Speaking for the People? : Analysing the extent to which interest groups represent the opinion of the citizens and under which conditions they are more likely to do so

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Linda Flöthe,

The Hague, August 2019

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Lobbying – for better or for worse?

"Could an advanced democratic country prevent the drift toward government by de facto quasi guardians? To do so it would have to focus attention on the weakest link in the chain of successive approximations. That link is the demos itself."
(Dahl 1989: 338)

Do interest groups help or hinder democratic policymaking? Normatively speaking, democratic governments should be expected to develop policies that are in line with what the public wants, as this assumption lies at the core of representative democracies (Dahl 1971). For example, Dahl argues, that for a government to be responsive, all citizens must have the opportunity to formulate their preferences, indicate their preferences by individual or collective action and have their preferences weighted equally (1971: 2). However, policymakers constantly have to balance competing interests of different actors in society. For example, the interests of the automobile industry may not coincide with what the majority of citizens want. Who wins such a battle is one of the core questions in political science. The risk is, as indicated by the opening quote, that policymaking is taken over by political elites (or quasi guardians) who are influential because of their specialised knowledge (Dahl 1989: 337).

Generally, scholars show that governments succeed in translating public opinion into policies (Rasmussen, Reher, et al. 2018; Soroka and Wlezien 2010; Stimson et al. 1995; Toshkov et al. 2018). At the same time, there is a body of literature that is more critical, arguing that chances of policies being in line with what the public wants are equal to flipping a coin (Lax and Phillips 2012). Moreover, if governments respond to public preferences, they mostly cater to the rich rather than the poor (Gilens and Page 2014; Peters and Ensink 2015). Until recently, surprisingly little research has looked at how interest groups affect the link between public opinion and policy outputs (but see Burstein 2014; Gilens and Page 2014; Gray et al. 2004). The GovLis project[1] in which my PhD project was written, set out to fill this gap and has advanced the field with a number of new findings (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Rasmussen et al. 2019; Rasmussen and Reher 2019; Rasmussen, Romeijn, et al. 2018). Filling this gap is important as it enhances our understanding of whether interest groups thwart policies away from what the public wants or if specific interests prevail over the public

[1] www.govlis.eu

interest. While my dissertation does not aim at testing the conditioning link of interest groups on policy responsiveness (see for example Rasmussen et al. 2019), it advances the field by looking at an important precondition, that is, the extent to which interest groups act as transmission belts of public preferences and how they do so. I argue interest groups do so by means of information, which is a mechanism through which they represent citizens.

Existing theories offer two perspectives that help understand how interest groups could affect the opinion-policy link (cf. Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Rasmussen et al. 2019). The more optimistic perspective sees interest groups as important intermediaries between the public and the policymaking level with the potential for groups to enhance the legitimacy of democratic decision-making. This pluralist perspective understands interest groups as transmission belts (Truman 1951) that organise, aggregate and transmit public preferences to the policymaking level (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Dür and De Bièvre 2007b; Kollman 1998). Groups mobilise and emerge as a group if a common interest (shared by the members of that group) is 'disturbed', potentially, but not exclusively, by other groups. Hence, various groups co-exist, which, in the aggregate, reflect the complex needs and preferences within the society (Truman 1951). Different groups, therefore, transmit a diverse, balanced and pluralistic view to the policymaking level. This dynamic could positively influence the opinion-policy link as policymakers have incentives to take into account a diverse set of mobilised interests. Moreover, the mobilisation of interest groups allows policymakers to learn about citizens' preferences and therefore enables them to more accurately respond to what the public wants.

Yet, even though, from a pluralist perspective, the involvement of interest groups is supposed to enhance democratic legitimacy, their involvement is not without risk. Unequal opportunities and undue influence may bias the interest group landscape towards special interests. This line of thinking, which also reflects many of the public concerns, goes back to elitist perspectives on interest representation (cf. Bevan and Rasmussen 2017). Schattschneider (1960) draws an image of the interest group community that sings with an 'upper class accent' as especially diffuse interests or interests of the disadvantaged are systematically excluded and therefore less likely to be represented. This view is also supported by Olson (1965), who argues that economic, or special interests face less collective action problems and have therefore an advantage when it comes to mobilising in the first place. Moreover, such groups may be more advantaged with regard to the resources (monetary, informational, personnel) they possess (Yackee and Yackee 2006). Given these

groups represent sectoral interests from which only a concentrated set of actors can benefit (rather than the general public) (Olson 1965), their involvement may introduce bias. Much of the existing research has indeed found that the interest group landscape is crowded with business interests (Baumgartner and Leech 2001; Berkhout, Hanegraaff, et al. 2017; Rasmussen and Carroll 2014; Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Wonka et al. 2010). From such a perspective, it seems questionable that interest groups can transmit a balanced and diverse set of interests. Regarding the opinion-policy link, it could suggest that interest groups are likely to negatively influence general responsiveness as only certain actors voice their interests (Gilens and Page 2014).

The latter, less optimistic perspective on interest group involvement is one that reflects public concerns. Lobbying has a rather negative reputation amongst the general public. There is no shortage of news articles reporting about the dominance and power of big players in policymaking, criticising that policies tend to favour industry interests rather than ordinary citizens. According to the campaign group Corporate Europe Observatory as many as 30.000 lobbyists are attempting to influence EU politics, a number which roughly equals the staff employed by the European Commission.[2] By some estimates, "these shadowy agitators are estimated to influence 75 per cent of European legislation" (ibid.). This negative view of interest advocacy is not merely an EU phenomenon: More than half of the people in Germany and the UK feel that their national governments are run by business interests.[3] For example, Germany is often accused of developing policies that are more in line with what the automobile industry than with what citizens would prefer[4]. Critics therefore see lobbying as a threat to democracy and ask for more regulation and transparency[5]. The public perception of lobbying is likely to account, at least partly, for an increasing scepticism towards the political elite. In fact, the OECD reports that public trust in governments is waning, which is "partly due to the perception that policy decisions are driven by private interests at the expense of the public good"[6].

It is crucial for political science as well as representative democracy to know to what extent these stances on lobbying are warranted. Do groups actually represent the public and

[2] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/08/lobbyists-european-parliament-brussels-corporate
[3] https://www.transparency.org/gcb2013/report, last accessed 04.03.2019.
[4] see for example: https://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/deutschland-merkel-ist-die-beste-lobbyistin-der -deutschen-autoindustrie-1.3038396, last accessed 17.12.2018.
[5] https://www.sueddeutsche.de/geld/lobbycontrol-gruenderin-heidi-bank-in-der-politik-siegt-geld-zu-oft-ueber-argumente-1.3373534, last accessed 17.12.2018.
[6] https://www.oecd.org/gov/ethics/lobbyists-governments-trust-vol-3-highlights.pdf, last accessed 04.03.2019.

can contribute to democratic legitimacy? More specifically, can groups act as transmission belts of public preferences and how could they do so? Understanding these mechanisms is important for understanding how groups can help strengthening the extent to which governments respond to public demands. It is the dissertation's aim to contribute to these debates. I will show that different interest groups represent public opinion to varying degrees but that the differences in their congruence with public opinion are smaller than conventional wisdom would lead us to expect. Moreover, and this helps answering the question how interest groups can act as transmission belts, I argue that *one mechanism through which interest groups transmit public preferences is the information they provide to policymakers*. So while the field has advanced over the years in scrutinising whether interest groups affect the opinion-policy link, there is still little research that helps understanding how this potential link works. That is, so far, little attention has been paid to explaining how the potential transmission belt mechanism works (but see Albareda 2018; Kohler-Koch 2010) or whether it works at all. While some suggest that interest groups work as transmission belts by informing policymakers about public preferences (Albareda 2018; Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Eising and Spohr 2017; Klüver and Pickup 2019), existing research has not included information as a variable when assessing whether groups represent citizens.

Information is a key aspect in the literature on interest representation and lobbying is often understood as the 'strategic transmission of information' (cf. Wright 1996). Truman already argued that policymakers and interest groups exchange different types of information (Truman 1951). This results from an interplay between demand and supply side in which information is the currency (Austen-Smith 1993; Austen-Smith and Wright 1992; Bouwen 2002, 2004; Chalmers 2011, 2013; De Bruycker 2016; Hall and Deardorff 2006; Nownes 2006; Nownes and Newmark 2016; Wonka 2017; Wright 1996). Policymakers need information about different aspects when drafting new policies. For example, the government wants to implement new measures that help protect biodiversity. Even if the government has policy experts for different areas, it is quite unlikely that they have experts for every topic they have to deal with, nor that policymakers have knowledge about every detail and its consequences of a new legislation. They have to know whether decreasing biodiversity is actually a problem and if so how this problem can be solved. They probably would want to know whether there is any scientific evidence for whether proposed measures that help protecting biodiversity are successful, but also what new measures would mean for certain sectors. Eventually they also would want to know what the public thinks about the issue and

whether they would be willing to support new measures. As one interviewed civil servant summarised the dilemma: *"We do not know everything. We need interest groups to tell us what to do."* [7] Interest groups indeed have such knowledge and therefore constitute a source of different types of information, which they can use to access and influence policymakers. Importantly, however, providing information also constitutes a channel for interest groups to inform policymakers about what the public or segments of the public want(s). Eventually this may allow policymakers to actually respond to public demands in which case interest groups have helped strengthening the opinion-policy link.

This raises a couple of questions. First, and this can be seen as a precondition, to what extent do interest groups actually promote the same view as the public? Second, to what extent do interest groups provide information about public preferences? Do groups differ in the extent to which they provide information about public preferences? Furthermore, are there situations in which groups are more likely to inform policy makers about public preferences? How do groups acquire such information in the first place? Is information transmission actually effective, so do policymakers consider information? Eventually, these sub questions will help answering the dissertation's overall question, that is, *to what extent do interest groups act as transmission belts of public preferences and how do they do so?* Ultimately, answering such questions contributes to answering the bigger question of the GovLis project, that is, to what extent do interest groups represent the citizens and do we find empirical patterns that confirm the negative and somewhat worrying accounts of lobbying?

While a vast literature has examined the extent to which the interest group system follows a more pluralist or elitist account of interest representation, scholars have predominantly used business groups as a proxy for assessing how biased a group system is (Gray and Lowery 2000; Rasmussen and Carroll 2014; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). However, scholars tend to be less interested in 'the people' when assessing whether the system sings with an upper class accent. Including citizens in the equation may therefore help us evaluate the perhaps most widespread criticism of lobbying, namely that it does not articulate a voice representative of the population (Gastil 2000; McFarland 1991). Arguably, this requires not only data on interest group activity but also data on public opinion that is linked to interest group data. This could explain why scholars have rarely taken on the

[7] This quote comes from an interview, which I conducted in May 2016 with a German civil servant who has worked on one of our policy issues.

endeavour of linking public opinion, interest groups and policymakers when addressing questions of bias and unequal representation.

My participation in the GovLis project allowed me to answer the questions raised above. As already indicated, its purpose was to link data on public opinion, interest groups and public policy to study whether groups affect the link between public opinion and policy on specific policy issues. I contribute to this important research by looking at a precondition, that is, *how* and *to what extent* do interest groups act as transmission belts and inform policymakers about what the public wants. Answering questions about the information transmission between groups and decision-makers is important; not only for interest group scholars but also for scholars of political responsiveness given the question of how groups can help to enhance responsiveness may shed new light on the relationship between citizens and political representatives. Moreover, such research is also important for society as it provides empirical evidence on how warranted fears of lobbying are and under which conditions lobbying may be helpful for democracy.

1.2 Existing Research

Recent research has pointed out that scholars have rarely included interest groups when examining the opinion-policy link (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Klüver and Pickup 2019; Rasmussen 2018; Rasmussen et al. 2019; Rasmussen and Reher 2019; Rasmussen, Romeijn, et al. 2018). This research has also pointed out those that have tackled the question often provide mixed results (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Rasmussen et al. 2019). For example, Gray and her colleagues (Gray et al. 2004) look at whether interest group density and diversity affect the extent to which liberal states in the US get more liberal policies as an indication for whether the government responds to public preferences. If groups act as transmission belts, a higher number of mobilised groups (so higher density) may ensure that policymakers get more accurate representation of public preferences (ibid.: 413). Moreover, if business interests dominate the interest group landscape (so less diversity), the representation of public preferences may be skewed. The authors find marginal effects that a higher interest group density leads to more policy liberalism, while a dominance of economic interests weakens this link. The strongest predictor for policy liberalism is after all opinion liberalism, that is, policymakers predominantly develop liberal policies in liberal states. However, responsiveness was measured at the level of ideology, giving less precise estimates about

actual opinions on concrete policy issues. Moreover, interest groups usually do not mobilise to push a policy in a more liberal or conservative direction but act on concrete and specific policy issues.

A study by Bevan and Rasmussen (2017) examines how the population size of voluntary associations affects whether policy priorities reflect public priorities. Relying on measures of political attention of agendas at the US federal level over time, they find that if more voluntary associations are mobilising, the government is more likely to devote attention to the same types of issues as the public (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017). This suggests that groups positively affect the extent to which governments respond to public issue priorities. At the same time, their study shows that group numbers only affect agenda responsiveness at the early stage of the policy process, when institutional friction is low.

Similarly, Rasmussen and Reher (2019) study whether engagement in associations enhances the correspondence between public opinion and policy, using data of 20 specific policy issues in 30 European countries. The findings confirm their expectation, that is, the relationship between public opinion and policy is stronger on issues with higher engagement in associations relevant for the jurisdiction of the policy issue. Again, this study suggests that groups can positively affect the extent to which governments respond to what the public wants, which also finds support by another recent study. Based on a media content analysis of 160 specific policy issues in Germany and Denmark between 1998 and 2010, Rasmussen, Binderkrantz and Klüver (2019) show that policies are more likely to be congruent with the opinion of the majority of the public if the public's view is supported by interest groups that have mobilised on these issues.

For the US, Lax and Philips (2012) provide similar evidence, showing that if the public and interest groups agree on an issue the likelihood of congruence between policy outputs and opinion of the majority of the public is enhanced. Klüver and Pickup's recent study (2019) also emphasises that groups can exert a positive impact on policy responsiveness, but point out that there may be variation in the transmission potential of different group types: while cause groups enhance government responsiveness, sectorial groups decrease government responsiveness.

Although valuable, this research only partly allows us to understand the links between public opinion, interest groups and policy outputs. Scholars have acknowledged that research on responsiveness lacks an explanation of *how* organised interests affect the opinion-policy

link (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Burstein and Linton 2002; Gray et al. 2004; Rasmussen et al. 2019; Rasmussen et al. 2014; Rasmussen and Reher 2019). Some assume that groups can affect the link by acting as a transmission belt between policymakers and the public and by informing the latter about preferences of the former (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Eising and Spohr 2017; Klüver and Pickup 2019; Rasmussen et al. 2014; Rasmussen and Reher 2019). This would suggest that *information* is a mechanism through which representation may occur.

1.2.1 The Role of Information in Policymaking

Information is indeed a key aspect in the literature on interest representation, as, from an exchange perspective, interest groups are able to provide information that policymakers need. Policymakers need information to draft good policies but also, and this is important in the context of this dissertation, to respond to public demands. In '*The Politics of Information'* Baumgartner and Jones (2015) argue that a government's performance is often assessed with regard to its problem solving capacity *and* its responsiveness (ibid.). The ability to develop efficient policies and to respond to what the public wants requires information about public preferences and information about how to (effectively) design a policy so that policymakers can fully understand the issue (Baumgartner and Jones 2015; Wright 1996). Hence, groups may contribute to a government's problem solving capacity by providing expert information. However, they may also enhance the ability of governments to respond to public preferences if they inform policymakers about such preferences.

Arguably, policymakers can acquire some of such different types of information themselves. Yet information acquisition is time and resource intensive. So even if a policymaker had the cognitive capacities to find and interpret scientific studies and learn about the consequences of decreasing biodiversity, it would simply cost too much time. Moreover, this would only be one type of information and only one question would be answered. It may be even more difficult to access information that helps predicting whether the proposed measures will eventually be effective. Moreover, even if general public opinion may be available on such a specific issue, policymakers may want to have some more constituency-specific information. For example, what do farmers want? What do people who live next to fields on which pesticides were sprayed want? What do consumers who may have to pay higher costs for agricultural products think about this? Such information is not easily accessible for policymakers as it is privately held information.

Interest groups, on the other hand, are a good source for the type of information policymakers need. They have access to the information as they are specialised in the field, acquire knowledge as part of their daily work routine or can obtain information from their members (Dür and Mateo 2013: 94; Michalowitz 2004: 86; Wright 1996). For example, a farmers' association may have a good idea about the farmers' opinion. Moreover, the association may also have information on whether the new measures will actually solve the problem and be effective. A consumer protection organisation, on the other hand, has more accurate estimates about what a new policy could mean for consumers. In addition, interest groups also have information as to whether citizens actually care about an issue and think such an issue is a problem the government should address. Finally, interest groups have some estimates about direct consequences, that is, whether a new policy will positively (or negatively) affect certain parts of the public.

Hence, relying on different interest groups allows policymakers to acquire the relevant information at much lower costs (compared to if they had to collect the information themselves). Even more so, drawing on interest groups for information also allows policymakers to credibly justify and legitimise policy decisions. If groups fulfil the role of a link between policymakers and citizens, involving those means that policies are made with the input from society and less behind closed doors. Involving interest groups in the decision-making process, hence, can (ideally) contribute to input-legitimacy (Kohler-Koch 2010). Either purpose makes information a powerful resource and a source of influence as interest groups can use information in exchange for access and influence (Bouwen 2002, 2004; Chalmers 2013). Hence, interest groups achieve influence through the acquisition and strategic transmission of information that legislators need in order to draft good policies and get reelected (Wright 1996: 2). Since information is a source of influence it is important to know when and how interest groups transmit it.

Early accounts of informational lobbying were formal and theoretical but illustrated how information can influence decision-making (Austen-Smith 1993; Austen-Smith and Wright 1992; Hall and Deardorff 2006; Lohmann 1998). Only recently has research approached informational lobbying empirically. This stream focused predominantly on explaining the different types of information that interest groups provide. Such research has shown, for example, that interest groups predominantly use technical information and less political information (Baumgartner et al. 2009; De Bruycker 2017; Mahoney 2008; Nownes and Newmark 2016) and that groups with higher financial resources hold higher levels of

information and therefore influence (Klüver 2012). Yet, even though there is a growing body of literature on informational lobbying "we still know relatively little about it" (Nownes and Newmark 2016: 58). Moreover, even though "numerous studies rest upon the premise (or show) that lobbying is about providing information, few delve into precisely what types of information lobbyists provide" (ibid.: 61).

Linking this back to the question of whether groups act as transmission belts, scholars often assume that groups work as transmission belts by informing policymakers about what the public wants without considering empirically to what extent interest group actually provide information (cf. Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Eising and Spohr 2017; Klüver and Pickup 2019; Rasmussen and Reher 2019). Also Burstein argues that "general ideas about information have not been used as the basis for practical research designs, data on the information provided has not been systematically gathered or analyzed, and hypotheses about such information have not been tested" (Burstein 2014: 131). Especially we know very little about information on public preferences and how interest groups use such information to represent their constituents' interests. This is an important gap, which this dissertation addresses theoretically and empirically.

1.2.2 Research Question

The overall aim of the dissertation, therefore, is to look at the extent to which interest groups act as transmission belts of public preferences and understand how they do so. I argue that we have to go to the core of interest representation and bring the people back in. The focus is hence on the constituents of an interest group. I furthermore argue that interest groups represent their constituents by informing policymakers about their interests. Interest groups interact with their constituents (to varying degrees), which allows them to acquire different types of information such as how a new policy proposal will affect them and whether they support such a proposal. When approaching policymakers, interest groups use such information to get access and to influence a policy proposal by lobbying in the interest of their constituents. Policymakers need this information as they have to anticipate electoral consequences and may be quite receptive to such information. This allows groups to influence the opinion-policy link, simply by informing policymakers about what the people want.

The dissertation therefore applies an informational perspective to interest representation aiming at answering the question to what extent interest groups represent citizens. Moreover, the dissertation aims to shed light on how they do so, when they do so and whether they are successful in doing so. More specifically, and as indicated in the introduction, the dissertation seeks to answer the following questions:

To what extent do interest groups represent the opinion of the citizens?

- To what extent do interest groups and the public want the same things?
- To what extent do interest groups inform policymakers about what the public wants?
- Under which conditions are interest groups more likely to provide such information?
- What resources are necessary for groups to acquire information?
- Do interest groups increase their chance of lobbying influence when providing information?

