" will be used interchangeably.

spend on lobbying as well as the potential to impact sector-wide parts of the economy. The opportunities this economic power comes with in terms of asserting control over democratic decision-making processes, has occupied a range of social scientists for a long time (Dür et al., 2019, p. 1).

Contemporary studies disagree regarding which interests have been influential in recent EU environmental policies, as the issue has steadily gained importance to the public. Whereas some find evidence that commercial interests have been able to steer environmental policies in a less restrictive direction, most studies suggest that business interests have lost compared to for instance public interest groups (Dür et al., 2019, p. 2). To determine which interests have been represented, it is necessary to look at which conditions ensure influence for competing interests. It is inevitable that some interests will win, and some will lose when competing for influence over a specific process, but there are factors at several levels that can affect their potential to influence. The increased importance of environmental policies, as well as the contested positions of interests in the EU, leads me to the overarching research question this thesis wants to study:

Which interests have been able to influence the European Union's decision-making on recent climate action legislation, and which factors can explain their success?

To answer this question, this thesis sets out to measure the level of preference attainment that interest groups have been able to attain in recent policy proposals produced by the European Commission (EC) on climate action. In the analysis, the influence of interest groups is measured in two recent (2021) climate action decision-making processes and characteristics which may have increased their ability to influence are determined.

Analysing interest group influence is relevant for two ongoing scholarly debates: the first debate concerns the practical explanation of policy outcomes in the EU, and the second debate concerns the democratic legitimacy of the EU (in particular the EC). First off, understanding the conditions and characteristics that may increase the success of a certain type of group can help us gain an understanding of the general EU policy-making process and the multitude of actors involved. Second, involving interest groups in a decision-making process can only enhance the legitimacy if the political system is not systematically biased in favour of certain interests. If that was the case, the democratic arrangement would be considered flawed.

This thesis thus places itself within the general field of research on EU lobbying, as well as the growing methodological use of quantitative content analysis in political science.

Within EU lobbying, it addresses the possibility to exert influence in the early decision-making process by focusing on the European Commission as an institutional arena. Furthermore, it specifically looks at environmental policy, and uses recent data yet to be categorized and analysed. Special attention devoted to commercial interests aims to increase our understanding of the development of their influence on policy making in the EU. Understanding who has power in a legislative process is important from a normative perspective, given the democratic implications that may follow depending on who is represented. The methodological aspect of the thesis contributes to the growing research utilizing quantitative content analysis in the data generating process, and the use of OLS regression analysis to draw generalizable conclusions regarding the state of lobbying in the EU. The thesis aims to improve our understanding of who has been influential in recent EU environmental policies, as well as the characteristics that can explain their level of success in translating their interests into EU policy.

1.2. Narrowing down the analysis

In this section I will explain how I have decided to narrow down central aspects of the analytical context. The first subsection will discuss the choice of narrowing the political decision-making process to the institutional context of the EC; the second section will explain the added focus on interest groups representing commercial interests; and the final section will explain why I have decided to limit the political field to that of climate action.

1.2.1. Why the European Commission?

The EU is a complex and diverse economic and political union, where institutions work together whilst simultaneously struggling to increase their own mandate. The EU is not a state in the traditional sense, but a complex, multi-level institution characterised by a horizontal sharing of power, between the European Commission, the Council of the European Union (often referred to as the Council of Ministers), the European Parliament, the European Council, and the European Court of Justice. The first three share legislative power. This structure offers numerous access points for external interests looking to influence legislative decisions, compared to a traditional nation state. Intuitively, one would assume that different interests lobby different institutions depending on where they might be able to assert the most influence. National interests lobby the European Council where the representatives are dependent on national support and civil society lobbies the European Parliament where representatives are

dependent on broad public support. Finally, business and trade interests lobby the European Commission as their representatives demand a wide variety of resources these can offer (Dür, 2008, p. 1214).

Of the different institutions in the EU, I have decided to focus on the European Commission. There are several reasons for this: first, the process of implementing new regulations and legislations in the EU takes time. The main legislative procedure in the EU, called the Ordinary Legislative Procedure (OLP) involves the Commission, the Council of the EU, and the Parliament. The Commission draws up a legislative proposal which needs to be adopted by Parliament and is sent to the Council for approval. Parliament and the Council are not subject to any time limit when it comes to their initial reading, and consequently, the process from proposal to legislation can face substantial delays. I intend to use recent examples for my data and looking at stages beyond the Commission would mean less recent data. My focus is thus on the earliest stage of the legislative process – the creation of a Commission proposal and the open consultation stage where external interests submit feedback. Lobbying at an early stage offers an opportunity to shape a proposal before it is formally debated by the remaining European institutions (Bunea, 2013; Chalmers, 2013; Dür, 2019; Klüver, 2011).

Previous studies have found that lobbying the Commission offers a great deal of potential influence, e.g., see (Bunea, 2013). Several findings offer high explanatory power for this outcome. For one, the Commission, as the initiator of legislation, is interested in their proposal becoming EU-wide legislation. To know what the public and economic actors are willing to support, their involvement is required to ensure the passing of the legislation.

Furthermore, the Commission is acknowledged to have a limited administration. The responsibility to draft proposals across all policy fields requires a substantial amount of diverse and precise expertise. Due to a limited budget and a staff that could not possibly cover all policy fields, the Commission requires external knowledge in order to draft their proposals (Bouwen, 2004). The Commission is thus characterized as having an "extensive policy agenda and limited policy resources" (Mclaughlin et al., 1993, p. 201). This ensures a dependence on external knowledge, which can be exchanged for influence (Coen et al., 2021, p. 54).

The Commission also has a legitimacy problem. As its Commissioners are not nominated by member states nor directly by the people, they strive to be transparent to legitimize their power in the legislative process (Dür et al., 2019). One possible explanation follows that as the Commissioners are not dependent on re-election, the Commission is not as easy to influence as for instance Parliament. However, opening up for the public to have their say at this stage of the policy formulation could decrease the perception of their so-called

"democratic deficit" (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020, p. 730). This may clarify why the Commission is the most populated lobbying venue of the EU institutions (Bunea, 2013, p. 558). This further justifies focusing the analysis on the political environment created by the Commission.

Focusing on a limited part of a complex legislative process means that the findings will be limited to the initial stages of the decision-making process and the environmental policy field. Interest groups lobby at all stages of the legislative process, including prior to a Commission consultation, and can also affect agenda-setting (Dür, 2008, p. 1221). There has also been an increase in lobbying in the European Parliament as they have gained more power (Coen et al., 2021). This thesis will not take these aspects into consideration but recognizes that there is real influence asserted at different stages of the legislative process in the EU, unaccounted for here.

1.2.2. Why focus on commercial interests?

What distinguishes an interest group representing business apart from a general definition of an interest group is the fact that they are commercially motivated. Interest groups representing business are organized interests with a political motivation to ensure their economic survival. There are a couple of reasons as to why I want to take a particularly close look at interest groups representing business. First off, commercial interests have a series of advantages when it comes to potential assertion of influence. They possess resources such as money and technical knowledge that the EU is interested in acquiring when drafting legislation. In addition to this, they also represent employees within specific sectors of an economy. The control of certain knowledge and specific markets may increase their chance of influencing decision-making (Dür et al., 2015, p. 955).

Furthermore, commercial interests are a central part of lobbyism in an EU-context. If considered a single economic unit, the EU is the largest single market area, as well as one of the largest economies in the world. In 2019, the EU contributed 15.3% of the world Gross Domestic Product (GDP). That is third, only behind the US and China (Amadeo, 2021). Thus, lobbying the institutions that control the terms under which these businesses operate, is vital in ensuring their own self-interests (Coen et al., 2021, p. 52).

There are also some normative motivations as to why one should take a closer look at commercial interests. The economic power of large groups representing the interests of businesses, is substantial. They also have the most to lose when the Commission initiates new

legislation within the field of climate action, as new legislation tends to change the status quo in a more restrictive direction. The definition of a commercial interest entails a reliance on profit, and the cost of implementing restrictive statutes, institutes a cost on industry (Bunea, 2014, p. 1227). When there is more at stake for a certain sector, they are expected to outnumber other interests in their lobbying efforts. The different groups and companies vary greatly in organizational form and other characteristics, but they all provide a service in exchange for profit. Economic power, combined with the potential high cost of restrictive climate policies, makes business groups a particularly interesting unit of analysis. If it turns out that commercial interests are disproportionally influential, that could lead to a decrease in the environmental ambition of a legislation.

Historically, the Commission has been seen as a "friend of business interests", although recent research contests this claim as the issue of environmental policy in particular has grown in importance to the public (Dür et al., 2015). The effect of this recent claim on the commercial interest influence deserves consideration. A recent study conducted by Hermansson (2016) finds that the EC *does* favour business in environmental consultations. These findings are however in contrast to most other contemporary research, such as Binderkrantz et al. (2021) or Bunea & Ibenskas (2015), who find that business actors are relatively unsuccessful compared to public interests within similar policy fields.

1.2.3. Why the field of climate action?

I have chosen to direct my attention to a single policy field, and this is considered beneficial for several distinct reasons. First off, there are obvious data constraints if I were to analyse multiple policy areas with multiple cases in the amount of time available when writing a master thesis. The method applied in the analysis involves extracting, reading, and coding hundreds of position documents submitted during the open consultations for the proposals and extracting positions on multiple issues derived from them. The human element of the coding also restricts the number of cases analysed, which limits the generalisability of the results across policy fields as they vary in terms of governance and external involvement (Mahoney, 2008, p. 6).

Analysing multiple policy areas is also something that has been done to an extent previously and has provided a general understanding for who might win and lose when lobbying in the EU (Dür et al., 2015; Klüver, 2013b; Mahoney, 2007). Looking into one specific area, either over time, across cases or with a large *n*, can provide valuable insight without necessarily producing generalisable results, and is requested by for instance Bunea

(2013, p. 567). It has the benefit of being able to more accurately diagnose trends that are relevant in the field of environmental policy.

Environmental policy as a policy topic is chosen given its importance in EU-policy in recent years. The EU has for the past few years been working on the EU Green Deal (EUGD), a comprehensive legal action plan to turn the economy of the EU into a sustainable one. It involves a modification of the economy, restrictions on pollution for both member states and private enterprises, implications that in turn affect the average EU-citizen. The EU has a reputation of being at the forefront of restrictive climate policies, and their ambition is to be the first climate neutral bloc in the world (The European Commission, Delivering the European Green Deal). Who gets to influence the legislative decisions within this area and their characteristics are important questions to answer to determine the legitimacy of the process.

The more specific area of environmental policy I want to look at is climate action. Climate action is chosen because of the responsibilities that come with it, namely coordinating the effort to mitigate climate change. In 2010 it attained a Directorate General (DG) in its own right (equivalent of a national ministry). Furthermore, it is responsible for an array of different subjects and issues such as "climate strategies and targets", "transport transmissions" and "protection of the ozone layer", which attracts a variety of interests, ensuring a heterogenous population of interest groups.[3]

In addition to this, climate action as a political area is important to interests beyond the EU-institutions. The Directorate General Climate Action is one of the most lobbied in the Commission (Bunea, 2013, p. 558). The external interests differ in terms of their specific concerns, their organizational form, country of origin, number of employees and resources spent specifically on lobbying the European institutions. This provides a great deal of variation when it comes to the different interest groups within this one policy area.

1.3. Outline of chapters

The following chapter will present previous literature on interest group influence in the EU and review their findings, as well as introduce the theoretical framework based on rational choice theory. The proposed theoretical framework assumes that interest group influence in the EU is dependent on an exchange of resources. Hypotheses, as well as the effects I expect to observe, will be deducted based on this theory.

[3] For a comprehensive list, please see: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/index_en

The third chapter introduces the research design, methodology and data. Text as data is presented, and quantitative content analysis as well as the measurement of influence is discussed. The fourth chapter introduces the operationalisation of the theoretical variables, and a discussion regarding the chosen analytical method of the analysis, OLS regression, and its advantages and disadvantages.

The fifth chapter presents an overview of the analysis. It starts out with a descriptive analysis of the relationship between interest groups and influence in the EC, before moving on to the regression analysis with control variables. Robustness-tests are summed up in order to further validate the operationalisations and regression. A discussion regarding the findings will follow. The final substantial chapter, Chapter Six, sums up the thesis and its findings, situates them within the existing literature, evaluates the research as well as suggests potential starting points for future research. An appendix will be available at the very end, following the bibliography.

Chapter 2 Literature, Theory, and Hypotheses

This chapter will present previous studies and theories that relate to my research question; *Which interests have been able to influence the European Union's decision-making on recent climate action legislation, and which factors can explain their success?* Following an introduction to the field of research, I will consider central contributions and their units of analysis, methods, as well as empirical findings. The purpose of this is to situate this thesis in a wider literature and academic debate. A discussion of the most central contributions, what they have done well and what can be done to improve them, will lead to an identification of potential gaps, some of which this thesis aims to address.

In turn, this chapter will look at the general field of interest group research in the EU, both regarding how the term "interest group" has been defined and previous empirical findings in similar studies. The exploration of the literature will attempt to uncover which characteristics have been found to matter when it comes to interest group influence. Following this discussion, the theoretical framework will be presented and lead to a set of hypotheses which aim at elucidating the research question.

2.1. Defining interest groups

One of the reasons why interest group research has been considered fragmented and chaotic is due to the multitude of terms employed, such as "political interests", "social movements", "special interests" etc. The lack of coherence is related to the abundance of research-fields that study these interests, and their various latent assumptions. I will employ a broad and frequently used definition of an interest group, based on Beyers, Eising and Maloney, who claim that three features must be present when defining an actor as an interest group: *organisation*, *political interest*, and *informality* (Beyers et al., 2008, p. 1006).

First off, organisation has to do with the composition of the group. When a group has to be organised, the definition excludes loose social movements and "waves of public opinion", which may also externally and temporarily influence the political process (Beyers et al., 2008, p. 1006). The organizational structure of a group can for instance include formal membership (of either individuals, companies, or institutions) and a permanent secretariat in charge of administrative duties. This differentiates them from instances of broad public opinion, which

may also influence policy outcomes but lacks organizational structure and hierarchy (Klüver, 2013b).

Second, the organised interest needs to possess a desire to influence political outcomes, so-called political advocacy. This interest in coercing political decisions in a direction that is beneficial to one's own objectives distinguishes interest groups from organized interests such as leisure groups, who have a clear organisational nature, but normally do not seek to influence political outcomes directly (Klüver, 2013b, p. 6).

Finally, informality, or private status as Klüver uses as a definition, refers to the fact that these organised, political interests do not seek public office through elections, but use informal and formal channels in order to reach their preferred goals (Beyers et al., 2008, p.1006). This excludes for instance political parties. These channels include contact with politicians and bureaucrats. In this thesis the contact is focused on open consultations in the EC on a proposed legislation, which represents a formalised process in the EU.

It is not easy to grasp the nuance of the characteristics that I have drawn out above, nor understand the subtlety in difference between an interest group and similar entities that operate within the same environment. Table 2.1.1. demonstrates how an interest group is different to political parties, social movements, and leisure associations, based on Beyers, Eising and Maloney's definition, and is recreated from (Klüver, 2013b, p. 6):

	Organization	**Political interest**	**Private status**
Political parties	x	x	
Social movements		x	x
Leisure associations	x		x
Interest groups	x	x	x

Table 2.1.1: The features of organised interests

The broadness of the categorisation aims to increase the likelihood of capturing a heterogenous population. There are of course some that fall within a grey area of the definition, and there are differences between the interest groups in how they chose to assert their agenda. This makes drawing general conclusions regarding the influence of interest groups complicated (Beyers et al., 2008, p.1108). Focusing on one policy area can help deepen the understanding within this

policy area, but not so much across other policy areas. In the context of this thesis, that will provide a deeper understanding of climate policies in the EU.

2.2. Previous literature and their empirical findings

Interest group research is a well-established field of research in the context of the European Union. The field grew substantially in the late-1990s, when the EU consisted of 15 member states, had a monetary union, and was subject to impressive economic growth. The attention paid to this area of research has increased simultaneously with increased political and legislative power transferred from the member states to the EU-institutions. Understanding why some interests win and lose receives a great deal of attention in relation to the EU, as its institutional structure offers multiple opportunities for external organized interests.

The EU is not a state in the traditional sense, but a multi-level institution characterised by a horizontal sharing of power, with several potential access points for external interests (Beyers et al., 2008, p. 1112). This is particularly significant when it comes to the EC which has been accused of being a supranational entity, and has actively sought to include interest groups in their policy-making process in an effort to compensate for their "democratic-deficit" (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020, p. 730). As the number of interest groups lobbying in the EU has steadily increased, researchers have included them when seeking to understand the policy-outcomes of the EU, but the question of influence has largely been avoided:

> *"Despite the central importance of interest group influence in the European Union, only few have studied it"* (Klüver, 2013b, p. 2)

Furthermore, Beyers et al. (2008) points out that there is a gap in the literature when it comes to the measurement of influence and interest groups' political impact, as it is a complex and diffuse area of science where multiple research fields meet. When it comes to other political entities, such as the United Nations or nation states, the research is more developed. Studies on the lobbying of the EU have typically focused on understanding the process of Europeanization in relation to interest groups (Beyers, 2002, 2004) or interest group characteristics (Eising, 2007a; Kohler-Koch & Eising, 1999; Wonka et al., 2010). Others focus on trying to explain the lobbying strategies that the interest groups employ (Coen, 1997). The measurement of *influence* was for a long time avoided, despite the general growth of interest group studies in an EU-context (Coen, 2007).

Even though there has been many studies regarding the *access* of interest groups to the European institutions (Bouwen, 2004; Chalmers, 2013; Eising, 2004b, 2007b), these do not look at the causal relationship between actors' preferences and a political outcome. The concept of access is considered a prerequisite to exert influence, and has served as an indicator of influence (Klüver, 2013b, p. 10). However, as demonstrated by Dür and de Bievre, access does not always imply influence as there is a distance from gaining access to the institutions to reaching your preferred political outcome (Dür & De Bièvre, 2007a). The general area of interest groups in the EU is thus well-studied, but the measuring of influence, less so.

There are notable exceptions to the rule when it comes to measuring influence in an EU-context, e.g. (Bunea, 2013; Dür et al., 2015; Dür et al., 2019; Klüver, 2011; Klüver, 2013). An issue, however, is that there are multiple ways to conceptualize and measure influence which in turn affects who are found to be influential on a given issue. Studies such as the ones conducted by Dür et al. (2015) or Bunea (2013) give valuable insight into the measurement of influence but provide contradictory findings regarding the influence of interest group influence in the EU due to their restricted and limited focus on a specific category of interests, a certain policy area, or a single European institution. Whereas Dür et al. (2015, 2019) find that business groups have limited success compared to citizen groups, Bunea (2013) finds that "diffuse interests" such as NGOs perform worse than business groups. This means that, in general, findings from studies regarding influence are not generalizable across policy areas or institutions, and scholars are unable to agree on definite trends in EU lobbying.

Even though the measurement of influence is relatively untouched in the EU-literature, there have been multiple studies regarding which factors affect the level of attained influence in the EU.[4] I will present different characteristics found to affect interest group's influence divided into interest group characteristics, issue-specific characteristics, and contextual characteristics.

2.2.1. Interest group characteristics

An important aspect to consider when studying influence has been the characteristics of the interest groups involved in lobbying. Previous studies have been particularly interested in whether economic resources can explain interest group influence. An economic resource refers to an interest groups financial spending on lobbying, which can be translated to for instance

[4] I would like to point out that this type of research is more established in other contexts, such as in the US, the UN or in national entities, e.g., Grossmann, 2012; Vannoni, 2015.

number of employees working with lobbying or the obtaining of external expertise on a specific issue (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020, p. 731).

Studies have found that having resources to spend on specific expertise, in turn can increase an interest group's influence (Bouwen, 2002; Dür et al., 2019; Eising, 2007b). If well-endowed interests are able to assert influence on this basis, that goes against the notion put forward by Truman. Truman argues that interest groups exist in a pluralist environment in which interests are in competition with each other and the outcome of a process reflects the opinion of the people (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020, p. 729; Truman, 1951). Whether this is actually the case, or if Schattsneider's observation of pluralism, that "the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent" and favours an elite, is disputed in the literature (Rasmussen & Carroll, 2014; Schattschneider, 1960; Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020).

A 2020-study from Stevens and De Bruycker builds on this and looks at whether economic resources matter when including media salience on a particular issue. They find that it is still "largely resourceful insiders" who gain access to the EC, and that resource rich interests are more influential compared to those with less resources (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020, p. 730). Their findings suggest that an increase in an interest group's staff resources also increases the probability of an interest group being influential. This is in line with earlier studies by (Binderkrantz et al., 2015; Eising, 2007b). However, in line with the findings of Dür et al., (2015) they did not find business groups to be more influential than civil society groups. They also find that the advantage of resourceful actors disappeared the more media attention an issue received. To fully understand the conditions in which interest group-characteristics such as economic resources are an advantage, they find it necessary to look at the characteristics of the individual issues.

2.2.2. Issue-specific characteristics

Another much studied aspect in interest group influence is issue characteristics. Previous literature on public policy and participation has found that different issues create varying levels of conflict, which in turn can dictate which interests are successful in reaching their preferred outcome (Rasmussen & Carroll, 2014, p. 447). Looking at specific characteristics of the individual issues can therefore reveal valuable information about who wins/loses in a public consultation.

Studies have found that proposed regulations or directives set to have a direct impact on peoples' lives through for instance a budget, will increase public attention and mobilize a

wide array of interests in the political process. Increased contestation, and a high level of public attention, has been found to decrease the level of success for commercial interest groups compared to public interests, which may correlate with the increase of share in the proportion of citizen groups involved in salient issues (Bunea, 2013; Dür et al., 2015; Hanegraaff & Berkhout, 2019; Klüver, 2013b). Policymakers are reliant on the support of the public, and they may be particularly sensitive to this in a supranational entity such as the EC. Stevens and De Bruycker (2020) found that the more salient an issue was, the less it mattered how resource rich an interest group was.

On the other hand, when an issue is specific and narrow, studies have found that mainly the groups affected by a proposed regulation will get involved in the political process, and the public does not get involved if it does not affect them directly. If there is a proposal on a new business regulation in the internal market for instance, economic interests will be particularly involved. Thus, issue salience and contestation have been found to affect who is able to assert influence in the EU.

A common expectation of EU-policy is that the Commission only launches a new political initiative when there is thought to be widespread support and it constitutes some form of change in the status quo (if not, *why* would you initiate new legislation?). When it comes to environmental policies, this tends to coincide with the interests of citizen groups who are typically in favour of more regulation, and goes against the interests of commercial interests who will typically want to maintain status quo, synonymous with less regulation and broader parameters in which they can operate (Dür et al., 2015). Whereas Bunea (2013) finds that diffuse interests such as NGOs perform worse in achieving their preferences compared to concentrated interests such as business groups, Dür et al. (2015) in a more recent article finds that business success is limited when compared to citizen groups in pulling an outcome in a favourable direction. These contradictory findings depend a lot on the context and boundaries of the specific research.

Regulatory issues that are of low salience have also been found to be of a fairly technical nature (Broscheid & Coen, 2007, p. 359). This is another issue-factor that can alter potential influence. The technicality of an issue raises the cost of lobbying on the issue as it may require expert knowledge (Rasmussen & Carroll, 2014, p. 447). This favours resource-strong interests, with necessary funding and technical-knowledge (Dür et al., 2019, p. 10). Rasmussen and Carroll find that for policy proposals with a more "concentrated cost" there is a greater share of interest groups representing business involved in the policy process. As a consultation

receives less feedback from a less diverse set of organized interests, there is an increase in the share of economic groups partaking in the consultation (Rasmussen & Carroll, 2014, p. 455).

2.2.3. Contextual characteristics

The context in which interest groups operate has also been found to alter their potential influence. Working in coalitions with other interest groups on the same issue has in particular been found to increase the pressure on policy-makers in a way that coincides with the size of the coalition (De Bruycker & Beyers, 2019, p. 59). Interest groups are part of a complex environment and interact with both resembling and conflicting interests on a given issue (Klüver, 2011, p. 486). A coalition is defined as an arrangement between two or more interest organizations, attempting to coordinate their lobbying efforts on a specific issue in order to reach their common preferred outcome. Building on Klüver, this thesis will use the term lightly, and groups located on either side of the Commission's position will be defined as a coalition. This allows for the inclusion of informal, issue-specific coalitions (Klüver, 2013b).

Klüver (2011) finds that the relative size of a coalition (as well as the salience of the policy issue) has an effect on the level of influence. Furthermore, if an interest group belongs to the larger coalition, an increase in salience is expected to have a positive effect on this group reaching its preferred outcome. Including this aspect in an analysis on interest group influence is thus relevant.

Stevens and De Bruycker find in their 2020-study that the more groups mobilise on an issue, the probability of being successful in influencing on that issue decreases. It may be self-explanatory that the more competitors there are, the less likely anyone is in having their preferred way. Mahoney also finds that taking part in a coalition did not affect the level of influence, as more compromise may lead to relatively less success for a greater number of actors (Mahoney, 2007, p. 51). These findings are closely connected with the salience of an issue, as highly salient issues typically lead to compromise between the involved parties.

De Bruycker and Beyers (2019, p. 71) found that forming a heterogenous coalition, i.e., one with a diverse set of interests represented, leads to a higher level of success when combined with outside lobbying (mobilization of the public and media attention). Looking at interest groups working with policy proposals in the EC, they find that interest groups working in coalitions will increase the proximity between an ideal position and the outcome of the process. Furthermore, the more heterogenous (or diverse) the coalition is, the more likely it is in

succeeding. Having a diverse set of actors come together on an issue is thus beneficial (De Bruycker & Beyers, 2019, p. 68).

Table 2.2.1. presents an overview of central contributions on interest group influence in the EU, their findings, and their analytical method. It is limited to studies with a similar subject and method to mine (the measurement of influence in the EU and large *n* studies) but note that the same subjects have received a lot of academic attention in different political systems such as the United Nations and the United States, as well as single- and cross-country studies. Small *n* case studies in an EU-context are also excluded from this overview.

2.2.4. Gaps in the literature and opportunities to contribute

As I have demonstrated with the literature review, studies regarding the causal influence of interest groups in relation to decision-making in the EU are limited, and there are debates regarding how to accurately answer questions. In addition to this, due to definitional variation and a wide use of similar terms, empirical findings vary and generalisable results are rare.

The first gap this analysis hopes to add to is the case of measuring influence in a meaningful way, as demonstrated in the quote from Klüver. A mathematical formula needs to be accompanied by large data, and a statistical program that can do the calculation, to fulfil its potential. This thesis will take aspects from different scholars regarding their concept of influence and their practical calculation of influence to provide more insight based on original data from recent cases.

Understanding under which conditions interests are able to assert influence, and the characteristics that may increase their chances are also areas in which this thesis can contribute. Building on previous findings and expectations but using recent data, the analysis can hopefully uncover which interest group-, issue-, and context-characteristics matter in order to be influential when lobbying in the EU. The analysis will include variables related to all these characteristics, either as explanatory or control variables.

The analysis will also offer specific insight into groups representing commercial interests and contribute to either side of the debate about whether these enjoy a privileged position in relation to the EC, which, as demonstrated by Table 2.2.1, contains conflicting empirical findings. More generally, the thesis can contribute to the overall literature on interest group literature, specifically in the EU as well as interest group influence in the early stages of decision making and environmental policies. This is valuable due to the growing importance of the policy field, as well as the debate regarding the democratic qualities of the EC.

Author(s)	Title of study	Method for measuring influence	Central findings	Explanatory variables that affect influence
Dür & De Bièvre 2007	The Question of Interest Group Influence.	Self-assessment on a scale from 1-4 (large extent to not at all), supplemented by 2 in-depth case studies.	NGOs gain access to policymakers on trade in the EU but fail to influence in their favour. They lack the necessary resources with which they can exchange. Business groups were able to provide specific and precise information relevant to the policymakers.	Resources (+) Technicality (+)
Klüver 2011	The contextual nature of lobbying: Explaining lobbying success in the European Union.	Issue dimension, interest groups successful if the final policy proposal is closer to their ideal draft than the preliminary proposal.	Issue context accounts for variation in lobbying success. Interest groups located on the same side of the policy space are a coalition. The strength of a coalition affects who is influential. Salience of an issue depends on the relative size of lobbying coalitions prior to it affecting lobbying success – increased salience has a positive effect for the larger coalition on an issue.	Salience (+) Coalitions (+)
Klüver 2013b	Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change.	Issue dimension, interest groups successful if the final policy proposal is closer to their ideal draft than the preliminary proposal.	Resources in the form of information supply, economic power and citizen support has a positive effect on the ability to assert influence, information supply being the least important. Lobbying coalitions are issue specific. Lobbying coalitions which provide a lot of information should find it particularly easy to influence the policy-making process if a highly complex policy issue is debated.	Salience (-) Coalitions (+) Technicality (+)
Bunea 2013	Issues, preferences, and ties: determinants of interest groups' preference attainment in the EU	Preference attainment dichotomous variable, based on position documents and EC-proposal.	Organizations representing ‘diffuse’ interests, such as environmental NGOs, perform significantly worse in achieving preferences than main business groups, representing ‘concentrated’ interests. The findings indirectly suggest that resource endowment matters for EU	Resources (+) Median preferences (+)

	environmental policy.		lobbying and provide support for the characterization of EU policymaking as 'elite pluralist' or 'semi pluralist' The system benefits EU associations and business groups.	
Rasmussen & Carroll 2014	Determinants of Upper-Class Dominance in the Heavenly Chorus: Lessons from European Union Online Consultations	Manually codes online consultations in the Commission during the last ten years and compare it to the population of registered interests.	Business dominance in consultations is even higher than in the population of registered groups. Support Schattscheider's predictions that the 'pluralist choir' does not sing without an accent. Business dominance is obvious at the aggregate level and present in all types of policy examined. Policies whose costs are concentrated on a small number of sectors are likely to witness more bias in mobilization than those whose costs are diffuse across the population.	Resources (+)
Dür, Bernhagen & Marshall 2015	Interest Group Success in the European Union: When (and Why) Does Business Lose?	Difference between an actor's ideal point and the outcome.	Business success is limited relative to the success of citizen groups. Business success, however, is both bigger and more likely on less conflictual policy episodes, when business interests face limited opposition from other actors.	Median preference (-) Business (-) Salience (-) for business groups.
De Bruycker & Beyers 2019.	Lobbying strategies and success: Inside and outside lobbying in European Union legislative politics.	The extent to which policy objectives of an interest group is realized measured by self-assessment and the judgment of EC officials.	Forming a coalition with a heterogenous set of actors leads to a higher level of success when using outside lobbying. Outside lobbying is more successful when defending a position with public approval. If a group relies on inside lobbying it is better alone.	Coalition (+) Salience (+)
Stevens & De Bruycker 2020	Influence, affluence, and media salience: Economic resources and lobbying influence in the EU.	Self-reported and attributed influence, the extent of congruence between interest group interests and policy outputs.	Economic resources matter for lobbying influence, but the effect is conditional on media salience. Economic resources in the form of staff resources in Brussels increases influence. Business interest groups are not significantly more influential than civil society.	Resources (+) contingent on salience (-).