1.3 Theoretical Approach

The following part will introduce the theoretical framework that is used throughout the dissertation. The question the dissertation seeks to answer is about the extent to which interest groups *represent* citizens. Naturally, then, we have to look at concepts of representation, which will be discussed in the following. Concepts of representation will allow me to pay particular attention to the represented ones, thus the citizen. After discussing concepts of representation, I will link them to theories of informational lobbying to develop a theoretical framework that will help understand how interest groups represent citizens and work as transmission belts.

1.3.1 Classic Representation

The most prominent concepts of representation to date are probably rooted in Pitkin's work in '*The Concept of Representation'* (Pitkin 1967). For example, when we talk about the representation of women in parliament we often get the impression that women are underrepresented as the amount of women in parliament does not reflect the amount of

women in a country. Pitkin refers to this as descriptive representation. If we think of representation as descriptive representation we could therefore conclude that women are not adequately represented. Descriptive representation in Pitkin's sense refers to a 'standing for'. Essentially it means that a representative government mirrors the people and that the composition of a legislature should accurately corresponds to that of a nation (Pitkin 1967: 60 ff.). Descriptive representation is less about what the representative does but rather what a representative stands for, i.e., for women, for ethnic minorities, for old people. However, arguably a woman may actually not agree with another woman on a policy issue. Hence she may ensure descriptive representation of other women but not necessarily *acting* in the interest of the majority of women. Similarly, a man can share the same interest as a woman; a rich person can act in the interest of a poor person. So even though they may not be representative in the sense of descriptive representation, they may still act in the interest of someone. This is what Pitkin calls substantive representation.

Substantive representation is less about a 'standing for' but rather an 'acting for'. Substantive representation is seen as an activity of making something present, a "substantive acting for" others (ibid.: 115). The represented "person is present in the action rather than in the characteristics of the actor" (ibid.: 144). Ultimately, Pitkin defines representation as "acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them" (ibid.: 209). We shall come back to this term at a later stage to also illustrate what this could look like empirically. Importantly, however, representation in this dissertation is based on Pitkin's concept of a substantive 'acting for'.

1.3.2 Classic Representation and Interest Groups

As the discussion of these two concepts has shown, representation can be defined in different ways, which arguably has implications for whether we consider something to be representative. For decades, scholars have discussed and disagreed about concepts of representation and it is for that reason that some scholars suggest that instead of arguing about *the* concept of representation, we should "develop *concepts* of representation to study the broad array of phenomena that we often imprecisely classify as 'representation'" (Rehfeld 2011: 631). This approach is especially convenient when we want to study representation through interest groups; the reason being that classic concepts of representation usually refer to electoral forms of representation. Electoral forms of representation imply that the

representative is given a mandate to act in someone's interest and is held accountable by the represented one. Arguably, such a conceptualisation is hard to apply for interest groups. Interest groups do not necessarily have the formal authorisation to act in someone's interest. Instead, they claim to represent someone or something (Urbinati and Warren 2008: 403). Hence, they act as self-authorised representatives (ibid.). While recognising that self-authorised representation is not necessarily new, their increasing emergence, diversity and importance has forced democratic theorists to understand nonelectoral democratic representation to "assess which of them count as contributions to democracy and in what ways" (ibid.: 404).

For example, one question is how the representatives who claim to represent someone or something are authorised to act in their interest and how they are held accountable. Some groups can be held accountable by their members or supporters who could withdraw support or who can even have an impact through internal voting mechanisms. However, there are also agents that act on behalf of involuntary constituencies such as ethnic groups, children, animals (ibid.). In such cases, the representatives have not been given a clear mandate to represent someone or something. In either case, "it is up to those who are claimed as 'represented' to say yes or no or to offer alternative accounts" (ibid.). In the case of interest groups, this could mean that those who feel not accurately represented will organise themselves and mobilise to counterbalance some of the other interests. In that sense, these newly organised groups can hold other groups accountable, especially if they feel they do not accurately represent the ones they claim to represent (ibid.). The problem with nonelectoral representation is that there is no guarantee that representation ensures equality as "advantages of education, income, and other unequally distributed resources are more likely to translate into patterns of over- and underrepresentation" (ibid.: 405). This is exactly Schattschneider's and Olson's point: the interest group landscape will be dominated by those that actually have the means to mobilise in the first place which may introduce bias and foster unequal representation.

So what does this mean for interest groups? Can they not act as representatives? Surely not. It means, however, that it is important to understand the extent to which interest groups represent citizens. Moreover, it means that we should focus on the represented ones and use citizens' preferences as a benchmark for assessing whether interest groups introduce bias (Flöthe and Rasmussen 2019). It also means that we should stretch some of the classic

concepts of representation (cf. Rehfeld 2011) to be able to study representation through interest groups.

1.3.3 Nonelectoral Representation through claims-making

Representation through interest groups is a nonelectoral form of representation and understanding representation in the sense of 'claims-making' allows taking such representation 'seriously' (Saward 2006). For example, studying nonelectoral forms of representation often includes the process of 'claims-making' (Rehfeld 2018), that is, self-authorised representatives claim to act in the interest of someone (Urbinati and Warren 2008). Saward provides a valuable contribution to the debate by defining representation as claims-making (Saward 2006). Instead of focusing on different forms of representation and, most importantly, seeing representation as a state achieved after elections, he sees representation as a dynamic process. In such a process, multiple actors articulate claims to an audience to "represent something or somebody, or to know what is in the interest of the represented" (Saward 2006).

Saward starts with a critique of Pitkin's concept of substantive representation, which, in his mind, focuses too much on the representative and not the one to be represented (Saward 2006: 300). While Pitkin acknowledges that representative institutions provide information about the people, she takes such information as given. She, so Saward argues, does not pay enough attention to the transfer of information and by doing so she neglects what Saward considers most important, namely the active making of what is to be presented as well as the actor of 'making present' (Saward 2006: 301). Following him, the process of representation is crucial for a 'substantive acting for' in the sense of Pitkin.

Moreover, while Pitkin predominantly looked at representatives who received a mandate to act on someone's behalf (by that someone), Saward suggests that representation is a two-way street (ibid.). At the core of representation, so he argues, is "the depicting of a constituency *as* this or that, as requiring this or that, as having this or that set of interest" (ibid.). Hence, an interest group decides to act on behalf of constituency for some reason. For example, an organisation wants to represent the interests of pensioners. They depict all pensioners as their constituents as they share the key characteristic of being retired. That

organisation presents itself to its constituency who has to accept the claims the organisation makes on their behalf.

Arguably, the claims an actor makes are contested and not everyone within the alleged constituency may agree with the claim, but, as Saward suggests, "[to] argue in this way is to stress the performative side of political presentation" (ibid.: 302). Representative claims, so he continues, can only work if an audience can accept or reject the claims in one way or another. While in practice this may be difficult, theoretically, the audience is "always free to reinterpret" and reject a claim (ibid.: 304). It is not entirely clear in Saward's understanding how the audience can reject or accept such claims, nor who this audience actually is. I follow De Wilde in that case who defines the audience as anyone who witnesses the claim (cf. De Wilde 2013). More specifically, in my case, audience is defined as the policymakers who witness the claims and have to decide whether to accept or reject them (why I refer to policymakers will become clear in the next section). This also means, however, that we cannot know whether the represented ones actually accept the claim by the interest group, and results should be interpreted accordingly. In essence, however, a representative claim can be expressed in a number of ways but may refer, for example, to the needs/desires/preferences of a person or a group of people (ibid.: 305). So what does this mean for interest groups and how does this help to understand the extent to which interest groups represent citizens?

1.3.4 Interest Groups as Transmission Belts

As discussed, the application of classic concepts of representation to interest groups is not without problems. This may be the reason why these two literatures have hardly spoken to each other. Yet, if we want to understand *representation through interest groups*, I think we should also look at how interest groups refer to citizens as well as how they represent citizens and whether they succeed in 'making present'. The concepts of representation help to understand how interest groups act as transmission belts and are therefore the base for the theoretical framework in this dissertation.

One of the exceptions bridging representation literature and interest groups is Kohler-Koch (2010). Concerned about the democratic deficit in the European Union, she assesses the contribution (and limitations) of civil society organisations to democratic representation. While generally quite pessimistic about their contribution at the EU level, her work is

important for understanding how interest groups can (ideally) act as representatives of the public. Moreover, while some may argue that linking interest groups and representation makes no sense as interest groups are a matter of participation and not representation, which ultimately is about delegation, Kohler-Koch argues that this may depend on the types of questions one asks (Kohler-Koch 2010: 105). Clearly, the question addressed in this dissertation is a question of representation and not participation.

Kohler-Koch (see also Furlong and Kerwin 2004; Rasmussen et al. 2014) refers to the pluralist understanding of interest representation, according to which interest groups (or in her case civil society organisations) act as intermediaries, "feeding citizens' preferences into the policy process" (Kohler-Koch 2010: 107). Following this approach, so she argues, representation through interest groups is "a case of representation built on the expression of preferences" (ibid.). She refers to Pitkin's concept of substantive representation, hence, a substantive acting for others in the interest of others. So, democratic representation is achieved when policy outputs are congruent to the interests of the represented (ibid.: 108).

Applied to interest groups, it means that we have a relation between citizens and interest groups on the one hand, and a relation between interest groups and policymakers on the other hand. While she uses this conceptualisation for civil society organisations involved in EU policymaking, I argue this can be applied to interest groups (and interest advocates) more generally. So interest groups 'give expression to citizens' preferences', which they channel to the policymaking level by interacting with the relevant policymakers. Policymakers take these views into account and either respond or ignore the demands. Representation can be considered successful when interest groups and citizens agree on an issue and when the positions of policymakers and interest groups on an issue are congruent (ibid.: 109). Eventually, governments can respond to the interests of citizens. This idea of interest groups as transmission belts is the backdrop for the whole dissertation. Each empirical chapter will look at a different step of the transmission belt chain.

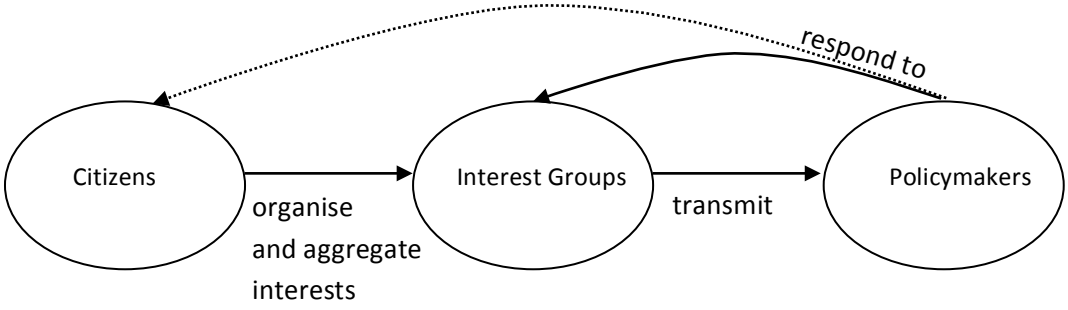

Figure 1.1: Conceptualisation of interest groups as transmission belts

The figure visualises interest groups as transmission belts. First, interest groups organise and aggregate public preferences, which are then transmitted to the policymaking level. Policymakers, finally, may or may not respond to pressures by the groups and/or citizens.[8]

A word of caution is in order. I conceptualise interest groups as transmission belts who organise, aggregate and transmit public preferences to the policymaking level. This means I treat public opinion as exogenous. Yet, arguably, interest groups can and do shape public opinion as well. Moreover, they also transmit information they have received from policymakers to their constituents which can influence their opinion on an issue. Hence, the relationship is reciprocal and the transmission belt can work in both directions. It is beyond the scope of this study, though, to examine *both directions* which is why I focus solely on the extent to which interest groups transmit public preferences to the policymaking level, irrespective of how such preferences were formed in the first place.

While Kohler-Koch's conceptualisation of interest representation nicely illustrates interest groups as transmission belts, it is largely based on Pitkin's concept of substantive representation. Hence, representation is understood as acting for someone in a manner responsive to them. While obviously valuable, it does not allow understanding *how* interest groups represent citizens. Moreover, this conceptualisation still comes with the problem of accountability and authorisation that are at the core of Pitkin's definition of representation.

[8] Note that this is only one route of how public preferences get transmitted to policymakers. An obvious alternative way are political parties which are however not the focus of this dissertation.

1.3.5 Representation through Information

"Representing means giving information about the represented, being a good representative means giving accurate information; where there is no information to give, no representation can take place." (Pitkin 1967: 83)

After discussing different concepts of representation and conceptualising interest groups as transmission belts, we now turn to the question of *how* they do so, that is, how they can represent citizens. Answering that question will help answering the question about the extent to which interest groups represent citizens as it will allow gauging some of the underlying mechanisms of interest representation. As mentioned, representation in this dissertation is seen as an 'acting for' someone to be represented. Following Saward, I am, however, also interested in the process of 'making present' as I think this is crucial for understanding the 'acting for'.

Moreover, I argue that information is a crucial part of representation. Interestingly, already Pitkin hints at the importance of information in representation as shown in the quote above. Saward criticises, however, that Pitkin takes such information as given and ignores the process of providing such information (Pitkin 1967; Saward 2006: 301). Moreover, Pitkin's concept is difficult to apply empirically to interest groups as they are nonelectoral actors. Yet, I focus on her idea of a 'substantive acting for' which will be part of the theoretical framework of the dissertation. So what can the act of 'making present' through information look like? Here the concept of representative claims will be helpful.

First, as previously indicated, it allows studying nonelectoral forms of interest representation (De Wilde 2013; Saward 2006). However, it also considers more discursive elements of representation (De Wilde 2013). Given that my argument is about information transmission, we should see information transmission as a communicative act in which a sender (interest groups) sends a message (information about public preferences) to a receiver or an audience (policymakers). However, an empirical application of Saward's concept is also difficult as some of his concepts remain unclear (see for a discussion De Wilde 2013). Yet, we focus on his idea of representative claims by focusing on the activity of making present as well as the actor of making representative claims. So can we have the best of both worlds?

Severs (2012) links the idea of the representative claim back to the concept of substantive representation by introducing the term 'substantive claims'. The substantive claim refers to "a particular dimension of representation, implying some sort of activity on behalf of others rather than the mere claiming to do so" (ibid.: 170). That activity, in my case, refers to an interest group who has mobilised and informs a policymaker about the preferences of the represented ones. While Severs uses an example with electoral representatives, her example can also be applied to interest groups. So she argues that while an actor who claims to stand for the interests of families qualifies as a representative claim, the claim misses a reference to an activity (ibid.: 173). However, an actor who claims to stand for the interest of families by "denouncing revenue cuts for family allowances" (ibid.) adds a substantive element in Pitkin's sense of 'acting for'. Linking this to interest advocates and the question of how they act as transmission belts, representation through interest advocates can be thought of an act where interest advocates mobilise on a specific issue (reforming children support) to actively promote a position (no cuts) in the interest of the represented (families with children) by informing policymakers about what the people in general or the affected ones will think about this proposal, or also by informing policymakers how it will affect the respective people (in this case families with children). Interest advocates, therefore, can be conceptualised as transmission belts that transmit public preferences to the policymaking level by informing them about what the public wants.

Going back to the literature on informational lobbying, scholars have referred to such information as political information, which includes information regarding support or opposition of a specific constituency or the public at large (see for example De Bruycker 2016; Nownes and Newmark 2016). Importantly, however, Nownes finds that advocates do not necessarily make arguments about the public as whole, but rather about certain parts of society (2006: 66). To allow a systematic analysis of how interest groups can act as transmission belts and to link it more to the concept of representation, I define such information in the dissertation as information on public preferences, which refers both to information on preferences of the public at large but also preferences of specific constituencies and certain segments of society (cf. Burstein 2014). This definition allows including claims that interest groups make about the interests/needs/desires/wants/preferences of a person or group of people (Saward 2006).

Information on public preferences therefore includes both information on general public opinion on an issue, as well as information on preferences of a specific constituency.

Importantly, this is not restricted to interest group member preferences but refers to a somewhat broader constituency that would allegedly benefit from the lobbying efforts of a group. Hence, interest groups can act as a transmission belt by providing information about more general public opinion, but also in a more narrow sense by providing constituency-specific information. Moreover, information on public preferences does not only entail information about support (opposition) of certain parts of the public, but also whether people consider an issue as relevant to address as well as information about how new policies will affect certain people (both positively and negatively). Such an understanding helps to unpack the transmission belt mechanism, that is, tapping into the question of how interest groups act as a transmission belt and to what extent they represent the people.

As discussed, policymakers need information about how people will react to a policy decision to anticipate electoral consequences (Baumgartner and Jones 2015; Wright 1996). Interest groups have such information because of their interactions with their members and constituents (Wright 1996). Relying on interest groups for such information does therefore constitute not only a valuable source for information but may also increase the legitimacy of a policy decision. Yet, groups vary in their ability and also in their motivation to acquire and provide such information which is why the information groups are able to provide may be a potential source of bias and unequal representation. Linking this to representation, I argue that this also helps to understand when and to what extent interest group represent their constituents and the public. Bridging these two literatures, the argument of the thesis will be outlined in the following.

1.3.6 Theoretical Argument

The first argument is that groups should have a higher potential to act as transmission belts when they share the same view as the public. This logic is derived from the first step in the transmission belt chain, that is, as a first step of successful representation the public and interest groups have to agree on an issue (Kohler-Koch 2010). As mentioned, this idea is based on Pitkin's concept of substantive representation. Hence representation is understood as an 'acting for' the interest of someone. This does not necessarily imply that interest groups follow public opinion but can also mean that interest groups have shaped public opinion so that their positions align. Hence, causality can go in both directions. **The first empirical chapter of the dissertation (Bias Article with Anne Rasmussen)** delves into this and looks

at the extent to which the general public shares the same view on an issue as individual advocates but also as all mobilised actors aggregated on an issue. Moreover, bringing the people back into interest group literature, it suggests to use public preferences as a benchmark to assess the extent to which groups act as representatives of the public which ultimately allows commenting on whether there is bias in the interest groups system or not. While this is a valuable first step for exploring the extent to which interest groups represent citizens, it does not allow understanding *how* they do so. As criticised earlier, the concept of substantive representation does ignore the process of 'making present' and solely looks at whether a representative (the interest group) acts in the interest of the represented (the public).

To understand how interest groups represent the public, **the second empirical chapter (Transmission Belt Article)** conceptualises interest groups as transmission belts. It introduces the argument more elaborately that groups act as transmission belts by informing policymakers about public preferences. This means, representation is still understood as an 'acting for', yet the focus in this chapter now lies on the process of 'making present'. Hence, representation is rather understood in the sense of (substantive) claims-making (Saward 2006; Severs 2012) to gauge how representation may occur. The second argument, therefore is, *that for representation to occur and as a necessary (but insufficient) condition for interest groups to act as transmission belts, we should observe that groups provide information about what their constituents want when lobbying policymakers*. Moreover, this chapter argues that interest groups provide both general public opinion information and also information about specific segments of society that will allegedly benefit from the lobbying efforts of a group. While such disaggregated, constituency-specific opinion is difficult to measure or get data on, the concept of representative claims allows getting closer at who exactly interest groups (claim) to represent.

So after looking at how interest groups represent citizens' preferences and arguing that they do so by means of information, it is relevant to assess how interest groups get such information. While existing research has usually treated information as a resource, I argue that information acquisition and provision requires resource itself. This is important for two reasons. Following Kohler-Koch, representation is successful when interest groups and the public agree *and* when interest groups manage to agree with policymakers (Kohler-Koch 2010). However, only information that is costly and privately held by the interest group can be used as a source of influence (Austen-Smith and Wright 1992; Wright 1996); and it has to be used to influence policymakers if a group also wants to fulfil the second criteria of

successful representation. Policymakers do not need interest groups for information that they can easily access themselves. Hence, they do not have to rely on interest groups for information that they can access at much lower cost. This also means that for interest groups it only makes sense to provide information that is costly.

Second, the idea of information requiring resources is relevant when we want to think more about the democratic element of representation. The discussed concepts of representation are not necessarily democratic, especially if applied to nonelectoral actors who are not formally authorised nor can be held accountable. Representation qualifies as democratic when it "conforms to the principle of equality" (Kohler-Koch 2010: 109-10) and we simply cannot know if all people had the same chances in being represented. Arguing that interest groups act as transmission belts by providing information, we should therefore look at what it requires to acquire such information; the reason being that *resources* have often been seen as a source of bias in the interest group literature. Hence: *A condition for successful representation is that interest groups get policymakers to agree with them. One source for that influence is the information they transmit. Yet, for that information to be a source of influence, the information has to be costly. Moreover, and this is more from a normative standpoint, for information to be a mechanism of (fair) representation, the cost aspect should not introduce bias.* **The third empirical chapter (Resource Article),** therefore, looks at the costs of information and applies a resource perceptive to informational lobbying.

Lastly, as indicated, representation is only successful when groups and the public agree (argument 1) and if groups and policymakers agree on an issue. Hence, *the fourth argument is that a necessary (but insufficient) condition of interest groups to act effectively as a transmission belt is, that the information they provide on public preferences has to help them acquire a certain degree of influence.* The dissertation's **fourth empirical chapter (Success Article),** therefore, assesses the extent to which interest groups are able to influence policymaking by means of information.

In sum, interest groups are more likely to work as transmission belts when they fulfil all conditions, that is, when they 1) agree with their constituents on an issue, 2) transmit these preferences by informing policymakers about them and 3) be successful in getting the policymaker to listen and respond to that information. Ideally, and 4), the access to such information should not introduce bias and lead to unequal representation. The figure below

again shows how interest groups act as transmission belts, but adds how each empirical chapter contributes to understanding how they do so.

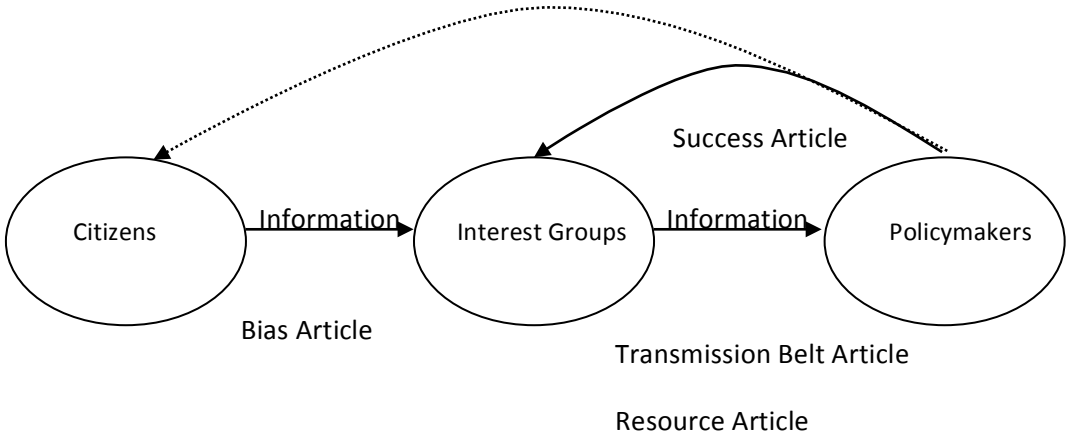

Figure 1.2: Interest Groups as Transmission Belts and dissertation's contribution

1.4 Empirical Approach

The empirical chapters rely on data collected within the GovLis project pooling information on interest group activity, public opinion and policy outputs. Specifically, the dissertation relies on two main datasets. The first dataset integrates information about public opinion and interest group activity on 50 specific policy issues in 5 West European countries (Denmark, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK). This dataset is used for the articles in chapter 2, 4 and 5. Another dataset includes information about public opinion and interest groups on 102 specific policy issues in Germany. This dataset is the base for chapter 3.

1.4.1 Country Selection

While the dissertation does not aim to theorise about how different institutional characteristics affect the extent to which interest groups represent the citizens, it controls for potential country differences in most of the chapters. The data for the main dataset has therefore been collected in five countries. Information provision can determine access to policymakers (Bouwen 2004; Tallberg et al. 2018), which is why the inclusion of different countries considers variation in the degree to which interest groups are involved in policymaking; the

UK being a country in which the interest group system is characterised as pluralist while the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden and Denmark experience moderate or strong degrees of corporatism (Jahn 2016; Siaroff 1999). This selection of countries should enhance the generalisability of the findings.

1.4.2 Issue Selection

While much of the research on informational lobbying has surveyed interest groups about general information provision in their lobbying activities (cf. Chalmers 2011; Klüver 2012; Nownes and Newmark 2016), the dissertation applies a design which takes into account that information by advocates is typically provided *on specific aspects of a proposal* and not policymaking in general. Even if some interest organisations may mobilise to push general policy in a more right or left wing direction, most lobbying activities are targeted at specific policy proposals (Berkhout, Beyers, et al. 2017; Beyers et al. 2014).

One of the challenges in interest group research is how to draw a representative sample of interest group activity, as it is hard to define a clear population. This study follows an issue-centred approach (Beyers et al. 2014), rather than an actor-centred sampling strategy to also account for varying context factors that may affect lobbying behaviour. There are different starting points from where to sample policy issues. While some rely on a legislative database (Beyers et al. 2014; Burstein 2014), or the media (Bernhagen 2012), or the actors themselves (Baumgartner et al. 2009), the starting point for the project's dataset were nationally existing public opinion polls conducted in the timeframe between 2005-2010 (for further description of the issue selection, see Rasmussen et al. 2019; Rasmussen, Mäder, et al. 2018).

Each survey item had to be about a specific policy issue rather than an overall policy area, present a suggestion for policy change, be measured on an agreement scale and had to fall under national competences (as opposed to EU or sub-national level). While the 102 issues for the one dataset constitute the population of issues that met the criteria, the specific policy issues for the 50 issue dataset were selected as a stratified random sample from the issues that met the criteria mentioned above to ensure variation with regard to issue type, media salience and public support for the issue. Ensuring such variation should increase the ability to draw more generalisable conclusions. Issues in the sample concern, for example, the

question of whether to ban smoking in restaurants or to cut social benefits (each empirical chapter is followed by an appendix which lists the issues that have been part of study).

The advantage of sampling from public opinion polls over sampling issues from the legislative agenda is that the sample also captures interest group activity before an issue was introduced in parliament, which increases the likelihood of policy change compared to all issues in the universe of issues on the public agenda in a country (Rasmussen, Mäder, et al. 2018; Toshkov et al. 2018). Sampling from existing opinion polls, however, means that the sample only includes issues that were somewhat salient so that they were worth polling on (Burstein 2014). In that sense, this sample is also not a completely random sample of the universe of all potential issues, but is suitable to sample issues that have made it on to the public (polling) agenda. It is also important to consider that citizens should have at least somewhat informed opinions if interest groups are expected to transmit their preferences meaningfully (Gilens 2012). This concern speaks in favour of sampling issues with at least some minimal public salience. Still, the stratified sample ensures variation with regard to media saliency, which is always added as a control variable.

1.4.3 Actor Selection

The main unit of analysis in all empirical chapters is an actor on an issue. Actors (or interest groups) are defined based on their observable, policy-related activities which follows a behavioural definition of interest groups (Baroni et al. 2014; Baumgartner et al. 2009). The terms advocates or interest groups are used interchangeably throughout the dissertation. It is important to note that the dissertation uses quite an inclusive definition of interest advocates. Hence, next to traditional membership groups such as non-profit-organisations, labour unions or business associations, also companies, experts and think tanks have been included. While these actors may differ in their internal structure, they have mobilised on the issues in our sample and have therefore had the chance to influence policymaking. Schlozman and Tierney, for example, find that half of the actors in Washington are groups without members such as firms, institutions etc. and conclude that even though they differ in internal dynamics, they are not so distinct in their political comportment (1986: 49).

In the 50 issue data set, several steps were taken to identify the actors that mobilised on an issue (Flöthe and Rasmussen 2019). First, student assistants coded interest group

statements on the specific policy issue in two major newspapers[9] in each country for a period of four years or until the policy changed (cf. for a similar approach Gilens 2012). Second, interviews with civil servants that have worked on the issue during our observation period (82 % response rate) helped to complete the list of advocates that had mobilised on the issues. Lastly, desk research on formal tools and interactions such as public hearings or consultations was conducted in order to identify additional relevant actors. Although this triangulation may still have missed some actors, the interviews with civil servants should help ensure that also actors who exclusively focused on less visible inside-lobbying strategies were captured. Active advocates identified through these steps form the base for the dataset used for the article in chapter 2. From December 2016 until April 2017 I participated in the conduct of an online survey with 1410 advocates identified as active on the specific issues. 478 respondents completed the survey which resulted in a response rate of 34% and is in the range of what is common for interest group surveys (Bernhagen 2013; Dür and Mateo 2010; Eising 2007; Rasmussen and Lindeboom 2013). The survey data has been used for the articles presented in chapter 4 and 5.

The identification of actors for the data used in chapter 3 was slightly different. The dataset covers 102 issues in Germany and pools information about public opinion and issue characteristics on these 102 issues. The study, however, relies on a subsample of issues on which public hearings were held during the observation period. To move the literature forward and in order to establish a new measure of political information, I collected additional data on the different types of information that interest groups raise in submissions to public hearings in parliament. I developed a codebook to be able to scrutinise observed information transmission in public hearings. Analysing written statements by interest groups is a novel way of studying information provision as most studies rely on self-reported information transmission through surveys or interviews (for an exception see Burstein 2014). Table 1 below summarises the data that has been used for each paper.

[9] Denmark: Politiken and Jyllands-Posten; Germany: Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung; Netherlands: De Volkskrant and NRC Handelsblad; Sweden: Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet; United Kingdom: The Guardian and The Telegraph

Table 1: Overview of data for the different research articles

	Article 1	**Article 2**	**Article 3**	**Article 4**
Name	Bias Article with Anne Rasmussen	Transmission Belt Article	Resource Article	Lobbying Success Article
Countries	5 Countries	1 Country	5 Countries	5 Countries
Issues per Country	10 Issues	34 Issues	10 Issues	10 Issues
Actors identified through:	Media Content Analysis, Desk Research, Civil Servants, Other actors in the Survey	Public Hearings	As Article 1	As Article 1
Additional Data		+ Coding of Arguments	+ Survey	+ Survey
Status	Published in the *Journal of European Public Policy*	Published in the *Journal of European Public Policy*	Published in *European Political Science Review*	Published in *Interest Group & Advocacy*

1.5 Outline and Summary of Dissertation

Figure 1.2 has illustrated how each empirical chapter will explore one of the conditions that are necessary for interest groups to act as transmission belts. As such, **chapter 2 (Bias Article co-authored with Anne Rasmussen)** examines the question to what extent and under which conditions interest groups and the public are more likely to hold congruent positions on a policy issue. Moreover, it introduces the discussion on bias in the interest group community and elaborates on its implication for opinion representation. The chapter's analysis shows that the public and interest groups agree roughly half the time, yet some groups seem to do a better job. For example, citizen groups are more likely to align their positions with the public than other actor types. However, the differences between the representativeness of different group types were not as strong as expected. We also saw that a large share of those groups that are feared the most (such as business groups and firms) agree with the majority of the public on an issue. A potential reason for these group differences could be that groups vary in the extent to which they fulfil their function as representatives. Moreover, some may have more information about what their constituents want, which they transmit to policymakers.

Chapter 3 (Transmission Belt Article) builds on these findings and conceptualises interest groups as transmission belts, arguing that information is the

mechanism through which representation occurs. It shows that interest groups inform policymakers about public preferences, but also scrutinises who does so and under which conditions actors are more likely to do so. More specifically, it argues that citizen groups are more likely to share the same opinion as the public as they are better informed about what the public wants. This is why they are also more likely to transmit that information to policymakers. The analysis finds that those actors that are more likely to align their positions with the public are also those that are more likely to inform policymakers about public preferences. Moreover, actors that have a higher share of the public on their side provide more of such information. Hence, the chapter's analysis shows that, by and large, interest groups have the potential to act as transmission belts by informing policymakers about public preferences, yet there is variation in the degree to which they act as one. Additionally, it shows that those advocates that generally provide more information (irrespective of the type) provide more information on public preferences. Linking this to research that argues that more resources lead to more information provision, leads to the question if resourceful groups are better able to provide information.

Chapter 4 (Resource Article) explores this further and argues that it depends on the type of information. While policy expertise may require more economic resources, political information can be acquired and transmitted by other means. The findings show, that economic resources facilitate the provision of expert information transmission. However, interest groups can also rely on other resources (such as political capacities) for providing expert information. Even more so, groups are less dependent on economic resources for providing information about public preferences (which is how the transmission belt mechanism works). In fact, here it are predominantly political capacities that seem to matter. Hence, using information for representation does not necessarily introduce bias in the sense that only the well-off are able to transmit it.

Finally, **chapter 5 (Success Article**) examines the question with what type of information interest groups are more likely to get their way. The empirical chapters so far have shown that interest groups qualify to act as transmission belts (some more than others, sometimes more than other times) by means of information. Yet, the fifth empirical chapter shows that only those actors that provide expert information are able to increase their likelihood of lobbying success. The effect of information about public preferences on lobbying success is, if anything, negative. This is intriguing, given that policymakers are assumed to need both types of information and that interest groups are said to be influential

because they provide both types of information. However, from chapter 4 (Resource Article) we know that groups that rely a lot on their members are able to generate such expert information as well. Moreover, we also know from this chapter that most of the time, groups provide both types of information. Hence, interest groups can only fulfil the last step of the transmission belt chain, if they provide at least a considerable amount of expert information (for which they can rely on their members' expertise). Yet, this also suggests that 'evidence-based lobbying' seems to be more successful and that policymaking is rather made in the light of technical considerations and perhaps revolves less about what the public wants.

Finally, **chapter 6** summarises and discusses the findings as well as their normative implications.

Chapter 2: Group Type Bias and Opinion Representation

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Public Voices in the Heavenly Chorus?

Group Type Bias and Opinion Representation

Abstract

While strong voices in the academic literature and real-world politics regard interest groups as biased representatives of the public, we know little about the scope and consequences of such biases for democratic governance. We conduct the first cross-national comparison of group and public preferences analysing a new dataset of 50 issues in five West European countries. Despite the negative image of interest groups in politics, we find that their positions are in line with public opinion more than half the time. Moreover, while firms and business associations enjoy weaker support for their positions among citizens than public interest groups, they still enjoy the backing of a sizable share of the public. Additionally, we find no general pattern that communities with low interest group diversity are less likely to represent public opinion. Our findings have implications for democratic governance and discussions of how to conceptualise and measure biases in interest representation.

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2.1 Introduction

The issue of bias in pressure group systems remains one of the core topics in interest group research (Dür and Mateo 2013; Lowery and Gray 2016; Rasmussen and Gross 2015; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). Ever since Schattschneider's famous assertion that the heavenly chorus does not provide equal voice to all interests (1960), scholars have spent ample time investigating possible bias in the accent of interest representatives. Yet, while there is an abundant literature on bias in interest representation, there is a lack of a common benchmark for judging the representativeness of organised interests (e.g., Lowery et al. 2015; Lowery and Gray 2004; Schlozman 1984). Nevertheless a lot of empirical commentary operates with at least an implicit benchmark. Lobbyists are often criticised for representing special interests rather than the voice of the population as a whole. For instance, more than half of those asked in Germany and the UK in Transparency International's 2013 Global Corruption Barometer respond that their national governments are run by self-interested groups rather than for the benefit of the general public[10].

We propose a new benchmark for assessing bias by conducting a study of opinion representation examining how closely the positions of interest groups and the public are aligned. Whereas a large literature studies ideological congruence between citizens and their representatives (e.g., Golder and Ferland 2017; Huber and Powell 1994), the alignment of public and interest group positions has not been examined in a systematic manner except in a few US studies (Claassen and Nicholson 2013; Gilens 2012; Page et al. 1987). Understanding whether and when lobbyists counter public preferences, and which lobbyists are representative of what the public wants is essential for understanding the role of lobbying in modern policy-making. Such an analysis is important to address both the public fears of lobbying capture, as well as for discussions in democratic theory on the role of groups (see Gilens and Page 2014).

Many argue that some group types are more likely to bias policy-making rather than considering the policy positions of these groups (Gray and Lowery 2000; Rasmussen and Carroll 2014; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). Focus is often on whether especially business interests are overrepresented compared to other group types or whether the representation of different substantive interests is ensured. Yet, the question remains *whether those types of*

[10] https://www.transparency.org/gcb2013 (accessed October 14, 2017).

interest groups and interest group communities subject to criticism are actually the ones least likely to represent the opinion of the general public.

To examine this question, we analyse a new dataset of 50 issues in five West European countries (Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and the UK). Our study is the first to systematically compare group and public preferences on a high number of specific policy issues in several countries. It provides a comprehensive account of the relationship between interest group positions and public opinion by relying on different ways of conceptualising and measuring opinion representation. We first conduct analyses at the level of individual groups examining whether the types of advocates conventionally expected to cause bias in the group community are less aligned with public opinion. Thereafter, a series of issue-level analyses scrutinise whether the likelihood of finding correspondence between public opinion and the opinion of the advocacy community on an issue is affected by how diverse a set of substantial interests the group community represents.

Rather than providing clear-cut support or disapproval of the negative view of groups, we show that advocates are on the same side as the public in a little over half of the cases. While there are some expected differences between group types in opinion representation our results also underline that group type is not as strong a predictor as conventional wisdom might lead us to expect. The positions voiced by firms and business groups enjoy the support of significantly lower shares of citizens than public interest groups but this pattern is less clear for other group types representing narrower interests. We also do not find consistent statistical evidence that an advocacy community with a biased distribution of advocates across different actor types is less likely to be aligned with public opinion on an issue. Our results have implications for democratic governance and how we conceptualise bias in interest group research.

2.2 Conceptualising the relationship between advocates and the public

We conduct an analysis of *opinion representation* examining how closely groups' preferences and public opinion are aligned on specific policy issues. Our approach is similar to the one used in the broader literature on political representation, in which the substantive overlap in the policy positions of citizens and elites has been studied through the concept of ideological congruence (e.g., Golder and Ferland 2017; Huber and Powell 1994). While our study looks at interest groups (rather than elected politicians) and citizens, we share the interest of this

literature in what Pitkin (1967) coined "substantive representation". Hence, our analysis ultimately provides information about the incentive of interest groups to act as representatives for the people and promote their interests.

We make an important addition to existing work on group bias which predominantly relies on frequencies of group types (e.g., Gray and Lowery 2000; Rasmussen and Carroll 2014; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). By interest groups (or *advocates*), we refer to a broad range of non-state actors engaged in public policy-making, including membership associations, firms and expert organisations (Baroni et al. 2014). Including citizens in the equation helps us evaluate the perhaps most widespread criticism of lobbying, namely that it does not present a voice representative of the population (Gastil 2000; McFarland 1991). Only a few studies on the US have examined the alignment of interest groups and public opinion (e.g., Claassen and Nicholson 2013; Gilens 2012; Page et al. 1987). For instance, Gilens found that the policy preferences of interest groups and the public are uncorrelated but his study is restricted to the most powerful interests only.

While all our analyses of opinion representation examine how closely aligned the substantive policy positions of groups and the public are, they use different benchmarks for public opinion. Some measures calculate correspondence between groups and the public as a whole, whereas others indicate whether groups represent the median citizen. Hence, we speak to both a *proportional* vision of democracy expecting representatives to resemble the public at large (Pitkin 1967: 60-91) and a *majoritarian* emphasising their ability to represent the median citizen (for criticism, see de Tocqueville 1840).

Second, similar to the ideological congruence literature (Golder and Stramski 2010) the relationship between the public and groups can be analysed in several ways. We look at both 'many-to-one relationships' focusing on the alignment between citizens and individual interest group actors and 'many-to-many relationships' comparing the cumulative preferences of citizens and the entire group community on an issue.

2.3 Variation in Opinion Representation

One option is to see interest groups as transmission belts that help the public get its message across to policy-makers acting as 'surrogates for the public' allowing policymakers to produce outputs that 'benefit directly from the public's considerable wisdom and experience

with the topic at hand' (Furlong and Kerwin 2004: 354; see also Rasmussen et al. 2014). However, while groups may voice an opinion that is representative of that of the public, their role is usually not to represent the population on a given issue but a more limited set of interests (Lowery et al. 2015).

Importantly, the dangers of relying on groups as representatives should vary in different circumstances. Empirical studies of bias often expect that some types of groups and group communities are more likely to raise concerns (see e.g., Gray and Lowery 2000; Rasmussen and Carroll 2014; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). The underlying *mechanism* seems to be related to *the scope of the interests* represented either by the different group types or by different group communities. The expectation is that those that represent broader interests are more likely to act as representatives. Consequently, the capacity of different group types and group communities to represent public opinion is at the core of our theoretical framework.

We focus on cross-sectional variation in the alignment of groups and public opinion rather than conduct a dynamic analysis of how the two affect each other, since repeated measures of public opinion on our issues are not available. Yet our *theoretical predictions* take into account that *at a given point of time* this alignment may be the result of both similarities in the opinion of the two *before* an issue became subject to attention *and* affected by whether groups and the public have been able to influence the opinion of each other *in the course of* policymaking (Dür and Mateo 2014b; Kollman 1998). Thus, when speaking of opinion representation we remain open to the possibility that causality flows in both directions with both groups and the public being able to represent the opinion of each other.