Table 2.2.1: Overview over central contributions on interest group influence in the EU

2.3. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

In this section I will present the theoretical expectations, derived from rational choice theory and its associated social interaction expectations called the exchange model. There is not one definite theoretical framework in the study of interest groups, but rational choice is a frequently used one when it comes to deducting hypotheses on the question of influence e.g., (Bunea, 2013; Klüver, 2013b). It is also much used when studying the dynamic of power between the EU institutions, and it thus makes sense to use it as the theoretical starting point for this thesis.

I will first begin with a short explanation of rational choice theory, introducing its advantages as well as potential drawbacks and place interest groups within this theoretical expectation, before moving on to the practical expectations of the *exchange model* derived from the broader theory. To round up this subchapter, the theory, in combination with the earlier presented studies and their empirical findings, will lead to the hypotheses the coming analysis will attempt to answer.

2.3.1. Rational choice theory and interest groups as rational actors

Rational choice theory offers a framework for understanding the social and economic behaviour of actors.[5] A rational actor will, when met with a set of options, act in a way that benefits their self-interest to the greatest possible extent within the conditions they operate in. This way of assuming actors' motivations comes from an economic perspective and is in essence a cost-benefit calculation (Browning et al., 2000, p. 126). As a rational actor cannot achieve everything they want, they have to choose between different goals and the terms in which they choose to achieve them. A rational actor has to anticipate alternative outcomes and decide which one provides the highest level of satisfaction. In many ways it is a theory that complements the collective action problem that Mancur Olson defined in his 1965-book, where he argues there has to be a coercive component to get rational actors to cooperate, and if there is not, actors fail to act in their collective interest (Eriksson, 2011, p. 4; Olson, 1971). This theoretical expectation about peoples' motivations has been confirmed by sociologists, but it does not define the actions and motivations of all people in every situation; people are also prone to non-rational behaviour, motivated by for instance emotions or personal principles (Browning et al., 2000, p. 126).

[5] The theory was developed by William Riker, who wrote *The Theory of Political Coalitions* in 1962, where he demonstrated why politicians formed alliances using mathematical reasoning.

Rational choice theory is an interdisciplinary theoretical model, and consequently does not offer a coherent, definite school of thought. An individual scholar can somewhat define which designations they choose to apply and how they are defined in their specific study, making it a flexible, but inconsistent, theoretical model. What brings all these particular studies under the rational choice-umbrella is the assumption that "complex social phenomena can be explained in terms of the elementary individual actions of which they are composed" (Browning et al., 2000, p. 127). In other words, what happens at the meso- or macro level, can be explained by mechanisms at the microlevel. What this means is that the predictions you end up with are most likely determined by the assumptions and definitions you initially make (Rødland, 2019, p. 18).

Rational choice theory is limited in that it struggles to explain why anyone would join a multitude of organisations, and thus faces the collective action problem. Individuals, institutions, firms etc. choose to organise themselves even though this may cost more than it rewards in a short-term perspective. Furthermore, it is unable to explain why some act non-rationally and for instance choose to follow social norms that are rooted in altruism and reciprocal trust. Finally, it is in practice difficult to reduce all social aspects to individual, microlevel actions, and sometimes it makes no sense to do so (Browning et al., 2000, p. 136).

On the other hand, however, rational choice theory has the benefit of being able to explain that actors are opportunistic in the choices that they make, as well as including an institutional setting in its reasoning (Roskin, 1999). It is a major step in a more scientific direction within the social sciences, allowing for rigorous hypotheses and research. For these reasons and given its central standing in the overall literature on interest group research, it is chosen as the main theoretical framework for deriving hypotheses.

To sum up this section, I expect both the EC and the different interest groups as rational actors to be acting in a way that will maximize their preferred outcome. This in turn, leads to a relationship based on an exchange of resources that the other party is interested in utilising to achieve their goals. For interest groups, this can be translated into power, or influence, over a political process. Let us look at this expected exchange and determine which theoretical aspects may impact the influence an interest group has over a political process in the EU.

2.3.2. The exchange-model

Rational choice theorists, based on economic expectations, see social interactions as a process of social exchange, including something of value to the actors involved (Browning et al., 2000,

p. 129). The cost-benefit analysis implies that an actor will only agree to an exchange if the benefits of the exchange outweigh the costs. Given that the central research aspect of this thesis regards the influence of interest groups, I will give special attention to the theoretical expectations these come with. However, the premise of an exchange model requires two actors acting in a utility-maximizing way. The EC is also expected to be acting in a rational, utility-maximizing way. They can offer access to their political processes also prior to actual policy proposals (in an agenda-setting stage) as well as indirect economic support through proposed legislation.

Interest groups are patently interested in legislation that is compatible with their political goals, rooted in ideological, economical, and social goals (or a combination of these). In this case, that translates into influence on the legislation proposed by the EC. Potential influence is thus what the EC has to offer and what the interest groups demand in an exchange. In this case, mutual resource dependence triggers an exchange of for instance issue-specific knowledge in return for influence. The EC will only open for an interest group's input if they believe that what the interest group can offer will be beneficial in their attempt to reach their goal of ensuring the passing of their proposed legislation and strengthening of their institutional power. This in turn means that groups with the resources that are considered the most valuable by the EC, have an advantage in exerting influence (Bouwen, 2004, p. 337; Coen et al., 2021). I will present the expected demands of the EC, and discuss how interest groups can use their relevant resources in exchange for potential influence.

As previously mentioned, the EC lacks the personnel resources necessary to have comprehensive insight into every single policy area they are responsible to introduce legislation on (Coen et al., 2021). To ensure its survival, the EC wants to propose legislation that will pass through the other institutions involved in the legislative process. To fulfil its institutional role, the EC therefore needs to write proposals that the majority of the population also agrees with, as a proposal which is not broadly supported will most likely not pass through the directly elected Parliament, and one that is not supported by economic actors will not pass in the Council (Klüver, 2013b). This creates a demand for information supplied by external actors. In accordance with Klüver, I expect the Commission to demand information regarding the specific policy problem, as well as citizen support and economic power, including the position of major stakeholders affected directly or indirectly by the proposed legislation. This means that interest groups that can provide relevant information, as well as citizen support, in possession of sectoral power, will have the best chance at influencing the legislative outcome (Klüver, 2013b, p. 18). We will look at these in turn.

First off, the Commission launches a policy proposal with the intent of solving a policy problem. It is put on the agenda due to societal, economic, or political pressure. There may be different opinions on whether the specific issue needs to be on the agenda, and there may be different ways in which to solve the problem. The EC requires knowledge to best solve the issue, and interest groups can offer specialist information on narrow issues they are concerned with. Interest groups possess specialist information that the EC requires in order to ensure the quality of the proposed legislation – what Dür, Marshall and Bernhagen call policy expertise (Dür et al., 2019, p. 11). How important this aspect is in terms of influence is dependent on the complexity and technicality of the issue. As well as ensuring quality when it comes to the proposal, the consulting of knowledgeable actors may also increase the legitimacy of the legislative process. Over time, the complexity of political propositions has increased, and this is another major disadvantage to the already understaffed EC (Coen et al., 2021). The rise in policy complexity is in favour of interest groups in possession of technical, niche knowledge. Climate policy has a comparatively high complexity as it is a newer political terrain, and there is less policy learning opportunities from others.

Furthermore, interest groups can offer information regarding how major stakeholders that may be affected by the legislation, consider the proposal (Coen et al., 2021, p. 81). The differing interest groups can provide information on how the constituents they represent position themselves, and the EC can use this information as a measure as to where the EP and the Council may also position themselves. Any legislative decisionmaker will be hesitant regarding the pursuit of policies which may cause businesses to delay or cancel an investment within their jurisdiction (Dür et al., 2019, p. 10). The EP and Council, who answer more directly to the public than the EC, could be more willing to listen to these concerns. To make sure a proposal passes through all EU institutions, the EC is expected to listen to these interest groups to get an idea about how their members may respond.

General citizen support for the proposal is also crucial to have the proposal become legislation, and a high level of citizen support equals a high level of institutional legitimacy. The EC has been accused of suffering from a democratic deficit due to the lack of direct elections of the Commissionaires, neither by the member states nor citizens (Klüver, 2011). The forum of open consultations can be seen as an attempt to counter this notion. Constant interaction with various interest groups can strengthen their institutional position and procedural legitimacy. Following Klüver, I expect the EC to strive to introduce proposals which enjoy wide public support, and this in turn speaks in favour of interest groups with a wide social reach who possess knowledge of how their members perceive the proposal. This also speaks in

favour for interests who share a similar preferred outcome to the majority of other mobilized interests. The more plentiful and diverse a coalition, the more public support is ensured.

Furthermore, interest groups possess to a varying degree resources in the form of economic power. Intuitively, it is easy to think that this aspect would not matter that much to the EC, as its Commissioners are not dependent on running expensive election campaigns like members of the EP nor respond to their domestic economic interests like the Council. Economic power does however translate in the context of the EC as well. Economic resources in this sense are a mean in which an organisation can professionalise their work and offer more knowledge on given issues. Information of this sort assists policymakers in the EC in making thoroughly informed choices (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020, p. 732). Resourceful groups can spend them on closely following the policy process, lobby at multiple stages, engage the media and involve as many actors as possible with a similar preferred outcome in the process.

Figure 2.3.1. visualises the exchange relationship between the lobbying interest groups and the EC. At the top are the resources that interest groups can offer and the EC is interested in obtaining, and at the bottom is what the EC can offer which the interest groups desire. There are of course other resources that the EC can offer interest groups as well as other possible explanatory variables, but these broad ones will serve as the basis for this thesis.

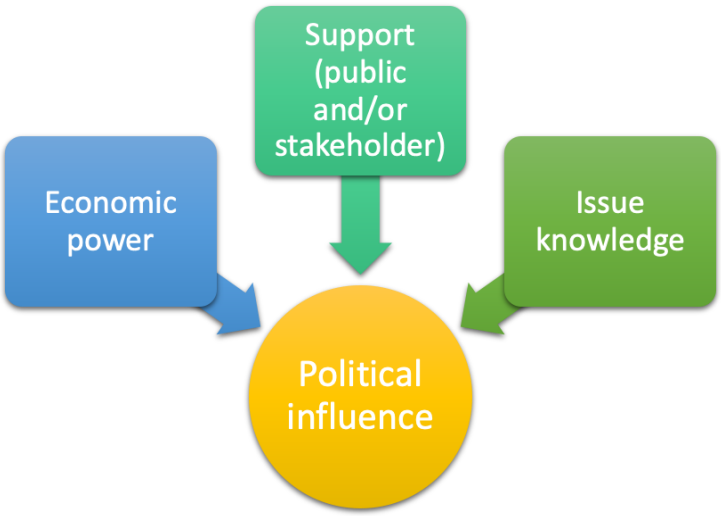


Figure 2.3.1: Theoretical expectations of the exchange relationship

2.3.3. Hypotheses

The above discussion regarding both previous empirical findings and expectations of the exchange model leads me to the hypotheses generated to respond to the research question

regarding what it takes for an interest group to influence the EC's position on legislation concerning climate action.

I will first present a general hypothesis regarding recent influence in the European Commission based on group category. Then, I turn to explanatory hypotheses rooted in the exchange-model, concerning the characteristics of the interest groups and the different issues that may impact who is able to achieve their preferred outcome. Whether the general expectation of a low level of influence for commercial interests due to the increased attention on environmental policies turns out to be accurate, it is interesting to look at which conditions can enhance influence for differing interests. There are, as demonstrated, some circumstances that enhance interest groups' chances of reaching their preferred outcome such as level of controversy regarding the legislation or the technicality of a proposal.

The first thing I want to do is determine which interest groups have been successful in reaching their preferred political outcome when it comes to recent EU climate action policy. I do this by comparing interest groups that represent commercial interests and interest groups that represent public interests. In line with the theoretical expectations outlined above, I expect that the Commission needs to enhance its own legitimacy by passing legislation that is widely supported by the public. Previous literature on the subject has found that the Commission only launches a new initiative when there is thought to be widespread public support for the initiative, and it constitutes some form of change in the status quo (Klüver, 2013b). When it comes to environmental policies this tends to coincide with the interests of citizen groups and go against the interests of business groups (Dür et al., 2015, p. 952; Dür et al., 2019).

Therefore, based on recent findings in similar cases using similar data, as well as an increase in contestation of the general area of environmental policies in the past few years, I assume that commercially driven interests will in general have been unsuccessful compared to public interests in reaching their preference attainment in recent climate action policy proposals from the EC. This leads to the first hypothesis, the *Business success-hypothesis:*

H1 Business success-hypothesis: Interest groups representing commercial interests have been unsuccessful in reaching their preferred political outcome vis-à-vis public interests in recent climate action proposals from the European Commission.

Interest groups representing commercial interests are those organizing business, institutions or other entities on issues related to a form of production, such as business groups or trade unions (Binderkrantz & Pedersen, 2019, p. 77).

Characteristics of the different interest groups is the first aspect which may affect an interest group's level of influence, as demonstrated by the exchange model. There is an expectation that commercial interests are favoured due to their resource superiority. Interest groups with significant knowledge or economic power are expected to take central stage in the lobbying process, as the EC lacks essential resources. Based on the theory I expect the EC wants to fulfil its institutional role by introducing popular and exhaustive legislation. This creates an opportunity for interest groups to influence policy proposals in a way that they prefer. Whoever has the specialist information required can be offered political influence in the exchange model. To ensure that your interest group has the most relevant information as possible across as many issues as possible, you will need resources. That leads me to Hypothesis 2, the *Resource-hypothesis*:

H2 Resource-hypothesis: The more resources an interest group has available on lobbying the EU, the more likely it is to reach its preferred outcome.

Finally, characteristics in terms of the specific issues can impact an interest group's level of influence. Based on the exchange model I expect that it is important to the EC that their legislation is widely supported by the public on issues that they consider important, but which people lack technical, in-depth knowledge on. The salience of an issue, i.e., how involved in the specific issues a certain number of actors are, is thus expected to affect the level of success for the involved parties. I consider climate action policies to be a very clear example of a policy field of great importance to numerous people, but when it comes to the individual cases and issues, ordinary citizens are not expected to possess much technical knowledge. However, to ensure their own legitimacy, the EC will be interested in pleasing as many as possible. Including interest groups as well as other organised interests with a stake in an issue is a way to deal with their legitimacy-issue.

The way in which the effect of salience can be manifested, is that compromises in the policy processes are made. This means I expect a lower level of success for all the involved parties, regardless of their categorization of interest group, because the EC attempts to find a middle ground to please as many as possible. Issues that are salient, are expected to produce less success on average for everyone, whereas non-salient issues are expected to create clear winners. Hypothesis 3 thus reads:

H3 Salience-hypothesis: The more salient an issue, the less likely the interest groups involved will be in reaching their preferred outcome.

Furthermore, if an issue receives much public attention, the awareness could theoretically shift the EC's priorities away from for instance technical details or support from large economic actors, and towards pleasing citizens. Previous studies have found that the more salient an issue, the less likely businesses are in reaching their preferred outcome when compared to public interests (Klüver, 2013b). This is because the more salient an issue is, and the more involved the public is, the more contested the given issue also tends to be. When an issue becomes more salient and thus potentially more contested in the interest group environment, an interest group characteristic such as resources is expected to have less of an impact on the political outcome. Based on the rational choice theoretical framework, I expect that the EC wants to ensure the proposal passes through the entire legislative process, and in the end (due to the way the EU's legislative process is organised), that means having the population on your side. Who you represent as a group could be more important when issues become salient.

Salience is expected to moderate the effect of resources, which means that highly salient issues are advantageous to those with less resources, compared to the non-salient ones. Given that Hypothesis 2 expects a high level of resources are primarily enjoyed by the economically vested interests, this means that we can expect issues of high salience to negatively affect the success of resourceful interest groups. I expect to find an interaction effect between Hypothesis 2 regarding resources, and the degree of salience of an issue. That leads me to Hypothesis 4, the *Salience interaction-hypothesis*:

H4 Salience interaction-hypothesis: When salience is high, resources become less important when an interest group attempts to reach their preferred outcome.

A higher degree of salience should thus be a disadvantage to the more resource-rich interest groups. This is an interaction that is expected both due to the theoretical assumptions of the exchange relationship, as well as findings that are rooted in previous empirical studies (Dür et.al., 2015, Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020). It is included to test whether it influences the importance of resources in recent cases.

These hypotheses can hopefully increase our understanding of which interest groups are able to achieve their preferred political outcome, as well as which factors may increase their level of success. The first hypothesis can tell us something about who has influenced recent

climate action policies. The second hypothesis can tell us whether the interest group characteristic of resources has an impact on the level of influence, and if this is a more accurate measure than group category regarding their political success. The third hypothesis considers whether the salience of an issue (i.e., the attention it is given) moderates the level of success as the EC attempts to please as many as possible. The final hypothesis looks at the interaction between resources of interest groups and salience of the individual issues, and whether a high degree of salience counteracts the effect of resources. Whether or not the expectations that are gathered based on previous findings and the rational choice theory expectations hold, we can still gain insight into what it takes to be influential in the context of climate action and the EC.

Using original, novel data for this type of analysis can also say something about potential development within the literature. Control variables that may also influence the level of success as well as the factors mentioned in the above hypotheses will be included. This will also ensure that interest group-, issue specific-, as well as contextual-factors are all included in the analysis.

The next chapter will explain the data that constitutes the basis for the analysis as well as the methodology chosen for the data generating process. In it, I will discuss the choices made regarding the data collected, the chosen cases for the analysis, and the practicality of measuring influence.

Chapter 3 Methodology, Data, and Research Design

This chapter will explain the methodology that will be employed in the analysis. First off, I will discuss the use of text as data, both what is possible when using text as data, and which documents are relevant in the case of this analysis. Text is considered fitting as the data given its availability at the EU-level, as well as the advantages it brings when measuring influence (which I will get back to). These choices tie into the discussion regarding the method of data gathering, quantitative text analysis, and its advantages and disadvantages. Furthermore, I will explain the choice of cases that have been selected for the analysis. These serve as the starting point for identifying the issues used in the analysis.

A discussion regarding the identification of issues follows. Next, I will focus on the operationalisation of a central aspect – the measurement of influence – including a discussion of what has previously been done in similar research. Finally, I introduce the practical model of influence measurement, which will be used to answer the research question: *Which interests have been able to influence the European Union's decision-making on recent climate action legislation, and which factors can explain their success?*

3.1. Text as data

Text will be the data in the coding process, and a discussion regarding text as data, as well as an explanation of said texts is therefore needed. In this section I will start off with a general discussion of what using text as data entails and what we can gain from it, as well as the potential drawbacks to the method.

The use of documents and text as data has had a growth spurt in all social science research, and the development of new methods within political science has greatly contributed to the field. Some documents of interest to political scientists which have become readily available with the development of technology and digitalisation of bureaucracies are for instance parliamentary speeches, legislation, and party manifestos. Access to these has quickly multiplied and given that they are often published, researchers have the opportunity to systematically turn them into data (Benoit, 2020, p. 461). Given the quantity of text material that is available, as well as the variety of political actors they involve, there has also been development in the ways in which we can study them.

The aim of this thesis is to uncover which interests have been influential in a highly formalised process, where documents are the medium in which information is mostly passed back and forth. Even though all communication between the relevant actors cannot be uncovered purely in text as there are informal meetings or phone calls, they represent the most frequent ones. In addition to this, given the formalisation of the process, the choices the EC makes need to be supported by the information they have been provided, and less formal communication is unlikely to become part of the final product. The use of position documents to answer the RQ is thus considered appropriate.

Previous research has used interviews, surveys or self-questionnaires in order to answer similar questions regarding influence in the EU, see for instance (Dür et al., 2015; Marshall, 2015; M. K. Rasmussen, 2015). These methods are about as frequently used as position documents but are more often applied in research with a focus on the European Parliament.[6] Some advantages to interview/survey methods are that the nuances are uncovered by people who have more knowledge of the specific cases, and the results are not dependent on a single individual doing the coding. However, to gather as large an *n* as is preferable to answer the research question statistically in order to make generalisable conclusions, documents stand out as the preferable source of data. Conducting enough interviews would take too long given the time restraint of a thesis. Self-reporting surveys were an option to produce large *n*-data, but it could not guarantee answers from all involved actors and suffers from potential subjectivity. You risk that only those with the available resources to spend on a task that is not necessary for their operation would respond, and that could skew the results in favour of those with abundant resources. Position documents are all published, and I can ensure that all involved actors become part of the population. The material is available online, and the contents are considered objective compared to that of surveys and interviews.

There are different ways in which you can analyse relevant texts, such as discourse analysis, rhetorical analysis, quantitative or qualitative content analysis etc. Common for all these methods, are that they study text in a systematic way in order to draw conclusions regarding the context it is written in, or the author(s) intentions and ideas (Bratberg, 2019, p. 11). Interpreting other's intentions and ideas through text is not a straightforward task. How do you know someone is expressing their opinion, and not supplying misleading information? How do we make sure that one coder's interpretation of a given text is the "right" one? An

[6] For an example on research where surveys are used in relation to all EU institutions, see Thomson & Hosli (2006).

actor's political agenda can be difficult to uncover, especially when it comes to behaviour. However, what an actor says, rather than how they behave, is thought to be a more accurate representation of their intentions and ideas (Benoit, 2020, p. 462).

The significance of text is to convey a message, and it thus contains information. Most text however is unstructured and not meant to be analysed. It is not data until it has undergone a systematic transformation where the text is converted into for instance a matrix when using a quantitative approach (Benoit, 2020, p. 464). Extracting information from text and giving it numeric values, means losing some of the overall information, even though it involves a close reading of the documents. However, when converting text in this way, we gain all the tools that are available to quantitative data analysis, associated with more precise estimates. The procedure from identifying documents to having statistical results, is explained in Table 3.1.1:

1. Identify the documents
2. Close reading of documents
3. Extracting necessary information based on variables (numeric values)
4. Create matrix
5. Analysing the matrix
6. Interpreting the results.

Table 3.1.1: Data generating process. [7]

3.1.1. The documents used as data

Let us consider the documents that are of relevance to this analysis. First off, the EC's initial impact assessments will be used to identify the individual issues within the cases. These are the documents that come with the initial call to feedback in an online consultation and explains the background for the legislation. Even though each of the consultations can at first glance seem explicit and narrow, there are many underlying, specific issues that the EC is asking for feedback on. How many issues there are for the different policy proposals varies. These issues

[7] Inspired by Benoit (2020).

are how the individual interest groups will be measured up against each other when it comes to how influential they have been in reaching their preferred outcome. This way of identifying issues, close reading the impact assessments, has previously been done by Bunea (2013). In addition to this, given the nature of the cases as revisions of existing legislations, a *status quo* position will be identified in the previous legislative documents. Having identified the individual issues, the policy proposal adopted by the EC following the open consultation which is sent on to the other EU legislative institutions, will be used as the policy measure for the final outcome (Bunea, 2013, p. 560).

Next, interest groups' position documents will be used in order to identify their position on the individual issues. The use of position documents as a source of data is well established in the study of bureaucracies, particularly in American research (Bunea, 2013, p. 560). However, the use of position documents and feedback in open consultations as the data for the analysis, represents a relatively recent development in the literature of EU lobbying (Bunea & Ibenskas, 2015, p. 430). These have been employed in order to study lobbying success (Bunea, 2013), to identify patterns of participation (Rasmussen & Carroll, 2014), and to study the impact of coalitions on the level of preference attainment (Klüver, 2011).

Given that position documents are part of a highly formalised process, they are thought to be particularly accurate representations of actors' sentiments (Klüver, 2009, p. 536). The position documents are typically 1-2 pages long, concise, and formal. The more relevant the policy is for an interest group, the longer we can expect the reply to be as they will be particularly invested. For instance, the German e-Fuel Alliance had a 6-page response to the initiative on "CO2 emissions for cars and vans – revision of performance standards".[8]

I do not expect every single position document to express an opinion on all the identified issues. This is solved by having a dimension for each of the issues, i.e., the interest groups will only have the chance to influence the outcome of the issues that they respond to. All documents and the close reading of them will be part of the original dataset used in the analysis.

3.2. Quantitative content analysis

The most common method when it comes to researching interest group behaviour in the EU has been small *n* case studies focused on specific policy areas (Bouwen, 2004; Geddes, 2000). There are a few, notable attempts at constructing larger *n* studies regarding interest groups in

[8] A policy proposal on the performance standard of fuels is considered important to an interest group lobbying on behalf of an alliance of fuel-producers.

the EU pre-2008 (Beyers, 2002, 2004; Coen, 1997; Kohler-Koch & Eising, 1999), but there has been a significant increase in more recent years (Bunea, 2013; Bunea & Ibenskas, 2015; Dür et al., 2015; Dür et al., 2019; Klüver, 2009, 2011). Large *n* studies allow for generalisable results when large enough, but the coding prior to the analysis can be time-consuming and complicated to replicate.

One of the analytical methods that has grown in recent years within political science research is quantitative content analysis. A content analysis is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18). The quantitative quality refers to the coding process, in which numeric values are prescribed to use statistical methods and generate generalisable results (even though the data is text and loaded with qualitative meaning). Categories in the coding process are operationalised as variables with their own inherent values, and each text is read and in turn coded based on these (Bratberg, 2019, p. 103). The goal is to be able to draw conclusions that are valid beyond the material of the analysis.

For the research question this thesis intends to answer, quantitative content analysis is considered fitting as the method of data creation. No method will ever be a perfect fit and there are multiple ways in which it could be solved, but quantitative content analysis is deemed the most fitting given the nature of the research question and the available data. It allows for a large *n* dataset which in turn leads to statistical conclusions and higher generalizability.

The advantages of a quantitative content analysis are many. Most important are the factors that make these types of analyses reliable and valid, which is important to any research to evaluate the quality. *Reliability* entails a research technique that leads to results that others would also come to when using the same technique and data, even under different circumstances. This is called replicability (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18). In a quantitative content analysis, the material should be limited to the relevant texts, and the coding instructions should be clear enough for anyone to follow both intension and execution. This way the author ensures that there is little room for subjective interpretation (Bratberg, 2019, p. 103). Content analyses of a quantitative nature are considered to produce more reliable results than qualitative ones, where subjective interpretations and fewer cases are typical (Bratberg, 2019, p. 121). Adding for instance an inter-coder reliability test to assess whether two coders achieve the same results is one way of demonstrating whether the analysis is reliable.

As with any research method, there are also some drawbacks. A common critique of quantitative content analysis is that the method ensures a high level of reliability, but the level of validity does not measure up. *Validity* refers to whether the analysis accomplished what it

set out to do – answer the research question, through the chosen method, and whether or not the results are defendable outside the specific sample studied (Bratberg, 2019, p. 120). Validity regarding the causal inference in quantitative content analysis relies on for instance whether or not the operationalisation of variables is able to sufficiently comprise the true meaning and intention of what we want to study. Furthermore, validity outside of the chosen cases should be fulfilled if the documents in the analysis are chosen randomly from a given population. If this is the case, then you should validly be able to generalise your findings.

The analysis is relatively straightforward and should be easy to replicate, but the validity of the inferences is less obvious. Ensuring validity involves, to an extent, human judgement (Heale & Twycross, 2015). In the case of quantitative content analysis, there is typically not a significant presence of human assessment. When you prescribe text a numeric value and then analyse a matrix, are you able to uncover the true meaning and intentions of the actors? Are the operationalisations sufficiently accurate, and are the findings viable outside the studied sample? Whether you can turn ideas and intentions into numbers for analysis and infer on these is debated (Bratberg, 2019, p. 121). Researchers utilising content analyses have been criticised for accepting "face validity", i.e., that the results are valid based on intuition and inherent knowledge of the individual researcher (Heale & Twycross, 2015; Krippendorff, 1980, p. 70). There thus needs to an individual assessment, as with any research, about the validity of the research, and preferably validity tests.