It is widely expected that interest groups try to shape public opinion, even if the empirical evidence is mixed (e.g., Andsager 2000; Kim and Margalit 2017; McEntire et al. 2015; Page et al. 1987; Smith 2000). Nevertheless, we cannot rule out the opposite relationship; i.e. that some groups pay attention to the public when forming their positions. Interest group leaders can take cues from the public, which may affect their calculations which policy to defend (Holyoke 2003). We argue that interest groups that represent broader public interests are the ones most actively aiming at influencing public opinion, and the ones with the greatest need to respond to the shifts in public opinion to maintain support. Moreover, we expect the same logic to apply if we examine correspondence between the opinion of the entire group community on an issue and public opinion.

2.3.1 Variation across group types

Studies of bias are typically not equally concerned about all types of interest groups and frequently refer to Olson's (1965) seminal work (e.g., Schlozman 2010). He argued that special interest groups representing particular constituencies face fewer collective action problems mobilising than groups representing diffuse, public interests. Worries arise because those groups that should have the easiest time mobilising are also the ones least likely to be strong candidates for representing the general interests. The underlying assumption seems to be that there is a link between the scope of the interests of these groups and whether their opinion is aligned with public opinion.

We draw a distinction between 'diffuse' and 'concentrated' interests. The former represent wider societal interests often involving the provision of public goods (e.g., environmental and consumer groups). In contrast, concentrated interests in our terminology are those with a well-defined, narrow constituency that provide concentrated benefits to their members or supporters. The latter can both represent specific economic interests (e.g., business groups and trade unions) or specific identity subgroups (e.g., LGBT support groups, women's associations or particular hobbies).

Differences in how closely these diffuse and concentrated interests are aligned with public opinion may result from not only differences in the scope of interests they represent, but also from variation in their ability to influence public opinion. Diffuse interests may be more successful in swaying public opinion than groups representing concentrated constituencies. Citizen groups representing diffuse, mass-based interests are more likely to apply outsider lobbying strategies aimed at shifting public opinion by raising issue awareness (Kollman 1998). Going public is relatively cheap and effective for them (Dür and Mateo 2013: 663-4). Instead, groups representing concentrated interests – e.g., business associations and firms but also many trade unions and occupational groups – often have a comparative advantage in *inside lobbying* since they possess specialised information demanded by policymakers (ibid.). Perhaps as a result of such differences in lobbying focus, Page et al. (1987: 37) found that groups representing specific, narrow interests have a negative impact on public opinion, whereas broader, mass-based interests can have a positive one.

When considering the reverse relationship in which groups adapt to public opinion, we also expect the dynamic to work in a way that results in closer alignment with public opinion for diffuse interests than for concentrated interests. The latter should generally be less

responsive to public opinion when formulating their policy positions. Hence, even if all organisations aim to ensure survival (Klüver 2011b; Lowery and Gray 1995), they differ in their survival strategies. For many organisations representing concentrated interests ensuring organisational maintenance is frequently a question of delivering certain services to the more specific, narrow economic or identity interests they represent (Klüver 2011b)**.** Being responsive to the concerns of the public could sometimes even be suicidal for them if this entails the risk of alienating their members and supporters. Instead, public interest groups typically rely on broad-based membership (Berry 1999; Bevan 2013) and satisfying both existing and potential members in the general public is therefore more likely to affect their survival. Failure to adapt their views to a shift in the public mood can potentially be costly, as members can withdraw their membership, possibly selecting another organisation that better represents their interests, and potential new members may be disincentivised from joining. Therefore, we predict that,

1: Opinion representation is less likely for groups representing concentrated as opposed to diffuse interests.

2.3.2 Bias in the interest group community

At the issue level, the configuration of interests might also affect the alignment between groups and public opinion. The mobilisation of diverse types of substantial interests on an issue can be expected to increase the likelihood that different parts of society are represented compared to one on which very homogenous groups mobilise. Hojnacki's recent contribution on bias argues that, while it is impossible to know what the proportion of different group types should be in an unbiased system, bias should generally be lower with a reduction of imbalances between the types of interests represented. According to her, 'a more heterogeneous mix of interests than currently exists would represent a move in the right direction' (Lowery et al. 2015: 1218).

Similarly pluralist theory leads us to expect that when many groups mobilise they do so to counterbalance each other. Truman famously argued how in cases of policy disequilibria occurring with some types of groups mobilising, other might mobilise and 'restore balance' (Truman 1951). Interest group research has indeed found some evidence that groups such as those representing citizen and public interests could have some 'countervailing power' to other types of groups such as business and professional associations (McFarland 2010:

42).Communities consisting of countervailing interests should thus have a higher chance of acting as agents of the general public.

The mobilisation of a diverse set of interest group types can also be expected to play a positive role in the alignment of public and advocacy opinion when we consider the ability of the two to influence each other. In the case of diversity, we would expect that, if a diverse set of groups is active, the public discussion is informed by multiple perspectives. If public opinion is responsive to (or maybe even *affected* by) group opinion, members of the public should 'listen more' to a group community representing a broad range of different interests than one representing only a few group types. In turn, it might also be easier for various segments of the public to affect the voice of the advocacy community when the public can interact with groups representing a multitude of substantial interests. In contrast, a less diverse set of groups may decrease the likelihood that any given segment of the public can have its voice heard. Communities where certain types of substantial interests dominate should therefore on average hold positions more at odds with the opinion of the general public. Our second prediction is thus that,

2: Opinion representation is less likely, the higher the level of concentration in the types of interest groups mobilised on an issue.

2.4 Analysis Design

Our dataset pools information on public opinion and interest group activity in five countries on altogether 50 issues. We do not expect overall differences in state-society structures between pluralist and corporatist types of systems to play a strong role for how closely the positions of groups and the public on specific policy issues are aligned. Yet, our selection of countries allows us to control for such system-level variation by including both systems typically classified as experiencing strong or moderate levels of corporatism (Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden) and a more pluralist one (the UK) (Jahn 2016; Siaroff 1999).

All issues come from high-quality opinion polls of a representative sample of the adult population. All of the selected questions involve a call for future policy change on specific policy issues under national jurisdiction and measure responses on an agreement scale (Gilens 2012; Rasmussen, Mäder, et al. 2018), For example, one of our Dutch issues asks whether

euthanasia should be banned and a Swedish one concerns the question of allowing free downloads of films and music from the Internet. While sampling issues on which public opinion is available creates the risk of studying issues with higher salience than average (Burstein 2014), it increases the likelihood 'that average citizens may have real opinions and may exert some political influence' (Gilens and Page 2014: 568). Moreover, issues are selected in such a way that there is substantial variation in media saliency between them. The latter was measured by conducting a keyword search in a major national newspaper for each issue (*Politiken* in Denmark, German *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *the Guardian* in the UK, *Dagens Nyheter* in Sweden, and the Dutch *de Volkskrant*). The 10 selected items per country (see Appendix B) also vary in policy type (regulatory, distributive, redistributive) and the level of public support for policy change.

The lowest unit in our analyses is an actor on an issue, of which we have 771 cases. We include all actors for whom we could identify a policy position either in favour of or against the specific call for policy change in the poll[11] and mapped advocacy on the issues for an observation period of up to four years (see also Gilens 2012)[12]. Four separate rounds of data gathering (see Appendix A) yielded the sample of active advocates. First, student assistants coded all active advocates making statements on the issues in two broadsheet newspapers per country (one left- and one right-leaning, to control for potential differences in the overall tone of advocacy) as in favour of or against the proposed policy change[13]. Second, we conducted expert interviews on the 50 issues with policy officials who had worked on the issue in our observation period (response rate 82%), asking them to identify additional advocates to those identified in the media. Third, we also relied on in-depth desk research of online sources and physical archives to identify advocates involved in government interaction on the issues (e.g., public consultations and parliamentary committee hearings). Fourth, a survey was distributed to the advocates identified in step 1-3, in which respondents were asked to name the most important actors on an issue. The overall response rate was 34% and we received responses from 478 actors. Actors mentioned that did not appear in the other sources were added to the dataset and their positions were coded by searching for policy documents or position papers. Intercoder reliability tests conducted by two coders on 50

[11] 16 actors who expressed opposing positions are excluded from the analysis.
[12] More specifically, advocacy was measured one month prior to the relevant opinion poll and until a policy decision was taken on the issue or 4 years in the cases in which there was no reaction to the call for action.
[13] In addition to the newspapers used to measure saliency in our sampling of policy issues, we coded articles from *Jyllands-Posten* in Denmark, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in Germany, *The Daily Telegraph* in the United Kingdom, *Svenska Dagbladet* in Sweden, and *NRC Handelsblad* in the Netherlands.

randomly selected units revealed a Krippendorff's alpha of .78 for the coding of positions and a score of .92 for the coding of group type.

There are multiple ways of comparing the preferences of groups and the public to measure opinion representation (see Appendix C for an overview of four different approaches). In the main paper, we focus on the *volume* of opinion representation at the level of individual groups, i.e. how large a share of the public is aligned with the group's position. This measure helps us assess not only whether an advocate is supported by the median member of the public but also how strong public support or opposition the group enjoys for its positions. As an example, an actor supporting change has a score of 100 on this 'many-to-one' measure when all respondents in the opinion poll supported change. At the issue-level, we look at the absolute percentage point difference in the shares of the interest group community and the public on an issue, which supported policy change. This 'many-to-many' measure allows us to directly compare the distributions of our dichotomous position measures. It ranges from 0 when support for change is identical in the two communities to 100 when the two are opposed. After our analyses we report on robustness checks using alternative measures of opinion representation.

To test Prediction 1 that opinion representation varies between groups representing concentrated and diffuse interests, our actor-level models include the type of advocate. We distinguish between: (1) public interest groups, (2) business groups, (3) firms, (4) trade unions and occupational associations, (5) hobby and identity groups, and (6) expert organisations, think tanks and institutional associations. Public interest groups are prominent examples of groups that 'seek to advance diffuse benefits to their members as well as everybody else' (Binderkrantz et al. 2014: 881) and include e.g., environmental and consumer groups and associations promoting international humanitarian work. Groups in the second, third, fourth and fifth categories all defend the interests of concentrated constituencies, with variation in whether the subgroups promoted are economic (as in the case of business groups, firms and trade unions) or identity based (as in the case of hobby and identity groups). Finally, expert organisations, think tanks and institutional associations may promote either diffuse or concentrated interests. Appendix D provides a more detailed list of the group types included in the six categories.

To test Prediction 2, our issue-level models include the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI), which indicates the distribution of advocates between the six categories of actor

types. Initially developed to measure the concentration of firms within an industry, the HHI equals the sum of the squared proportions of actors in the different categories and ranges from 1/number of group types (in our case 1/6) to 1, 1 indicating the highest level of concentration with all groups falling into one category. The HHI can be criticised for implicitly assuming that our six categories of advocates are equally important for representing public opinion. Therefore, we also consider an alternative measure of issue-level bias by including the share of firms and business associations relative to all advocates on an issue. This measure also relates to frequent criticisms of bias in the literature owed to the dominance of business interests (Rasmussen and Carroll 2014; Schattschneider 1960; Schlozman and Tierney 1986).

We control for a number of additional factors. First, we include dummies for the different policy types in our sample distinguishing between distributive, regulatory and redistributive issues (Lowi 1964), and our measure for the media saliency of an issue. It records the number of articles in one daily newspaper per country; identified with a Boolean keyword search for articles published one month prior until one month after the question was asked in the opinion poll.[14] The measure is standardised within each country and higher numbers indicate higher media attention. Second, we include country-fixed effects to control for unobserved heterogeneity between observations from the different countries. Finally, our issue-level analyses control for the number of actors on an issue, since the likelihood that the group community represents public opinion might be higher when many advocates are active[15].

2.5 Analysis

Before our multivariate analyses, we start with some descriptives on congruence between group opinion and the public median. At the issue level, the share of policy issues where the majorities of interest groups and the public are aligned is 60% (see Appendix E). According to Table 2.1, the actor-level figures are similar with 54% of the individual advocates holding positions congruent with the public majority. As expected, we find higher congruence for public interest groups than for the actor types representing concentrated interests (significant at the 0.05 level or lower): 78% of public interest groups hold a position congruent with the

[14] Our measure does not cover the whole observation to avoid bias resulting from issues that would experience policy change at a later stage and, hence, would receive more coverage in the time preceding change.
[15] Given that we expect decreasing returns for the number of actors, the measure is logged in the analysis.

public majority, while the numbers for business groups and firms are 41% and 45%, respectively. Yet, no matter which of all the group types representing concentrated interests we examine, a sizable share of them are aligned with the public majority.

Table 2.1 Actor Level Congruence between Interest Groups and the Public Opinion Majority

		Diffuse Interests	Concentrated Interests				Mixed Interests	
		Public Interest groups	Business Groups	Firms	Trade Unions & Occupa-tional assoc.	Hobby & Identity groups	Expert Organisations, Think Tanks & Institutional Associations	Total
Congruence	%	77.86	40.83	45.45	60.40	60.00	41.23	53.83
Total n	N	140	120	198	149	50	114	771

Turning to our multivariate analysis of the volume of opinion representation in Table 2.2, we find a similar pattern. Since advocates are nested in policy issues these regressions are run as multi-level regressions with random intercepts for the issues, first including actor types and country fixed effects only before including controls[16]. Public interests have a significantly larger share of the public on their side (58% according to Model 2) than firms and business groups (49% and 48% respectively). When comparing them to the other group types representing concentrated interests the evidence is more mixed[17]. The scores for hobby and identity groups are never significantly lower than for public interest groups, and the volumes of public support for trade unions and occupational associations are only significantly lower at the 0.10 level in the regression without controls[18]. With respect to the controls, there is no effect of policy types on the likelihood of having a higher share of the public on one's side, but media saliency negatively affects the volume of public support (albeit marginally). Moreover, German groups have a somewhat lower volume of public support for their views than the Swedish groups ($p<0.10$ or lower).

[16] A significant likelihood ratio statistic provides strong evidence that between-issue variance is different from zero in all of the regressions.
[17] The remaining covariates in the calculation of margins in this and subsequent calculations are held constant at their observed values.
[18] In addition to examining the extent to which different types of individual advocates are aligned with public opinion, Appendix E presents supplementary tests at the issue level where we compare measures for all actors belonging to a given group type on an issue to public opinion. These issue-level results also deliver mixed support for the expected relationship between group type and opinion representation put forward in Prediction 1.

Table 2.2 Share of the Public Supporting the Actor's Position

	(1)	(2)
	Volume	Volume
Group Type (ref.: Public Interest Groups)		
Hobby & Identity	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)
Business Groups	-0.10*** (0.03)	-0.10*** (0.03)
Trade Unions & Occupational Groups	-0.05+ (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)
Firms	-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.02)
Expert Org, Think Tanks & Institutional Assoc.	-0.14*** (0.03)	-0.14*** (0.03)
Issue-level Controls		
Country (ref: Germany)		
UK	0.00 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)
Denmark	0.05 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)
Sweden	0.07+ (0.04)	0.08* (0.04)
Netherlands	0.01 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)
Policy Type (ref: Distributive Issues)		
Regulatory		-0.00 (0.04)
Redistributive		-0.00 (0.04)
Standardised media saliency		-0.02+ (0.01)
Constant	0.57*** (0.03)	0.56*** (0.04)
Policy Issue Intercept	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Level 1 Residual	0.04 (0.00)	(0.04) (0.00)
Number of Cases	771	771
AIC	-271	-268
BIC	-215	-199

Notes: Multi-level Linear Regressions with SEs in Parentheses, + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

As a next step, Models 3-8 test Prediction 2 that low diversity in the advocacy community weakens opinion representation by increasing the distance between the shares of support for policy change among groups and the public (Table 2.3). The first three models examine the effect of the level of concentration in the types of mobilised groups, starting with a model with the HHI only before introducing country fixed effects and issue-level controls.

Table 2.3 Absolute Percentage Point Difference between the Shares of the Public and Interest Groups on an Issue supporting Policy Change

	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance
HHI	0.30*	0.33**	0.17			
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.15)			
Share of business groups				0.00	-0.01	0.15
				(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)
Issue-level Controls						
Country (ref: Germany)						
UK		-0.03	0.02		-0.01	0.05
		(0.08)	(0.09)		(0.09)	(0.09)
Denmark		-0.12	-0.11		-0.09	-0.08
		(0.08)	(0.09)		(0.09)	(0.08)
Sweden		-0.08	-0.14		-0.05	-0.16+
		(0.08)	(0.09)		(0.09)	(0.09)
Netherlands		-0.07	-0.09		-0.04	-0.08
		(0.08)	(0.09)		(0.09)	(0.09)
Number of actors on an issue (logged)			-0.08			-0.13**
			(0.05)			(0.04)
Media saliency			0.06+			0.08*
			(0.03)			(0.03)
Policy Type (ref: Distributive Issues)						
Regulatory			-0.01			0.01
			(0.09)			(0.09)
Redistributive			-0.06			-0.09
			(0.09)			(0.09)
Constant	0.12*	0.17*	0.49*	0.26***	0.30***	0.66***
	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.21)	(0.04)	(0.08)	(0.16)
Number of Cases	50	50	50	50	50	50
Adjusted R^2	0.11	0.07	0.07	-0.02	-0.08	0.09

Note: OLS Regressions with SEs in Parentheses, + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

In all three Models, the positive sign of the effect for the HHI is as expected indicating that the higher the bias in group types represented, the greater the distance between the share of the public and the interest groups supporting policy change. Yet, whereas this effect is significant at the 0.05 level in Model 3 and at the 0.01 level in Model 4, it fails to achieve significance in Model 5 adding controls. At best we therefore have mixed evidence that group communities in which the advocates are distributed unevenly across different advocacy categories display a lower likelihood of being congruent with the public majority[19]. Models 6-8 examine the impact of the alternative measure of issue-level bias, i.e., the share of business interests on an issue. While in two out of the three Models this measure has the expected sign with a higher share of business groups increasing the distance, it fails to achieve statistical

[19] Robustness checks replacing the HHI with another commonly used measure of diversity: Shannon's H show similar results (see Models F1-F3 in Appendix F).

significance in all specifications. Overall, these findings indicate that there is no straightforward relationship between bias in the interest community on an issue and opinion representation. With respect to the controls, higher saliency results in a larger distance between the public and the interest groups (Models 5 and 8). Instead, a higher number of actors on the issue decreases the distance in Model 8. Finally, there are few differences between the countries with the exception of Swedish cases demonstrating a slightly lower absolute distance than German ones in one of the models ($p<0.10$).

2.6 Additional measures of Opinion Representation

Our appendices G-I consider additional measures of examining the alignment between groups and the public. First, Appendix G examines the likelihood that individual groups (Models G1-G2) and the majority of groups on an issue (Models G3-G8) hold a position congruent with the public majority. Using this measure, we find somewhat stronger evidence that public interest groups are more closely aligned with the public. Yet, while their likelihood of being aligned with the public is significantly higher than for all other group types, 25% of them (according to Model G2) are not aligned with the public majority. Moreover, again we have at best mixed evidence that diversity matters in the issue-level analyses. While we find some marginally significant effects of the share of business groups in two of the three regressions, there are no statistically significant effects for the HHI.

Second, Appendix H conducts a similar test using a third measure of opinion representation, i.e. the correlation between the policy positions of groups and the public. As explained in more detail in the Appendix, this measure indicates whether advocacy support for a given policy change increases as *the level* of support for change in the general public increases. Similar to what we saw in the congruence analysis, public interest groups experience somewhat stronger opinion representation using this measure. Hence, the relationship between their positions and public opinion on an issue (see Table H1 and Figure H1) is generally stronger than for other group types. Using this measure, there is again little support for Prediction 2 in our issue-level regression (see Table H2). Hence, we do not find statistical evidence that the HHI or the share of business groups condition the relationship between support for policy change in the general public and the interest group community.

Finally, Appendix I explores variation in the share of the public holding the same position as the majority of the interest groups (pro/con policy change) on an issue. Here we

find a significant effect of the HHI at the 0.05 level in one of the three models before adding controls. Yet, the alternative measure of interest group bias at the issue-level, i.e. the share of business groups, is not significantly related to this measure either (see Table I1).

Overall, we see that, while there are some differences in findings depending on the conceptualisation and measurement of opinion representation, the vast share of the analyses do not present strong evidence for our two theoretical predictions. There is no general tendency for groups representing diffuse interests to clearly distinguish themselves from all the different groups representing narrower, concentrated constituencies. Even in the analyses where group type performs best as a predictor, a significant share of the groups expected to represent the public do not, whereas many groups expected to represent subsets of the public score higher than we might have expected. Second, we also find little evidence that measures of bias in the interest group community affect opinion representation at the issue level. At best, we find support for only one of two measures of group bias and the effects are never consistent across all the different model specifications. Overall, these additional analyses therefore give credence to the results in the paper.

2.7 Conclusion

Whether interest groups serve as a transmission belt of public preferences has been a recurrent theme in the academic literature and real-world politics alike. Strong voices warn of the potential biases in the group community that may not represent the public at large. Yet, whereas there is no shortage of recent studies demonstrating how the interest group community is dominated by business groups representing narrow and specific interests (e.g., Rasmussen and Carroll 2014; Schlozman and Tierney 1986), we know little about the scope and consequences of bias in practice. Even if interest groups are frequently criticised for obstructing democratic governance, their degree of representativeness is typically not examined with respect to a clear benchmark (Lowery and Brasher 2004).

To judge whether advocates represent public preferences, we conducted a systematic analysis of opinion representation using public opinion as a benchmark for assessing how closely interest group positions are aligned with citizen views. We compared information about public opinion and interest groups positions on 50 specific policy issues in five Western European countries using four different ways of conceptualising and measuring the alignment of public opinion and group preferences.

Our findings neither confirm nor disconfirm the fears of advocates as biased representatives of the public. Whether conducting the analysis at the individual or issue level, groups are congruent with the majority of the public a little over half of the time. This underlines the potential for groups to serve as a transmission belt but also reminds us to approach group involvement with a critical eye. Similar to what we have seen in research on the US, there is no correlation between the position of the group community as a whole and public opinion on an issue (Gilens 2012).

Our results underline that the relationship between group type and opinion representation is not as strong as conventional wisdom might lead us to expect: While firms and business groups enjoy weaker support for their positions among citizens than public interest groups, the pattern is less clear for other group types representing narrower interests. The fact that some types of interest groups represent narrower public constituencies does not disqualify them from acting in line with public preferences altogether. On the other hand, some public interest groups may be more distant from their grassroots and the public than is sometimes expected.

Our findings also show that having many different types of groups represented does not necessarily ensure that groups are more likely to represent public opinion. We do not find consistent evidence that how narrowly active advocates are distributed across group types affects opinion representation. Having the expectation that advocates should distribute evenly across a set of interest group categories for advocacy opinion to be in line with public opinion might be unrealistic. However, the findings are also at best mixed when using the relative dominance of business interests on an issue as an alternative measure of bias. These findings certainly do not rule out that the composition of the group community still plays a role for both democratic representation and, ultimately, policy responsiveness. Hence, we must remember that there may be many different ways of conceptualising and measuring bias in practice. However, they outline the challenges of drawing simple inferences about biases in representation based on group type alone. This is not least the case because even among actors belonging to the same group type there may be differences in policy positions and organisational attributes (Baroni et al. 2014). Our results also emphasise the importance of paying attention to multiple measures of opinion representation. Hence, while we found a number of similarities in the findings obtained from using four different conceptualisations and measurements, we also found smaller differences in the explanatory power of some of our key independent variables between the four. This underlines that opinion representation is a

multi-faceted concept and underscores the potential gains of being sensitive to its different conceptualisations in research designs.

Future research will be able to add to our study by theorizing and testing differences in opinion representation not only between those representing diffuse and concentrated interests but also between different subsets of groups within these broader categories, e.g., groups representing economic and identity interests. Hence, our empirical analyses underlined that there are also differences in opinion representation between groups representing narrower, concentrated interests. In addition, there is scope for exploring differences in opinion representation for larger numbers of policy issues and over longer periods of time in future studies. While our theoretical framework explicitly considers that the level of opinion representation at any given point of time is likely to be the result of both groups and the public having mutually influenced each other, our cross-sectional dataset does not allow us to directly examine the processes through which this happens. A key challenge for conducting such dynamic studies is the lack of public opinion data at the level of specific policy issues over longer time periods as well as the costliness of gathering longitudinal interest group data. However, as more public opinion data at the policy issue level becomes available and new technologies for extracting interest group data develop, future research will be able to pursue such a research agenda.

2.8 Appendices

Appendix A. Identification of interest groups

Stage 1: Media Content Analysis

For the set of selected policy issues, we identified articles based on keyword searches, which were subsequently content-coded with respect to reported statements by actors that address the policy in question. A statement was defined as the supply of information or the presentation of the opinion of an actor. It included direct and indirect quotes as well as more general information about statements made by actors (e.g. if the article stated that an actor has "said" or "holds a view" on something, it was considered a statement). Statements that were relevant to the wider topic but not to the specific policy issue, or to a related but distinct policy issue, were excluded. The analysis includes statements in favour of or against the policy action in question made by a broad set of non-state actors engaged in policy relevant activities on a given issue such as membership associations, firms and expert organisations. We refer to these as interest groups. Our analysis excludes individual citizens and experts as well as actors from the political systems in the five countries, such as political parties, civil servants and party officials.

Stage 2: Expert interviews

Additional advocates were identified from semi-structured expert interviews, which were carried out with a national policy official who worked on the policy issue during our observation period. Altogether, we conducted 41 interviews in the five countries between February and April 2016 (response rate 82%). Experts were presented with a list of advocates identified in the media content analysis and asked to name additional advocates that were active on the issues. Moreover, we asked the experts to state the policy positions of the newly added actors where possible. The specific questions posed to the experts were:

Based on an extensive analysis of media sources we identified the following list of advocates [SHOW LIST].

a) *Can you check this list and see whether there are any organised non-state actors missing who actively lobbied policy makers and/or the public on the issue between [date of PO question] and [end of observation period, i.e. policy adoption or 4 years after PO question]?*
   [The interviewer may reiterate that we refer to organised non-state actors as including membership associations, and firms. We are interested in advocates who were successful, as well as those unsuccessful, in their attempts to influence the outcome. If the list is long, the interview should present it in parts, first showing the interest groups, then the experts, then the firms, then the IOs. Offer the respondent to add actors later on. Also mention that the additional columns are for later in the interview and not something to think about at this stage]
b) *Please state what the position of the actors you have added was: pro, con, neutral, don't know [insert PO formulation]*

(to be completed in ACTOR LIST)

Stage 3: Desk research

We also conducted desk research of online sources and physical archives to identify additional actors who interacted with governmental institutions related to the sampled issues (e.g. public consultations and parliamentary committee hearings). Student assistants coded the positions of the actors in these sources where they contained information about an advocacy opinion on the issue addressed in the public opinion question (e.g. through consultation submissions). For actors identified in the desk research for whom this was not possible, student coders tried to gather the policy positions by conducting a search for policy documents or position papers by the actors on the issues using the same keywords as those used in the media coding.

Stage 4: Survey of Interest Advocates

As a final step, we carried out a survey among advocates that have been active on the 50 specific policy issues and were identified through the media content analysis, interviews or desk research. A total of 1,410 actors active on the specific issues received the survey, which was conducted between December 2016 and May 2017. Based on completed surveys, the overall response rate was 33.9%. The survey was designed in such a way that respondents were asked questions about the specific issues in which they had been involved. One of the questions in the survey asked the respondents to identify actors that had exerted the greatest impact on the (lack) of political decisions on the issue in question. It allowed the respondents to list up to five actors.

> ***In your view, which non-state actors had the highest impact on the political decisions on the issue of #u_policytitleshort#?***

Student coders subsequently checked whether the actors mentioned were already included in our dataset to which the newly mentioned actors were added. Thereafter, the assistants coded the positions of these actors, again by searching for policy documents or position papers using the same keywords as those used in the media coding.

Appendix B: List of policy issues

Country	Policy issue
Denmark	Building of a bridge for vehicles and trains across the Kattegat
	Reducing mortgage interest deduction from 33% to 25%
	Granting asylum to families with children among rejected Iraqi asylum seekers
	Reducing the unemployment benefit period by half from four to two years
	Strengthening the control of the Danish agriculture in order to take action against the misuse of antibiotics
	Controlled delivery of heroin for particularly vulnerable drug addicts at special clinics as a pilot scheme
	Introducing differentiated VAT
	Making schools' average test results public
	Cutting the allowances paid to young people between 25 and 29 years by half
	Creation of an equal pay commission
Germany	Financial support of Arcandor through public money
	Guaranteeing a pension above the poverty line for pensioners who have paid contributions for many years
	Supplying citizens with consumption vouchers to boost the economy
	Establishing a wealth tax
	State control of electricity prices
	Banning of computer games that glorify violence
	Cutting the tax exemption for night, Sunday, and holiday supplements
	Cutting coal subsidies
	Making it illegal to carry out a paternity test without the consent of the mother
	Cutting social benefits
Netherlands	Allowing all illegal immigrants who have lived in the Netherlands for a long time to stay
	Raising the retirement age to 67
	Abolishing the mortgage interest
	Spending more money on development aid
	Obligating stores to be closed on Sunday
	Ban of smoking in restaurants
	Banning embryonic stem cell research
	Allowing more asylum seekers
	Banning euthanasia
	Building new nuclear power plants

Sweden	Permanent introduction of a congestion charge in Stockholm
	Reinstating the wealth tax, which was abolished in 2007 and meant that anyone with a fortune of 1.5 million paid 1.5% in taxes
	Rescuing Saab through government funds
	Banning the construction of minarets in Sweden
	Reducing third-world aid
	Introducing a language test for Swedish citizenship
	Restricting the right to free abortion
	Making household and domestic services tax deductible
	Allowing free download of all films and music from the Internet
	Increasing the old age retirement age
UK	Giving amnesty to illegal immigrants who have spent ten years in Britain without getting into trouble with the police
	Scrapping ID cards
	Requiring food manufacturers to reduce the fat/salt content in their products
	Introducing a graduate tax, where graduates would pay an extra income tax on their income after graduating
	Allowing a third runway to be built at Heathrow Airport
	Reducing corporation tax
	Increasing Air Passenger Duty, to be paid by people taking both short-haul and long-haul flights
	Subsidising the building of new nuclear power stations
	Increasing the tax on large executive-style, estate, and 4x4 vehicles
	Downgrading ‘ecstasy’ from a class-A drug to a class-B drug

Appendix C: Types of Opinion Representation

Dimension/ level	*Individual level*	*Issue level*
Volume	**Share of the public holding the same position (pro/con policy change) as the interest group**	Share of the public holding the same position as the majority of the interest groups (pro/con policy change) on the issue
Congruence	Whether the majority of the public holds the same position (pro/con policy change) as the interest group	Whether the majorities of the public and the interest groups are on the same side on the issue (pro/con policy change)
Correlation	Relationship between degree of public support for policy change and the position of the interest group (pro/con policy change)	Relationship between the share of the public and the share of the interest groups on the issue supporting policy change
Distance		**Absolute percentage point difference between the shares of the public and interest groups on the issue supporting policy change**

Notes: Cells in bold display the measures used in the individual and issue-level analyses in the main paper.

Appendix D: Overview of interest group types

To classify groups, we rely on the coding scheme of the INTERARENA project (Binderkrantz et al. 2015) to which we have added firms and think tanks.

Public interest groups
Environment and animal welfare
Humanitarian – international
Humanitarian – national
Consumer Group
Government reform
Civil liberties
Citizen Empowerment
Other public interest

Business associations
Peak-level business group
Sector-wide business group
Breed associations
Technical business associations
Other business group

Firms

Labour groups and occupational associations
Blue-collar union
White-collar union
Employee representative committee
Other labour groups
Doctors' associations
Other medical professions
Teachers' associations
Other occupational associations

Identity, hobby and religious groups
Patients
Elderly
Students
Friendship groups (i.e. non-specific groups related to a country)
Racial or ethnic
Women
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transsexual
Other – undefined - identity group
Sports groups
Other hobby/leisure groups
Groups associated with the protestant church
Roman/Catholic groups
Other religious group

Expert organisations, think tanks and institutional association
Expert organisations
Think tanks
Associations of local authorities
Associations of other public institutions
Associations of managers of public institutions
Other Institutional associations

Appendix E: Alternative Tests of the Actor Type Hypothesis at the Issue level

In addition to examining the extent to which individual types of advocates are aligned with public opinion, we have conducted supplementary tests at the issue level where we compare measures for all actors belonging to a given group type on an issue to public opinion.

Table E1. Issue Level Opinion Representation across Advocacy Types

Actor type	Congruence: Share of issues with congruence between the majority of (different types of) advocates and the public on an issue (%)	Correlation: Bivariate relationship between share of the advocates on an issue and the public in favour of policy change	Volume: Average share of the public supporting the positions of the advocates on the issues (%)	Distance: Average distance between the public and advocates on the issues (percentage points)	N
Public Interest Groups	67	0.37*	55	36	30
Business Groups	40	-0.10	48	42	30
Firms	44	0.06	52	40	32
Trade Unions & Occupational associations	66	0.43*	60	33	35
Hobby & Identity Groups	53	0.16	55	37	19
Expert Organisations, Think Tanks & Institutional Associations	51	-0.09	47	45	41
All	60	0.21	54	26	50

Notes:
**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.*
The number of cases per actor type is the number of issues on which the actor type mobilised.

Looking at congruence first, we see that the share of issues where there is congruence between the positions of the group community as a whole and the median member of the public is 60%, which is in line with our individual-level findings. Considering the correlation between the share of advocates on an issue in favour of policy change and the support for policy change in the general public, there is no relationship for the advocacy community as a whole: Pearson's r is only 0.21 and not significant at the 0.05 level.

Using the different measures, there is some variation in opinion representation between the actor types on the issues. Yet, the differences are not always in the expected direction: While

the share of issues where business groups and firms are aligned (40% and 44% respectively) with the majority of the public is lower than for public interest groups (67%), other groups representing concentrated interests: trade unions and occupational association actually score similarly high with respect to congruence (66%). Furthermore, both the position measures for public interest groups and for trade unions and occupational associations are correlated with public opinion. Scatterplots of the relationship between shares of the (different types of) groups and the public supporting policy change with fitted regression lines are shown in Figures E1 and E2. They underline the weak relationships between the two communities of actors.

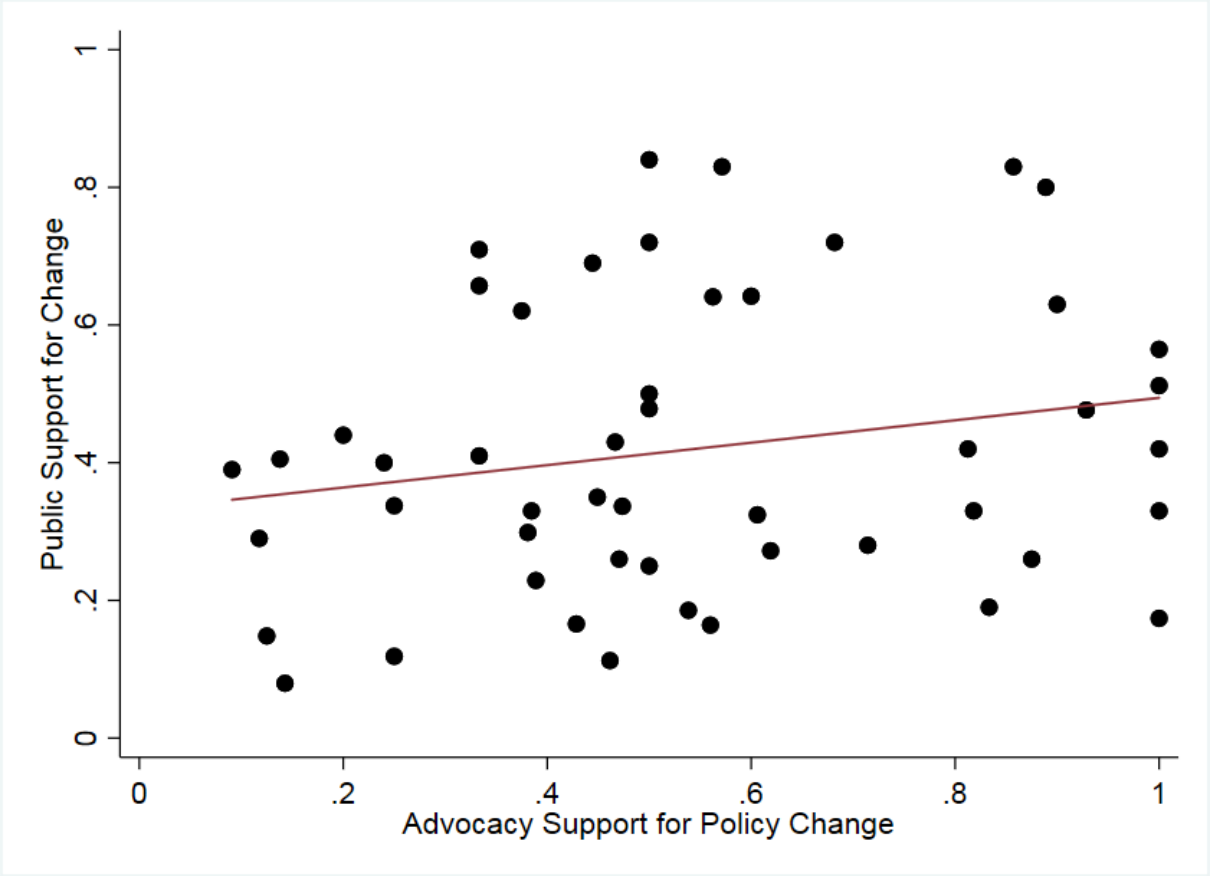

Figure E1. Scatterplot with fitted Regression Line for the Relationship between the Opinion of the Advocacy Community and Public Opinion on the Policy Issues

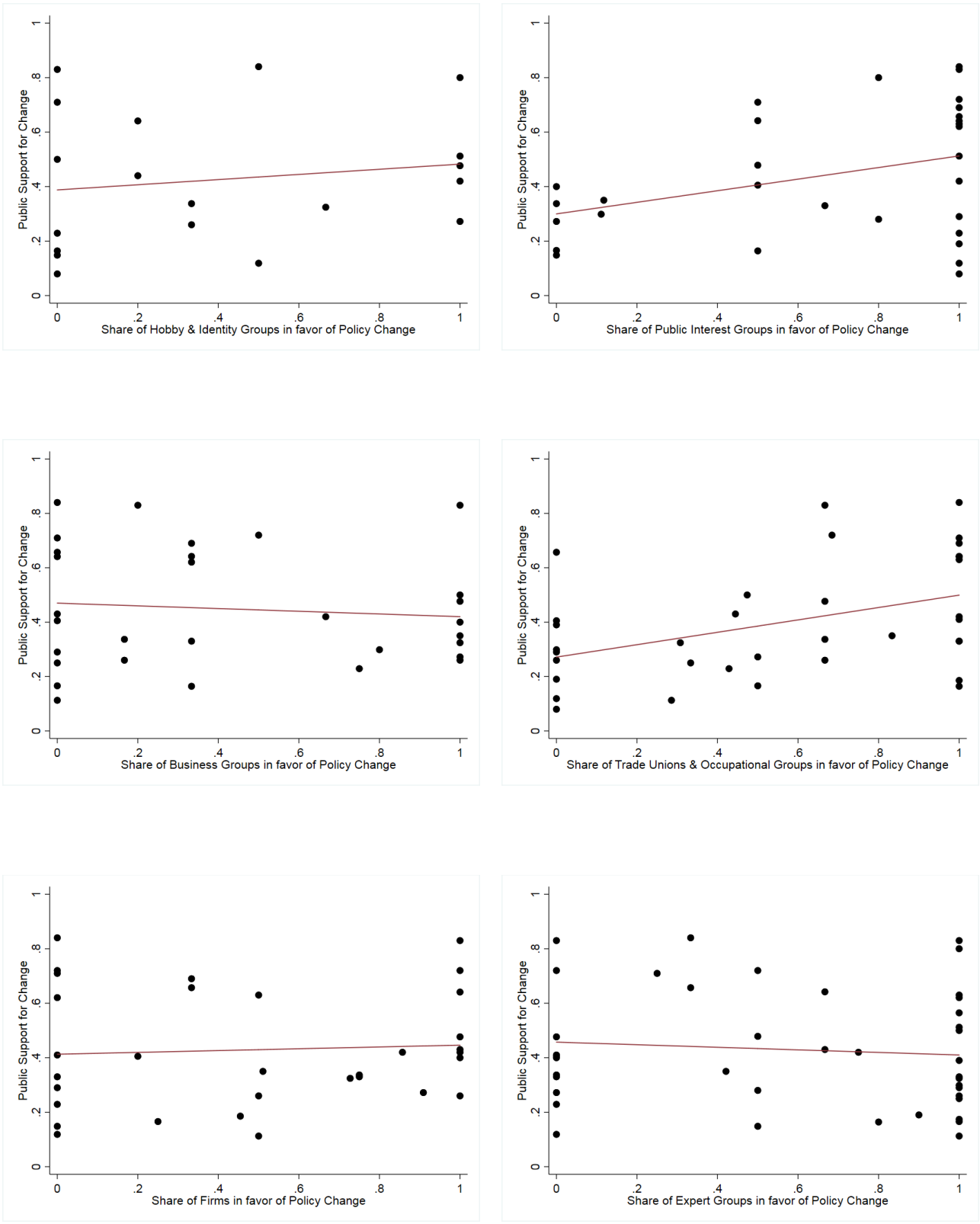

Figure E2. Scatterplots with fitted Regression Lines for the Relationship between the Opinion of different Types of Advocates and Public Opinion on the Policy Issues

Turning to the last two measures in Table E1, there is also no clear-cut support that public interest groups perform better than groups representing concentrated interests when it comes to representing public preferences. Looking at volume, the average share of the public supporting the positions defended by the majority of the public interest groups on the issues is 55%, which is very similar and never significantly different from the scores for the group types representing concentrated interests that range from 47 to 60%. Finally, when looking at the absolute difference in the share of the public and the different group types on an issue supporting policy change, public interest groups do not stand out. Their difference score (36 percentage points) is lower than that of business associations (42 percentage points) and think tanks (45 percentage points) but again very similar to that of trade unions and occupational associations and hobby and identity groups. Again these differences between public interest groups and the other group types are not statistically significant. In sum, also the issue-level results deliver mixed support for the expected relationship between group type and opinion representation put forward in Prediction 1.