3.2.1. Previous use of quantitative content analysis in EU interest group research

When it comes to research regarding interest group influence in the EU using quantitative content analysis, Klüver (2013b) and Bunea (2013, 2015) stand out as two central and promising recent examples. They agree on several things, such as the fact that all involved parties when it comes to EU-interest group relations are rational actors, that preference attainment is an accurate way to measure influence when it comes to environmental policies, and that the early stages of legislation at the hands of the European Commission is the context in which interest groups are most likely to succeed in achieving their political goals. Interestingly, they disagree on the most accurate method of data gathering when studying interest group influence in an early decision-making process; Bunea and Ibenskas use manual coding (a close reading of all the text and subsequent coding, and a single policy proposal) and Klüver uses a method called *Wordfish*. Wordfish is an objective, unsupervised scaling method developed by Slapin & Proksch (2008).

Even though Wordfish is associated with a high level of reliability, increased time efficiency, and large *n*-research, there are also disadvantages with using Wordfish. These include having to determine the one-dimensionality of a policy space which may not be unidimensional in the first place, and the exclusion of relevant data that Wordfish is unable to process due to, for instance, a language-barrier in a position document (Bunea & Ibenskas, 2015, p. 430). Bunea and Ibenskas find that the exclusion of certain texts can have implications for the measurement of influence and demonstrates this by comparing the results from a Wordfish-analysis with hand-coding the same texts. They find that the correspondence between the estimates derived from the two methods is limited and thus not optimal for this type of analysis (Bunea & Ibenskas, 2015, p. 450). A fully automated, objective coding process seems the most reliable method within quantitative content analysis, but there are details that can go unnoticed when leaving the coding up to a computer (Bratberg, 2019, p. 104). Bunea and Ibenskas therefore suggest:

> *"… a thorough reading of analysed texts and an in-depth qualitative judgment about text characteristics is an absolute must for choosing the right method of content analysis in general, and the appropriate automated content analysis method in particular*" (Bunea & Ibenskas, 2015, p. 451).

This is a line-of-thought I base the following data gathering on: a close reading of the individual positions of different interest groups, and a quantitative coding process which, when there is a large enough *n*, allows for statistical conclusions valid outside the given sample. Quantitative content analysis of the sort Bunea advocates allows for a close reading of text and can thus, in contrast to automated methods of quantitative analyses, identify subtle differences to a greater extent. The close reading, followed by coding and a large *n* quantitative analysis, can hopefully contribute to a more nuanced, thorough analysis compared to an automated one. Some interest groups deliver position documents in their native language, and when coding manually, the researcher has the chance to have these translated and extract their position on the differing issues as opposed to excluding them from the analysis. The large *n* allows for statistical conclusions. It may also contribute to identify setbacks of the method and recognize what can be done to make the method even more applicable and accurate in future research.

3.3. Case selection

A "case study" can mean different things in the social science literature. It can refer to a qualitative research method with a small *n*, an in-depth study of an entity, research that takes

place outside of a laboratory etc. (Gerring, 2011, p. 1137). A key characteristic of a case study is that there is a focus on one or a few cases, but with an aim of producing an understanding of broader, more general dynamics. A case in the context of this thesis refers to the limits of where the data for the analysis will be pulled from, which are open consultation processes in the EC on climate action policies.

There are different rationales when figuring out how to choose appropriate cases for your analysis. As previously mentioned, the focus of this analysis will be climate action, a section under environmental policies with its own Directorate General. DG Climate Action is one of the most diverse DGs in terms of interest group representation and therefore represents an interesting circumstance to study interest group influence (Bunea, 2013, p. 558). The restriction of looking at just one policy area means you can account for within-field variation, but constricts the outside generalizing powers of the analysis, as there is great variation within the EU's political process in terms of participation, governance and political processes (Bunea, 2013, p. 558; Mahoney, 2008, p. 6). The findings of this study are thus limited in their thematic reach but can present results that give insight into the initial EU policy formulating stage regardless of the contents of the policy.

In order to produce original data, it is important to have a recent perspective and chose cases thereafter. This ensures valuable, previously unexplored data which can ensure a deeper understanding of recent development in civil society presence in the EU. It is also important that the cases are complete with their initial stages and passed on from the EC to the other institutions in order to get the final adoption document from the EC which is used as part of the analysis.

It is preferrable that the analysis includes more than one case to make sure that there is enough data to make generalisable statistical conclusions. However, given the time and work restrain no more than two cases were considered appropriate. There are numerous position documents in each consultation process and the human coding of them is labour intensive, but ensures a more precise estimation and degrees of preference than possible with machine coding (Bunea, 2013, p. 558).

3.3.1. The EU legislative process

There are multiple entry points in the European Union in which external interests can have their say, and this is due to the institutional nature of the Union which includes a sharing of legislative powers. The way in which most legislation (80%) is passed, is dubbed the *ordinary*

legislative procedure (OLP).[9] The OLP was introduced in 2009 following the Lisbon Treaty, and initiated significant legal change in the EU, including increased power for Parliament. The underlying aim was to make sure that Parliament, which is considered the most democratic of the EU institutions given its direct elections, be granted the same authority as the "less-democratic" Council of the European Union. The legislative process of the OLP is visualised in Figure 3.3.1:

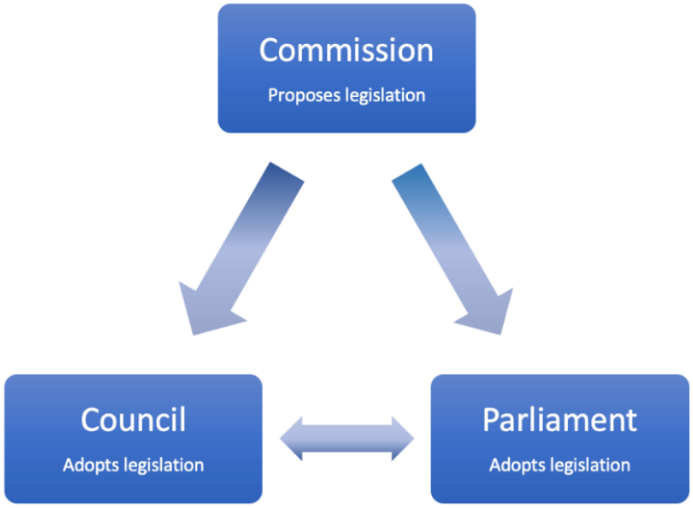


Figure 3.3.1: OLP visualised.[10]

The European Commission has the right to initiate new legislation, whereas the Parliament and Council together have the right to approve, amend or reject. That means that there are also several relevant institutions which could be the focus of an analysis with an interest group-perspective, as there are several opportunities to excerpt influence. I have already explained why the focus of this analysis will be on the EC, but to sum it up: the EC is the first access point and allows for recent cases; they want their proposals going all the way through the institutions and become legislation and are thus open to involve external interests and ensure support; and their limited administration, as well as their legitimacy deficit, means that the EC is dependent on including external interests in the process. I will now outline the possibilities external interests have in influencing the EC.

In recent consultation processes, the EC has asked for input on three different occasions of the process: first, as they present a roadmap of the initiative, anyone can submit position papers based on an initial impact assessment published by the EC over a 4-week period of time;

[9] One important exception is tax policy.
[10] If there is continued disagreement between Parliament and the Council, proposals will go back and forth and potentially lead to negotiation between the two parties.

second, they present a questionnaire with multiple-choice and open questions designed by the EC regarding the initiative; and finally, as they have adopted the initiative, interests can again send in position documents expressing their opinion on the final legislation. As the data for this analysis is going to be text in the form of documents, and the aim is to have interest group positions *prior* to adoption to measure influence they might have exerted, that excludes both the questionnaire-stage of the process as well as the post adoption-stage. That leaves us with the initial call to action, where nothing is explicitly or publicly set in stone by the EC.

The initial stage is considered the most fitting for a couple more reasons. At this stage, anyone can submit a document based on the impact assessment published by the EC. The questionnaires do not allow for issue-specific analysis in the same way that position documents do, which are of importance to this analysis. Even though these impact assessments are relatively uncomplicated, they are a few pages long and include information that requires some knowledge about the policy subject in question. The impact assessment published in relation to *Land use, land use change & forestry – review of EU rules,* includes information about LULUCF Regulation for instance.[11] This is a term not everyone will be familiar with. This increases the threshold for submitting a position document, something that becomes evident when you look the difference in number of replies between this initial stage and the number of replies to the questionnaire later in the process (93 vs. 232).

The demographic between the two stages is also remarkably different. Whereas the technicality of the impact assessment is likely to exclude many non-organised actors, the majority of replies to the questionnaire are EU citizens (25%) (The European Commission, 2021). Seeing as the aim of this analysis is to say something about organized interests, focusing on the very initial stage of the consultation is the most relevant.

3.3.2. The chosen cases

Based on the discussion regarding the options of the legislative process, the time restraint of the thesis and the coding work for one individual, I landed on two appropriate cases. They are presented in this section.

Once I located the published legislative initiatives, I added the filter of "climate action", and made sure the feedback was closed and the legislative proposal adopted by the EC. We are thus looking at legislative consultation processes that have been adopted by the Commission

[11] Land use and forestry regulation for 2021-2030.

on the subject of climate action. This left me with 9 initiatives that were closed in 2021 and are thus relatively recent in the context of this thesis. In addition to these filters, I wanted cases that had around 100 replies to get a large enough *n*, whilst keeping the workload manageable. Some replies were likely to be removed, for instance anonymous individuals, and some margin was therefore considered beneficial.

Within the two cases I chose to limit the data gathering to, I wanted diversity. The idea was to include cases that would attract a varied demography of interested parties, ensuring that the policy area was as representative as it could be when it came to the actors involved. As previously mentioned, the policy field of climate action constitutes many specific areas of responsibilities which attracts a diverse crowd. It has the potential of representing the entire interest group universe related to the EU. I landed on these two legislative proposals as analytical cases:

1) *Land use, land use change & forestry – review of EU rules* and
2) *EU Green Deal – Revision of the Energy Taxation Directive.*

Land use, land use change & forestry – review of EU rules (sometimes referred to as the case on LULUCF or Case 1) is a revision of the regulation of land use, land use change and forestry, and how these sectors to a greater extent can contribute to reducing emissions. Intuitively one would think this is a topic that could engage a large part of the European population, as it has the potential to reach wide in for instance rural communities. It also seems like a topic that the Member States of the EU would have strong opinions on (as agriculture and forestry are topics typically delt with domestically), and this may reflect in both the position of the EC as well as the feedback from the public in the consultation.

The second case, the *EU Green Deal – Revision of the Energy Taxation Directive* (sometimes referred to as the case on Energy Tax or Case 2) is also a revision of existing legislation due to the increased climate ambition of the Green Deal. This is a subject that one would assume more likely to engage commercial interests, as the taxation of energy may have a greater economic cost for those that use a lot of it. In this case I expect less involvement from the public and EU Member States, and a dominance of commercial interests.

These two legislative proposals are both revisions of existing legislation to meet the recent climate goals introduced by the European Green Deal. They are thus introduced to revise existing legislation. The legislative processes are the same and open for external interests to have their say along the way.

The cases are also highly technical. The level of technicality of an issue can affect which interest groups are influential. The idea is that highly technical issues demand a certain level of pre-meditated knowledge, which some interest groups are more likely to be able to obtain than others. Technicality of an issues has been measured using a Flesch reading ease level of the consultation document which measures how difficult it is to read a document based on average sentence length and average word length (Røed & Wøien Hansen, 2018, p. 1454).

In its simplicity, the test is a mathematic formula. The mathematic formula underlying the Flesch Reading Ease test looks like this (Readable, n.d.):

$$206.835 - 1.015\left(\frac{total\ words}{total\ sentences}\right) - 84.6\left(\frac{total\ syllables}{total\ words}\right)$$

In order to determine the readability, I used an online tool (*Flesch Reading Ease Score - Reading and Grade Level Calculator*, n.d.). The online tool is less likely to make human mistakes, such as missing syllables or miscounting the number of words. I therefore trusted this compared to manually calculating the Flesch-score. I put the EC initial Impact Assessments through the online tool which gave them a score based on the mathematic formula: Land use-revision (17.09), and EU tax-revision (21.04).

These scores are considered "very difficult to read, best understood by university graduates" or compatible for people who have reached 21-22 years of age (van de Rakt, 2019). The two cases are thus stable across this factor, which could indicate that the policy subject of climate action is a technical one across legislative processes. We cannot use them to compare the impact of highly technical/not so technical proposals on the level of influence, and this aspect is thus already controlled for and kept stable across all issues. Previous research that used the Flesch Reading Ease test as a measure of technicality in the EU found that across the different policy fields environmental policy and its subsequent issues were of the most complex ones (Røed & Wøien Hansen, 2018, p. Online Appendix). What this substantially means is that both cases are of a technical degree, possibly excluding certain actors from getting involved. Røed & Wøien Hansen (2018) argue that to contribute with something meaningful in the consultations, in-depth knowledge of the issue is a pre-requisite.

Even though the cases seem similar in their process and function, they differ in their contents. The subjects for the two cases are far from each other – one regards what is allowed when it comes to the exploitation of land resources, and the other on the taxation of fuel. Both cases are within the field of climate action, but the case on LULUCF is led by the Climate DG,

whereas the case on Energy Tax is lead mainly by the Tax DG. Tax policies are normally not subject to the OLP, but, since the main intent of this revision is a focus on environmental issues, the directive was passed through the OLP which is explained in the impact assessment (*The Energy Taxation Directive: INCEPTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT*, 2020). The difference in subject, hopefully leads to the attraction of different crowds.

The cases are also considered fitting for answering the overarching research question. The revisions are part of the overall effort of the EU on climate action policy, yet they represent different aspects of the efforts and thus ensure a wide representation of interests. This can help us gain a better understanding of which characteristics matter when it comes to asserting influence in the legislative process of the EU. Revisions are coincidently great as cases when the aim is to measure spatial distance on a dimension as they allow for a status quo, which I will get back to. What this essentially means is that the measure becomes more objective and does not rely on a subjective interpretation as much as the alternative would. Together the two cases contain enough responses to create a dataset that allows for a regression with statistical conclusions. Table 3.3.1. summarizes the initial information on the two cases, including a short summary collected from the EC.

3.3.3. Identifying issues

Now that we have established the two cases for the analysis, we can move on to identifying the issues. An issue in the context of this thesis is any specific topic brought up by the EC as something stakeholders could provide feedback on (Bunea, 2014, p. 1231). In order to identify the issues introduced by the EC, I look at the aforementioned impact assessment at the initial stage of the consultation (in the tradition of (Bunea, 2013, p. 559)). There is a technical and legal nature to this document, but one that makes it possible to identify which aspects are of importance to the EC.

The advantage of having revisions as cases for the analysis is that the Commission explicitly mentions why there is a need for a revision of the existing legislation. Practically, the issues are identified based on what the Commission has brought up as what needs to be revised in the previous legislation. It also needs to be an aspect which allows for differing opinions on a dimension, so that the interest groups can be sorted along this dimension based on their feedback. The final Commission proposal also mentions which aspects it asked for feedback on in the Impact Assessment and acts as an insurance mechanism whenever there is doubt regarding an issue. The subjects brought up by the Commission as the motive for the

Name of initiative	Short summary from the EC	Total number of replies in the initial stage	Replies applicable to the analysis	Approved by Commission
Land use, land use change & forestry – review of EU rules	As part of the Green Deal, the EU is proposing to increase its emission reduction targets for 2030. The EC is reviewing all relevant policies – including its regulation on land use, land use change and forestry. The goal is to increase this sector's efforts to reduce emissions and maintain and enhance carbon removals.	93	58	14.07.2021
EU Green Deal – Revision of the Energy Taxation Directive.	To become climate neutral by 2050, the Energy Taxation Directive is being reviewed. The main objectives are to align taxation of energy products and electricity with EU energy and climate policies, to contribute to the EU 2030 energy targets and climate neutrality by 2050; preserving the EU single market by updating the scope and the structure of tax rates and rationalising the use of optional tax exemptions and reductions.	180	144	14.07.2021

Table 3.3.1: Case summaries

revisions, were considered issues. The consultation process is formal, and the involved actors tend to respond only to what has been raised.

The number of issues identified in legislative processes has varied greatly in previous research, across authors and across different legislative proposals. Whereas Bunea (2013) finds on average 15.8 in her selection of cases, Dür et al. (2015) find 1.6 on average in the proposals in their cases. The way in which they have chosen to identify the issues, as well as the depth they go into is part of why there can be such great variation. In other words, there is not one single answer when it comes to identifying issues.

The issues identified in the two different cases for the analysis of this thesis are presented in Table 3.3.2. For each of the issues identified, the position of the interest groups on said issues will be identified based on their position documents. I do not expect every single group to provide input on every single issue, as there are individual considerations and areas of importance to each actor. Previous research suggests that organisations that are rich in resources, tend to respond to a smaller number of issues (Bunea, 2014, p. 1225). This leads to an expectation that those with a relatively large share of for instance full-time employees at a Brussels office are less likely to respond to all issues put forward in the initial impact assessment. We can now move on to discuss how the analysis will practically measure whether an interest group has been able to assert influence in this issue and attained its preferred political outcome.

3.4. Measuring influence

The ability to assert *influence* is understood as an actor's ability to make sure an outcome is shaped in a way that is in line with their preference (Dür, 2008, p. 561). A political actor is considered influential if they shape political decisions so that policies converge with their policy preferences. However, it is possible that a group's preference coincidentally converges with an outcome. This is not considered sufficient as influence (Klüver, 2013b, p. 7).

There must be a causal relationship between an actor's attempt to influence, and the political outcome. This is difficult in an EU-context for several reasons. For one, there are multiple channels in which it is possible to influence a political outcome, both directly by lobbying policymakers and indirectly by engaging the public or media. Furthermore, there are often multiple interests working within the same policy field, maybe even pushing in the same direction. Finally, influence can be asserted at multiple stages of the policy process of the EU (Dür, 2008, p. 561). Isolating the influence asserted by an interest group is therefore a

Issues identified	*Land use, land use change & forestry – review of EU rules*	*EU Green Deal – Revision of the Energy Taxation Directive*
1	Reducing CO2-emissions in the sector. *(11)*	Remove tax subsidies on fuel (such as aviation or maritime transport, and energy-intensive sectors). *(112)*
2	Review MRV-requirements (Monitor, report, verification). *(23)*	Increase incentives for investment in clean technologies – such as electricity, hydrogen, biofuels etc. *(106)*
3	Combine sector with other land-based exploitation sectors. *(25)*	Review the minimum excise rates (hereunder go from volume to content-based taxation). *(59)*
4	Subsidize bio-matter. *(36)*	
5	ESR/ETS linkage.[12] *(29)*	

Table 3.4.1:Identified issues.[13] Total n of observations per issue in parentheses.

comprehensive task. I will present alternatives of what has previously been done before moving on to what it will look like in the context of this thesis.

3.4.1. Previous measurements of influence in the literature

Previous research has used both "influence" and "success" interchangeably when discussing to what extent interests have been able to have their preferences translated into policy outcomes. Lobbying success is a less straightforward term and has been preferred as it takes away the causal relationship between an actor's preferred outcome and the political outcome that

[12] The Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) is the binding annual GHG emission reduction targets for each member state for sectors that fall outside of the Emission Trading System (ETS).

[13] Had this been a collaborative research project, I would have had another coder identify issues to control and reveal the inter-coder reliability. This is however not within the scope of this thesis.

influence is loaded with. Dür, Marshall and Bernhagen say that "*organized interests are politically influential to the extent that they succeed in obtaining policies that are more closely aligned with their preferences than would have been the case without their participation in the policy process"* (Dür et al., 2019, p. 43). The terms are thus closely intertwined. As the focus is on the political outcome and not actors, a group is considered influential if it manages to influence a political outcome in a favourable way (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020, p. 731).

The level of influence an actor can obtain, is based on the level of their preferences that are translated into the policy proposal, and thus how successful they are in achieving their preference. Given that this analysis will attempt to measure this level of influence relative to other actors and looking at both internal and external characteristics, the term "influence" will be used in the discussion but is operationalised in the analysis as "success". This may seem like a bold choice of term, but the difference is small when it comes to operationalisation and the analysis does attempt to uncover a causal relationship. To account for influence, it is important to look at properties of the actor such as characteristics of the organization as well as the environment in which they operate in. The data that comes with the policy proposals, namely position papers, and the close reading of these, opens for degrees of influence as well.

Measuring influence is not a straightforward task. Researchers have operationalized variables in different ways and utilized different methods when attempting to measure influence. There are typically three ways in which political science researchers have measured interest group influence. They are *process-tracing*, assessing "*attributed influence*" and gauging the degree of *preference attainment* (Dür, 2008). All of them constitute distinct advantages and shortcomings.

Process-tracing is the most frequently used approach when it comes to measuring influence in the EU (Bunea, 2013, p. 554). In this approach, the researcher attempts to find the causal chain and mechanism between an independent variable and the outcome of the dependent variable. It is thus a method which attempts to "uncover the steps by which causes affect outcomes". Scholars attempt to uncover groups preferences, their access to decision-makers etc. When studying a small *n*, this can lead to an in-depth understanding of the specific case. It is however time-consuming and often inaccurate, as it is near impossible to gather all relevant empiric evidence, and the small *n* makes the results ungeneralizable (Dür, 2008, pp. 561–562).

The attributed influence method uses surveys of self-assessment of a group's perceived influence as well as their perceived influence of other groups operating withing the same political environment. This offers a relatively simple method of analysis, as well as capturing

all different channels of influence. The major drawback of this method is bias in self-estimation, either an exaggeration or underestimation of one's influence, as well as measuring the *perception* of influence, and not actual influence. If you use experts on the field to observe influence, they can still be biased towards some prominent cases. In addition to this, problems that affect all kinds of surveys are present, such as interviewer bias and avoidance of extreme values/outliers (Dür et al., 2019, p. 566).

The final method of measuring influence is to assess groups' degree of *preference attainment*. When it comes to preference attainment, the outcome of a political process is compared with the ideal position of an interest group. The idea is that the distance between these two reflect the level of an interest group's influence. This approach has several advantages. For one, it allows for large *n* studies and generalisable results. If there should be an error in the assessment of one or a few of the groups, this should be minimised due to the large *n*. The approach is also promising as it covers all channels of influence, even when nothing visible is detected, and provides a more objective measurement of influence in contrast to the other methods (Dür, 2008, p. 567).

There are some drawbacks with this method as well. The preferences of the different actors are not always easy to determine based on their submissions. It can also be difficult to account for coincidental factors that affect the relationship between preferences and outcomes. Furthermore, even though it covers most channels of influence, it cannot determine which of these were used to *actually* influence a policy outcome. Finally, measuring the salience of an issue empirically when using this method is difficult as the large number of cases may blur the nuances of influence. As it is a quantitative method, the level of success can be measured relative to others. This means that if a group is successful in 30% of the issues but unsuccessful in the remaining 70%, it will be considered to not have been very influential, regardless of whether those 30% of issues where the ones that really mattered to the specific group (Dür, 2008, p. 569). This follows when qualitative contents such as text is reduced to numeric values. If we had conducted a qualitative analysis these contexts could be taken into consideration when measuring influence.

The level of preference attainment is still considered the most fitting way of measuring influence for this analysis. It is advantageous over process-tracing, as it allows for a large *n* in the period available; and it is advantageous over attributed influence as it allows for a more objective measure of influence as well as easier data collection that does not rely on the involvement of multiple people.

3.4.2. The issue continuum

The theoretical discussion regarding the best way to measure influence in this case leads to the practical way in how it will be done. I have already established that the level of preference attainment is the most relevant measure of influence for my analysis. It covers all formal channels of influence and can lead to generalisable results if you have a large *n*.

The practical aim is to measure influence on a single dimension and on a graded scale so that it has a comparative and relativistic aspect in order to spatially determine the different position of actors on a given issue (Dür et al., 2015, p. 961; Dür et al., 2019). This allows for a comparison between different categories of interest groups. Having a scale for each of the issues is another crucial aspect as close readings of position documents in the EU show that most of these speak on more than just one issue.

It bears repeating that an actor is influential when their ideal point (located in their position documents) is reflected in the political outcome (the document adopted by the Commission). Any interest would prefer the outcome to be close rather than far away from their standpoint. Each issue gets its own scale, as interests may have differing opinions on individual issues within the same case. Given that the scale will be the same across the issues, but with their own individual measures, we are able to compare the results across issues.

In the tradition of Dür et al., (2015) and Dür et al., (2019), I will locate what they call a reversion point, or the status quo of each issues. Seeing as both my cases are revisions of existing legislation, I can identify where the EU is located (legislatively) prior to these consultations. The status quo of each issue will be extracted from the existing legislation. Dür et al. use reversion points (where a policy would be located if the proposal fails), but in nearly all cases, the reversion point is equal to the status quo (Dür et al., 2015, p. 978). In this case, where the existing legislation would remain in place if the revision was to "fail", it is appropriate to discuss the status quo as there is already concrete evidence as to what the situation would be without a revision of the legislation.

The scale in which preference will be measured is based on Dür et al., (2015), Dür et al., (2019) and Thomson & Hosli (2006). It is spatial, with two extremes at 0 and 100, which represents the very outer points of opinion on each issue. If I was unsure of the substantial values of the scores, I took to the position documents of groups where I expected great variation in opinion and used that as a guideline. This allowed for a close analysis of the nuances of influence, as opposed to a more concentrated scale. Somewhere along this line every actor who has an opinion on an issue in their position document can be placed as well as the status quo

and the final outcome of the given issue. The nuances between a score of for instance 60 and 65 is not always intuitive, but after a while the positions can be scored relatively to the positions of other groups. This ensures that the scale and the scores make substantial sense. Figure 3.4.1. is an example of an issue continuum from the analysis:

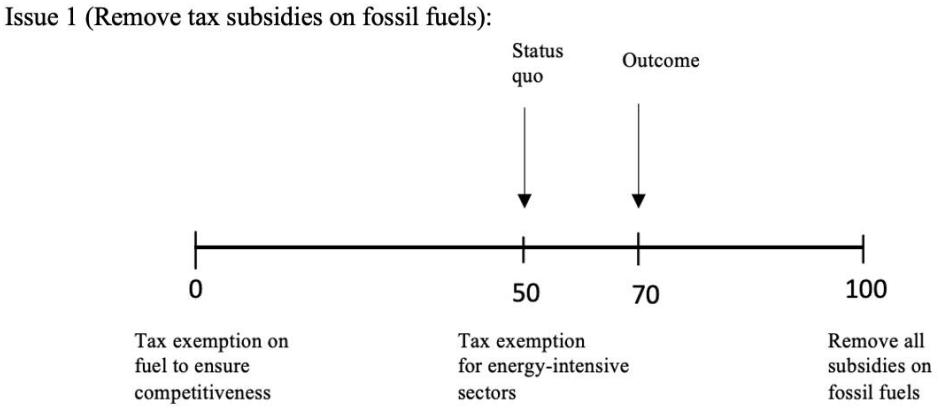


Figure 3.4.1: Issue continuum example.[14]

On this continuum, where the issue is whether or not the EU should remove tax subsidies on fossil fuels, the minimum score of 0 is given if an actor expresses the need for tax exemption on fuels in order to ensure global competitiveness regardless of sector. A score of 50 (which is consequently also the status quo where those that produce energy for EU citizens and industries, aviation and maritime transports are exempt) represents a less radical solution where only energy-intensive sectors are given tax exemptions. Finally, the maximum score of 100 is given to those seeking to remove subsidies on all fossil fuels without exceptions.

Measuring the distance between an actor's preference and the outcome is the next practical challenge. The most straightforward way to measure influence would be to look at the distance between the outcome and an actor's ideal position. The disadvantage of this research design is that it does not take the initial standpoint of the EC into account, which means we are unable to measure whether an actor has been able to *pull* them in a given direction compared to others, and thus is relatively more influential (Dür et al., 2015, p. 963). The exchange is not a zero-sum game, as there can be multiple winners in an exchange if they pull the policy closer to their ideal point compared to where it initially was located. Including this particular measure can allow for degrees of success and makes the analysis less black and white (Mahoney, 2007, p. 37). An actor is thus more successful the more it is able to pull the final

[14] This is Case 2, Issue 1. For all issue continuums, see Appendix A.

outcome closer to its ideal position, relative to the status quo (Dür et al., 2015, p. 963). The mathematic formula that will be used in order to calculate the success-score is based on Dür et al., (2015), Dür et al., (2019), and adjusted in order to fit the cases:

$$s_{ij} = \left|(x_{ij} - SQ_j)\right| - \left|(x_{ij} - FO_j)\right|,$$

where *x* is an actor's ideal position-score, *SQ* is the status quo (existing legislation on the issue) and *FO* is the final outcome (the official EC position on the revision).[15] The subscript *i* represents the specific interest group, and *j* represent the specific issue. *s* denotes the success measure, where the larger s_{ij} of interest group *i* on issue, the greater the influence (Dür et al., 2015, p. 963). The next chapter delves further into the practicality of the analysis and explains how this measurement of influence is transformed into the dependent variable in the regression.

[15] See Appendix B for status quo- and final outcome-scores for all identified issues.

Chapter 4 Operationalisation of Variables and Analytical Method

In this chapter, the operationalisations of the variables are presented as well as the appropriate analytical method to answer the RQ: *Which interests have been able to influence the European Union's decision-making on recent climate action legislation, and which factors can explain their success?* I start with the dependent variable before moving on to the independent variables. Furthermore, the analytical method will be introduced. First off is a discussion regarding the general use of regression analysis and an overview of analytical methods used in similar research. Finally, I move on to what will be the specification for this analysis, an OLS regression. This choice also leads to several assumptions that need to be fulfilled, which will be presented in turn. Those that require a more in-depth discussion are examined and potential options for the analysis are evaluated.