Appendix F: Alternative specifications of Issue-level Opinion Representation with Shannon's H instead of the HHI index

Table F1: Absolute Percentage Point Difference between the Shares of the Public and Interest Groups on an Issue supporting Policy Change (OLS Regressions with SEs in Parentheses)

	(F1)	(F2)	(F3)
	Distance	Distance	Distance
Shannon	-0.14*	-0.16*	-0.08
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.08)
Country (ref: Germany)			
UK		-0.04	0.02
		(0.09)	(0.09)
Denmark		-0.13	-0.11
		(0.09)	(0.09)
Sweden		-0.09	-0.14
		(0.09)	(0.09)
Netherlands		-0.08	-0.10
		(0.09)	(0.09)
Number of actors on an issue			-0.08
(logged)			(0.05)
Media saliency			0.06+
			(0.03)
Policy Type (ref: Distributive Issues)			
Regulatory			-0.01
			(0.09)
Redistributive			-0.06
			(0.09)
Constant	0.41***	0.49***	0.65***
	(0.06)	(0.09)	(0.17)
Number of Cases	50	50	50
Adjusted R^2	0.09	0.07	0.06

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Note:
While both Shannon's H and the Herfindahl index are measures of how narrowly or widely observations are distributed across categories, there is the important difference between them that higher values of the HHI reflect a higher level of concentration in the observations, while the opposite holds for Shannon's H where higher values reflect greater diversity. For this reason the directions of the effects estimated with these two measures can be expected to be reversed.

Appendix G: Opinion Congruence

Table G1: Actor-level Congruence: Does the majority of the public holds the same position (pro/con policy change) as the individual interest group? (Multi-level Logistic Regressions with SEs in Parentheses)

	(G1)	(G2)
	Congruence	Congruence
Group Type (ref.: Public Interest Groups)		
Hobby & Identity	-1.13**	-1.16**
	(0.43)	(0.43)
Business	-1.67***	-1.65***
	(0.32)	(0.32)
Trade Unions & Occupational Groups	-0.92**	-0.90**
	(0.33)	(0.33)
Firms	-1.58***	-1.56***
	(0.29)	(0.29)
Expert Org & Think Tanks & Institutional associations	-1.61***	-1.59***
	(0.32)	(0.31)
Issue Level Controls		
Country (ref: Germany)		
UK	0.26	0.21
	(0.51)	(0.52)
Denmark	0.36	0.29
	(0.52)	(0.51)
Sweden	0.66	0.62
	(0.54)	(0.54)
Netherlands	0.43	0.37
	(0.53)	(0.53)
Policy Type (ref: Distributive Issues)		
Regulatory		0.39
		(0.52)
Redistributive		0.03
		(0.52)
Media Saliency		-0.05
		(0.18)
Constant	1.02*	0.85
	(0.43)	(0.61)
Policy Issue Intercept	0.88**	0.83**
	(0.31)	(0.31)
Number of Cases	771	771
AIC	980	985
BIC	1031	1050

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table G2: Issue-level Congruence: Are the majorities of the public and the interest groups on the same side on the issue (pro/con policy change)? (Logistic Regressions with SEs in Parentheses)

Model	(G3)	(G4)	(G5)	(G6)	(G7)	(G8)
	Congruence	Congruence	Congruence	Congruence	Congruence	Congruence
HHI	-0.58	-1.43	-1.50			
	(1.28)	(1.46)	(1.96)			
Share of business groups				-1.75+	-1.74	-2.56+
				(1.03)	(1.13)	(1.39)
Issue Level Controls						
Number of actors on an issue (logged)			0.33			1.02+
			(0.64)			(0.60)
Media saliency			-0.39			-0.65
			(0.42)			(0.43)
Policy Type (ref: Distributive Issues)						
Regulatory			1.32			1.14
			(1.14)			(1.16)
Redistributive			0.65			1.05
			(1.10)			(1.15)
Country (ref: Germany)						
UK		0.98	0.71		0.92	0.46
		(0.96)	(1.08)		(0.96)	(1.05)
Denmark		1.89+	1.82+		1.58	1.59
		(1.01)	(1.06)		(1.00)	(1.07)
Sweden		2.46*	2.96*		2.32*	3.35*
		(1.10)	(1.32)		(1.08)	(1.37)
Netherlands		1.87+	1.94+		1.53	1.81+
		(1.01)	(1.07)		(1.00)	(1.09)
Constant	0.67	-0.33	-2.20	1.03*	-0.20	-3.83+
	(0.66)	(0.86)	(2.73)	(0.48)	(0.81)	(2.27)
Number of Cases	50	50	50	50	50	50
Pseudo R^2	0.003	0.12	0.15	0.05	0.14	0.20

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Appendix H: Opinion Linkage

Opinion linkage at the actor level

Model H1 and H2 show the effect of interest group type on opinion linkage for individual advocates. They do so by examining whether there is a difference between the interest group types in how strongly the share of public support for policy change is related to the likelihood that individual advocates also support policy change. To examine the conditioning impact of group type on the linkage we interact public opinion and group type in the models. Moreover, since the idea is also that the control variables might affect the relationship between the opinion of groups and the public, these variables are also interacted with public opinion in Model H2 where they are included. Figure H1 illustrates the predicted probability that different types of advocates hold a position in favour of policy change for different levels of public support for policy change.

Table H1: Actor-level Opinion Linkage: Relationship between degree of public support for policy change and the position of the interest group (pro/con policy change) (Multi-level Logistic Regressions with SEs in Parentheses)

Models	(H1)	(H2)
Dependent variable	*Opinion of advocate (In favour/against)*	*Opinion of advocate (In favour/against)*
Group Type (ref.: Public Interest Groups)		
Hobby & Identity	1.46 (0.99)	1.58 (1.02)
Business	3.08*** (0.81)	3.01*** (0.82)
Trade Unions & Occupational	1.70* (0.80)	1.74* (0.82)
Firms	2.82*** (0.78)	2.76*** (0.79)
Expert Org & Think Tanks & Institutional associations	3.96*** (0.79)	4.02*** (0.80)
Share of public in favour of policy change	6.19*** (1.59)	3.95 (3.60)
Interaction Effects		
Group Type*Share public in favour		
Hobby & Identity*Share public in favour	-4.54* (2.08)	-4.91* (2.13)
Business *Share public in favour	-7.10*** (1.82)	-6.99*** (1.83)
Trade Unions & Occupational *Share public in favour	-3.35+ (1.84)	-3.66+(1.87)
Firms *Share public in favour	-5.65** (1.81)	-5.57** (1.82)
Experts, Think Tanks & Inst.*Share public in favour	-7.75*** (1.79)	-7.91*** (1.81)
Issue Level Controls		
Country (ref: Germany)		
UK	0.18 (0.50)	0.04 (1.28)
Denmark	0.54 (0.51)	-0.64 (1.17)
Sweden	0.06 (0.53)	-2.42* (1.24)
Netherlands	0.53 (0.52)	-1.01 (0.52)
Policy Type (ref: Distributive Issues)		
Regulatory		0.54 (1.36)
Redistributive		-0.58 (1.43)
Media Saliency		0.38 (0.43)
Interaction Effects with Controls		
Regulatory Issues*Share public in favour		-0.81 (3.40)
Redistributive Issues*Share public in favour		1.86 (3.48)
Media Saliency * Share public in favour		-0.19 (0.99)
UK* Share public in favour		0.57 (2.76)
Denmark* Share public in favour		2.71 (2.20)
Sweden* Share public in favour		6.11* (3.09)
Netherlands* Share public in favour		3.61 (2.66)
Constant	-3.00*** (0.80)	-1.98 (1.57)
Policy Issue Intercept	0.79** (0.29)	0.57* (0.23)
Number of Cases	771	771
AIC	993	1003
BIC	1072	1129

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

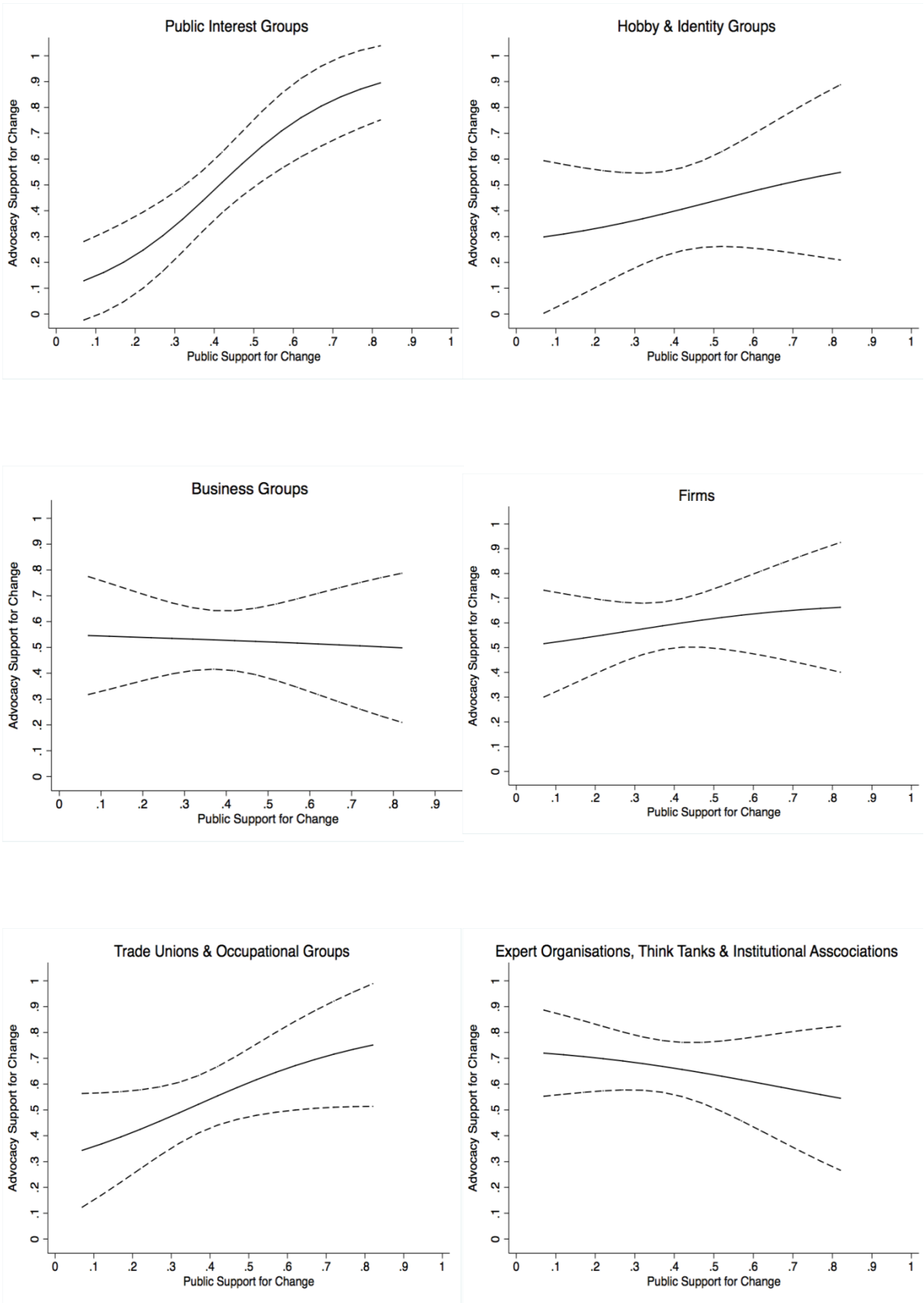

Figure H1: Predicted Probability of Advocacy Support for Policy Change for Different Types of Advocates (based on Model H2)

Opinion linkage at the issue level

Models H3 and H4 examine the effect of the two measures of bias on opinion linkage at the issue level. In order to do so, we include interactions between public opinion and the bias measures in the regressions allowing us to determine whether the relationship between the share of support for policy change by the public and the interest groups on an issue is conditioned by the bias measures.

Table H2: Issue-Level Opinion Linkage: Relationship between the share of the public and the share of the interest groups on the issue supporting policy change (OLS Regressions with SEs in Parentheses)

Model	(H3)	(H4)
Dependent variable	*Share of advocates in favour*	*Share of advocates in favour*
Share of public in favour	0.37	0.41
	(0.39)	(0.28)
HHI	0.42	
	(0.38)	
Share of business groups		0.12
		(0.30)
Interaction Effect		
HHI*Share of public in favour	-0.16	
	(0.86)	
Share of business groups *Share of public in favour		-0.43
		(0.64)
Constant	0.23	0.39**
	(0.19)	(0.13)
Number of Cases	50	50
Adjusted R^2	0.08	0.00

Appendix I: Opinion Volume at the Issue Level

Table I1: Share of the public holding the same position as the majority of the interest groups (pro/con policy change) on the issue (OLS Regressions with SEs in Parentheses)

	(I1)	(I2)	(I3)	(I4)	(I5)	(I6)
	Volume	Volume	Volume	Volume	Volume	Volume
HHI	-0.19	-0.27*	-0.21			
	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.16)			
Share of business groups				-0.12	-0.08	-0.17
				(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.11)
Country (ref: Germany)						
UK		0.07	0.01		0.05	-0.02
		(0.09)	(0.10)		(0.09)	(0.09)
Denmark		0.29**	0.27**		0.26**	0.24*
		(0.09)	(0.09)		(0.09)	(0.09)
Sweden		0.27**	0.31**		0.24*	0.33***
		(0.09)	(0.09)		(0.09)	(0.09)
Netherlands		0.18*	0.18+		0.14	0.16+
		(0.09)	(0.09)		(0.09)	(0.09)
Number of actors on an issue (logged)			0.05			0.11*
			(0.05)			(0.05)
Media saliency			-0.06+			-0.09*
			(0.04)			(0.03)
Policy Type (ref: Distributive Issues)						
Regulatory			0.10			0.08
			(0.10)			(0.10)
Redistributive			0.05			0.08
			(0.10)			(0.10)
Constant	0.63***	0.50***	0.27	0.58***	0.43***	0.06
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.22)	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.17)
Number of Cases	50	50	50	50	50	50
Adjusted R^2	0.02	0.22	0.23	0.00	0.15	0.24

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Chapter 3: Representation through Information

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Representation through information?

When and why interest groups inform policymakers about public preferences

Abstract

While interest groups are often seen as transmission belts of public preferences, little is known as to how they might transmit such preferences. This paper argues that the provision of information is one mechanism through which advocates represent their constituents' interests and analyses who informs policymakers about these preferences and when actors are more likely to do so. The study relies on a new dataset containing information on the arguments advocates made in public hearings that were held on 34 specific policy issues in Germany. The results reveal that the amount of information on public preferences an actor provides is determined by actor type, its public support and position on the issue. Interestingly, information on public preferences is predominantly used by status-quo defenders. This paper contributes to our understanding of interest groups as transmission belts and their potential to enhance governments' ability to respond to public preferences.

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3.1 Introduction

Interest groups are expected to act on behalf of their constituents and seen as channels through which legitimate policy is produced (Dür and De Bièvre 2007; Gilens and Page 2014; Kohler-Koch 2009, 2010; Truman 1951; Urbinati and Warren 2008). However, fears of interest groups bias and unequal representation evoke the question whether interest groups are able to transmit public preferences or whether they thwart policies away from what the public wants (Gray et al. 2004; Schattschneider 1960; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). This paper contributes to this debate by assessing the extent to which interest groups represent citizens through the provision of information about their preferences. Research shows that interest groups serve as important mediators by responding to issue priorities of citizens (Klüver 2015; Rasmussen et al. 2014) and by affecting the extent to which a government addresses public concerns (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Klüver and Pickup 2019). Scholars often assume groups work as such 'transmission belts' (Lowery et al. 2015; Rasmussen et al. 2014), but only few have looked at the extent to which interest groups reflect what the public wants (see for example Flöthe and Rasmussen 2019; Klüver 2015; Rasmussen et al. 2014). So far, little attention has been paid to explaining how the transmission belt mechanism works (but see Albareda 2018). While some suggest that interest groups work as a mediator by *informing* policymakers about public preferences (Albareda 2018; Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Eising and Spohr 2017; Klüver and Pickup 2019; Rasmussen and Reher 2019), existing research has not included information as a variable when assessing whether groups represent citizens.

Arguing that interest groups (or advocates) act as transmission belts by transmitting information on public preferences to the policymaking level**,** the paper analyses who informs policymakers about public preferences and under which conditions actors are more likely to do so. Information on public preferences is defined as information on general public opinion on an issue and on preferences of a specific constituency. Importantly, this is not restricted to interest group member preferences but refers to a broader constituency that will allegedly benefit from the lobbying efforts of a group. The paper theorises that information transmission is dependent on the actor type and the actor's positional alignment with the government and the public. Empirically, the paper relies on arguments interest groups make in written statements that are submitted in public hearings on 34 specific policy issues in Germany. Thus, rather than relying on self-reported information transmission of broadly defined information categories through surveys or interviews, this unique setting allows

gauging fine-grained arguments to uncover some of the underlying dynamics of information provision.

The results show that, overall, interest groups provide information on public preferences. However, citizen groups do so more frequently than professional groups, business groups and experts, suggesting that they have a greater potential to act as transmission belts. Moreover, predominantly opponents of policy change transmit public preferences in order to protect these interests if they are at risk. Furthermore, actors who share the same opinion as a large part of the public inform policymakers more about these preferences. The contribution of this paper is twofold. First, it conceptualises interest groups as transmission belts and provides an empirical test of the assumption that interest groups inform policymakers about what the public wants which is a necessary condition for them to act as transmission belts. Second, it highlights conditions under which actors are more likely to do so which contributes to our understanding of when interest groups have the potential to help governments to respond to public preferences.

3.2 Interest Groups as Transmission Belts

Interest groups are often seen as channels 'through which citizens can express their opinions' to policymakers (Dür and De Bièvre 2007: 1) and portrayed as transmission belts who aggregate and transmit public preferences (Albareda 2018; Kohler-Koch 2010; Truman 1951). While scholars often assume that groups act as transmission belts by providing information about public preferences (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Eising and Spohr 2017; Klüver and Pickup 2019; Rasmussen and Reher 2019), they do not empirically consider the extent to which groups actually engage in informational lobbying. Moreover, while interest groups, in the aggregate, are often expected to represent diverse and balanced interests, most individual groups primarily serve a certain constituency. If we assume that groups work as transmission belts by providing information, we should not only consider general political information but also more fine-grained constituency-specific information. This means that groups can work as transmission belts in a narrow and a wide sense and provide information respectively: Wide, because some groups represent a broad constituency and therefore provide information about general public preferences, and narrow, because some groups focus on the interests of their specific constituency and transmit information about their preferences. Narrow does not

necessarily mean information about members of a group, yet refers to certain subparts of society such as 'families' or 'the poor'.

The literature on informational lobbying has referred to such information as political information, which includes information regarding support or opposition of a specific constituency or the public at large (see for example De Bruycker 2016; Nownes and Newmark 2016). Importantly, however, Nownes finds that advocates do not necessarily make arguments about the public as whole, but rather about certain parts of society (2006: 66). To allow for a systematic analysis of how interest groups can act as transmission belts, the paper defines such information as information on public preferences, which refers both to information on preferences of the public at large but also preferences of specific constituencies and certain segments of the society (cf. Burstein 2014).

In order to understand *how* groups act as transmission belts the paper follows Saward who defines representation as a dynamic process in which multiple actors articulate representative claims to an audience to 'represent or to know what represents the interests of someone or something' (2006: 305). Saward criticises Pitkin (1967), who acknowledges that representative institutions provide information about the people, but takes such information as given and neglects the process of providing such information. Saward shifts the focus to the act of making present and the actor making such claims. Even though Saward's conceptualisation is not without problems either, the focus on claims allows for analysing representation through non-elected representatives such as interest groups (for a discussion, see De Wilde 2013).

A representative claim can be expressed in a number of ways but may refer for example to the needs/desires/preferences of a person or a group of people. Representation through interest groups, then, can be thought of as an act where advocates mobilise on a specific issue (e.g. reforming child support) to actively promote a position (e.g. no cuts) in the interest of a group of people (e.g. families with children) by informing policymakers about the interests of the group of people (cf. Severs 2012). So for representation to occur and for a group to act as a transmission belt, advocates may either signal support or opposition of the public at large or, importantly, of specific constituencies. Such a conceptualisation considers the two underlying mechanisms of how the transmission belt works. A first assumption therefore is:

H0: Interest groups use information about public preferences when lobbying policymakers.

While this does not allow for drawing inferences about whether interest groups are effective in transmitting preferences, it sheds light on a necessary (but insufficient) condition for acting as a transmission belt, i.e., whether (and under which conditions) they provide such information in the first place. Given the focus on the actors of 'making present', the paper theorises how variation in the actor's characteristics affects information provision.

3.2.1 Who informs about Public Preferences?

Although scholars have not found differences across actor types with regard to information provision (De Bruycker 2016; Nownes and Newmark 2016), there are several hints in the literature why we could expect groups to differ in their motivations for transmitting information *about public preferences*.

First, information provision is determined by the type of constituency. While some groups have a clearly defined constituency, others represent a broad public interest (Olson 1965). For example, some groups aim at promoting broader interests (improved air quality) which are not tied to a specific constituency (such as doctors) or restricted to benefit members only (Binderkrantz et al. 2015). Instead, the benefits are collectively available. Public interest groups typically defend diffuse public interests that are not exclusive to their members but the public at large (Dür and Mateo 2013). Even identity groups (e.g. patient groups), who have a slightly more specific constituency promote interests that also non-members could benefit from. Since these groups often rely on (potential) members and supporters for organisational survival, they are under greater pressure to demonstrate that they act in the interest of their constituency (Flöthe and Rasmussen 2019; Klüver 2015: 141), which may also increase the transmission of information about their preferences.

Business groups and firms, in contrast, have clearly defined constituencies. Such groups typically aim at delivering exclusive services for their constituency and defend interests that mainly their members could benefit from. The primary goal of such organisations is service-provision and lobbying is a by-product (Olson 1965). Their focus may hence be less on informing policymakers about what their constituents want but more on technical details that help improve regulations to their advantage (Klüver 2011b: 4). Lastly, professional groups such as trade unions and occupational groups also represent a narrower constituency than citizen groups. Even if they may be more responsive to their members than

business groups, their main motivation is to primarily provide services that mainly their members would benefit from.

Secondly, groups have different capacities and exchange goods to offer when lobbying policymakers (Bouwen 2002; Daugbjerg et al. 2018; Dür and Mateo 2013). Policymakers need technical expertise to increase their output legitimacy, but also information about political support to increase their input legitimacy (Bouwen 2002; Wright 1996). While information about general public opinion may be quite accessible for policymakers, issue-specific information about preferences of different sub-groups is more difficult to access. Policymakers may have preferred options for sources for the different types of information. Citizen groups, since they represent broad interests, are assumed to articulate a diversity of interests and are therefore able to contribute to the input legitimacy of the policymaking process (Kohler-Koch 2010: 106). Moreover, they should validate that their claims reflect the concerns of their constituents (Kohler-Koch 2009: 54) and invest in 'determining member preferences' (Schlozman and Tierney 1986: 142), which makes them a credible source of such information and can help to legitimise a policy decision (Michalowitz 2004: 85).

Actors without mass membership such as expert organisations but also firms cannot credibly provide this information to the same extent (cf. Wright 1996: 92). In contrast, business groups, professional groups and also experts are a credible source of expert information (Bouwen 2002) as they are close to the market (Dür and Mateo 2013; Eising 2007), have hands-on experience (Dür and Mateo 2013; Michalowitz 2004), better capacities to understand the technical and scientific context or even such data themselves (Yackee and Yackee 2006). Given that each information type requires different resources, one can expect groups to specialise in their core capacities (Daugbjerg et al. 2018) and those resources they are especially approached for. This does not imply that business groups or professional groups do not provide information about their members, yet given that access to expert information is easier for them (Dür and Mateo 2013) one could expect them to emphasise this type of information more. Similarly, citizen groups might focus on their core capacity, i.e., provide input legitimacy by transmitting information about public preferences.

In sum, interest groups differ in the type of interest they represent and the type of resources they possess. Whereas some place higher emphasis on pursuing interests for a collective good, others are more focused on sharing their expertise or lobby for specific

interests. This does not rule out that all actor types transmit information on public preferences but their propensity to do so should vary.

H1: Citizen groups are likely to provide more information on public preferences than professional groups, business groups and expert groups.

3.2.2 Under which Conditions do Actors inform about Public Preferences?

Interest groups may not necessarily transmit information on public preferences with the intention to represent the public's interest, but to strategically justify their position and pressure policymakers (De Bruycker 2016; Wright 1996). Research on informational lobbying shows that actors lobby differently depending on their position on a policy (Baumgartner et al., 2009; Burstein 2014). Burstein shows that opponents of policy change use arguments that cast doubts regarding the proposed solution and its effectiveness (2014: 148), suggesting that opponents use information negatively to warn for undesired consequences.

This suggests that advocates channel their constituents' interests especially when their interest is at risk. Kingdon noted that the public sometimes directs governments to do something, yet most of the time constrains the government from doing something (1984). Policymakers rely on interest groups for information to reduce some of the uncertainties they face when deciding on a policy (Wright 1996) and opponents of policy change can use information to highlight the risks of change, something policymakers fear. Hence, opponents of policy change use information on public preferences more frequently to signal negative consequences for (parts of) the public. They may transmit such information to warn of negative consequences to strategically increase fears and uncertainties or to protect their constituents for undesired policy change.

H2: Opponents of policy change transmit information on public preferences more frequently than supporters.

Furthermore, it is important to consider the amount of support an actor enjoys from other players (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Nownes and Newmark 2016). Given the paper's focus on the transmission belt mechanism, an actor's alignment with the public is considered. Public backing is a powerful resource for interest groups to signal broad support and representational value. A recent study shows that certain types of advocates are more successful when they have public opinion on their side (Rasmussen, Mäder, et al. 2018) as a large public majority is

difficult for the government to ignore. Knowing how important public support is, interest groups cannot ignore it (Nownes 2006: 101) and may even be tempted to use information about public preferences strategically (Wright 1996). The more people the actor has on its side, the higher the representational value of an actor's claim as a large part of the public may benefit from or support the new policy. It does not mean that actors who represent minority preferences do not transmit their constituents' interest when they only have low support for their claim. However, the representational value would be rather low and the electoral consequences for policymakers may be minor. In such a scenario, the emphasis on this information should be limited at best. Likewise the likelihood of transmitting more of the information should increase if the actor enjoys broad public support as it demonstrates broad acceptance for the claim.

H3: An actor with a higher proportion of the public on its side is likely to transmit more information on public preferences than an actor with lower support.

3.3 Research Design

The study relies on observed information transmission in public hearings held by standing committees of the German parliament. The hearings are supposed to generate issue-specific expertise and information on actors' position and general support on the topic (Burstein 2014: 130; Eising and Spohr 2017: 316). Public hearings in Germany take place after a bill proposal has been assigned to a committee. The proposals have been initiated by the government and opposition parties. Eventually, 59% of the issues in the sample were enacted. One could argue that predominantly advocates are invited to hearings who support a policy proposal to help policymakers legitimise a policy decision.[20] Yet, we see that only 36% of the advocates were in favour of policy change. This indicates a higher mobilisation of actors who want to protect the status-quo and speaks to a common pattern found in the literature (cf. Baumgartner et al 2009).

As a working parliament, the German Parliament consists of highly professionalised parliamentarians who are able to exert a considerable degree of influence which makes the committees and their hearings an important venue for advocates (Eising and Spohr 2017: 318-9) and hearings an interesting case to uncover underlying mechanisms of information

[20] Also submissions of uninvited actors have been coded. However, they only account for a small share (4%) and controlling for it does not change the results (not shown).

provision. Analysing written statements by interest groups is a novel way of studying information provision. Most studies rely on self-reported information transmission through surveys or interviews (for an exception see Burstein 2014). This is likely to uncover only the information types that actors find most important and may overlook types that are less consciously used. Focussing on one venue in a single country allows labour-intensive coding of arguments to get a more accurate picture of information provision (cf. Burstein 2014: 130-59).

3.3.1 Issue Sampling and Data Collection

The sample of issues is based on a dataset developed within the larger GovLis[21] project that contains 102 specific policy proposals in Germany. The starting points of data collection are existing nationally representative public opinion polls on specific policy issues that were held between 1998 and 2010. Selected issues had to fall under national jurisdiction (as opposed to the EU or sub-national level) and the opinion poll questions had to ask for a change of the status quo. Issues in the sample concern, for example, the question of raising the tobacco tax (see Appendix A for a list of issues). Polls are likely to be conducted on relatively salient policy issues and a sample based on them does not constitute a completely random sample of policy issues (Burstein 2014). However, citizens should have at least somewhat informed opinions if interest groups are expected to transmit them meaningfully (Gilens 2012: 50-6). Following Gilens (2012), the observation period for each policy issue starts in the year the policy item was asked by the pollster and ends four years later or when policy changed.

This study relies on a subsample of issues on which public hearings were held during the observation period and focuses on written evidence. The final sample contains 34 issues on which 42 hearings were held in which actors made 356 statements about the issue. The unit of analysis is an actor in a hearing. Each actor is counted once for testifying at a hearing on the specific issue, however appearances at different hearings on the same issue are counted separately (Burstein 2014: 141; Eising and Spohr 2017). An issue can be discussed in multiple hearings and a hearing can discuss multiple issues, which suggests a cross-classified multilevel structure with actors nested in hearings and issues. However, given that variance at the hearing level is quite low and the data structure overly complex, information provision will be modelled in a two-level structure with actors nested in policy issues. Model fit does

[21] www.govlis.eu

not significantly differ irrespective of whether actors are nested within hearings or issues or within each other.

3.3.2 Dependent Variable

Information types in this paper are conceptualised as arguments with which advocates underpin their position. Arguments are stated reasons an actor uses to justify and substantiate its position (Eising et al. 2017: 5). Thus, after identifying an actor's position on an issue, the different types of arguments used to defend the position were coded by two trained coders. Appendix C1 contains the coding instructions including examples. Arguments are counted separately if a different argument is provided in the next paragraph or if the causal story for why the actor supports (opposes) policy change differs. Two coders independently coded 50 units, which resulted in an acceptable Krippendorff's alpha of .72 (De Wever et al. 2007).

The dependent variable *Information on Public Preferences* relies on two proxies which capture the underlying mechanisms of the transmission belt. The first proxy counts how often an actor makes any references about how much public support (opposition) a policy proposal has. The second proxy records how often the actor argues how a policy proposal will affect certain segments of society. This partially follows Burstein's operationalisation of political information, which includes not only references to broad public support but also how advocates refer to how a policy will affect certain subparts they (claim to) represent. An example would be 'We oppose the proposal because it will aggravate the situation of the poor'. This measurement allows gauging the observed transmission of more specific information that interest groups provide about constituency preferences (as opposed to general public opinion polls that policymakers can also access via other channels). The count measure moreover captures the extent to which actors reinforce certain arguments. The dependent variable combines these two count measures and ranges from 0 to 11 (see Appendix B1 for an overview of all variables).

3.3.4 Independent Variables

The independent variable *Actor Type* distinguishes between four types which are derived from a broader coding scheme for interest groups developed by the INTERARENA project (Binderkrantz et al. 2015) with the addition of firms and experts (see Appendix C2). The

category 'citizen groups' includes public interest groups and identity & hobby groups such as environmental groups or patients groups. This category includes groups that have a strong incentive to represent their members or a more diffuse interest. The category 'business groups' includes firms and business associations, which have a strong advantage over policy expertise and which aim to protect exclusive interests. Professional groups include trade unions and occupational groups. A last category refers to experts, institutional associations and think tanks that are assumed to provide expertise without taking a side for a preferred constituency. The second independent variable *Pro Change* captures an actor's position on an issue, which can be in favour or against policy change. This binary measure is based on a self-reported statement in a written submission to the hearing. Krippendorff's alpha reports an acceptable score of .86 for this variable. Lastly, *Public Support* is measured as the proportion of the public in the opinion poll on the issue that shares the same position as an actor on the issue (based on the coded position in the hearing).

3.3.5 Control Variables

One variable controls for the overall number of arguments an actor has made because the likelihood of providing information on public preferences may be higher if the actor provides more arguments in general. Another variable controls for policy type, distinguishing between regulatory, redistributive and distributive policy issues (Lowi 1964). Information on public preferences may be more likely on redistributive issues where actors discuss the allocation of resources, whereas the discussion on regulatory issues is expected to be more technical. Media saliency controls for whether higher public awareness increases references to public preferences. Saliency is measured by the log of the average number of newspaper articles on the issue per day in two major German newspapers (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and Süddeutsche Zeitung) during the observation period. Lastly, a variable controls for whether an actor provided technical information to rule out that differences between group types are driven by the fact that citizen groups compensate potentially lacking technical information with the provision of information on public preferences. Technical information refers to the provision of scientific evidence, facts and detailed technical knowledge. Krippendorff's alpha for this binary variable is 0.87. The analysis applies multilevel negative binomial models with

random intercepts for policy issues to account for the heterogeneity of different issues and for over-dispersion of the count measure.[22]

3.4 Analysis

Table 3.1 provides descriptive statistics on information provision by different types of actors. As the right column shows, information on public preferences is used by 45% of the actors. The figures in the left columns indicate that citizen groups are more likely to inform policymakers about public preferences: While 64% provide this information, approximately 44 % of professional groups and business groups and 30% of experts supply this type of information. Ultimately, however, the figures show that groups do transmit information about public preferences and have hence the potential to act as transmission belts.

Table 3.1: Provision of information on public preferences for different types of advocates (in percentages)

	Citizen Groups	Professional Groups	Business Groups	Experts & Others	Total
Informing about public preferences	64.29	43.90	44.00	30.00	45.22
Total N	84	82	100	90	356

Table 3.2 presents the findings to test hypotheses 1-3. As predicted in hypothesis 1, the negative coefficients in Models 1 and 2 (adding control variables) indicate that professional groups, business groups and experts provide significantly less information on public preferences than citizen groups. Model 2 shows that the differences for professional groups and business groups are significant at $p<0.05$ and for experts at $p<0.001$. Marginal predicted mean counts for different types of actors (based on Model 2) reveal that on average citizen groups provide information on public preferences 1.3 times per statement, while the amount for the other types of actors is between 0.66 and 0.86.

[22] Alternatively, a zero inflated model could be used as the number of actors not providing political information is relatively high. However, there are no theoretical reasons to expect structural differences in whether actors provide this information at all and how frequent they do so and using such a model without theoretical reasons would risk overfitting the data (Allison 2012; Long and Freese 2001: 262). Furthermore, since zero inflated models cannot easily be run with random effects, multi-level negative binomial models were applied instead.

Table 3.2: Multilevel Negative Binomial Regression with random intercepts for policy issues (SEs in parentheses)

Model	1	2
Dependent Variable	Info on Public Preferences	Info on Public Preferences
H1: Actor Type		
(Ref: Citizen Groups)		
Professional Groups	-0.51**	-0.44*
	(0.19)	(0.18)
Business Groups	-0.49**	-0.44*
	(0.19)	(0.18)
Experts and others	-0.77***	-0.71***
	(0.21)	(0.21)
H2: Pro Change	-0.60**	-0.60***
	(0.18)	(0.18)
H3: Public Support	0.96**	1.04**
	(0.37)	(0.35)
Control Variables		
Number of Arguments	0.14***	0.13***
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Technical information		-0.19
		(0.16)
Policy Type		
(Ref: Redistributive)		
Distributive		0.13
		(0.54)
Regulatory		-1.21*
		(0.49)
Media Saliency (logged)		0.10
		(0.07)
Constant	-1.09***	-0.65+
	(0.29)	(0.37)
lnalpha	-2.01***	-2.04***
	(0.59)	(0.60)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes	Yes
N Cases (Issues)	356 (34)	356 (34)
AIC	756	751

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

However, the differences for the amount of information become only significant after controlling for the overall number of arguments made. While it is crucial to control for the length of an actor's contribution, it suggests that groups differ significantly regarding the emphasis they put on information about public preferences. Appendix D provides an alternative analysis using a binary outcome variable, i.e., whether or not an actor provided information on public preferences. Overall, the results are similar and the differences are significant even when not controlling for the length of an actor's contribution (not shown). Hence, interest group type is an important predictor for whether the actor provides information on public preferences in the first place. If actors decide to transmit such information, they differ significantly regarding how much they emphasise such information.

A further exploration of the control variable technical information supports this finding. As Model 2 shows, actors that provide technical information are less likely to provide information on public preferences. When not controlling for number of arguments the effect of technical information is positive and significant at $p<0.05$ (not shown). This suggest that, generally, the higher the likelihood that an actor provides technical information the higher the likelihood that the actor provides information on public preferences. Yet, when considering the length of the contribution, the results indicate that the emphasis is really one-sided: The more technical information provided, the less information on public preferences is provided.

Hence, when trying to explain information provision, it is crucial to also look at the other types of information that are provided as this ultimately affects the provision of a specific type. This could also explain why some other work has not found differences across group types as the relational aspect has not been considered or is difficult to capture with self-reported information provision, whereby actors can make less accurate estimations of how much a certain type of information was used or was considered important (De Bruycker 2016). It does not mean that business and professional groups do not provide information about public preferences, nor that their informational value is less, solely that citizen groups emphasise it more, possibly because it is their stock in trade as they are a legitimate source for such information.

Second, it was predicted that an actor's position on the issue affects the provision of information on public preferences (H2). As shown in Model 2, opponents of policy change differ significantly from supporters in the amount of information on public preferences they provide. The negative coefficient indicates that supporters of policy change provide less information ($p<0.001$). Hence, opponents of policy change transmit more information on public preferences, possibly in order to warn of negative consequences for their constituents and to either protect their interests or to use it strategically to pressure policymakers. Information is used as a warning signal or as a threat to raise levels of uncertainty about proposed policy changes (Baumgartner et al., 2009: 131) which may be especially effective given the risk aversion of policymakers. This suggests that if the public interest is at risk (at least according to the advocates), policymakers get informed about that. It also adds to our knowledge of how advocates lobby differently, depending on their position on an issue. In fact, it may be one mechanism driving the status-quo bias in the first place. One could argue that the result is driven by the fact that most issues receive very little attention and therefore rivalry amongst actors (Baumgartner and Leech 2001) and that mobilisation is often one-

sided, with predominantly opponents of policy change mobilising at higher rates in order to protect existing legislations (Baumgartner et al. 2009). Appendix E therefore provides an analysis controlling for the level of conflict amongst advocates on an issue. While the results show that actors provide less information about public preferences when they face less conflict, the control does not alter the results.

Lastly, it was argued that the amount of public support an actor enjoys affects information provision. In line with this hypothesis, Model 2 shows a positive and significant relationship between public support and the amount of information the actor provides ($p<0.01$). Thus, the higher the share amongst the public having the same view as an actor, the more information on public preferences are transmitted by that actor. Figure 3.1 shows the predicted mean counts of information on public preferences for different levels of public support with 95% confidence intervals (based on Model 2).