4.1. Operationalisations

This section will present the operationalisation of the variables for the analysis. To employ a quantitative method to answer the hypotheses, we need to convert the terms we are interested in researching precisely and make them measurable. In other words, abstract concepts need to be translated into measurable variables (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). The variables are selected in order to answer the hypotheses put forward in subchapter 2.3.3. The operationalisations are well-used in the interest group literature and based on a few selections of previous research but are modified to fit with the available data and the specific research question.

4.1.1. Dependent variable

The units of analysis in this thesis are interest group – policy issue dyads. The dependent variable is *interest group influence* – the degree to which a preferred outcome was reached in the specific dyad. This is measured by using the issue continuum that was introduced in section 3.4.2, which has been translated into a variable and coded in the dataset. What this means is that for each issue put forward by the EC that an interest group speaks on, the interest group will receive a score between 0-100. Prior to this, both the status quo and the final outcome of an issue have already been identified and scored, within the same continuum. This allows for a relative measurement of influence, based on how much an interest has been able to "pull" the

EC in their preferred direction, away from the standard quo and potential competing interests, and towards their preferred outcome.

For instance, if the political outcome is **50** and the status quo **20**, and the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) has an ideal position of **25** and the WWF European Policy Office has an ideal position of **100**, WWF is considered more influential than NHO as it has pulled the EC in its preferred direction, *relatively* more than the NHO has been able to do and thus receives a higher score. The practical calculation of each dyad is done in the statistical program.

4.1.2. Independent variables

The operationalisations of the independent variables are developed based on how the hypotheses are formulated and the information required in order to test them in a meaningful way. This section will outline each of the independent variables and their operationalisation in turn. The independent variables are related to interest group characteristics, issue characteristics and contextual characteristics and can provide insight into which characteristics play a part when it comes to how influential certain interests are in asserting influence in the context of the EC. I will discuss the operationalisation of the central concepts in hypotheses 1-4 in turn.

i) Explanatory variables

Category: The core of the *Business success-hypothesis* is simply a question of whether interest groups representing business have been more successful, i.e., have on average a smaller distance between their ideal position and the political outcome relative to the status quo, compared to interest groups representing public interests. These categories are coded with basis in the EU's Transparency Register, which was created to increase awareness of who is in dialogue with the legislative institutions of the EU. It enables citizens of the EU to gain an insight into which interests are represented, as well as an understanding of the financial and human resources they possess (European Commission, 2021). The initiative is part of the EU's eagerness to appear democratic and non-partisan.

In 2021 it became mandatory for every interest who attempted to influence any of the three legislative EU institutions to register their organisation in the Transparency Register. This means that from now on, organisations must register prior to lobbying these institutions

(Pingen, 2021). Even though the two cases for this analysis were finalized in 2021, the initial roadmap-stage that the information is gathered from was March-April 2020. Being registered in the Transparency Register was at this time not mandatory, and some of the respondents are thus expected to lack necessary information in the Register. The loss is however not expected to be substantial as the norm at this time was to register voluntarily.

The EU operates with their own categories of organisations, and the different interests choose the category in which their organisation fits the best. The Register operates with 13 categories, ranging from self-employed individuals to trade unions and professional associations. As of January 2021, there is a total of 13.366 who have registered in the Transparency Register. When registering, the EU has several questions to ensure the quality of the information in the Register, but seeing as the process is self-regulated, the organisations have control regarding what their published information looks like. However, the EU requests frequent updates and registers which consultations they take part in, and any organisation that is found to publish misleading or inaccurate information is excluded (European Union, 2022). The process of self-registration is also efficient in terms of resources and in quality, as the EU does not know the interests as well as they know themselves.

Having identified the organisations that took part in the consultation process I cross-referenced them in the Transparency Register. The research design allows for a study of the interests that participated in the consultations, and not every single interest who had a stake in the relevant consultation. In other words, this analysis is limited in terms of explaining variation only within those who decided to engage in an open consultation (Bunea, 2014, p. 1226). If an organisation lacked information that was relevant for my analysis (such as number of full-time employees), it was excluded. Locating information elsewhere was considered too time-consuming, but this could bias the results as organisations with plentiful assets are more likely to publish accurate information given their human or financial resources.

If two branches of the same organisation replied, I excluded one of them, i.e., in the case of the Energy Tax– revision, both CEWEP and CEWEP Ireland submitted their position. I decided to exclude the national entities when this problem occurred, as the international entities were more likely to have the necessary information in the Register. The submitted documents were often identical and keeping both would corrupt the results. EU-citizens and EU-cities were also excluded as they did not fit my definition of an interest group (ref. the table from Klüver, 2013b); Lille and Stockholm submitted position papers in one of the cases, but they were the only ones to do so.

In Case 1, most of the removed observations are not a relevant part of my population and are thus not missing in the sense of the data frame. This does however not mean that they have been unable to influence the EC in their policy making and removing these observations could create bias. Having read all the excluded position papers, I find that EU-citizens which were plentiful in this case tends to request stricter legislation than already in place. It is possible that these interests have influenced the EC in this direction, leading to possible overestimation of the influence of groups with a similar view included in the data frame.

In Case 2, many of the excluded observations were either business associations or companies & groups from Poland. They were removed because they were not registered in the Transparency Register and collecting information on the relevant variables would be time-consuming and from a potentially unreliable source. Based on premeditated knowledge, I expect these to be in favour of limited restrictions when it comes to taxation on energy sources. The removal of these could mean that the model is unable to accurately estimate the effects of the included interest groups with similar views.[16]

Resources: The *Resource-hypothesis* theorises that the more resources an interest group has at its disposal, the more likely it is to succeed in reaching its preference attainment. Affluent groups can spend more on each issue and should thus be more likely to succeed in their tactics. There are different ways in which level of resources has been measured in the literature, but to indicate the resourcefulness of an interest group, I will measure staff size. According to Mahoney (2007, p. 41), staff size is a good indicator of the resources that a given advocate controls at an office in Brussel. Having staff in Brussels where the European Commission and other important EU institutions are seated, often as an addition to a national office somewhere else in Europe, should correlate with general financial endowment as it is an expensive investment.

Stevens & De Bruycker (2020) use staff size as their indicator of resource endowment. They take the number of full-time equivalents that the interest groups employ in Brussels as their measure. Bunea (2014) has another take, where having an office in Brussels is used as a similar measure and expected to produce similar results. It may not be that group category is an accurate measurement of who has been successful but rather their resources that give them an advantage in their political involvement. Based on the theory and literature, I expect interest groups that are well-endowed financially, to be more successful. This gives them an advantage

[16] See Appendix C for overview of categories in population.

as they can gather information desired by the EC and they can exchange that for political influence (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020, p. 738). Staff size is expected to correlate with difficult-to-measure resources such as an interest group's annual budget on lobbying.

Analysing hundreds of interest groups' staff records would be a very comprehensive task. Fortunately, in the Commission's Transparency Register, organisations are encouraged to register how many full-time equivalents are working at a Brussels office. These are registered as absolute numbers and that is what will be used in the coding process, for example: EUROGAS has 9 people involved in EU-lobbying, but 5.2 full-time equivalents (European Union, 2021). Their value on Resources would thus be 5.2. In the dataset and throughout the analysis, *full-time equivalents* will be the term used in place of resources.

Salience: The *Salience-hypothesis* as well as the *Salience interaction-hypothesis* expects that the more salient an issue is, the lower the average success for all interest groups become and the less resources matter in achieving your preferred outcome. Salience is defined as "the attention paid to one issue by stakeholders, as indicated by the number of organizations expressing a preference on that issue" (Bunea, 2013, p. 556). The idea is that the more salient an issue, the more involved the public will be – and societal pressure will outweigh economic interests due to the EC's desire for legislative legitimacy (Klüver, 2013b).

Salience of an issue will be measured based on the number of replies (within the population) the EC receives on a given issue. The more replies, the more contested I expect the underlying issues to be. The actual value will thus be the same across all interest groups for the two cases but can fluctuate when it comes to the identified issues *within* these cases as I do not expect every single position document to mention every single issue. The assumption is that an increase in contestation, exemplified with a relatively high value on feedback for an issue, decreases the level of preference attainment for all the interest groups. High salience is expected to negatively affect the success of non-civil interest groups the most.

To determine what a relatively high value of salience is for a given issue, I will look at feedback on the individual issues within the cases – the share of organisations expressing a preference on the issue, from the total number of replies to the overall initiative (Bunea, 2013, p. 561). Each issue will thus receive a score that shows the percentage of replies from the interest groups who replied to the initiative. Any issue where more than 60% (a clear, absolute majority) had an explicit opinion on in their feedback document, was considered a salient one. It was then transformed into a dichotomous variable, where issues of low salience were coded

0, and issues of high salience coded 1. Measuring the share of stakeholders expressing an opinion on a given issue is in line with both Bunea (2013) and Klüver (2011; 2013).

The results from the data collection are presented in Table 4.1.1. There were 3 salient issues and 5 non-salient ones across both cases when setting a 60%-limit:

Percentage feedback on issue	**Case 1 LULUCF**	**Case 2 Energy Tax**
19%	*Reducing CO2-emissions in the sector*	
39%	*MRV-requirements*	
42%	*Combine sectors*	
63%	*Subsidise bio-matter*	
49%	*ESR/ETS linkage*	
77%		*Removal of tax subsidies*
73%		*Increase incentives for clean investments*
42%		*Review the minimum excise rates on fuel*

Table 4.1.1: Salience of each issue

ii) Control variables

In addition to the explanatory variables used to test the hypotheses it is necessary to include control variables to account for alternative explanations. The theoretical framework of the exchange model leads to several relevant variables that has the potential to explain interest group success. A selection of well-known variables will thus be included as controls in the regression part of the analysis to determine whether they can explain some of the success in the two cases, or if they affect the explanatory variables.

Coalitions: Even though interest groups- and issue characteristics are crucial in understanding which interests succeed and which fail, there are also contextual factors that need to be considered. The European institutions and their legislation affect hundreds of millions of individuals. They therefore attract a lot of attention from individuals and groups who can feel very different about a policy proposal and try to shift the policy outcome towards their ideal

point (Klüver, 2013b, p. 18). This does not necessarily mean they have to be in an official coalition; they just need to "pull" the EC's position in the same direction. If the focus would have been on strictly formal ties, the analysis would be unable to account for the informal channels in which interest groups participate, and thus underestimate the number of potential ties (Bunea, 2013, p. 561).

Based on the exchange model I expect that the EC is interested in introducing legislation that is popular among as many citizens of the EU as possible. This speaks in favour of interests who share a similar preferred outcome to the majority of other mobilized interests on the specific topic. The more voices that are united, the stronger the signal is that this is the desire of the overall population. The intensity of interest mobilization on an issue has been found to affect the influence on policymaking, i.e., the more competition an interest group meets, the less likely it is in reaching its preferred outcome. It is also likely that whoever is part of this majority is more likely to succeed (Rasmussen et al., 2018).

To decide which groups are in an *ad hoc* (informal) coalition with each other, I will look at the positioning of the interest groups relative to the EC initial position. The number of interest groups on each side of the status quo will be considered an informal coalition on the specific issue. In the dataset, groups that are part of the minority-coalition are coded 0, and groups part of the majority are coded 1.

Brussels office: Another control included is whether the organisation has an office in Brussels in charge of their EU-affairs. The theoretical expectation is that those with a Brussels office in charge of EU-affairs are more likely to be willing to spend money or other resources on lobbying the EC and should thus be more likely to achieve their political goals. This is included due to an encouragement from Hermansson (2016), who finds no support for the theoretical expectation in his research but asks for further empirical research as it is an understudied aspect.

The information is gathered from the Transparency Register, under "Office in charge of EU relations". It is coded as a dichotomous variable, where not having a Brussels-office is coded 0 and having an office in Brussels is coded 1. Some organisations have their headquarters in Brussels anyways, which may overestimate the results slightly.

Country of origin: Origin country is another control that will be included in the analysis. The theoretical expectation is that those originating from "old" member states are more likely to reach their preferred outcome, due to their status within the bureaucracy and their experience with EU-lobbying (Bunea 2014, p. 1233). Previously it has been found that being from an older

EU-member state increases the chance of an interest group from this country to express an opinion, i.e., they are overrepresented in the legislative process (Bunea 2014, p. 1237). It is included in this analysis as it would be interesting to see whether this increase in participation is true within the same policy field and institution at a later point in time than Bunea's study. Building on it, I will also analyse whether country of origin increases the chances of reaching your preferred outcome and not just increase access.

The data is gathered from the Transparency Register, under "Head Office". Those with a Head Office in a country that joined the EU before the year 2004, are considered "old" countries and are coded 0. Those from a country that joined after 2004 are considered "new" and are coded 1. All countries that were not part of the EU at the time of the legislative proposal (2021) are coded 2, and are expected to have the same disadvantages, if not more, as "new" countries. This includes the United Kingdom (UK) which has a long history as an EU-member.

4.2. Analytical method

For the analysis, I will utilise regression in R programming to produce statistical output that provide the basis for further analysis. A regression analysis is undertaken in order to shed light on a relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables in a given dataset (Christophersen, 2018, p. 46). The basic linear function for a regression looks like this:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1} + \beta_2 x_{i2} + \cdots + \beta_p x_{ip} + \varepsilon_i \,,$$

where in a dataset with *n* observations:

- y = vector of observed values where $i = 1, \ldots, n$.
- β_0 = intercept, where the regression-line crosses the Y-axis when $x_1 = 0$.
- β_p = slope, shows the direction of the effect of an independent variable on the dependent variable.
- x_p = independent variable(s)/predictors/regressors.
- ε = error term, takes random errors/left out variables etc. into account. Represents the difference between predicted and actual y for an i (Christophersen, 2018, pp. 47–48).

The specific regression models for my hypotheses are presented in Table 4.2.1:

H1	$Success_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Group\_category_{ij} + \varepsilon_i$
H2	$Success_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Resources_{ij} + \varepsilon_i$
H3	$Success_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Salience_{ij} + \varepsilon_i$
H4	$Success_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Resources_{ij} + \beta_2 Salience_{ij} + \beta_3 Resources_{ij} \times Salience_{ij} + \varepsilon_i$
Full model	$Success_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Group\_category_{ij} + \beta_2 Resources_{ij} + \beta_3 Salience_{ij} + \beta_4 Resources_{ij} \times Salience_{ij} + \beta_z Z_{ij} + \varepsilon_i$

Table 4.2.1: Specific regression functions

where *i* = interest group, and *j* = issue, and *Z* = all control variables included in the full model. The interaction term between the two explanatory variables in H4 allows for an examination of the effect of salience on interest groups, based on the groups' resources.

A regression analysis can have different starting points based on theoretical assumptions as well as available data. It can be a simple linear model, a multiple linear model, hierarchical model etc. In previous studies with similar objectives and theoretical basis as this thesis there has been some variation in the chosen way to commence the analysis. Dür et al., (2015) conducts a multivariate analysis, using mixed-effects linear regression and mixed effects ordered logistic regression. Bunea (2013) uses a multi-level random intercept probit model with maximum likelihood estimates. In a very similar study using differing data, Bunea (2014) used a mixed-effects probit model with random intercept at issue level using *R*. Finally, Klüver (2011) used a multilevel analysis.

I have chosen ordinary least squares (OLS) as the most appropriate regression method for this thesis. It is also the most popular method of performing a regression analysis, as it produces optimal results (Pedace, 2013). In the following section, I will briefly discuss what it entails to undertake an ordinary least squares regression, and whether the data is fit for the method.

4.2.1. Ordinary least squares regression

Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is an analytical method that estimates the relationship between the dependent and independent variable(s) *"by minimizing the sum of the squares in the difference between the observed and predicted values of the dependent variable configured as a straight line"* (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2022). A relationship can be represented by a straight line, and when squaring the difference between the observed

and predicted values of Y and then summing these squared differences, the line with the lowest score of squared errors is considered the best one. The smaller the difference is, the better the model is assumed to fit the data (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2022).

There are some assumptions to be aware of before running an OLS regression. The advantage is, that when all assumptions hold, OLS estimation is considered Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE). If one or multiple assumptions do not hold, then OLS may not produce the best estimation for the given data. The literature on OLS assumptions varies, but there are 7 recurring assumptions used as the basis here:

1. *No omitted-variable bias:* variable bias occurs when a model is missing relevant variables that may affect the dependent (and/or independent) variable(s). This can lead to an overestimation of the variables included in the model.
2. *The assumption of linearity:* the model is linear in parameters, meaning that one unit increase in X changes the value of Y by β_1.
3. *The assumption of no autocorrelation:* the values of the error terms cannot correlate with one another.
4. *The assumption of zero conditional mean:* the conditional mean of the error term should be zero, i.e., no relationship between the independent variables and the error term.
5. *The assumption of homoscedasticity:* the error term needs to have a constant variance.
6. *The assumption of no (multi)collinearity:* there can be no linear relationship between the independent variables, and they cannot be constant.
7. *No missing values:* missing values can lead to over/under estimation of variables included in the model (*Key Assumptions of OLS: Econometrics Review*, n.d.; Pedace, 2013)

Turn to Appendix D for a more in-depth discussion regarding all the OLS-assumptions and output from the diagnostics tests, and my Github for the *r*-code which was used to test them.[17] In short, all assumptions are fulfilled, and an OLS-regression is deemed fitting for the analysis. Assumptions 3 and 6 will be discussed here in more detail as cross-sectional, hierarchical data can lead to autocorrelated standard errors and interaction-effects can lead to multicollinearity.

[17] https://github.com/SofieKG/Master-thesis

4.2.2. Autocorrelated standard errors

The data I have sampled in the coding-process is cross-sectional, taken at a single point in time. The interest groups can however be repeated based on how many issues they respond to. Within the data, there is arguably a hierarchy with two levels: issue-level and case-level. The different levels could contain unobserved variables and in turn lead to clustering of observations within the levels (Konrad, 2021).

Seeing as one interest group can reply to multiple issues, each subject has the potential to form a cluster. This does not bias the regression estimates, but it could pose a problem for the precision of the estimates, i.e., the standard errors are lower than what they should be. This is because the standard errors will correlate for the same interest groups across issues. We can handle this problem with clustered standard errors (Konrad, 2021). If the number of clusters are large, which I consider them to be in this case as there are many interest groups, cluster-robust standard errors are preferable (Cameron & Miller, 2015).

I ran a robustness test where I clustered the standard errors on the interest group level, i.e., the variable called "groupname" (see results in Appendix D). There is not enough difference to consider clustered ones an advantage when conducting the analysis when comparing the clustered standard errors to ordinary standard errors,

4.2.3. Multicollinearity due to interaction-effects

H4, the *Salience interaction-hypothesis*, has an interaction effect between full time equivalent and salience. Given that I have an interactive term in H4, I run the risk of having multicollinearity between the two independent variables. This is because the interaction term is likely to correlate with the independent variables it is made up of in the first place. Even though the coefficients remain unbiased, a high level of multicollinearity can lead to inflated standard errors (Christophersen, 2018).

To check for multicollinearity, I ran a VIF-test (variance inflation factor) using the *vif()*-function. If the vif-score of a variable is larger than 5, then that predictor is more related to the other predictors than to the response. A value of 1 indicates that there is no correlation between a given predictor variable and any other predictors in the model. A value of 1-5 is good.

The results are presented in Appendix D. All control variables have a vif-score of only slightly above 1, which is very good. The full-time equivalent variable and the interaction term both receive a score of >2. There is however no real danger of multicollinearity, and so the

coefficients will not be biased due to multicollinearity. Multicollinearity does not pose a threat to any of the hypotheses, and an OLS regression can be conducted based on the data.

4.2.4. Skewness and kurtosis

There are no restrictions regarding the distribution of the variables in an OLS regression. However, skewed distributions on a variable can make it difficult to fulfil the assumption regarding homoscedasticity (Christophersen, 2018). To further test this assumption, I test the variables for skewness and kurtosis.

Skewness is a measure of the symmetry of a distribution. A standard normal distribution will have a skewness score of 0 (Hermansen, 2019, p. 174). Kurtosis on the other hand says something about the mass in the tails of the distributions. A standard normal distribution will have a kurtosis of 3. Anything above this number will have a lot of observations in the tails of the distribution, and thus be "wider" as opposed to a distribution with a low kurtosis score.

(Christophersen, 2018) utters that a skewness-score of +-3 can impose trouble for an analysis that relies on normally distributed variables. None of the variables for this analysis had a result as skewed as this. Results varied from –1.64 to 2.85 as the most extreme scores. Skewness is thus not an issue for the variables in this analysis.

The implications of extreme kurtosis-values are less studied than those for skewness. (Christophersen, 2018) says that a kurtosis-score far from +-3 might not pose as much of a problem as it would have for skewness. In the instance of my variables, only one was very far off in its kurtosis-score, and that was full time equivalent with a score of 11.6. However, given that its skewness-score was within the recommended limit, and the lack of knowledge regarding possible implications of a high kurtosis-score, I have decided to go on with the variable without transforming it.

Having discussed pre-conditions for the analysis, the next chapter will present the results from the regression analysis, some robustness tests and a discussion regarding the statistical findings.

Chapter 5 Empirical Results and Discussion

In this chapter, the hypotheses laid out in Chapter 2 will be answered using the method presented in the previous chapter. In other words, statistics will now be utilized to answer the theoretical expectations derived from the research question: *Which interests have been able to influence the European Union's decision-making on recent climate action legislation, and which factors can explain their success?*

This chapter is divided into five parts. First, descriptive information is presented to gain an overview of the data and variables. Following this, models of the statistical results are presented to shed light on the hypotheses. The literature review as well as the theoretical framework has resulted in four expectations: 1) that interest groups representing commercial interests have been less successful than public interests in recent EU climate policy processes, 2) that success for any group regardless of category is easier attained for those with plentiful resources, 3) that salient issues lead to compromise and less success for commercial interests in particular, and finally 4) that the effect of resources decreases with increased salience of an issue. I introduce some expectations related to the explanatory variables that I answer with descriptive results to nuance the findings from the regression. Then follows several robustness tests intended to validate the operationalisations and the findings. Finally, a substantial discussion regarding the output from the statistical analysis, to make practical sense of the statistical results.

5.1. Descriptive analysis

As mentioned in subchapter 3.3. in the section on case selection, I had some expectations prior to the coding regarding which categories were going to dominate each of the cases. In Case 1 - LULUCF, I expected noticeable engagement from civil organisations, NGOs, and EU citizens. In Case 2 - the Energy Taxation Revision, I expect business associations and companies to be the most dominant ones, as the taxation of energy is of a more commercial nature where the biggest spenders are expected to potentially lose the most.

Table 5.1.1. displays the share of categories in each of the two cases.[18] The names of the organisations are not included at any point in the analysis, only their appropriate category. In the matrix for the analysis, each of the categories are given a numeric value.

Categories	Case 1: *Land use, land use change & forestry – review of EU rules*	Case 2: *EU Green Deal – Revision of the Energy Taxation Directive*
Non-Governmental Organisations, Platforms, Networks and Similar	**31%** (19)	**11%** (16)
Trade and Business Associations	**45%** (27)	**63%** (91)
Companies and Groups	**13%** (8)	**19%** (28)
Trade Unions and Professional Associations	**6%** (4)	**6%** (8)
Other Organisations	**2%** (1)	**0%** (0)
Think Tanks and Research Institutions	**2%** (1)	**1%** (1)

Table 5.1.1: Share of categories represented. The first number is percentage of all replies, the number in parentheses is the absolute n of replies. The percentages are rounded up and down.

The results in Table 5.1.1. confirm my expectations regarding the share of categories in each case. Trade and Business Associations represent the greatest share in both cases. In Case 1, six NGOs were excluded from the dataset, which means that there initially were almost as many NGOs as Trade and Business Associations. This could impact the statistical findings.

In Case 2, there is a serious dominance of Trade and Business Associations. These are both independent associations as well as configurations of organisations consisting of multiple companies across national borders. Quite far behind, Companies and Groups and NGOs follow.

[18] I would like to remind the reader that the Transparency Register operates with 13 different interests, but not all were represented in the two cases to begin with. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 4, some of the respondents were removed due to them not representing organised interests in a way that fits the initial operationalisation. These include EU citizens, small businesses, and sub-national entities such as cities.

As expected, a review of a directive on the taxation of energy supplies attracted mainly the attention of those affected by a potential (negative) change, i.e., those that have a financial interest at stake.

There is thus a majority of commercial interests in both cases. However, the total *n* of observations contains a relatively wide variety of interest groups, and the distribution between the different categories seems to be representative of other open consultations on climate action in the EC, see for instance the published initiatives for *Climate change – restoring sustainable carbon cycles* or *the EU Green Deal (carbon border adjustment mechanism)*. This representation in interests ensures results which can tell us something substantial about interest group influence and characteristics within the topic of climate action.

Descriptive Statistics

Statistic	N	Min	Max	Mean	Median	St. Dev.
Success	401	0	60	25.17	20	14.98
Full Time Equivalent	401	0.20	41.80	5.66	3.20	7.61
Dichotomous Salience	401	0	1	0.63	1	
Coalition	401	0	1	0.82	1	
Office in Brussels	401	0	1	0.65	1	

Table 5.1.2: Summary statistics of the numeric variables

Table 5.1.2. summarises the *n, min, max, mean, median* and *standard deviation*-values for the dependent, explanatory and control variables that are numeric. There is a total of 401 observations (issue-interest group dyads) in the dataset. The table shows that on a scale of 0-100, the average score on the dependent variable (*success*) is 25.17, with a standard deviation of 14.98 and a median (most common score of 20). No interest scored the maximum value of 100.

The first numeric explanatory variable, *full time equivalent*, ranges from 0.2-41.8, with a mean of 5.6 and a standard deviation of 7.61. There is thus a large gap between the interest groups with little and many resources. The value of the mean, the average score on this variable, is on the lower end of the scale which indicates that the majority of the organised interests in these cases have limited resources and that there are some which deviate greatly. Whether this leads to an increase in success, will be uncovered in the analysis.

The other numeric explanatory variable, *salience*, is dichotomous and separates high and low salience. This variable has a mean of 0.63, which means 63% of the observations had a value of 1 (high-salience issues). Even though there are fewer issues with a high level of salience (3 compared to 5 non-salient ones), these issues have received a greater number of replies, making them salient.

Coalition is the first numeric control variable. It is dichotomous, which means that an interest group is either part of the minority (0) or majority (1) coalition. The mean score on this variable is 0.82. This means that 82% of the observations are part of the majority coalition on a given issue.

Having an *office in Brussels* is the second numeric control variable. This is also dichotomous, where not having an office in Brussels in charge of EU-relations is coded 0, and having one is coded 1. It has a mean of 0.65, which means that 65% of the observations are registered with a Brussels office.

The categoric variables included in the analysis also deserve some attention, even though it makes no substantial sense to consider the min, max, mean, median and standard deviation of them. First off, is the *category-variable* which separates the different interest groups in their categories. The results can be seen in Figure 5.1.1. Evidently, most replies are made up of Trade and Business Associations. From Table 5.1.1, we know they represent the majority of the respondents, but here we see that they have also responded to the most issues across the two cases. The NGOs in the population have also been active. There was a total of 35 NGOs in the population, but they represent nearly 80 of the responses (out of 401). Companies and Groups were 36 in total of the population but represented less than 75 responses. The three remaining categories which were less plentiful in the population represent a small amount of the responses. The category "Other Organisations" with a single interest group represents a particularly small amount of the observations, and it will therefore be excluded from some of the statistics.

Origin country is a categorical control variable. It has three categories, where the value 0 equals being from an EU member state prior to 2004, a value of 1 equals being from a member state that joined in or after the 2004-accession, and a value of 2 equals not being from an EU member state as of 2021. From Figure 5.1.2, it is evident that interest groups from "old" EU member states are disproportionally the most frequent in the sample. Furthermore, we know that there were more interest groups from new EU member states compared to those from non-EU countries, but the interests from the non-EU countries have responded to nearly as many issues.

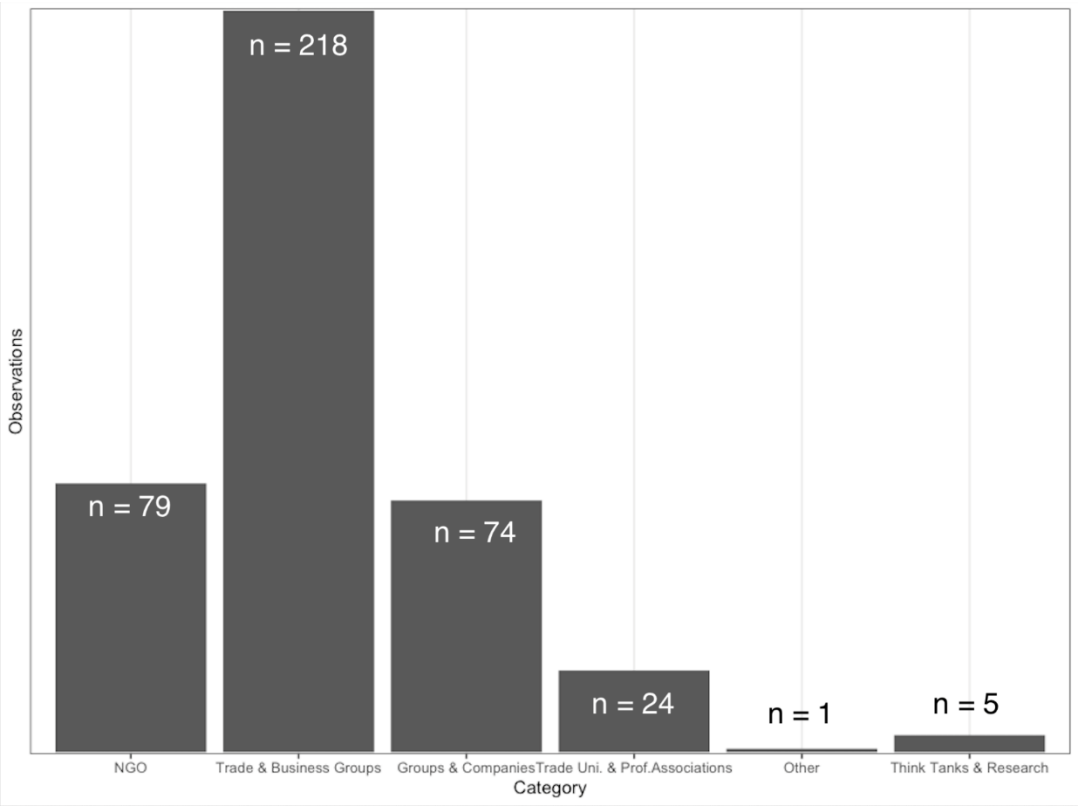


Figure 5.1.1: Descriptive statistic for the category-variable, both cases combined

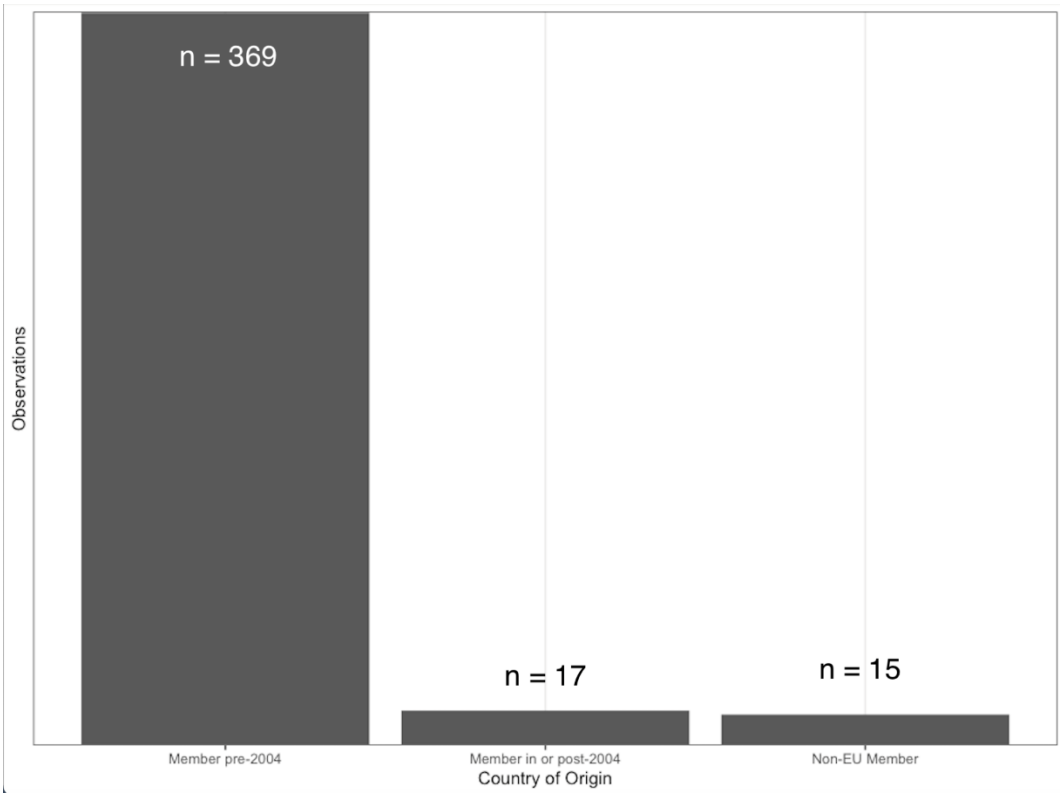


Figure 5.1.2: Descriptive statistics for the origin country-variable

5.2. Regression analysis

Hypothesis 1: Who has influenced the EC in recent climate action policies?

First off, I decided to combine the categories of commercial interests (Trade and Business Associations and Companies and Groups) and compare them with the public interests (NGOs and Think Tanks and Research Institutions). The *Business success-hypothesis* theorises those public interests should have been more likely to reach their preference attainment in recent climate action policies, given the increased attention the policy field has gained in the public.

The results are shown in Table 5.2.1.[19] Here we see that public interests score on average 2.1 points lower than commercial interests. This comparison of all commercial interests versus all public interests produces results that are close to those of for instance Dür et.al., (2015). The difference in success between the two merged categories is adamant, but there is also a fairly big difference in their numbers (*n*), which could indicate which groups gain access to the political process (Bouwen, 2004, p. 366). I also ran a t-test in order to validate the results. The output (0.248) shows that the difference between the two groups is not significant at any relevant level.

Category	*Average success*	*n*
Commercial interests	25.582	292
Public interests	23.452	85
t-test (p-value)	0.248	

Table 5.2.1: All commercial vs. all public interests

Table 5.2.2. presents the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimation results for Hypothesis 1, the *Business-success hypothesis.* Model 1a shows the results of the regression without any controls, and Model 1b includes the control variables. The dependent variable is success, and the explanatory variable is the different interest group categories. The category from the Transparency Register used as the reference category is Trade and Business Associations. Trade and Business Associations have on average more success than NGOs and Think Tanks and Research Institutions. They have on average less success than Trade Unions and

[19] Trade Unions and Professional Associations do not really fit either categorisation. They are economic interests, but not commercial in the sense as the other interests. They are therefore excluded, together with Other Organisations with its single *n*.

Professional Associations, Companies and Groups, and Other Organisations.[20] None of the coefficients change direction when including the controls in Model 1b.

The most successful interest groups by category are Companies and Groups, with an average predicted success-score of 27.9. The range in predicted success based on category ranges from a score of 20 on average to almost 28. Not a very big difference maybe, but one that could result in real advantages and disadvantages depending on which category of interests you represent. There are of course other economic interests represented in the model other than Trade and Business Associations, and they have evidently been even more successful (Companies and Groups, and Trade Unions and Professional Associations). Earlier studies using similar data when researching interest groups representing business interests, have operationalised their own categories that are more inclusive when it comes to commercial actors (Klüver, 2011; Dür et al., 2015; Dür et al., 2019). This can also explain part of why most have concluded that business interests have indeed been successful compared to public interests, but as we can see from Model 1, there are nuances within the commercial interests as well. Groups and Companies are by far the most successful category overall, with a 3.112 increase in success-score compared to Trade and Business Associations. This is also the only category of interest group to produce a coefficient that is statistically significant (at the 10%-level) when including the controls in Model 1b. The rest of the coefficients are statistically insignificant which makes the results uncertain. In addition to this, the adjusted R squared for the model is negative, indicating it is not a good fit to the data.

I also aimed to understand which interests were able to obtain the highest possible score on influence. The maximum score for success was 60. I identified which organisations received the highest score of which there were 12, and found that there were two NGOs, one Group or Company and one Trade or Professional Union. There were however, eight Trade and Business Associations. So, even though this category collectively received a lower mean for success compared to the other commercial category, it turns out that they are well represented in terms of reaching the maximum score. The uneven number in *n*, the majority of observations belonging to the Trade and Business Associations-category may explain some of this divergence. What this substantially means is that some of these Trade and Business Associations are particularly influential, even though the category as a whole is less so.

[20] Please note that category "Other Organisations" only consist of a single interest group and should thus not be judged in the same way as the others.

Output Hypothesis 1

	Dependent variable: Interest Group Success	
	Model 1a	Model 1b
Group categories:		
NGOs	-1.123	-0.770
	(1.970)	(1.989)
Groups and Companies	3.112	3.680*
	(2.018)	(2.073)
Trade Unions and Professional Associations	1.456	1.939
	(3.226)	(3.259)
Other Organisations	0.206	2.005
	(15.033)	(15.526)
Think Tanks and Research Institutions	-4.794	-4.534
	(6.784)	(6.794)
Brussels Office		1.993
		(1.652)
Coalition		2.755
		(1.946)
EU-accession:		
New Member State		-0.894
		(3.988)
Non-EU State		-1.576
		(3.987)
Constant	24.794***	21.134***
	(1.016)	(2.316)
Observations	401	401
R^2	0.010	0.020
Adjusted R^2	-0.002	-0.003
Residual Std. Error	14.999 (df = 395)	15.004 (df = 391)
F Statistic	0.821 (df = 5; 395)	0.871 (df = 9; 391)
Note: Ref.cat Categories = *Trade and Business Associations*		*p<0.1**p<0.05***p<0.01

Table 5.2.2: Hypothesis 1 with and without controls

Hypothesis 1 regarding interest groups representing business' success, theorising that interest groups representing commercial interests have been on average *less* successful than public interests in reaching their preferred outcome in recent EU climate action policies, is not supported. There are indications that they have been more successful compared to public interests, but it is difficult to say for certain that group-type has a direct effect on lobbying success such as Binderkrantz & Pedersen (2019) do, given the insignificance of the coefficients.

Hypothesis 2: Can resources explain which interests are influential?

Model 2a and 2b in Table 5.2.3. presents the results for Hypothesis 2, the *Resource-hypothesis,* without and with controls respectively. This hypothesis theorises that an interest group-specific characteristic, namely level of resources, rather than group category, can explain who has been able to assert influence. Full time equivalents (working with EU lobbying) are regressed on success to determine whether this is the case.

The result from the regression shows that an increase in 1 full-time equivalent, results in a 0.109 increase in success. This could indicate that regardless of which category of interest one represents, having employees working with EU lobbying is an advantage in reaching your preferred political outcome. Whether or not such a small increase in success (0.109 on a scale of 0-100) is worth employing more people, is disputable. When including the controls in the regression, the coefficient becomes even smaller (0.085). There may be other ways to spend one's resources that could provide a larger increase in success than this model accounts for. The statistical insignificance of the results, however, means that we cannot with certainty say that the given variable responsible for the coefficient, or if it's a random effect that the model does not control for. Furthermore, the adjusted R squared for the model is low.

The results from the regression suggest that an increase in resources slightly increases the level of success. The results are moderated given the relatively low *n* of the public interests compared to the commercial ones, and the insignificance of the coefficients. The expectation that resources might explain the real advantage when it comes to successfully influencing the EC is thus not supported by the coefficients in this analysis. Hypothesis 2, the *Resource-hypothesis,* is not supported.

Output Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3

	Dependent variable: Interest Group Success			
	Model 2a	Model 2b	Model 3a	Model 3b
Full Time Equivalent	0.109	0.085		
	(0.098)	(0.104)		
Salience			-4.235***	-4.083***
			(1.540)	(1.559)
Brussels Office		1.235		1.838
		(1.707)		(1.611)
Coalition		2.754		2.097
		(1.945)		(1.946)
EU-accession:				
New Member State		0.033		0.487
		(3.833)		(3.806)
Non-EU State		-0.904		-0.817
		(3.972)		(3.939)
Constant	24.557***	21.672***	27.857***	24.864***
	(0.932)	(2.139)	(1.226)	(2.398)
Observations	401	401	401	401
R^2	0.003	0.009	0.019	0.025
Adjusted R^2	0.001	-0.003	0.016	0.012
Residual Std. Error	14.978 (df = 399)	15.006 (df = 395)	14.861 (df = 399)	14.890 (df = 395)
F Statistic	1.229 (df = 1; 399)	0.749 (df = 5; 395)	7.562*** (df = 1; 399)	1.998* (df = 5; 395)

Note: Ref.cat Origin Country = Pre-2004 Member

*p<0.1**p<0.05***p<0.01

Table 5.2.3: Hypothesis 2 and 3 with and without controls

Hypothesis 3: Does salience impose compromise and reduce average success?

Models 3a and 3b in Table 5.2.3. present the output for Hypothesis 3, the *Salience-hypothesis*. The hypothesis theorises that the average success for all involved interests will decrease on issues of high salience compared to those of low salience, as the EC, based on the exchange theory, will seek compromise in order to make sure the legislative proposal passes all the institutions.

Salience has been transformed into a dichotomous variable (where issues with more than 60% of the respondents to a case had an explicit opinion on in their feedback document, were considered highly salient). From the output of the regression, we see that when moving from an issue with "low" to one of "high" salience, average success for all involved interest groups decreases by –4.235, without controlling for any other factors. Seeing as the scores on the success-variable range from 0-60, the effect of moving from an issue of low to one of high salience seems pretty strong. The decrease of the coefficient in the regression is constant on all interest group categories. The effect is moderated slightly when including the control variables in the model, but the coefficient is still -4.083.

Having salience as a predictor for success produces a negative coefficient. Furthermore, the coefficients for salience in Models 3a and 3b are statistically significant at the 1%-level. The adjusted R squared for both Model 3a and Model 3b continues to be low but is higher than the previous models, indicating that it is a better fit model.

The statistics therefore suggests that salience negatively affects the average level of success for all the involved parties, which could indicate that compromises are being made and individual interests are less likely to obtain their specific preference attainment in these contested topics. The significance of the coefficients strongly supports the finding. Hypothesis 3 *the Salience-hypothesis* is thus supported.

Hypothesis 4: Does issue-salience affect the importance of resources?

Model 4a and Model 4b in Table 5.2.4. present the results for Hypothesis 4, the *Salience-interaction hypothesis,* which suggests that a high level of salience can moderate the importance of having plentiful resources. The theoretical expectation is that the more involved the public is on an issue, the more the EC is willing to listen to the public and discard the opinions of resourceful actors and their financial interests.

Output Hypothesis 4 and Full Model

	Dependent variable: Interest Group Success		
	Model 4a	Model 4b	Model 5
Group category:			
NGOs			-2.735
			(2.111)
Groups and Companies			3.495*
			(2.059)
Trade Unions and Professional Associations			1.777
			(3.241)
Other Organisations			-1.400
			(15.470)
Think Tanks and Research Institutions			-5.091
			(6.743)
Full Time Equivalent	0.126	0.091	0.140
	(0.140)	(0.145)	(0.147)
Salience	-3.670*	-3.619*	-4.310**
	(1.927)	(1.940)	(1.988)
Fte*Salience Interaction	-0.077	-0.065	-0.032
	(0.196)	(0.197)	(0.197)
Brussels Office		1.541	1.401
		(1.701)	(1.738)
Coalition		2.070	1.987
		(1.954)	(1.951)
EU-accession:			
New Member State		0.473	-0.252
		(3.815)	(3.964)
Non-EU State		-0.729	-1.272
		(3.950)	(3.957)
Constant	27.036***	24.480***	24.595***
	(1.529)	(2.492)	(2.728)
Observations	401	401	401
R^2	0.021	0.026	0.043
Adjusted R^2	0.014	0.008	0.013
Residual Std. Error	14.881 (df = 397)	14.920 (df = 393)	14.882 (df = 388)
F Statistic	2.827** (df = 3; 397)	1.481 (df = 7; 393)	1.449 (df = 12; 388)

Note: Ref.cat Categories = Trade and Business Associations, Ref.cat Origin Country = Old

*p<0.1**p<0.05***p<0.01

Table 5.2.4: Hypothesis 4 and full model with all variables

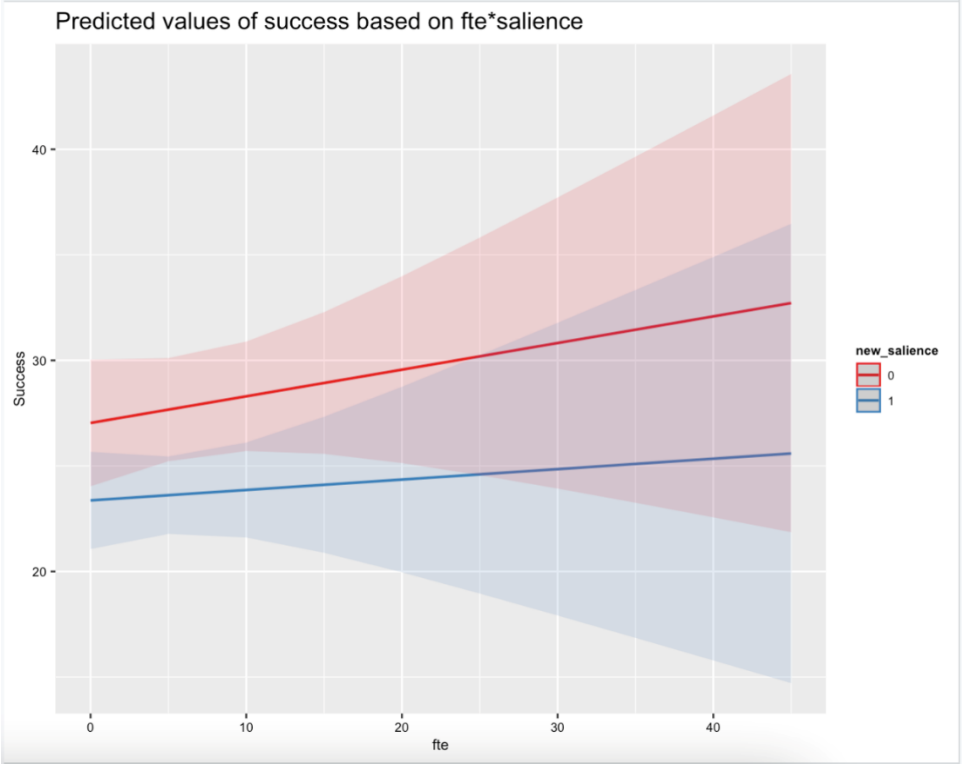


Figure 5.2.1: The interaction effect visualised

The core component of this hypothesis lies in whether salience modifies the effect of resources. The full-time equivalent coefficient does not change direction when controlling for salience, and the coefficient for full-time equivalent is still statistically insignificant. When including salience as a control when using resources as a predictor of success, the effect of resources becomes slightly stronger. A rise in 1 full-time equivalent now increases the chance of success of 0.126 points (an increase of 0.015). This coefficient decreases when the controls are included in Model 4b. The effect of resources on level of success when salience is low is thus 0.126, and on issues of high salience this effect is 0.126-0.077 = 0.049. Highly salient issues seem to decrease the effect of resources slightly in line with the theoretical expectation, but full-time equivalent maintains a positive coefficient. The coefficient for full-time equivalent as well as the interaction-coefficients are insignificant in both models. Based on the results from the regression, coming to certain conclusion is difficult.

As an additional step, I decided to plot the interaction effect between full-time equivalent and salience to visualise the potential relationship. From the plot in Figure 5.2.1, we see that low salience has a bigger effect on the impact of full-time equivalent on success, compared to an issue of high salience (0 = low salience, and 1 = high salience). There is, however, no interaction to be detected between the two explanatory variables. The overlapping

confidence intervals (95%) also suggest that there is no interaction effect, even though this method of estimating statistical significance has recently been scrutinized (Knol et.al, 2011; Parasurama, 2017).

The theoretical expectation of Hypothesis 4, that a high level of salience decreases the importance of resources on success is not supported based on the statistical findings. Including salience in the regression, shows that moving from issues of low to high salience slightly decreases the effect of full-time equivalent, albeit slightly and insignificantly. An interaction effect between salience and resources is seemingly non-existent, and there may be an effect that is unaccounted for in the model that is the real reason for the decrease in the coefficient. Hypothesis 4 is not supported by the regression output.

Full model

The final model in Table 5.2.4, Model 5, includes all explanatory as well as control variables. When including all explanatory and control variables in the model the coefficients for all the group categories become less "extreme" than in Models 1a and 1b compared to the reference category Trade and Business Associations. The Groups and Companies-coefficient remains statistically significant at the 10%-level which it also was in Model 1b where the controls were included but has now slightly decreased to 3.495. This is the only coefficient other than salience that is statistically significant in any of the models, indicating that when including all other independent variables, belonging to this category can partially explain level of influence.

The coefficient for full-time equivalents increases (0.140) compared to all the previous models where it has been included (2a, 2b, 4a, 4b). The coefficient is however statistically insignificant and drawing conclusions regarding this variable continues to be hard.

Salience is significant at the 5%-level and has a coefficient of -4.310. Going from low to high salience when including all the other variables thus decreases success for all interest groups on average with the highest number in any of the models. The effect of both full-time equivalent and salience increases slightly when all controls are included, compared to just the explanatory variables. The effect of salience on resources is smaller compared to Model 4a and 4b, and the explanatory powers of this interaction further weakened.

Now for the control variables. First off, being part of the major coalition on an issue seemingly increases success by nearly 2 points (1.987) when including all other independent variables. The direction of the coefficient could indicate that being part of the major coalition can explain portions of an interest group's success when it comes to lobbying the European

Commission, in line with the theoretical expectations laid out in Chapter 4. The coefficient is however statistically insignificant, and the results are uncertain.

Having an office for EU-affairs in Brussels, where the majority of the EU's institutions (including the EC) are situated, has a coefficient of 1.401. Being close to where the decisions are being made or having an office with employees dedicated to lobbying the EU, could thus seemingly impact one's level of success. The coefficient is statistically insignificant, and conclusions can therefore not be drawn regarding this variable.

Finally of the control variables, being from an EU country that has been a member since before the 2004-accession seems advantageous when lobbying the EC. An interest group from a country that joined the EU in or after 2004 has a coefficient of -0.252 and an interest group from a country that was not in the EU as of 2021 (of which there were 4, the UK, the US, Switzerland, and Norway), has a coefficient of -1.272. Note that being from an old member state was also the most common, indicating that these interest groups are more likely to engage in the consultation processes to begin with. It thus seems like interests from "older" EU-members have an advantage when it comes to lobbying in the EU, but the coefficients are all statistically insignificant and making conclusions is therefore not possible. Model 5 has a lower adjusted R squared than Model 3a and Model 4a, indicating that these models are a better fit (even though their adjusted R squared scores are also considered low).

Figure 5.2.2. is another visualisation of the significance of the independent variables in a dot-and-whiskers plot. The "whiskers" for each of the coefficients represent a 95% confidence-interval, and the 0 on the x-axis equals the coefficient estimate. In other words, for a coefficient to be statistically significant at the 5%-level, the whiskers cannot cover 0 on the x-axis. The plot visualizes what was already evident: that with a 95% confidence-level, only one explanatory variable is statistically significant: salience.[21] We can also see the direction of the coefficients, whether they are positive or negative when regressed on the dependent variable, and it all lines up with the coefficients from the OLS output.

[21] When running the same plot with an 80% confidence-interval, the coefficients for "Groups and Companies" and "NGOs" become statistically significant.

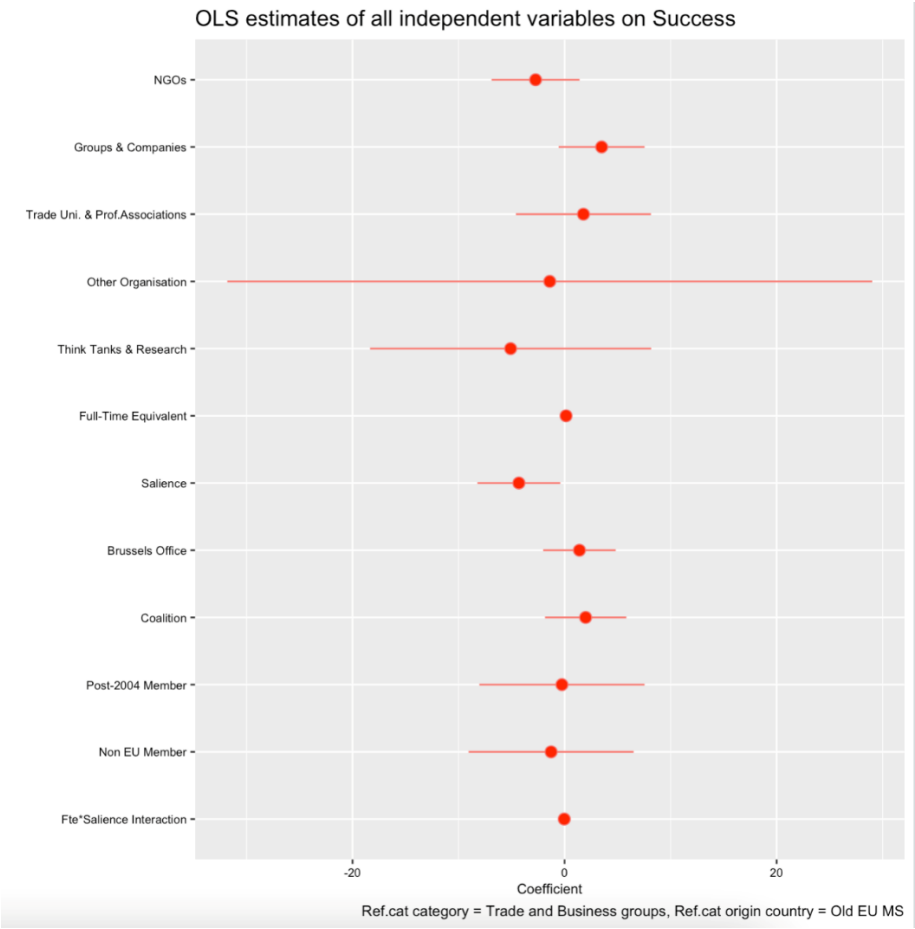


Figure 5.2.2: OLS estimates of all independent variables on success.[22]

5.3. Additional descriptive findings

In order to produce some further insight into the two explanatory variables, full-time equivalent and salience, I have analysed some of the prior expectations related to them. The variables are used as predictors of the success-variable, but not in an OLS-regression with the remaining variables. They can therefore not provide us with generalisable results but could uncover interesting relationships worthy of closer research in the future.

[22] My only explanation as to why the coefficient for full-time equivalent (and subsequently fte*salience) is centred on 0 is that the coefficient was so small. The confidence intervals for "Other Organisations" and Think Tanks and Research Institutions are that large as there are very few observations with these values.

Category	*Full-time equivalent mean*	*n*
Commercial groups	4.389	302
Public interests	7.658	84
t-test (p-value)	5.486	

Table 5.3.1: Fte-mean per category.[23]

How does number of full-time equivalents spread out amongst the different group categories? From the regression, we know that resources have small but positive, insignificant coefficients, and that commercial interests are on average the most successful. Prior to the analysis I expected the commercial interests were the most resourceful. From Table 5.3.1. we can see that, on average, public interests have 7.658 full-time equivalents. In comparison, the commercial interests (Groups and Companies and Trade and Business Associations) when combined have on average 4.389 full-time equivalents working with lobbying. The public interests are the ones with the most registered full-time equivalents, as far as categories go, and my prior expectation is thus not supported. The p-value indicates that the difference between the two groups is not significant at any confidence-level.

Category	*Average success*	*n*
Commercial groups	23.817	203
Public interests	24.695	36
t-test (p-value)	0.231	

Table 5.3.2: Average success on highly salient issues

Another prior expectation was that when salience was regressed on success, public interests would on average be more successful than commercial interests when issues were highly salient. To test this assumption, a data frame of only the highly salient issues was created and the average success based on the group categories were drawn. The results are shown in Table 5.3.2, and it shows that on average the public interests are more successful than commercial interests when salience is high. NGOs are now the most successful individual category with an average success score of about 26. Companies and Groups are not far behind, but Trade and Business Associations which were used as the reference category for the OLS regression in all

[23] Once more, the commercial categories are Trade and Business Associations + Groups and Companies, and public interests are NGOs + Think Tanks and Research Institutions.

the models is now the least successful category overall. A p-value of 0.231 means that the difference between the two groups is insignificant and uncertain. When creating a data frame consisting of issues of low salience, the commercial groups had on average a success-score of 31.817, and the public interests an average score of only 18.478.[24] The p-value between the two groups in the low-salience data frame was significant at the 1%-level. There is indication of a relationship between the salience of an issue and which groups are influential, in favour of the commercial interests when salience is low. This prior expectation is thus supported, as issue-salience seem to change which category is influential.

5.4. Robustness tests

Statistics are considered an exact science, but it is important to keep in mind that estimates can be unprecise. The results of a model can change substantially by introducing small alterations, and it is therefore considered advantageous to conduct robustness tests to verify your own specifications and results. This is particularly relevant when a single individual is conducting the data gathering, operationalisations as well as the analysis, as is the case of this thesis.

In the Appendices you will find several robustness tests. In Appendix D is a clustered standard error regression compared to the ordinary standard errors which was the basis for the discussion in subchapter 4.2.2. regarding autocorrelation. In short, including clustered standard errors did not seem to affect the coefficients.

The results from the remaining robustness tests can be found in Appendix F. First off, I run two regressions with fixed-effects at the case- and issue-level to check for unobserved heterogeneity at the different levels in the data. Next, I run an OLS regression where the observations that score the minimum and maximum value on the dependent variable are removed to see whether the independent variables really explain difference in success, even when the most extreme values on the dependent variable are removed. The coefficients for the predictors did not change much. Finally, I run a binomial logit-model where the dependent variable (success) is coded either 0 (for success-scores lower than 30) or high (30-60). In this test I check whether the direction and significance of the coefficients change when using a different statistical method for the analysis, which they did not.

[24] You can see a table of the results on low salience issues in Appendix E.

5.5. Discussion

In the above section, the hypotheses were tested running OLS regression models, and the statistical results from these were interpreted. This section will further discuss the statistical results of the hypotheses, and their practical, potential real-life implications. This is intended to provide insights and possible explanations of the relationship between an important political and legislative institution in the EU and civil society.

Based on the statistical regression, I find no support for Hypothesis 1, theorising that interest groups representing business have been on average *less* successful than public interests in reaching their preferred outcome in recent climate action policies. Commercial interests, including Trade and Business Associations and Groups and Companies, are in fact more successful on average compared to their public counterparts, NGOs and Think Tanks and Research Institutions. In addition to this, Trade and Business Associations represent the majority of those organisations that reached the maximum score of success (a score of 60). It is evident that business groups are the most successful in influencing the European Commission in the two cases chosen within recent climate action policies. Hypothesis 1, the *Business success-hypothesis*, is thus not supported by the quantitative analysis.

There are practical implications that may come with this finding. When commercial interests are found to consistently be more influential, the democratic legitimacy of the consultation process can be questioned. This is a particularly sensitive finding in terms of the EC, as they have been scrutinized as a supranational entity. Climate action is a political field of great importance to the general public, and one where current policies have long-term implications for all citizens. If the commercial interests are the ones with the power in the legislative consultations, the requirements of the general population may not be perceived. Letting commercial precautions outweigh public precautions when it comes to environmental policies could have serious future consequences.

It is important to emphasise that the two cases were partly chosen because they were expected to attract a diverse set of interests. Case 1 on LULUCF did attract a relatively large share of public interests, and Case 2 on Energy Tax attracted a majority of commercial interests. Due to a certain lack of information however, the final population for the analysis included a clear majority of commercial interests. This imbalance could explain some of the apparent advantage these groups have. Bias can however not be identified based on the analysis, even though it has been found to be true in earlier studies (Coen, 2007, p. 335).

The final three hypotheses were deducted based on the exchange-theory, subtracted from rational choice theory. First off, having plentiful resources, operationalised in the regression as full-time equivalents is positive across all statistical models. A 1-point increase in full-time employees increases the success-rate of 0.109 points. Not a very large increase, and the coefficient for full-time equivalent is also insignificant.

Furthermore, I expected resources to be an advantage enjoyed primarily by commercial interests. This, however, did not eventuate for the given operationalisation of resources – namely full-time equivalents. Instead, NGOs are the category with the most employees, with an average of 9.836, and this is in line with previous findings (Dür et al., 2015, p. 978). This could imply that resources are not as advantageous on its own, given that NGOs were, as a category, less successful than all the commercial categories. It could be that instead of using their own employees in lobbying, the commercial interests use external consultants for this type of work, but that is only speculation. Resources can therefore not explain level of political success on its own with the given operationalisation. I therefore consider the results derived from Hypothesis 2 to be inconclusive and difficult to interpret when there are no statistically significant results. Hypothesis 2 is thus not supported based on the results from the regression.

In Hypothesis 3, salience was expected to affect the average success for all interests involved in the political consultations. Issues of high salience were expected to lower the average success-score for all interests. Furthermore, I expected this effect to be particularly evident for commercial interests, as the increased public attention would lessen the chances of success for the commercial interests as a consequence of the expected increase in success for public interests. Across all models, salience is statistically significant with 99, 95 or 90%-confidence intervals. Issues of high salience reduce the overall success for interest groups, independent of their categorical belonging. When looking at only issues of high salience, NGOs were found to be on average the group that was the most likely to reach their preference attainment, i.e., they were the most influential in highly salient issues. This indicates that for salient issues that are of specific importance to the public, compromises are made by the EC, and these compromises seem to negatively affect the influence of commercial interests in particular. Hypothesis 3 is thus supported.

In Hypothesis 4, salience was expected to moderate the effect of resources on the dependent variable, success. Salience was included in the regression based on the theoretical expectation that salient issues engage a large part of the population, and thus increases the political prominence of an issue (Røed & Wøien Hansen, 2018). The engagement of the population was expected to reduce the advantage of resourceful interests, because the EC wants

to see their policy proposal pass through all the legislative institutions, and ultimately satisfy the population and not just certain parts of the economy.

There is a slight decrease in the effect of full-time equivalent when salience is high, in line with the theoretical expectation. This means that issues that are of high salience slightly moderate the effect of resources on level of success, but there is no real interaction between the two explanatory variables. Salient issues significantly reduce the average success for all interest groups, meaning there is probably compromises being made which reduces the degree of success for all interest groups, regardless of their category. The coefficient for full-time equivalent remains insignificant. Furthermore, as there seems to be no real interaction between the two conditions (full-time equivalent and salience), Hypothesis 4 is not supported.

It seems like there are underlying characteristics that tend to be advantageous to certain interest groups. Commercial interests continue to be the most influential when it comes to policies proposed by the European Commission. This is despite the latter's attempts at eliminating their label as "a friend of business". Based on this analysis however, no statistical conclusions regarding this can be made. Full time-equivalents are not found to be important in reaching your political goals through lobbying, and the salience of a given issue does not moderate the importance of resources. Salience does however reduce the chances of success for all involved interests indicating compromise when salience is high, and this result was significant.

Following the discussion of the explanatory variables we can now consider the controls included in the regression. First off, being part of the major coalition had a positive coefficient. This could indicate that the EC is receptive to the majority of respondents, in an attempt to satisfy the public. It also indicates that the commercial interests could have been more successful because they were more plentiful in both consultation processes. Whether public interests could have been more successful had they had an increase in *n* is an interesting starting point for future research, given that this coefficient was insignificant and the result uncertain in the context of this analysis.

Having an office in Brussels also had a positive, but insignificant coefficient. This could imply that those with the resources to hire employees dedicated to lobbying the EU-institutions are more successful. Whether or not it is due to them being closer to the decision-making locus, or another reason related to geographical placement, is not for certain. It may thus turn out that resources spent on establishing an EU-office, rather than employing people to work with EU-affairs, is the "real" resourceful-explanation as to why the commercial interests have been more influential than the public interests. Once more, the coefficient for Brussels office is statistically

insignificant and it is therefore difficult to conclude that it explains the real increase in success as opposed to a random effect.

Finally of the control variables, was country of origin. Based on earlier literature I knew that interest groups from "old" member state have increased access to the EU institutions (Bunea, 2014). My analysis demonstrates that country of origin could potentially impact the level of influence. With "old" member state as the reference category, both new member state and non-EU member had negative coefficients. Keep in mind that the coefficients in the regression analyses were insignificant and drawing conclusions remains problematic.

Interest groups that as of 2021 were from a country outside of the EU, had the lowest average success of the three groups. The expectation that those with connections with the EU are more likely to have a better understanding of the institutions is supported. It could also indicate that the EC is willing to consider the opinions of "their own" interest groups more seriously, given that, ultimately, pleasing your internal population is the number one priority.

Evident from the dataset is that interest groups from older member state are the most frequent in both cases. This could mean that there are underlying reasons which favours the involvement of these groups. It could indicate that those from non-EU countries do not achieve as much access to the legislative process as their EU-counterparts. The interest groups that found themselves in the non-EU category were from countries with historically close ties to the EU (the UK, the US, Switzerland, and Norway) and the disadvantage these seem to have, thus circumvented expectations.

Chapter 6 Concluding Remarks

In this final chapter, I will summarise the research question, the framework of the thesis and the results from the analysis. Furthermore, I will evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the analysis, as well as share a few possibilities of what I think can be valuable aspects to look at in future research wishing to contribute to the field of EU interest group-research.

6.1. Summary of thesis and discussion of findings

This thesis has attempted to answer: *Which interests have been able to influence the European Union's decision-making on recent climate action legislation, and which factors can explain their success?* To do so, the focus was limited to the European Commission as an institution and the early stages of policymaking within the policy field of climate action. These bounds were considered optimal due to their wide variety of actors involved in the process. For the data generating process, I went with quantitative content analysis using policy position documents as the method of gathering and systematising the desirable data, inspired by (Bunea 2013, 2015; Klüver 2011, 2013b). The aim was that this relatively novel way of producing interest group data would allow for statistical, generalisable results that could provide an analysis on interest group lobbying across EC consultations. This led to an original dataset, which was used in the OLS regression analysis.

The theoretical starting point for the analysis was rational choice theory, and the expectation that rational actors will choose options that maximize their success and disregard all other options. To measure influence, I used Dür et al.'s (2015) mathematical formula which takes the status quo and final outcome of the legislative process into account in order to create a relativistic measurement of interest group success. This became the dependent variable of the regression, where success is a measure of the level of influence an interest group was able to obtain on respective issues. The explanatory and control variables were gathered from different parts of the interest group literature and included due to their ability to explain the expected exchange-relationship laid out in the theoretical framework.

Hypothesis	Evidence	Results
H1 Business success-hypothesis: *Interest groups representing commercial interests have been unsuccessful in reaching their preferred political outcome vis-à-vis public interests in recent climate action proposals from the European Commission.*	Commercial interests are on average more successful compared to public interests.	Not supported
H2 Resource-hypothesis: *The more resources an interest group has available on lobbying the EU, the more likely it is to reach its preferred outcome.*	An increase in full-time equivalents increases the chances of success slightly, but insignificantly.	Not supported
H3 Salience-hypothesis: *The more salient an issue, the less likely the interest groups involved will be in reaching their preferred outcome.*	Salient issues significantly reduce the average success for all involved parties.	Supported
H4 Salience interaction-hypothesis: *When salience is high, resources become less important when an interest group attempts to reach their preferred outcome.*	Salience does not change the direction of the full-time equivalent coefficient, and there seems to be no interaction-effect between the two.	Not supported

Table 6.1.1: Summary of findings

The results from the regression analyses are summarised in Table 6.1.1. Hypothesis 1 regarding the expected limited success of interest groups representing business was not supported. I expected public interests to have been relatively more successful in reaching their preferred outcome compared to commercial business interests in the field of climate action in recent years. This was invalidated in the statistical analysis and supports the findings of Bunea (2013), Dür & De Bièvre (2007), Hermansson (2016) and Rasmussen & Carroll (2014). It could be that, given the increased importance of the policy-field, the EC has a more "anti-business" standpoint in their impact assessment. In order for commercial interests to be influential, they may not have had to pull the final outcome that far from the status quo, and public interests

may have faced more prominent barriers. In my dataset, the ideal positions of commercial interests are, on most occasions, closer to the status quo compared to public interests.

Hypothesis 2 theorised that resources could explain the "real" reason why some interest groups win, and others lose. The theoretical framework assumed that those with the most valuable resources of interest to the EC would be the most successful in reaching their preferred outcome. This was translated into full-time equivalents as a measure for resources, both in terms of knowledge and finances. Those with a relatively high number of full-time equivalents, were expected to be the most successful in asserting influence. Prior to the research I expected this to be an advantage for commercial interests, in particular trade and business groups, typically working on behalf of multiple companies and groups often across internal EU-borders.

The results were inconclusive. An increase in full-time equivalents was found to have a slight positive impact on the level of success, but the results were statistically insignificant. Therefore, I was unable to conclude that the variable was the one impacting the dependent variable and not some random effect. Furthermore, the category with the highest number of full-time equivalents on average was NGOs, one of the *least* successful categories in reaching their preferred outcome, further invalidating the expectations in Hypothesis 2. This outcome is in line with the findings of Bunea (2013), Klüver (2013b), Rasmussen & Carroll (2014) and Stevens & De Bruycker (2020). It could be that it is knowledge and not finances that hold real explanatory powers given the results. Commercial interests may provide information of higher quality, and this could give them an advantage in the exchange relationship. It could also partly explain why the commercial interests have on average less employees if these possess the required expert knowledge.

Hypothesis 3 theorised that the level of salience of an issue would lead to compromise and affect level of influence. Based on the exchange-theory, I expected that issues with a high level of salience, of importance to the public, would lead to compromise and a lower average success-score of all involved parties as the EC attempts to satisfy as many voices as possible. I further expected issues of high salience to be particularly disadvantageous for the commercial interests, as the increased public attention would moderate the effect of economic resources.

The regression produced significant results for the salience-coefficient in all the models. Highly salient issues reduced the average success for all involved interests with around 4 points (on a scale of 0-100). Salience was found to reduce the average success for all groups, in line with the theoretical expectations. The hypothesis is thus supported. Furthermore, when looking at the highly salient issues separately, NGOs were on average the most successful group. This

further indicates that issues of high salience are an advantage to public interests, but they are also more plentiful in these issues compared to the less salient ones. These findings are in line with Dür et.al. (2015) and Stevens & De Bruycker (2020).

Furthermore, a high level of salience was expected to "cancel out" the effect of full-time equivalents, due to the increased public attention the field of climate action has gotten in the past few years. In Hypothesis 4, I expected to find that issues that were salient would moderate the effect of resources on an interest group's level of success. The EC was expected to want to satisfy its population as much as possible and an issue of high salience should therefore limit the importance of resources possessed by an interest group. Salient issues do reduce the effect of resources on an interest group's level of influence slightly, but insignificantly. This contradicts the results from Klüver (2011) but is line with De Bruycker & Beyers (2019), Dür et.al. (2015) and Stevens & De Bruycker (2020), who all found that salient issues limit the success of resource-rich, commercial interests. There was however no interaction-effect between salience and the effect of full-time equivalents on success.

The first control variable included in the regression was coalition. This had a positive coefficient indicating that being part of the majority on an issue is advantageous. This implies that the EU wants to please the majority of the involved parties, and there is power in numbers. Furthermore, the coefficient for office in Brussels (as a headquarter or dedicated purely to EU-affairs) is also positive– in line with Stevens & De Bruycker (2020) but contradicting Hermansson (2016).

Building on earlier findings, interest groups from "older" EU member states are found to possess an advantage when it comes to accessing the EC, in line with Bunea (2014). This could indicate that interest groups from these countries have either acquired valuable knowledge regarding the institutions, or that the EU favours interest groups from established member states. Keep in mind that all the coefficients for the control variables were statistically insignificant, which means no certain conclusions can be made.

6.2. Evaluation of analysis

The aim of this thesis was to contribute to the literature on the measurement of influence using quantitative content analysis and the overall EU interest group literature. The findings are generalisable to other cases of early policy-formulation within environmental policies in the EU. The results from the analysis have both strengthened and weakened earlier findings. The theoretical expectation that commercial groups are on average more influential than public

interests in lobbying the EC is strengthened. Furthermore, salience is found to affect the average level of influence for all involved interests, and particularly increases the chances of success for the public interests. Salience was however, not found to significantly impact the importance of an interest group's resources, and an interaction-effect between the two was dismissed.

Furthermore, Bunea (2014) found that interest groups from older member states were more likely to participate in this type of consultation process. That was found to be true in the chosen cases for this analysis as well, supporting the idea that these may have an advantage in their knowledge of the EU institutions. Building further on this find, my analysis also suggests that interest groups from older member state-countries are more likely to reach their preferred outcome, i.e., are more influential. This aspect should be given attention in future EU interest group research, in order to validate its accuracy, as the coefficients in the context of this analysis were insignificant.

There are some evident limitations regarding the results from the regression. For one, the data is only gathered from one stage of the pre-policy formulation stage in the EC. It is not for certain that it is the opinions gathered in this formal round of feedback that is eventually turned into official policies. The EC could have been influenced by external actors prior to this stage (i.e., the agenda-setting), as well as the following stage where a much higher number of actors are involved in a less formal process. These two stages are unaccounted for in this analysis, which could mean an overestimation of my findings regarding the success of the commercial interests. In the following step in the consultation process, the commercial interests are outnumbered by public interests and individuals.

The data gathering process utilising quantitative content analysis led to a reasonably large *n* dataset of 401 observations. For a single individual doing the coding this produced an objective measure of influence and a large population, deemed more fitting than survey or interviews who suffer from either subjectiveness or small *n*. I would advise having another coder go through a sample of the code in order to increase the reliability of the data gathering, an aspect which is not within the scope of a MA.

As previously mentioned, the validity of this type of analysis is uncertain. There is a human element to the coding process which can lead to divergence in inferences. Furthermore, turning loaded text into numeric values can lead to a loss of meaning. The expectations and knowledge of the individual coder is expected to influence the interpretations of the data. Once the data has been coded and the analysis conducted, the statistical results are however considered relatively valid for the given dataset.

Furthermore, few of the coefficients from the OLS regression were significant. This could indicate that the data is not sufficient to make valuable conclusions regarding the variables in question. Different operationalisations or other variables entirely could potentially have better explanatory powers. There are also factors that are not included in the analysis, both in terms of interest group characteristics, issue-specific characteristics and contextual characteristics that have been used in previous research and could explain who is influential when lobbying the EU. These include for instance budget on lobbying, choice of lobbying strategy, possession of expert knowledge and media salience.

6.3. Future potential research

Building on both the theoretical and methodological choices as well as the findings from the regression analysis I will present a few options for what I would consider valuable future research. Future research on interest groups in the EU could build on this thesis but focus on other institutions in the EU as they gain legislative importance, in particular the EP. An overview of how a piece of legislation develops over time going from one institution to another, or a comparative analysis of who is influential in the different institutions are both starting points that could contribute greatly to the field of interest group research in the EU (Bunea, 2013, p. 567). This could provide insight into the complex power dynamics that operate at the European level.

Another theoretical starting point other than rational choice theory should also be considered, but it is necessary with a coherent framework in order to contribute to the literature on interest group research. A different theoretical starting point could produce a different set of expectations which may better explain interest group influence. Some of the hypotheses deduced from rational choice theory were repudiated, indicating that they may lack some explanatory powers.

I would further advise the analysis of more cases, even across policy fields (Dür, 2008, p. 573). I expected climate action to be the policy field that involved the most diverse set of actors and therefore created the most salient issues, but that intuition might be inaccurate as commercial interests represented the majority of the population in both cases. Given the implications of my findings, that commercial interests are the most influential, future research could gather data from similar cases and find out whether commercial interests are disproportionally influential when looking at different cases and interest group populations.

More research is needed to determine whether the EC really is biased towards certain interests (Binderkrantz et al., 2021).

The fact that all models had a relatively low adjusted R^2 could indicate that there are explanatory variables left out that deserve more attention. Different operationalisations of the variables could also be valuable. For instance, salience was found to be significant in terms of explaining level of success. Whether the finding that this is beneficial to public interests in particular deserves more attention. I would therefore encourage a closer look at this in the future, either within climate action or across other policy fields.

I would also advise future research to compare the two stages of the feedback process in the EC as my initial examination found that there is a remarkable demographic difference regarding who provides feedback in the different forums. Whereas organisations and institutions that are well-known and resource-rich typically respond to the first stage which this thesis focused on; the second round of the EC gathering opinions (the survey-round) is more diverse and includes many EU-citizens and smaller businesses who are unable to register in the Transparency Register, which was the source for the data gathering in this thesis. I found the demographic incongruence to be true when assessing multiple potential cases for the analysis. The feedback from another stage could have a big impact on what is eventually turned into legislation. A comparison between the two stages could yield important findings and, as far as I can tell, remains unstudied.

Bibliography

Amadeo, K. (2021, May 5). *Largest Economies in the World: Why China Is the Largest, Even Though Some Say It's the U.S.* https://www.thebalance.com/world-s-largest-economy-3306044

Benoit, K. (2020). Text as Data: An Overview. In L. Curini & R. Franzese, *The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations* (pp. 461–497). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526486387.n29

Beyers, J. (2002). Gaining and seeking access: The European adaptation of domestic interest associations. *European Journal of Political Research*, *41*(5), 585–612. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.00023

Beyers, J. (2004). Voice and Access: Political Practices of European Interest Associations. *European Union Politics*, *5*(2), 211–240. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116504042442

Beyers, J., Eising, R., & Maloney, W. (2008). Researching Interest Group Politics in Europe and Elsewhere: Much We Study, Little We Know? *West European Politics*, *31*(6), 1103–1128. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402380802370443

Binderkrantz, A. S., Christiansen, P. M., & Pedersen, H. H. (2015). Interest Group Access to the Bureaucracy, Parliament, and the Media: Interest Group Access. *Governance*, *28*(1), 95–112. https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12089

Binderkrantz, Blom-Hansen, J., & Senninger, R. (2021). Countering bias? The EU Commission's consultation with interest groups. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(4), 469–488. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2020.1748095

Binderkrantz, A. S., & Pedersen, H. H. (2019). The lobbying success of citizen and economic groups in Denmark and the UK. *Acta Politica*, *54*(1), 75–103. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-017-0076-7

Binderkrantz, A. S., & Rasmussen, A. (2015). Comparing the domestic and the EU lobbying context: Perceived agenda-setting influence in the multi-level system of the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *22*(4), 552–569. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2015.1008553

Bouwen, P. (2002). Corporate lobbying in the European Union: The logic of access. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *9*(3), 365–390. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760210138796

Bouwen, P. (2004). Exchanging access goods for access: A comparative study of business lobbying in the European Union institutions. *European Journal of Political Research*, *43*(3), 337–369. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2004.00157.x

Brambor, T., Clark, W. R., & Golder, M. (2006). Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses. *Political Analysis*, *14*(1), 63–82.

Bratberg, Ø. (2019). *Tekstanalyse for samfunnsvitere* (2nd ed.). Cappelen Damm Akademisk.

Broscheid, A., & Coen, D. (2007). Lobbying activity and fora creation in the EU: Empirically exploring the nature of the policy good. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *14*(3), 346–365. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760701243749

Browning, G. K., Halcli, A., Webster, F., & ProQuest (Firm). (2000). *Understanding contemporary society theories of the present*. Sage Publications.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (Fifth Edition). Oxford University Press.

Bunea, A. (2013). Issues, preferences and ties: Determinants of interest groups' preference attainment in the EU environmental policy. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *20*(4), 552–570. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2012.726467

Bunea, A. (2014). Explaining Interest Groups' Articulation of Policy Preferences in the European Commission's Open Consultations: An Analysis of the Environmental Policy Area: Explaining interest groups' articulation of policy preferences. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *52*(6), 1224–1241. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12151

Bunea, A. (2018). Legitimacy through targeted transparency? Regulatory effectiveness and sustainability of lobbying regulation in the European Union: LEGITIMACY THROUGH TARGETED TRANSPARENCY? *European Journal of Political Research*, *57*(2), 378–403. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12231

Bunea, A. (2020). Understanding the European Commission's use of politicisation in the negotiation of interinstitutional agreements: The role of consultations and issue framing. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *27*(3), 439–459. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2020.1712461

Bunea, A., & Ibenskas, R. (2015). Quantitative text analysis and the study of EU lobbying and interest groups. *European Union Politics*, *16*(3), 429–455. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116515577821

Cameron, A. C., & Miller, D. L. (2015). *A Practitioner's Guide to Cluster-Robust Inference*.

Chalmers, A. W. (2013). Trading information for access: Informational lobbying strategies and interest group access to the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *20*(1), 39–58. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2012.693411

Christophersen, K.-A. (2018). *Introduksjon til statistisk analyse: Med oppgaver og oppgaveløsninger* (2nd ed.). Gyldendal.

Climate action tracker. (2021, May 4). *The CAT thermometer*. https://climateactiontracker.org/global/cat-thermometer/

Coen, D. (1997). The European Business Lobby. *Business Strategy Review*, *8*(4), 17–25. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8616.00044

Coen, D. (2007). Empirical and theoretical studies in EU lobbying. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *14*(3), 333–345. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760701243731

Coen, D., Katsaitis, A., & Vannoni, M. (2021). *Business Lobbying in the European Union* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199589753.001.0001

Council of the EU. (2021, May 6). *Transparency register: Council adopts new rules making registration of interest representatives mandatory*. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/05/06/transparency-register-council-adopts-new-rules-making-registration-of-interest-representatives-mandatory/#

Curini, L., & Franzese, R. (2020). *The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations*. SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526486387

De Bruycker, I., & Beyers, J. (2019). Lobbying strategies and success: Inside and outside lobbying in European Union legislative politics. *European Political Science Review*, *11*(1), 57–74. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773918000218

Dür, A. (2008). Measuring Interest Group Influence in the EU: A Note on Methodology. *European Union Politics*, *9*(4), 559–576. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116508095151

Dür, A., Bernhagen, P., & Marshall, D. (2015). Interest Group Success in the European Union: When (and Why) Does Business Lose? *Comparative Political Studies*, *48*(8), 951–983. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414014565890

Dür, A., & De Bièvre, D. (2007b). Inclusion without Influence? NGOs in European Trade Policy. *Journal of Public Policy*, *27*(1), 79–101. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X0700061X

Dür, A., & De Bièvre, D. (2007a). The Question of Interest Group Influence. *Journal of Public Policy*, *27*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X07000591

Dür, A., Marshall, D., & Bernhagen, P. (2019). *The Political Influence of Business in the European Union*. University of Michigan Press. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.10033101

Eising, R. (2007b). Institutional Context, Organizational Resources and Strategic Choices: Explaining Interest Group Access in the European Union. *European Union Politics*, *8*(3), 329–362. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116507079542

Eising, R. (2004a). Multilevel Governance and Business Interests in the European Union. *Governance*, *17*(2), 211–245. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.2004.00244.x

Eising, R. (2007a). The access of business interests to EU institutions: Towards élite pluralism? *Journal of European Public Policy*, *14*(3), 384–403. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760701243772

Eising, R. (2004b). The access of interest groups to EU institutions. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, *45*(4), 494–518. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11615-004-0088-6

Enders, C. K. (2010). *Applied missing data analysis*. Guilford Press.

Eriksson, L. (2011). *Rational choice theory: Potential and limits*. Palgrave Macmillan.

EU Monitor. (n.d.). *Ordinary legislative procedure (COD)*.

European Commission. (2021, December 13). *Transparency Register*. https://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do

European Council. (2021, October 13). *Qualified majority*.

European Union. (2021a, November 4). *Transparency Register—EUROGAS*. https://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/consultation/displaylobbyist.do?id=17909506129-41

European Union. (2021b, December 13). Statistics. *Transparency Register*. https://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/consultation/statistics.do?locale=en&action=prepareView

European Union. (2022, January 31). *Transparency Register, Code of conduct*. https://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/staticPage/displayStaticPage.do?locale=en&reference=CODE_OF_CONDUCT

Flesch Reading Ease Score—Reading and Grade Level Calculator. (n.d.). https://charactercalculator.com/flesch-reading-ease/

Ford, C. (2017, October 27). *Univeristy of Virginia Library: Getting started with Multivariate Multiple Regression*. https://data.library.virginia.edu/getting-started-with-multivariate-multiple-regression/

Geddes, A. (2000). Lobbying for migrant inclusion in the European Union: New opportunities for transnational advocacy? *Journal of European Public Policy*, *7*(4), 632–649. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760050165406

Gehrke, L., & Tamma, P. (2019, March 15). Climate strikes sweep Europe. *Politico.Eu*. https://www.politico.eu/article/climate-strikes-sweep-europe/

Gerring, J. (2011). *The Case Study*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199604456.013.0051

Grimmer, J., & Stewart, B. M. (2013). Text as Data: The Promise and Pitfalls of Automatic Content Analysis Methods for Political Texts. *Political Analysis*, *21*(3), 267–297. https://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mps028

Grossmann. (2012). Interest group influence on US policy change: An assessment based on policy history. Interest Groups & Advocacy, 1(2), 171–192. https://doi.org/10.1057/iga.2012.9

Hanegraaff, M., & Berkhout, J. (2019). More business as usual? Explaining business bias across issues and institutions in the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *26*(6), 843–862. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2018.1492006

Heale, R., & Twycross, A. (2015). Validity and reliability in quantitative studies. *Evidence Based Nursing*, *18*(3), 66–67. https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2015-102129

Hermansen, S. S. L. (2019). *Lær deg R*. Fagbokforlaget.

Hermansson, H. (2016). The European Commission's environmental stakeholder consultations: Is lobbying success based on what you know, what you own or who you know? *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, *5*(3), 177–199. https://doi.org/10.1057/iga.2016.6

Hlavac, M. (2018). *Stargazer: Well-Formatted Regression and Summary Statistics Tables. R package version 5.2.2.* https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=stargazer

International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. (2022, February 28). Ordinary Least Squares Regression. *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/ordinary-least-squares-regression

Jonker, J., & Pennink, B. J. W. (2010). *The essence of research methodology: A concise guide for master and PhD students in management science*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-540-71659-4

Klüver, H. (2009). Measuring Interest Group Influence Using Quantitative Text Analysis. *European Union Politics*, *10*(4), 535–549. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116509346782

Klüver, H. (2011). The contextual nature of lobbying: Explaining lobbying success in the European Union. *European Union Politics*, *12*(4), 483–506. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116511413163

Klüver, H. (01/2013a). Lobbying as a collective enterprise: Winners and losers of policy formulation in the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *20*(1), 59–76. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2012.699661

Klüver, H. (2013b). *Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press.

Knol, M. J., Pestman, W. R., & Grobbee, D. E. (2011). The (mis)use of overlap of confidence intervals to assess effect modification. *European Journal of Epidemiology*, *26*(4), 253–254. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10654-011-9563-8

Kohler-Koch, B., & Eising, R. (Eds.). (1999). *The transformation of governance in the European Union*. Routledge.

Konrad, M. (2021). Clustered standard errors with R. *R-Bloggers*. https://www.r-bloggers.com/2021/05/clustered-standard-errors-with-r/

Krippendorff, K. (1980). Validity in Content Analysis. In *E. Mochmann (Ed.), Computerstrategien für die Kommunikationsanalyse* (pp. 69–112). Campus. http://repository.upenn.edu/asc_papers/291

Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (2nd ed). Sage.

Liefferink, D., & Wurzel, R. K. W. (2017). Environmental leaders and pioneers: Agents of change? *Journal of European Public Policy*, *24*(7), 951–968. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2016.1161657

Mahoney, C. (2007). Lobbying Success in the United States and the European Union. *Journal of Public Policy*, *27*(1), 35–56. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X07000608

Mahoney, C. (2008). *Brussels versus the Beltway: Advocacy in the United States and the European Union*. Georgetown University Press.

Marshall, D. (2015). Explaining Interest Group Interactions with Party Group Members in the European Parliament: Dominant Party Groups and Coalition Formation: Explaining interest group interactions with party group members. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *53*(2), 311–329. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12163

Mclaughlin, A. m., Jordan, G., & Maloney, W. A. (1993). Corporate Lobbying in the European Community. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *31*(2), 191–212. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.1993.tb00457.x

Olson, M. (1971). *The logic of collective action: Public goods and the theory of groups*. Harvard university press.

Parasurama, P. (2017, March 17). *Why Overlapping Confidence Intervals mean Nothing about Statistical Significance*. https://towardsdatascience.com/why-overlapping-confidence-intervals-mean-nothing-about-statistical-significance-48360559900a

Pedace, R. (2013). *Econometrics for dummies*. Wiley.

Pingen, A. (2021, July 1). Parliament Approves Interinstitutional Agreement on Mandatory Transparency Register for Lobbyists. *Eucrim*. https://eucrim.eu/news/parliament-approves-interinstitutional-agreement-on-mandatory-transparency-register-for-lobbyists/

Rasmussen, A., & Carroll, B. J. (2014). Determinants of Upper-Class Dominance in the Heavenly Chorus: Lessons from European Union Online Consultations. *British Journal of Political Science*, *44*(2), 445–459. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123412000750

Rasmussen, A., Mäder, L. K., & Reher, S. (2018). With a Little Help From The People? The Role of Public Opinion in Advocacy Success. *Comparative Political Studies*, *51*(2), 139–164. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414017695334

Rasmussen, M. K. (2015). The Battle for Influence: The Politics of Business Lobbying in the European Parliament: The battle for influence. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *53*(2), 365–382. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12156

Readable. (n.d.). *Flesch Reading Ease and the Flesch Kincaid Grade Level*. https://readable.com/readability/flesch-reading-ease-flesch-kincaid-grade-level/

Rødland, L. (2019). *Policy today or office tomorrow? Examining bias in interest group influence on legislative party groups in a rational choice framework* [MA Thesis]. University of Oslo.

Røed, M., & Wøien Hansen, V. (2018). Explaining Participation Bias in the European Commission's Online Consultations: The Struggle for Policy Gain without too Much Pain: Participation bias in online consultations. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *56*(6), 1446–1461. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12754

Roskin, M. G. (1999). Theory of rational choice. In *Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/topic/political-science/Theory-of-rational-choice

Ruffa, C. (2020). Case Study Methods: Case Selection and Case Analysis. In L. Curini & R. Franzese, *The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations* (pp. 1133–1147). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526486387.n62

Schattschneider, E. (1960). *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America.* Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Slapin, J. B., & Proksch, S.-O. (2008). A Scaling Model for Estimating Time-Series Party Positions from Texts. *American Journal of Political Science*, *52*(3), 705–722. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00338.x

Stevens, F., & De Bruycker, I. (2020). Influence, affluence and media salience: Economic resources and lobbying influence in the European Union. *European Union Politics*, *21*(4), 728–750. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116520944572

The European Commission. (n.d.-a). *Delivering the European Green Deal*. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-deal_en#documents

The European Commission. (n.d.-b). *Paris Agreement*. https://ec.europa.eu/clima/eu-action/international-action-climate-change/climate-negotiations/paris-agreement_en

The Energy Taxation Directive: INCEPTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT, EU (2020) (testimony of The European Commission).

EU Green Deal (carbon border adjustment mechanism), (2021) (testimony of The European Commission). https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12228-EU-Green-Deal-carbon-border-adjustment-mechanism-_en

The European Commission. (2021). *Land use, land use change & forestry – review of EU rules>About this consultation*. https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12657-Land-use-land-use-change-&-forestry-review-of-EU-rules/public-consultation_en

Climate change – restoring sustainable carbon cycles, (2021) (testimony of The European Commission). https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13066-Climate-change-restoring-sustainable-carbon-cycles_en

The European Union. (n.d.-a). *Living in the EU*. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/figures/living_en

The European Union. (n.d.-b). Towards open and fair world-wide trade. *The European Union*. Retrieved 29 October 2021, from https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/trade_en

Thomson, R., & Hosli, M. (2006). Who Has Power in the EU? The Commission, Council and Parliament in Legislative Decision-making*. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *44*(2), 391–417. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2006.00628.x

Torney, D. (2014). External Perceptions and EU Foreign Policy Effectiveness: The Case of Climate Change: External perceptions and EU foreign policy effectiveness. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *52*(6), 1358–1373. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12150

Truman. (1951). The governmental process : political interests and public opinion (pp. xvi, 544, xv). Knopf.

van de Rakt, M. (2019, May 20). *The Flesch reading ease score: Why and how to use it*.

Vannoni. (2015). The (un)heavenly chorus in British politics: Bringing the what, the when and the how questions into the analysis of interest group influence. British Politics, 10(3), 378–388. https://doi.org/10.1057/bp.2015.6

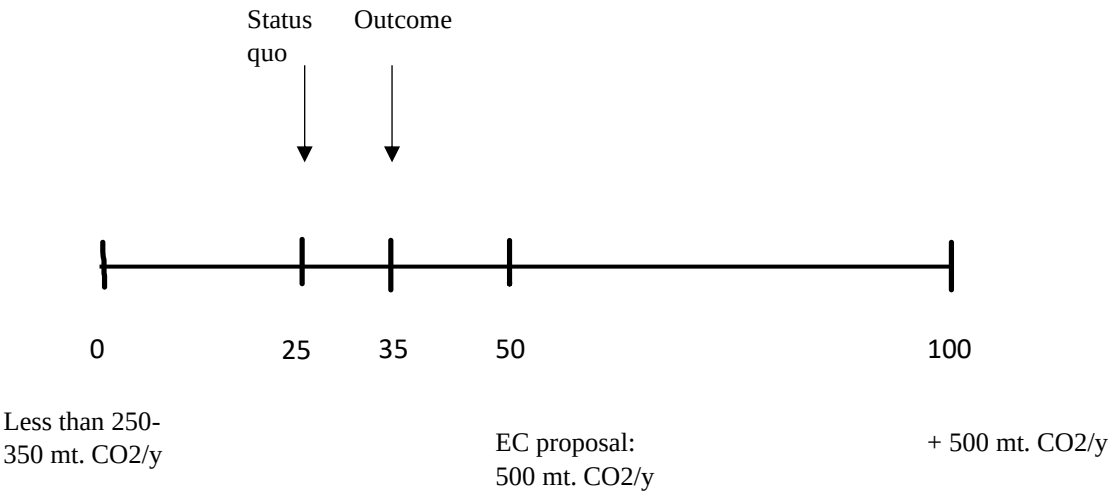
Wonka, A., Baumgartner, F. R., Mahoney, C., & Berkhout, J. (2010). Measuring the size and scope of the EU interest group population. *European Union Politics*, *11*(3), 463–476. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116510369267

Appendices

Appendix A: All issue continuums

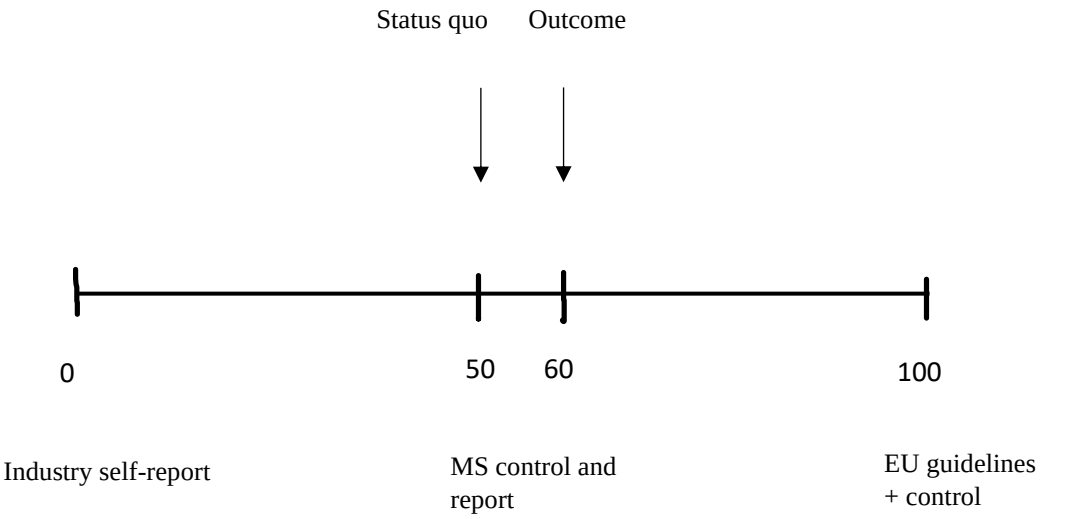
Case 1 LULUCF:

Issue 1 (Reducing CO2-emissions):



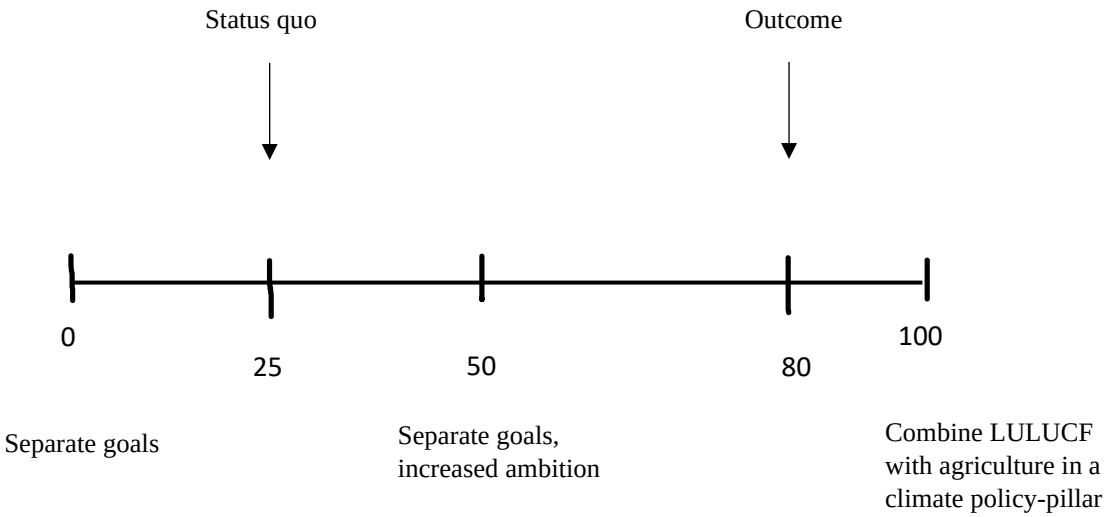
Appendix Figure 1: Case 1, Issue 1

Issue 2 (MRV-requirements):



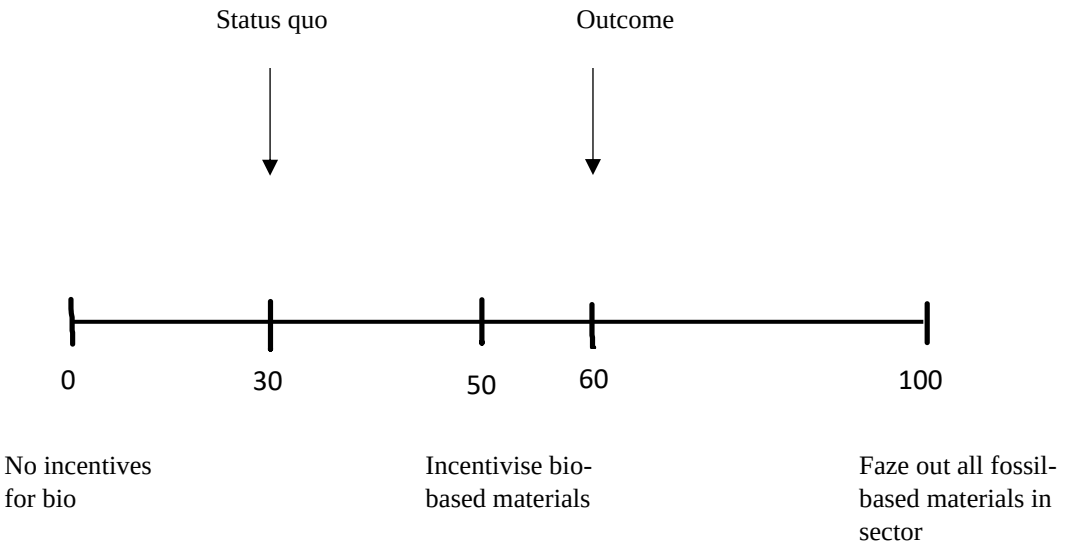
Appendix Figure 2: Case 1, Issue 2

Issue 3 (Combine sectors):



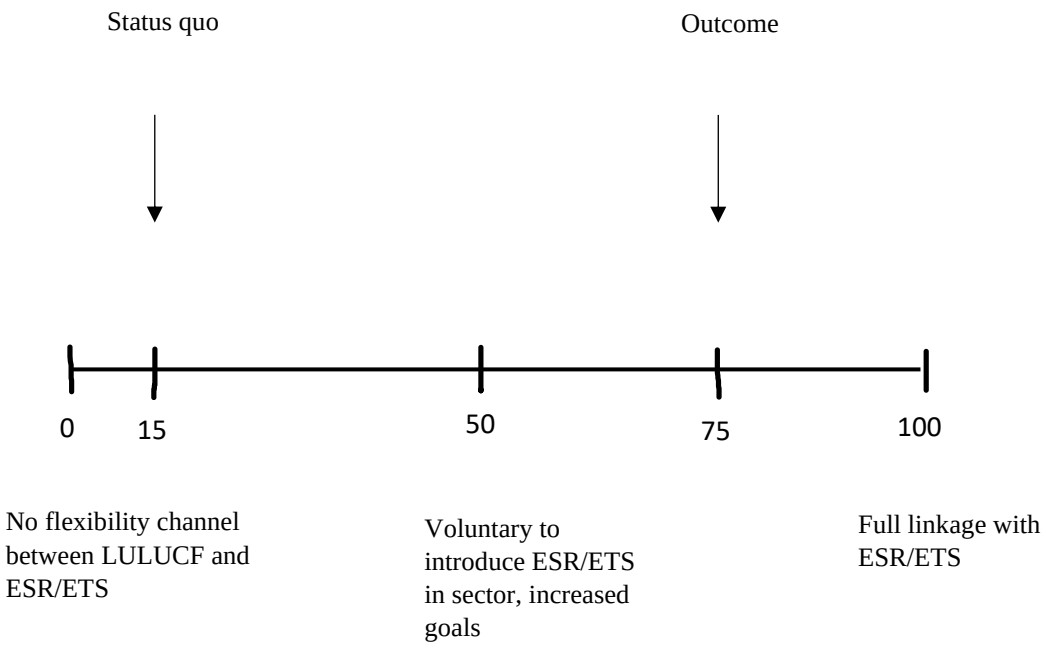
Appendix Figure 3: Case 1, Issue 3

Issue 4 (Subsidise bio-matter):



Appendix Figure 4: Case 1, Issue 4

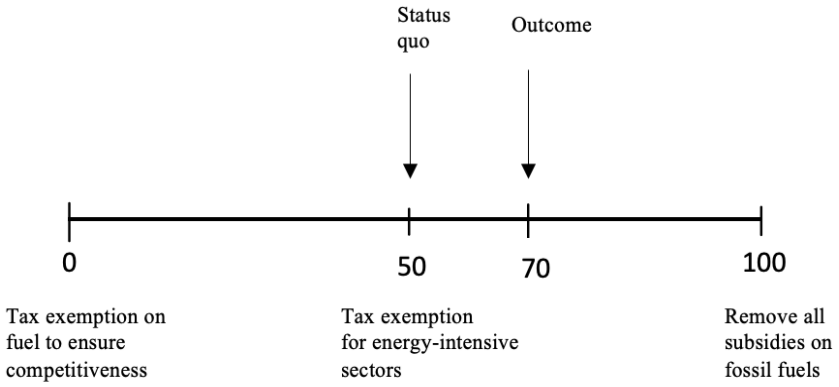
Issue 5 (ERS/ETS linkage):



Appendix Figure 5: Case 1, Issue 5

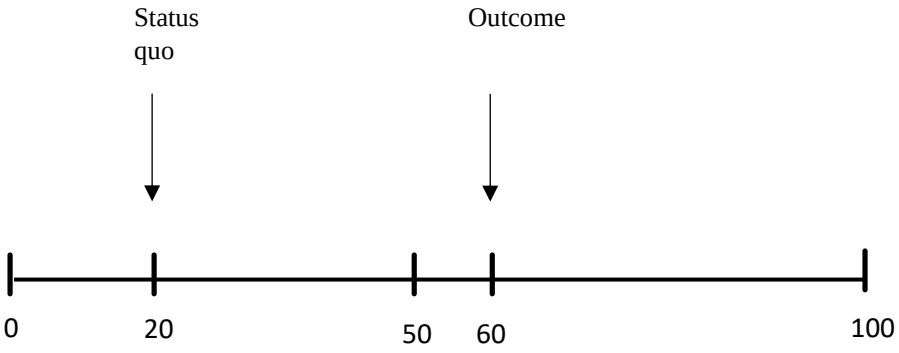
Case 2 Energy Tax:

Issue 1 (Remove tax subsidies on fossil fuels):



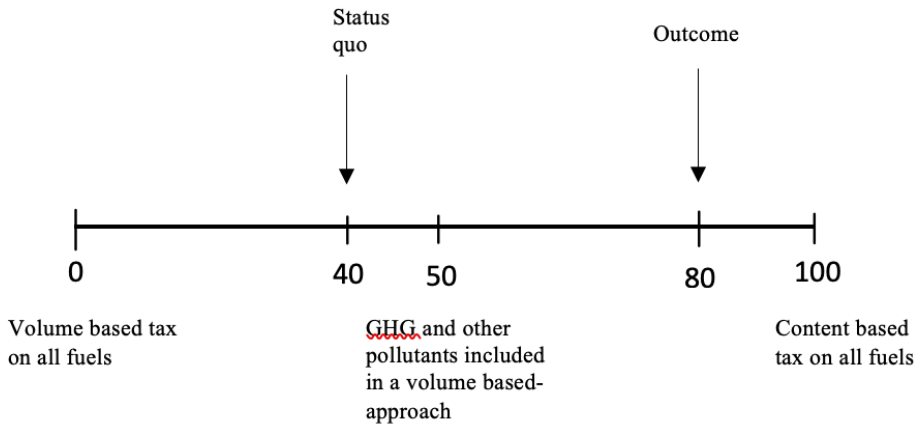
Appendix Figure 6: Case 2, Issue 1

Issue 2 (increase incentives for investments in clean technologies):



Appendix Figure 7: Case 2, Issue 2

Issue 3 (Review minimum excise rates):



Appendix Figure 8: Case 2, Issue 3

Appendix B: Status quo and final outcome – scores

STATUS QUO:

The status quo-score is identified in existing legislation, given that the two cases are both revisions. They are scored from 0-100 based on the contents. In the table there is an exert that can help explain why they have been scored the way they have, but the score is based on the overall document. Here I have identified the EC's initial position and given them a score based on this:

Case 1 (LULUCF):

Issue	**Legislation already in place**	**Status quo-score**
Reducing CO2-emissions in the sector	Current removals between 250-300 Mt CO2eq./year. "It is estimated that the EU removals will need to nearly double from their current level to up to 500 Mt CO2eq./yr by 2050 to be in line with aspirations for a climate-neutral EU."	**25**
MRV-requirements (Monitor, report, verification)	Currently member state control and reporting, simultaneous weak EU verification.	**50**
Combine sectors	LULUCF and other land-related sectors such as agriculture are kept separate and have separate emission reduction goals for instance.	**25**
Subsidise bio-matter	Some incentives, mostly subsidies that will increase the relevance of the product to potential consumers.	**30**
ESR/ETS linkage	MS control over policies and ensure emissions do not exceed reduction in emissions. Voluntary to implement ESR.	**15**

Appendix Table 1: Status quo Case 1

Case 2 (Energy Tax):

Issue	Legislation already in place	Status quo-score
Removal of tax subsidies	"Businesses entering into agreements to significantly enhance environmental protection and energy efficiency deserve attention; among these businesses, energy intensive ones merit specific treatment." "Existing international obligations and the maintaining of the competitive position of Community companies make it advisable to continue the exemptions of energy products supplied for air navigation and sea navigation, other than for private pleasure purposes, while it should be possible for Member States to limit these exemptions."	**50**
Increase incentives for investment in clean technologies – such as electricity, hydrogen, biofuels etc.)	"The proper functioning of the internal market and the achievement of the objectives of other Community policies require minimum levels of taxation to be laid down at Community level for most energy products, including electricity, natural gas and coal."	**20**
Review the minimum excise rates on fuel (hereunder go from volume to content-based taxation on fuel)	"The minimum levels of taxation should reflect the competitive position of the different energy products and electricity. It would be advisable in this connection to base the calculation of these minimum levels as far as possible on the energy content of the products. However, this method should not be applied to motor fuels."	**40**

Appendix Table 2: Status quo Case 2

FINAL OUTCOME:

The final outcome-score is identified in the final document proposal sent on from the EC to the other EU institutions. They are scored from 0-100 based on the contents. In the table there is an exert that can help explain why they have been scored the way they have, but the score is based on the overall document.

Case 1 (LULUCF):

Issue	**Proposed EC-revision**	**Final outcome-score**
Reducing CO2-emissions	"To this end, the proposal: sets out the overall Union target of net greenhouse gas removals in the LULUCF sector to 310 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent in 2030"	**35**
MRV-requirements	Still MS control and report, but new EU requirements + new monitoring methods using new technology. "A new system of governance of the target compliance will be introduced and the land use flexibility mechanism addressing risk of non-compliance by Member States will be adjusted."	**60**
Combine sectors	"The Communication proposes to move towards a more stringent contribution from the LULUCF sector and, as a further step, to combine the agriculture non-CO2 greenhouse gas emissions with the land use, land use change and forestry sector, thereby creating a newly regulated land sector (covering emissions and removals from agriculture, forestry and other land use)." (From 2031 onwards).	**80**
Subsidise bio-matter	"New business models based on carbon farming incentives and on the certification of carbon removals need to be increasingly deployed in the period until 2030. Such incentives and business models will enhance climate mitigation in the bio-economy, including through the use of durable harvested wood products, in full respect of ecological principles fostering biodiversity and the circular economy."	**60**

ESR/ETS linkage	"In order to simplify implementation and compliance, the Kyoto-inspired land accounting rules will no longer be applied post 2025, and the flexibility between LULUCF and with the "effort sharing" sectors will be adjusted, in line with the European Climate Law."	**75**

Appendix Table 3: Final outcome Case 1

Case 2 (Energy tax):

Issue	**Proposed EC-revision**	**Final outcome-score**
Remove tax subsidies on fossil fuels	"Targeted reductions in the tax level may prove necessary to incentivise the achievement of environmental protection objectives and improvements in energy efficiency of the Union productive sector."	**70**
Increase incentives for investment in clean technologies – such as electricity, hydrogen, biofuels etc.)	"Without prejudice to other Union provisions, Member States may apply under fiscal control total or partial exemptions or reductions in the level of taxation to: (a) taxable products used under fiscal control in the field of pilot projects for the technological development of more environmentally-friendly products or in relation to fuels from renewable resources; (b) electricity: of solar, wind, wave, tidal or geothermal origin; of hydraulic origin produced in hydroelectric installations; generated from sustainable biomass or from products produced from sustainable biomass; generated from methane emitted by abandoned coalmines; generated from fuel cells."	**60**
Review the minimum excise rates on fuel (go from volume to content-based taxation on fuel)	"Rules should be laid down to base energy taxation on the energy content of energy products and electricity, coupled with their environmental performances."	**80**

Appendix Table 4: Final outcome Case 2

Appendix C: Group categories in population

	Case 1 LULUCF	**Case 2 Energy Taxation**
NGOs	25	15
Trade and Business Associations	20	94
Groups and Companies	16	54
Trade Unions and Professional Associations	3	9
Other Organisations	4	5
Think Tanks and Research Institutions	6	1
N prior to sorting and coding	**74**	**178**

Appendix Table 5: All entries by category, prior to coding

Replies where all the necessary information was available for Case 1 = 58, which equals a loss of 22 %, and for Case 2 = 144, which equals a loss of 20%. The categories considered public are NGOs and Think Tanks and Research Institutions. The categories considered commercial are Trade and Business Associations and Groups and Companies. The remaining categories do not fit either categorisation, and are excluded when the comparison is relevant.

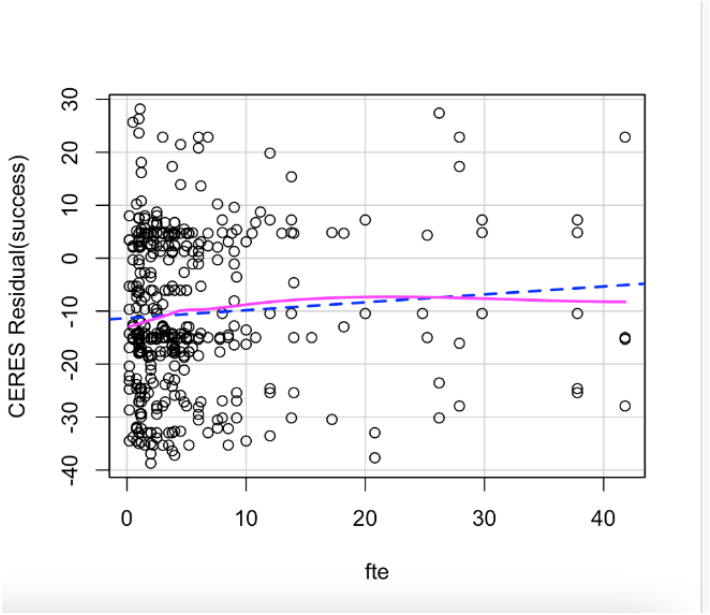
Appendix D: OLS assumptions

This section will present the results from the regression diagnostics done prior to the hypothesis-testing, and what lead to the choice of using OLS. The output here supports the discussion in Chapter 4 in the thesis. For the R-code, please go to my Github.[25]

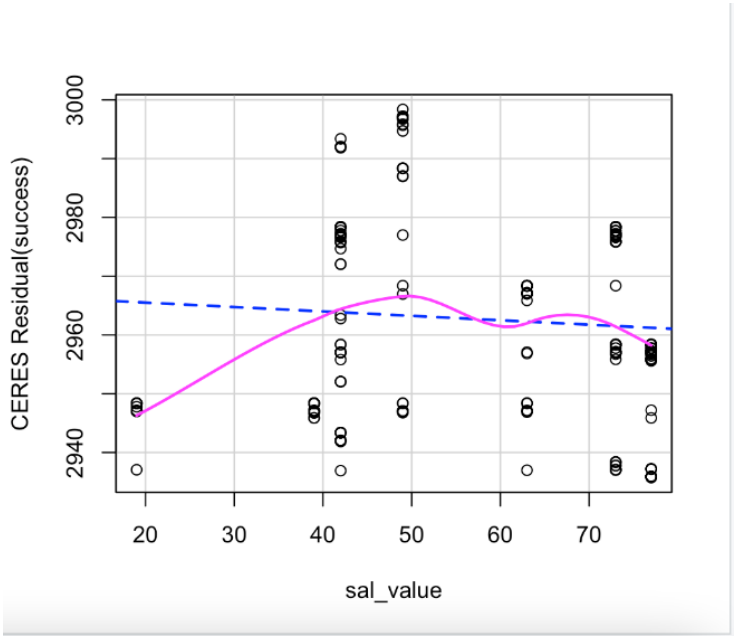
1. *Omitted-variable bias:* The first assumption of omitted-variable bias cannot be tested statistically. The risk of overestimation of one or more variables due to the lack of a relevant variable, will lead to an incorrect model. In order to answer the RQ, three control variables have been added to the analysis in addition to the two explanatory variables, which in previous research has been found to possibly explain some of the effect of my initial independent variables. These should cover most paths to the dependent variable, but there is no way of knowing for certain whether all relevant variables are part of the model. One such variable could be budget, where one could get a detailed look at what interest groups spend on lobbying annually. However, in the tradition of (Dür, 2015), I have decided that number of full-time employees is a good indicator on overall budget.

[25] https://github.com/SofieKG/Master-thesis

2. *Linearity:* For the second assumption both independent variables needed to be checked. The control variables are all either dichotomous, or in three categories. They therefore check out without this test. I used the *ceresPlot*-function from the car-package to check linearity. The full-time equivalent variable was fine, see Figure I.



Appendix Figure 9: Fte linearity-score



Appendix Figure 10: Salience linearity-score

The variable for salience, however, was not linear, probably given the small number of values (only on issue-level, so 8 in total with 401 observations spread out on these).[26] The graphic in Figure J is the visual representation of the assumption. I decided to transform the variable into a dichotomous one, by calculating the average value on the sal_value and finding a score of 50.5, I used this as the benchmark. All issues that had a salience-score >= 50.5 were coded as 1, and consequently all with a salience-score < 50.5 were coded 0. This way, linearity was no longer a problem.

3. *No autocorrelation:* Please see Chapter 4, subchapter 4.2.2. for this discussion. Table E presents the results. The coefficients are first, and the standard errors in the parentheses. Not a huge difference, expect for the "Other organisations" variable, which only consist of a single interest group. However, not a significant enough advantage to do this prior to the analysis

[26] NB: two of the issues share 42 as their value on salience, and therefore it looks like there are only 7 values in this graphic.

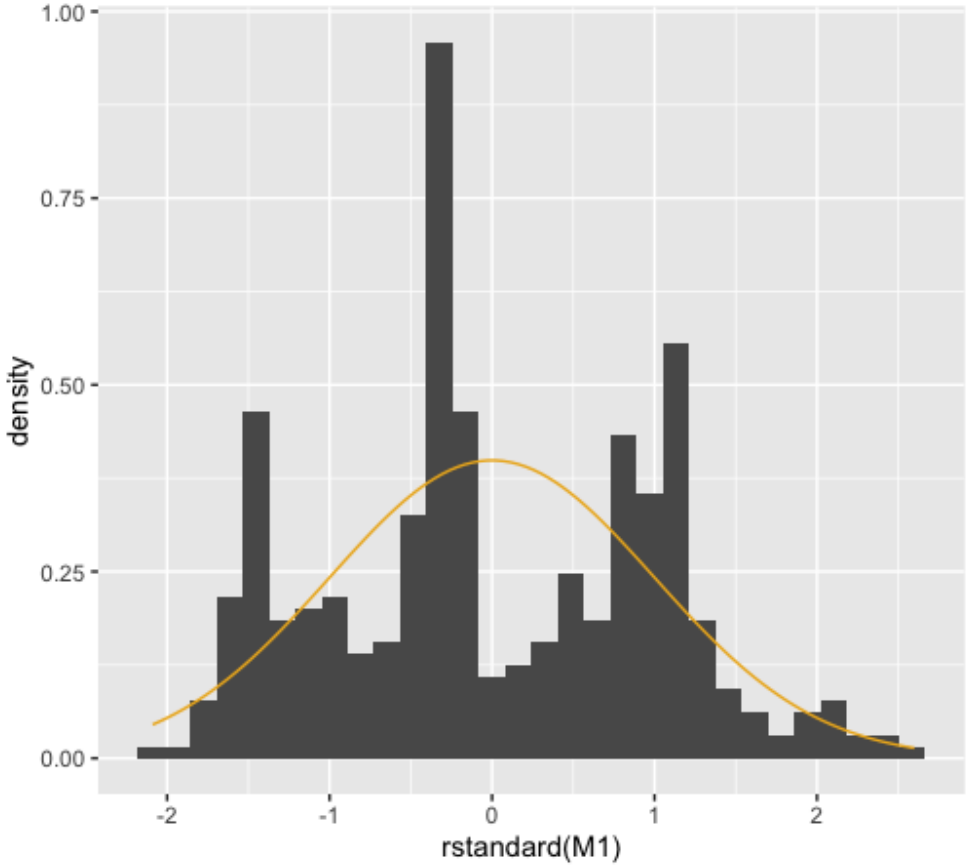
Clustered Standard Errors

	Ordinary	*Clustered*
	(1)	(2)
Full Time Equivalent	0.140	0.140
	(0.147)	(0.140)
Salience	-4.310**	-4.310**
	(1.988)	(2.041)
Coalition	1.987	1.987
	(1.951)	(2.321)
Origin Country:		
New Member State	-0.252	-0.252
	(3.964)	(3.714)
Non-EU State	-1.272	-1.272
	(3.957)	(3.755)
Brussels Office	1.401	1.401
	(1.738)	(1.506)
Group Category:		
NGOs	-2.735	-2.735
	(2.111)	(1.954)
Groups and Companies	3.495*	3.495*
	(2.059)	(1.858)
Trade Unions and Professional Associations	1.777	1.777
	(3.241)	(2.974)
Other Organisations	-1.400	-1.400
	(15.470)	(3.995)
Think Tanks and Research Institutions	-5.091	-5.091

	(6.743)	(5.483)
Fte*Salience Interaction	-0.032	-0.032
	(0.197)	(0.190)
Constant	24.595***	24.595***
	(2.728)	(3.014)
Observations	401	
R^2	0.043	
Adjusted R^2	0.013	
Residual Std. Error	14.882 (df = 388)	
F Statistic	1.449 (df = 12; 388)	
Note: Ref.cat Categories = Trade and Business Associations, Ref.cat Origin Country = Interests from old member states.	*p<0.1; >**p<0.05; >***p<0.01	

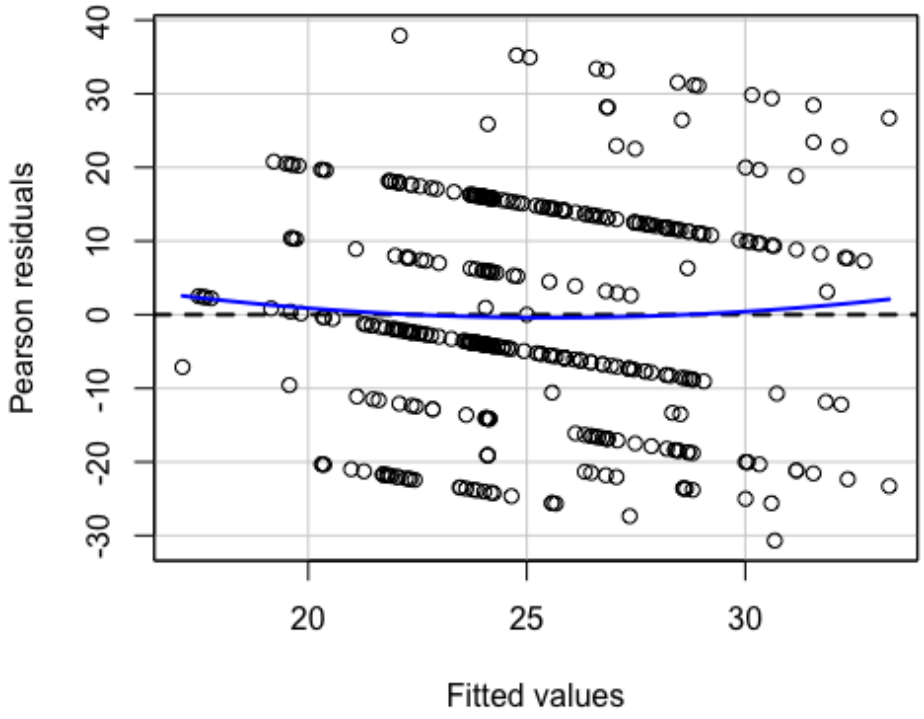
Appendix Table 6: Clustered std.errors

4. *Zero conditional mean:* For the fourth assumption, I decided to run a density plot with the model, the results which you can see in the histogram in Figure K. In the figure, the normal distribution is on the x-axis, and the density of the spread is on the y-axis. Ideally, there should be one peak in the middle of the graph as that would imply a normal distribution. The largest peak is however still relatively close to the centre, but there are two peaks towards the tail of the distribution. Even though the distribution is uneven, the values seem to at least be spread out.



Appendix Figure 11: Zero conditional mean-histogram

5. *Homoscedasticity:* To test that the error terms have a constant variance, I used the *residualPlots*-function. If the blue line follows the dotted line, the assumption checks out. In the figure below, the blue line does follow the dotted line. Figure L shows the results. I knew beforehand that there were many values on 20 and 40 on the dependent variable, and that it might influence the residuals. The plot that came out was therefore a pleasant surprise.



Appendix Figure 12: Residual-score

6. *No (multi)collinearity:* Please see Chapter 4, subchapter 4.2.3 for my discussion regarding (multi)collinearity.

Explanatory variable	*VIF-score*	*Df*	*Vif^(1/(2*Df))*
Full-time equivalent	2.252	1	1.500
Fte*Salience Interaction	2.503	1	1.582
Salience	1.660	1	1.288
Coalition	1.026	1	1.013
Origin Country	1.171	2	1.040
Brussels Office	1.247	1	1.116
Category	1.354	5	1.030

Appendix Table 7: Vif-score

7. *No missing values:* Missing values could lead to a biased model. Once again, this is not an aspect that is easy to test with my type of cross-sectional data, and I will therefore discuss potential dangers theoretically instead of running a practical test. First off, there is no general solution to dealing with missing values, and it is a recurring problem. A simple check shows that there are no NAs in the dataset that I use as the basis for the regression. This is because I explicitly removed them, and they are classified as Missing not at Random (Enders, 2010). Observations were not included in the dataset if they missed information relevant to any of my operationalisations, and, as I discuss in the thesis itself, this means a loss of 38% replies in Case 1, and 20% in Case 2. Recurring problems were not being registered in the Transparency Register; national and international entities of the same organisation sharing the same registration in the Transparency Register, or; not fulfilling the preconditions as an interest group (but rather individuals, cities etc.). Whether or not these observations are actually missing, or just not a part of the population, is arguable.

Appendix E: Low salience-issues

Category	*Average success*	*n*
Commercial interests	31.817	89
Public interests	18.478	48
t-test (p-value)	0.003	

Appendix Table 8: Average success low-salient issues

Here we see that there is a big difference in who is influential in issues of low and high salience (results which you can find in Chapter 5). Commercial interests are by far the most successful when issues are of low salience, and the p-value from the t-test indicates that the difference between the two groups is statistically significant at the 1%-level, as it is <0.01.

Appendix F: Robustness tests

Robustness test 1: Fixed effects

	No FE	Case FE	Issue FE
NGOs	-2.735	-1.383	0.295
	(2.111)	(2.133)	(1.767)
Groups and Companies	3.495*	3.150	2.410
	(2.059)	(2.040)	(1.676)
Trade Unions and Professional Associations	1.777	2.316	-0.158
	(3.241)	(3.210)	(2.639)
Other Organisations	-1.400	2.460	7.020
	(15.470)	(15.353)	(12.780)
Think Tanks and Research Institutions	-5.091	-4.371	-2.941
	(6.743)	(6.674)	(5.493)
Full Time Equivalent	0.140	0.155	0.064
	(0.147)	(0.145)	(0.121)
Salience	-4.310**	-6.374***	
	(1.988)	(2.076)	
Brussels Office	1.401	0.928	0.304

	(1.738)	(1.726)	(1.420)
Coalition	1.987	3.112	-0.354
	(1.951)	(1.946)	(1.701)
New Member State	-0.252	-1.634	-1.059
	(3.964)	(3.946)	(3.239)
Non-EU State	-1.272	-0.246	0.102
	(3.957)	(3.928)	(3.240)
Fte*Salience Interaction	-0.032	-0.072	0.016
	(0.197)	(0.196)	(0.161)
Constant	24.595***		
	(2.728)		
Observations	401	401	401
R^2	0.043	0.060	0.009
Adjusted R^2	0.013	0.029	-0.037
Residual Std. Error	14.882 (df = 388)		
F Statistic	1.449 (df = 12; 388)	2.068** (df = 12; 387)	0.323 (df = 11; 382)
Note: Ref.cat Categories = "Trade and Business Associations", *Ref.cat Origin Country =* "Old"			*p<0.1**p<0.05***p<0.01

Appendix Table 9: Fixed effects on issue and case-level compared to normal regression. Dependent variable = success. No FE-model = Model 5 in the regression. Salience does not show up in the model with Issue FE as the variance of this variable is dependent on the issue.

Table F shows the results from running fixed-effects regressions at the case and the issue-level. The direction for all the coefficients is the same, except for a few of the variables, most notably maybe “NGOs”, which throughout the analysis has had a negative coefficient. The direction of NGOs changes in the issue FE models, but the change is not that great. The changes in the rest of the coefficients are relatively small, with the exception of “Coalition”, which goes from 3.112 when running the case FE-model, to -0.354 when running the issues FE-model. “Other Organisations” still consists of just a single observation, and its coefficient is thus not to be interpreted confidently.

Robustness test 2: OLS regression with a reduced sample

Reduced Sample Regression

	Dependent variable: Interest Group Success	
	Ordinary Model	Reduced Sample
NGOs	-2.735	-2.433
	(2.111)	(1.851)
Groups and Companies	3.495*	2.705
	(2.059)	(1.788)
Trade Unions and Professional Associations	1.777	1.208
	(3.241)	(2.893)
Other Organisations	-1.400	-1.076
	(15.470)	(12.906)
Think Tanks and Research Institutions	-5.091	-6.357
	(6.743)	(5.611)
Full Time Equivalent	0.140	0.007
	(0.147)	(0.139)
Salience	-4.310**	0.773
	(1.988)	(1.733)
Brussels Office	1.401	2.061

	(1.738)	(1.534)
Coalition	1.987	-1.250
	(1.951)	(1.912)
New Member State	-0.252	1.689
	(3.964)	(3.503)
Non-EU State	-1.272	-5.112
	(3.957)	(3.413)
Fte*Salience Interaction	-0.032	-0.005
	(0.197)	(0.178)
Constant	24.595***	25.635***
	(2.728)	(2.561)
Observations	401	357
R^2	0.043	0.037
Adjusted R^2	0.013	0.004
Residual Std. Error	14.882 (df = 388)	12.354 (df = 344)
F Statistic	1.449 (df = 12; 388)	1.109 (df = 12; 344)
Note: Ref.cat Categories = "Trade and Business Associations", *Ref.cat Origin Country* = "Old"		*p<0.1**p<0.05***p<0.01

Appendix Table 10: Regression with and without extreme values on success

Table G shows the results from running the regression having removed those observations with a min and max value on the dependent variable. I am doing this in order to determine whether these make a big difference on the coefficients of the dependent variables. The *n* in the second model is reduced with 44 observations. None of the independent variables are statistically significant in the reduced sample-model. “Salience”, “Coalition” and “New EU-MS” are the variables that change direction. “Salience” in particular is moderated, indicating it plays a big part in explaining the extreme values that some interest groups obtain.

Robustness test 3: Logit-model

Logistic Regression Results

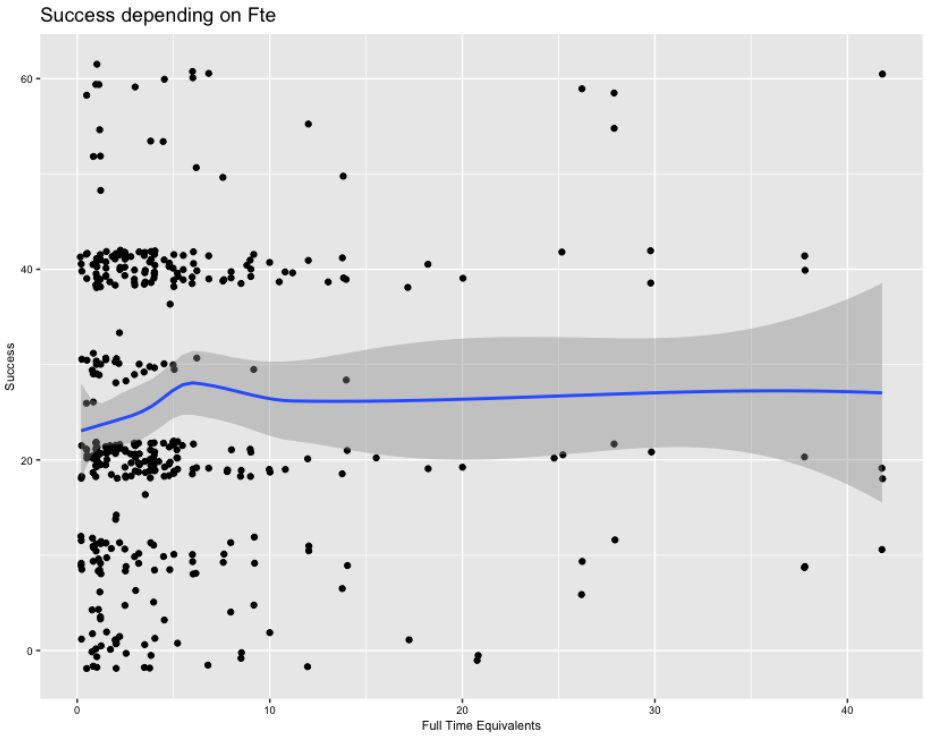
	Dependent variable: Interest Group Success	
	OLS Model	Logistic Regression
NGOs	-2.735	0.004
	(2.111)	(0.292)
Groups and Companies	3.495*	0.385
	(2.059)	(0.282)
Trade Unions and Professional Associations	1.777	0.617
	(3.241)	(0.444)
Other Organisations	-1.400	-13.226
	(15.470)	(535.411)
Think Tanks and Research Institutions	-5.091	-0.986
	(6.743)	(1.137)
Full Time Equivalent	0.140	0.008
	(0.147)	(0.020)
Salience	-4.310**	-0.434
	(1.988)	(0.274)

Brussels Office	1.401	0.184
	(1.738)	(0.241)
Coalition	1.987	0.243
	(1.951)	(0.275)
New Member State	-0.252	-0.131
	(3.964)	(0.553)
Non-EU State	-1.272	-0.375
	(3.957)	(0.567)
Fte*Salience Interaction	-0.032	-0.016
	(0.197)	(0.028)
Constant	24.595***	-0.457
	(2.728)	(0.378)
Observations	401	401
R^2	0.043	
Adjusted R^2	0.013	
Log Likelihood		-265.239
Akaike Inf. Crit.		556.478
Residual Std. Error	14.882 (df = 388)	
F Statistic	1.449 (df = 12; 388)	
Note: Ref.cat Categories = "Trade and Business Associations", *Ref.cat Origin Country* = "Old"		*p<0.1**p<0.05***p<0.01

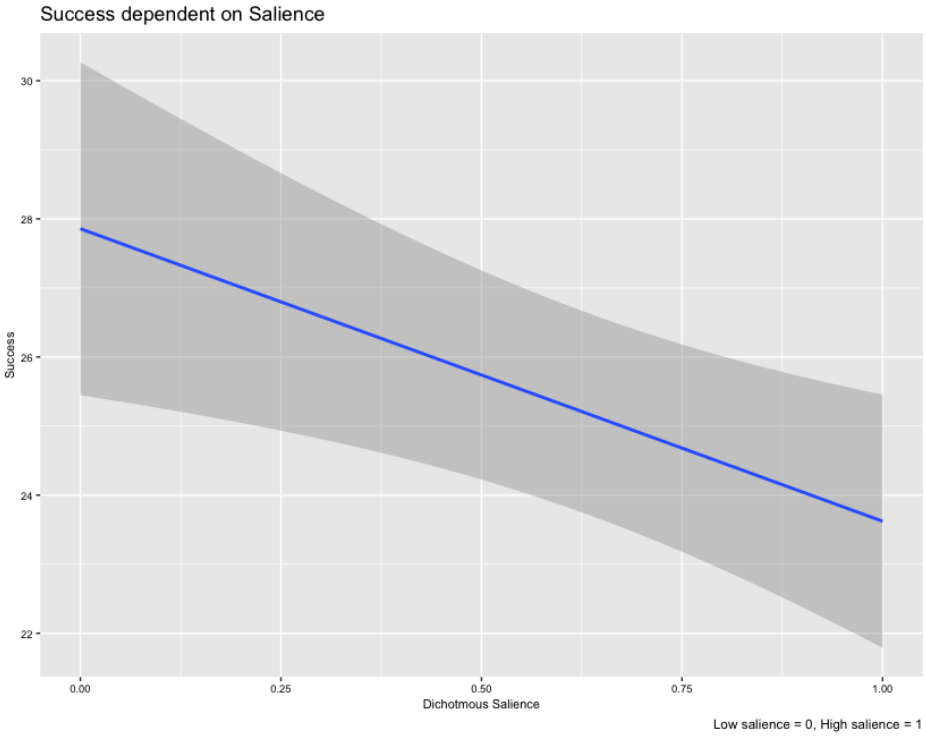
Appendix Table 11: Logit regression results

In order to check the validity of the direction of the variables and their significance, I decided to run a binomial logit regression. I transformed the dependent variable (success) into a dichotomous one, where a low degree of success was coded 0, and a high degree coded 1. Values on the success-variable ranged from 0-60, and I therefore decided to go down the middle, and any observation with a success-score of >30 were considered to have obtained a low degree of success, and those with a score between 30-60 were considered to have obtained a high degree of success. In Table H, the results from the logit regression are put together with the OLS regression but be cautious as we cannot compare coefficients and interpret anything from their differences. What I am looking at is whether the directions of the independent variables are the same, and the significance of the coefficients. The only number that changes direction is the coefficient for NGOs. The significant results from the OLS regression become insignificant in the logistic regression, which produces no significant results. Based on this test, I would say the results from the OLS are strengthened, and the use of OLS as the analytical method supported.

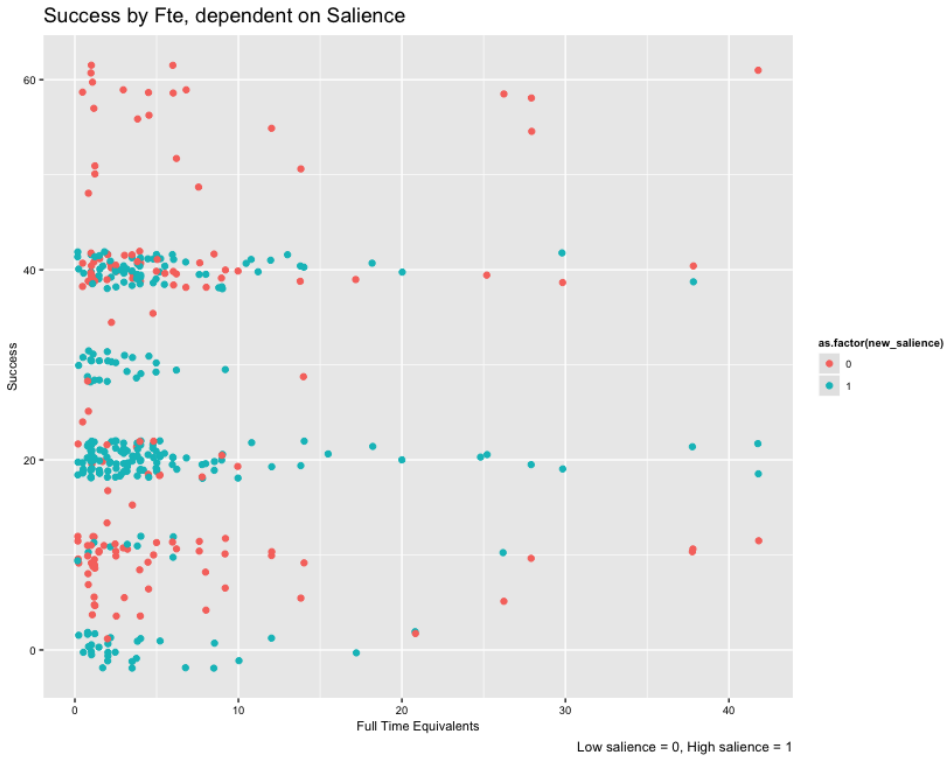
Appendix G: Plots of the independent variables



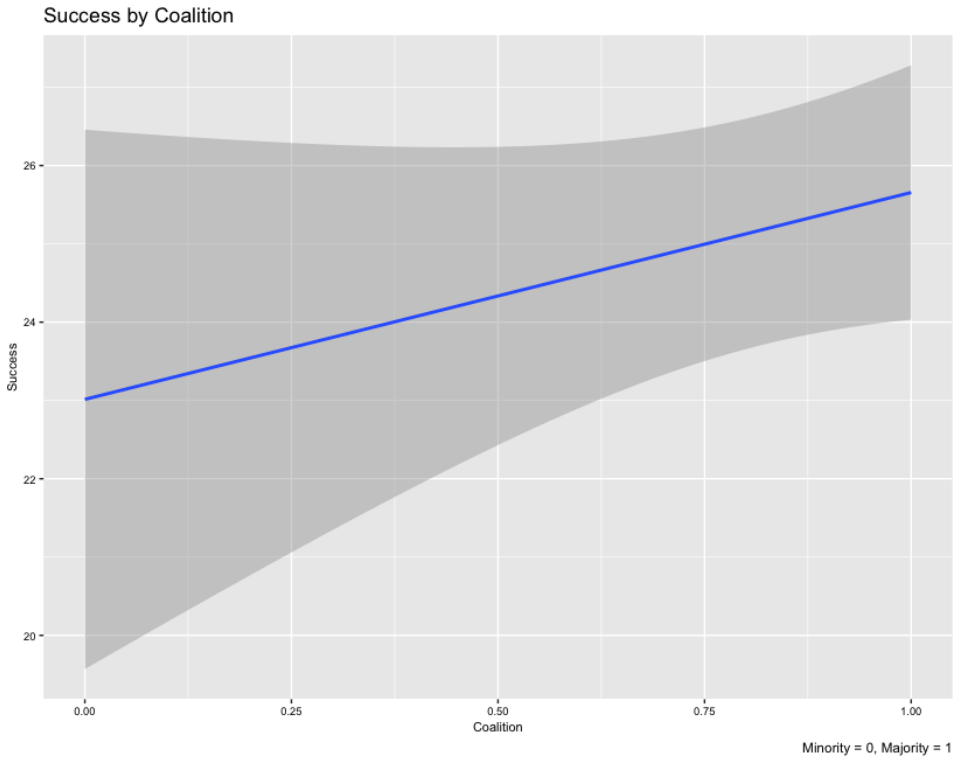
Appendix Figure 13: Success dependent on full-time equivalent



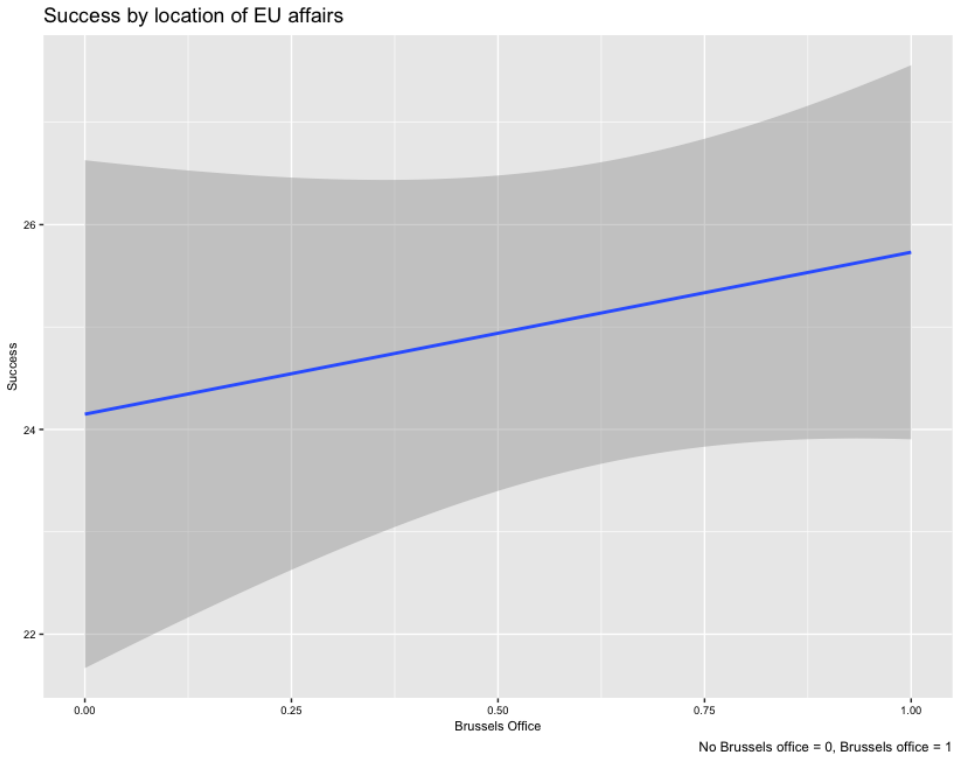
Appendix Figure 14: Success dependent on salience



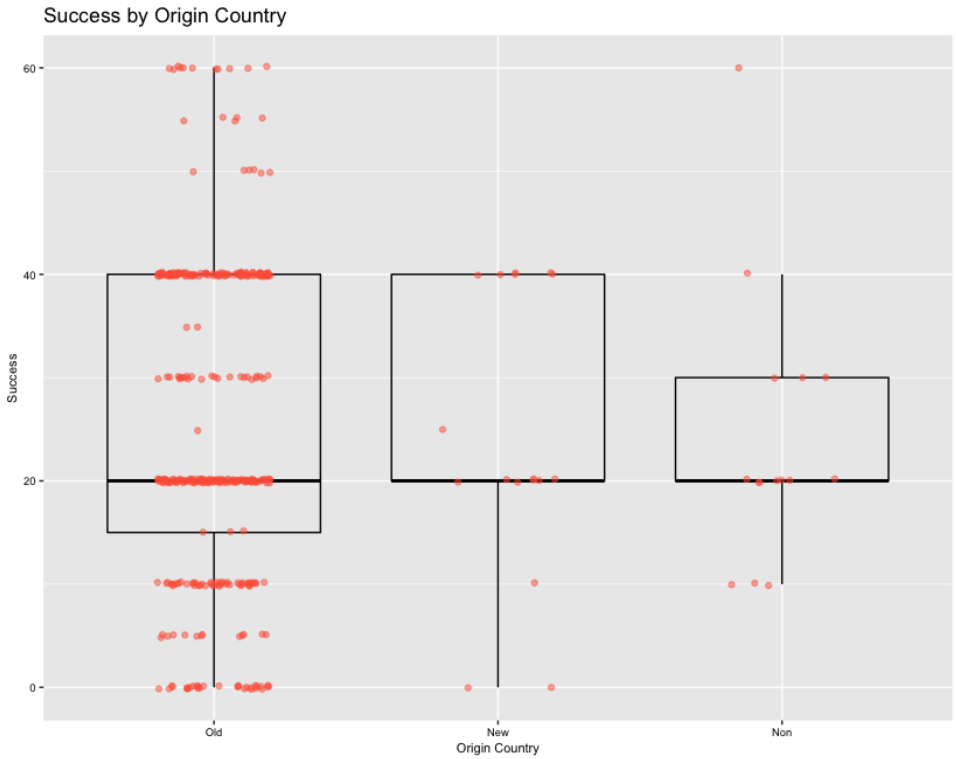
Appendix Figure 15: Success by full-time equivalent, dependent on salience



Appendix Figure 16: Success dependent on coalition



Appendix Figure 17: Success dependent on location of EU affairs



Appendix Figure 18: Success dependent on country of origin