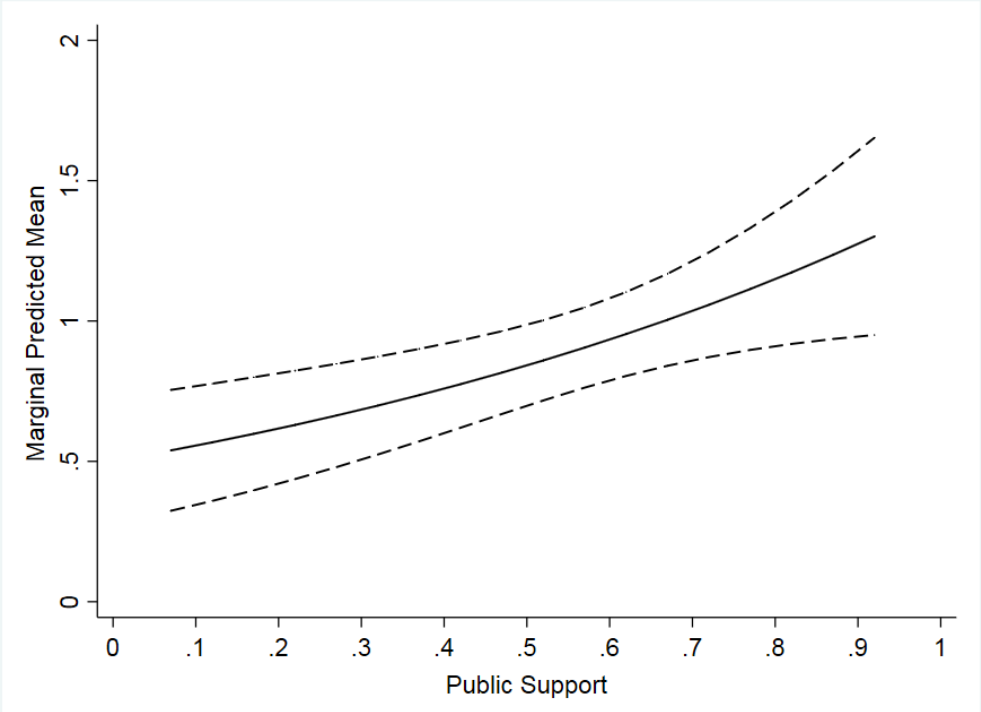


Figure 3.1: Predicted Counts for Public Support for an Actor

When interacting public support with group type (Appendix F), the results show that citizen groups, professional groups and business groups all provide more information on public preferences when they have higher public support, while the information provision of experts slightly decreases. The differences are, however, not significant. Hence, most groups transmit more information on public preferences when they promote the same view, meaning the more

public support actors have, the more they actually push for it. This may underline the strategic usage of this type of information and adds to studies that have shown that interest groups are more successful when they have the public on their side (Rasmussen, Mäder, et al. 2018).

All findings are robust to controlling for a number of factors. As expected, actors provide more information about public preferences on redistributive issues compared to regulatory ones ($p<0.05$), possibly because the conflictual nature of such issues incentivises advocates to transmit their constituents' interest. Furthermore, there is a highly significant effect ($p<0.001$) for the overall number of arguments made by an actor, i.e., the more arguments an actor makes the more information on public preferences is provided.

3.5 Alternative Model Specifications and Limitations

As mentioned, Appendix D provides an analysis using a binary measure indicating whether an actor transmitted public preferences or not. While the results for public support are not significant, all other findings show the same results. It suggests that public support is more important for the amount of information and less for whether to provide the information at all. This also fits to the caveat mentioned earlier: Minority groups are not less likely to provide information about their constituents when they have no public support, yet advocates provide it more frequently, the more their claim is supported by the general public.

Furthermore, the argument has been that interest groups act as transmission belts by informing both about general public opinion as well as specific constituents' interest. Interestingly, advocates primarily make references to specific constituents and not public opinion at large. This shows that interest groups use public hearings to provide quite specific, probably privately held, information about their constituents that policymaker cannot easily access by other means such as the media or party colleagues. Appendix G therefore presents the main analysis using one proxy only and shows that the results are even stronger when looking at information on preferences of specific segments of society only.

The present study uses a unique dataset to empirically test a new theoretical argument, but the design comes with some limitations. First, it is important to bear in mind that the issues in the sample may be somewhat more salient than the average policy issue given that they were sampled from opinion polls and discussed in public hearings, which may have increased public attention and actor mobilisation. A fair share of them concern tax or welfare

issues, which often stimulate larger public interest than other types of issues. Taken together, this could mean that information about public preferences was easier to access for advocates on the policy issues in the sample. Furthermore, it could imply that the level of conflict on these issues is higher than average due to higher mobilisation. Yet, it also suggests that on issues the public cares about, interest groups take on their concerns and transmit their preferences.

Second, while the measure of information about public preferences allowed for gauging both references to public and constituency specific opinion, it only considers such references if the actor specifically referred to the public or a specific group of people. Obviously, groups can represent the public's interest also by providing technical information. Even though this would not be counted as representation in Saward's sense, it does not mean that such actors do not act in the interest of a constituency. This could imply that also business groups and professional groups transmit *more* constituency preferences than this study might lead us to expect. Yet, the same could be said for citizen groups, that is, the measure used in this study might also miss more of their attempts to act as representatives by providing technical expertise. In fact, we do not see significant differences amongst citizen groups and business and professional groups when looking at the amount of technical information (not shown) they provide, which supports existing research (De Bruycker 2016; Nownes and Newmark 2016) and suggests that citizen groups make use of it to a similar extent.

3.6 Conclusion

It has been argued that interest groups act as transmission belts and may be able to enhance a government's ability to respond to citizens by informing policymakers about public preferences. However, studies that have conceived of interest groups as transmission belts have not examined how this mechanism works – both theoretically and empirically. To address this, the paper defined representation as 'claims-making' and conceptualised the transmission belt mechanism as the transmission of information about public preferences. This allowed conducting a systematic analysis of the information provided by interest groups; examining both how frequently it is used and the conditions under which it is supplied. It put forward expectations regarding how actor type, an actor's position on an issue and an actor's public support affect information provision. These predictions were tested on a new dataset that pools information on the extent to which interest groups provide information on public

preferences in public hearings. In addition to expanding on the limited body of knowledge on information transmission of public preferences, the study's content coding of observed information provides a more detailed measure of information transmission than existing studies that rely on surveys and interviews.

The results show that citizen groups transmit more information on public preferences than professional groups, business groups and experts. Thus, those that are seen as important surrogates of the public do transmit these preferences and have the potential to act as information providers that help public preferences get transmitted to policymakers. A recent study shows that groups vary somewhat in the extent to which they share the same view as the majority of the public (Flöthe and Rasmussen 2019). It is the same type of actors that is more likely to share the same view as the public that is also more likely to transmit information on public preferences to the policymaking level, suggesting that citizen groups are better able to represent the public both in substantive terms as well as in the sense of representative claims.

Yet also those for whom representation is a by-product and who are often accused of dominating the interest group landscape transmit preferences. Interestingly, professional groups do not differ from business groups in their provision of information on public preferences. Furthermore, opponents of policy change provide more information on public preferences than supporters. Hence, if interest groups perceive the public interest is at risk, they inform policymakers about these negative consequences, which could be a potential mechanism driving the status quo bias as policymakers may be especially keen to avoid such risks. Lastly, the study shows that the more people share the same view as an actor, the more information on these preferences is provided. This underlines the potential of groups to act according to the wishes of the public and pushing for these preferences.

Ultimately, this paper helps to understand why, when and how interest groups provide policymakers with information on public preferences, which is a necessary condition for groups to act as transmission belts. The paper does not evaluate whether representation through interest groups is successful, i.e., it does not look at whether policymakers respond to the signalled preferences (Kohler-Koch 2010). Future research could explore the extent to which groups are effective in transmitting public preferences. This paper, however, links interest representation to public preferences to assess the extent to which interest groups can act as representatives of the public to explore the complex relationship between public opinion, interest groups and public policy.

3.7 Appendices

Appendix A: List of Policy Issues on which Public Hearings were held

Cutting social benefits
Cutting budget for infrastructure
Cutting budget for Children Support
Implementing financial transaction tax at national level
Punishment for people evading taxes even though they self-reported
Regulating salaries of managers
Privatization of Deutsche Bahn
Decreasing Taxes to boost the economy
Financial release for companies
Raising unemployment benefits according to the development of living costs
Minimum wage for delivery mail service sector
Increasing fees for health insurance
Minimum wage for all sectors
Establishing a wealth tax
Introducing a unique tax rate
Cutting coals subsidies
Increasing Taxes
Making it illegal to carry out a paternity test without the consent of the mother
Introducing a unique health insurance (Citizen Insurance)
Prosecuting black labour in private households
Raising the fee for care insurance for people without children
Abolishing housing grants
Reducing commuter tax
Health insurance should only be paid by employees and not together with employers
Making a dentures insurance obligatory
Introducing a fee for patients when visiting the doctor
Citizen should pay 10% of their health service
Abolishing tax breaks
Raising tobacco tax
Cutting unemployment benefits
No gradual increase for pensions
Raising pension contributions
Increasing the retirement age up to 67
Facilitate moving to Germany for foreign employees

Appendix B

B 1: Variable Overview

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Information on Public Preferences (Count)	356	8792135	1.502867	0	11
Pro change (binary)	356			0	1
Group Type: Citizen Groups Professional Groups Business Groups Experts	356			1	4
Public Support for Actor	356	.5584951	.229845	.0703278	.9456077
Number of Arguments	356	4.657303	4.689272	0	28
Provision of Technical Information	356			0	1
Policy type: Distributive Redistributive Regulatory	356			1	3
Media Saliency (logged) (average number of articles per day)	356	-3.959097	1.120469	-7.307202	-1.442384

B 2: Correlation Matrix

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(1) Group Type	1					
(2) Pro Change	0.1753	1				
(3) Public Support	-0.2585	-0.1836	1			
(4) Technical Info	0.1327	-0.0733	0.0604	1		
(5) No. Arguments	0.0966	-0.2047	-0.0288	0.4800	1	
(6) Policy Type	-0.1418	-0.0286	0.0656	0.1546	0.1488	1
(7) Saliency	0.0781	-0.0957	-0.0652	0.2667	0.3567	0.3765

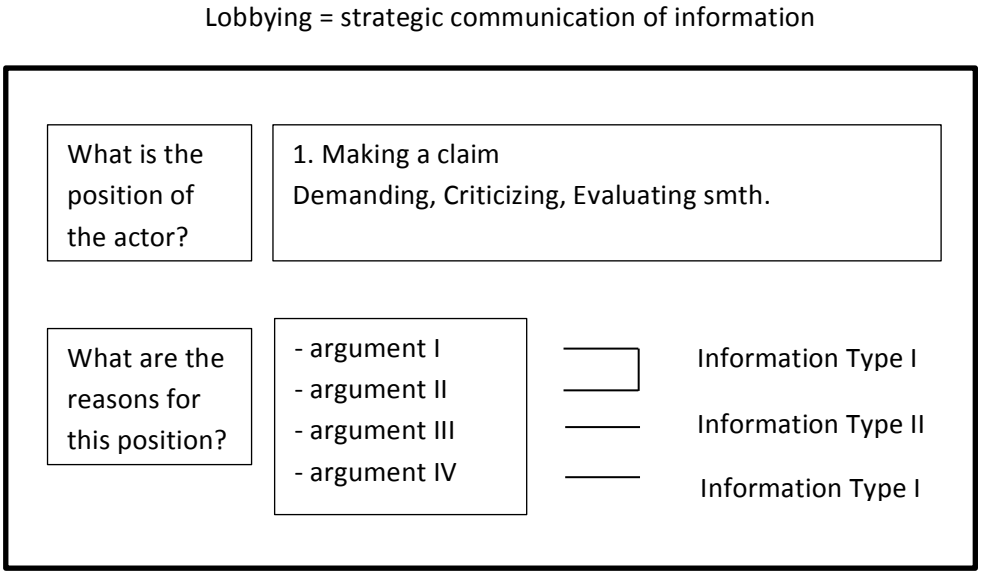
Appendix C

C1: Coding Instructions for Public Hearings[23]

Identifying an argument

In order to identify an argument, the coder should look for an actor's opinion on an issue, likely to be signalled by "demands, criticisms" related to the issue (Koopmans and Statham 1999). In order to identify and code an argument, it helps to think what the causal story is behind one's statement, i.e., actors claiming a position and giving a reason for their position ("we support this, because of that"). Second, after identifying the position on the issue, it is crucial to identify the different types of arguments used. The coder should read relevant passages after and before the statement. Different kinds of arguments can belong to the same type of information. "The proposal will lead to a loss of 300.000 jobs" and "the proposed policy will result in an increase of our greenhouse gas emissions of 20%" are two different arguments, both belonging to the broader category of "information regarding impact for economy, environment and alike". Any change of the structure of the arguments and/or the semantic meaning signifies a new argument and should be counted separately. Often actors also use signal words such as "additionally", "furthermore" etc. in order to add an additional argument. Often, a new argument is presented in a new paragraph. If the same argument re-occurs at another place, it has to be coded and counted again. Below is a figure visualising the relationship between the concepts.

[23]The coders were instructed to code 13 different arguments in order to capture different types of information. This paper, however, only considers two different arguments about public preferences as well as arguments about technical expertise. These guidelines only include codes and examples for the argument types used in the analysis.



Coding of Arguments

When coding, the appearance of how often an actor makes statements based on the following types of arguments has to be counted. This list is not exhaustive. If the coder feels there are other types of arguments used, they should be coded as well. Please copy them to the excel sheet and discuss with coding instructor. Again, it is really important that arguments can be pinpointed to sentences, sub-sentences or clauses in the submission. Please use the comment function and enter the code you would give each argument. Note that the arguments can be positive as well as negative and that both directions have to be coded, i.e. an actor can say something is compatible with existing law but also incompatible with existing law. If there is an argument that does not fit any of the given categories, the coder should highlight it nevertheless, enter "other" in the excel format and note few keywords what category this could be.

Political Expertise

1.1 References to public opinion

Does the actor make any references how much public support the proposal would have? Does the actor signals support or opposition from subparts of the public?

Examples: "This proposal is highly unpopular amongst the public." "70% of the public support the idea." "All sectors are against the proposal."

1.2 References to whose interest would be affected

Does the actor argue how the proposed policy will affect certain subgroups of the society? Are there references to who would benefit and who would be harmed?

Example: „This measure leads to higher burdens on contributors and is therefore to be rejected. " „It is important to point out that the situation for families with a low income would be aggravated."

Policy Expertise

2.1 Facts and Technical Knowledge

Does the actor present studies and analysis (conducted by him or herself or the organisations he or she is working in or external references)? Does the actor present facts about the current situation and facts about the impact of the policy based on calculations? Does the actor present very detailed and highly technical information?

Example: "According to international evidence, fiscal consolidation is successful if it starts on the expenditure side of the budget. This has been shown recently by the studies of Alesina and Ardagna (2009)." "The proposed discontinuation of compulsory insurance will usually mean that pensions will no longer increase by EUR 2.09 per annum of the ALG 11 pension."

C2: Interest group type categorization [24]

1 Labour groups
11 Blue-collar union
12 White-collar union
13 Other labour groups (i.e. think tanks related to unions)
14 Employee representative committee

2 Business groups
21 Peak-level business group
22 Sector-wide business group
23 Breed associations
24 Technical Associations
25 Other business group

3 Institutional Associations
31 Associations of local authorities
32 Associations of other public institutions
33 Associations of managers of public institutions
34 Other Institutional associations

Occupational associations
41 Doctors' associations
42 Other medical professions
43 Teachers' associations
44 Other occupational associations

Identity Groups
51 Patients
52 Elderly
53 Students
54 Friendship groups (i.e. non-specific groups related to a country)
55 Racial or ethnic
56 Other – undefined - identity group
57 Women
58 Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transsexual

Hobby/Leisure groups
61 Sport
62 Other hobby/leisure

Religious groups

[24] In the case of labour groups, business groups, and institutional associations, the subgroup does not need to be specified – they are only listed here to facilitate the classification of interest associations.

71 Associated with the protestant church
73 Other religious group
74 Roman/Catholic groups

Public interest groups
81 Environment and animal welfare
82 Humanitarian – international
83 Humanitarian – national
84 Consumer Group
85 Other – undefined – public interest
86 Government reform
87 Civil liberties
88 Citizen Empowerment

90 Think Tanks

99 Missing / uncodeable

Appendix D-G: Different Model Specifications

Table D: Multilevel Logit Models with random intercepts for policy issues and use of the binary Dependent Variable (SEs in Parentheses)

Model	D1	D2
Dependent Variable	Information on Public Preferences	Information on Public Preferences
H1: Actor Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)		
Professional Groups	-0.88*	-0.77*
	(0.38)	(0.37)
Business Groups	-1.25**	-1.09**
	(0.39)	(0.39)
Experts and others	-1.39***	-1.28***
	(0.40)	(0.39)
H2: Pro Change	-1.01**	-0.97**
	(0.31)	(0.30)
H3: Public Support	0.65	0.98
	(0.69)	(0.69)
Control Variables		
Number of Arguments	0.26***	0.24***
	(0.05)	(0.05)
Technical information		-0.36
		(0.36)
Policy Type (Ref: Redistributive		
Distributive		-0.38
		(0.96)
Regulatory		-1.62**
		(0.63)
Media Saliency (logged)		0.11
		(0.14)
Constant	-0.45	0.02
	(0.56)	(0.79)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes	Yes
N Cases (Issues)	356 (34)	356 (34)
AIC	393	392

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Appendix E: Controlling for Conflict amongst Advocates

Hypothesis 2 predicts that opponents of policy change are more likely to provide information about public preferences and the analysis shows that this is indeed the case. However, one could argue that the result may be driven by the fact that most issues attract very little attention and actor mobilisation which is why there might be little competition amongst the different advocates (Baumgartner and Leech 2001). Moreover, it is typically those actors that mobilise, that aim at protecting the status quo, probably because the existing legislations are more beneficial to them (Baumgartner et al. 2009). Hence, we might see H2 simply because there is very little group rivalry on an issue and then it is predominantly opponents that have mobilised. Given that only 36% of the actors promote policy change, lends support to the thesis that a high share of opponents mobilises. Table E therefore provides the analysis while controlling for the conflict amongst advocates on an issue. Conflict was measured by the distance of the share of actors supporting an issue to the 50-50 split. Higher values therefore indicate less conflict, whereas lower values suggest two similar pro and con camps and therefore more conflict. Model E1 shows a significant and negative effect for the conflict measure ($p<0.05$), which means that if actors face less conflict on an issue they provide less information about public preferences. Most importantly, however, including such a measure does not change the results regarding opponents providing more information about public preferences.

Table E: Multilevel Negative Binomial Regression with random intercepts for policy issues (SEs in parentheses) predicting Information on Public Preferences (count). Controlling for Conflict amongst actors on an issue.

	(E1)
	Information on Public Preferences
H1: Actor Type	
(Ref: Citizen Groups)	
Professional Groups	-0.43*
	(0.18)
Business Groups	-0.45*
	(0.18)
Experts and others	-0.72***
	(0.21)
H2: Pro Change	-0.73***
	(0.19)
H3: Public Support	1.31***
	(0.35)
Control Variables	
Number of Arguments	0.13***
	(0.01)
Technical information	-0.21
	(0.15)
Conflict amongst advocates	-1.04*
	(0.46)
Policy Type (Ref: Redistributive)	
Distributive	0.07
	(0.53)
Regulatory	-1.21*
	(0.48)
Media Saliency (logged)	0.11
	(0.07)
Constant	-0.48
	(0.36)
lnalpha	-2.17***
	(0.63)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes
Number of Cases	356
AIC	746

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Appendix F: Interaction between Group Type and Public Support

One could argue that the effect of public support an actor enjoys on the amount of information about public preferences is conditional on the type of actor transmitting the information. Citizen groups care about representation and may thus be more aware of the public support they enjoy, which they are more likely to use when they have it. Second, in contrast to citizen groups who are better equipped with information on public preferences, business groups, professional groups and experts may not have that information even if they were to promote the same view as the public, because their focus is neither on monitoring what the public wants nor on evaluating which parts of the public would benefit from a policy. Hence, the effect might be stronger for citizen groups than for the other groups. However Table F shows that the effect of public support is not conditional on group type, which means that all actors provide more information about public preferences the more they enjoy public backing.

Table F: Multilevel Negative Binomial Regression with random intercepts for policy issues (SEs errors in parentheses) predicting Information on Public Preferences (count) and interacting Public Support and Group Type

Model	F1	F2
Dependent Variable	Info on Public Preferences	Info on Public Preferences
Actor Type		
(Ref: Citizen Groups)		
Professional Groups	-0.28	-0.02
	(0.76)	(0.76)
Business Groups	-0.33	-0.29
	(0.60)	(0.60)
Experts and others	-0.02	0.16
	(0.68)	(0.68)
Pro Change		-0.57**
		(0.18)
Public Support	1.40+	1.49*
	(0.75)	(0.74)
Group Type Public Support*		
Professional Groups*	-0.44	-0.60
Public Support	(1.08)	(1.06)
Business Groups*	-0.12	-0.14
Public Support	(0.90)	(0.89)
Experts*Public Support	-1.56	-1.50
	(1.07)	(1.06)
Control Variables		
Number of Arguments	0.15***	0.13***
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Technical information		-0.19
		(0.16)
Policy Type		
(Ref: Redistributive)		
Distributive		0.14
		(0.54)
Regulatory		-1.22*
		(0.48)
Media Saliency (logged)		0.10
		(0.07)
Constant	-1.56**	-0.97+
	(0.53)	(0.58)
lnalpha	-1.89***	-2.00***
	(0.55)	(0.59)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes	Yes
N Cases (Issues)	356 (34)	356 (34)
AIC	768	754

Figure F2: Predicted Counts for Public Support by Actor Type

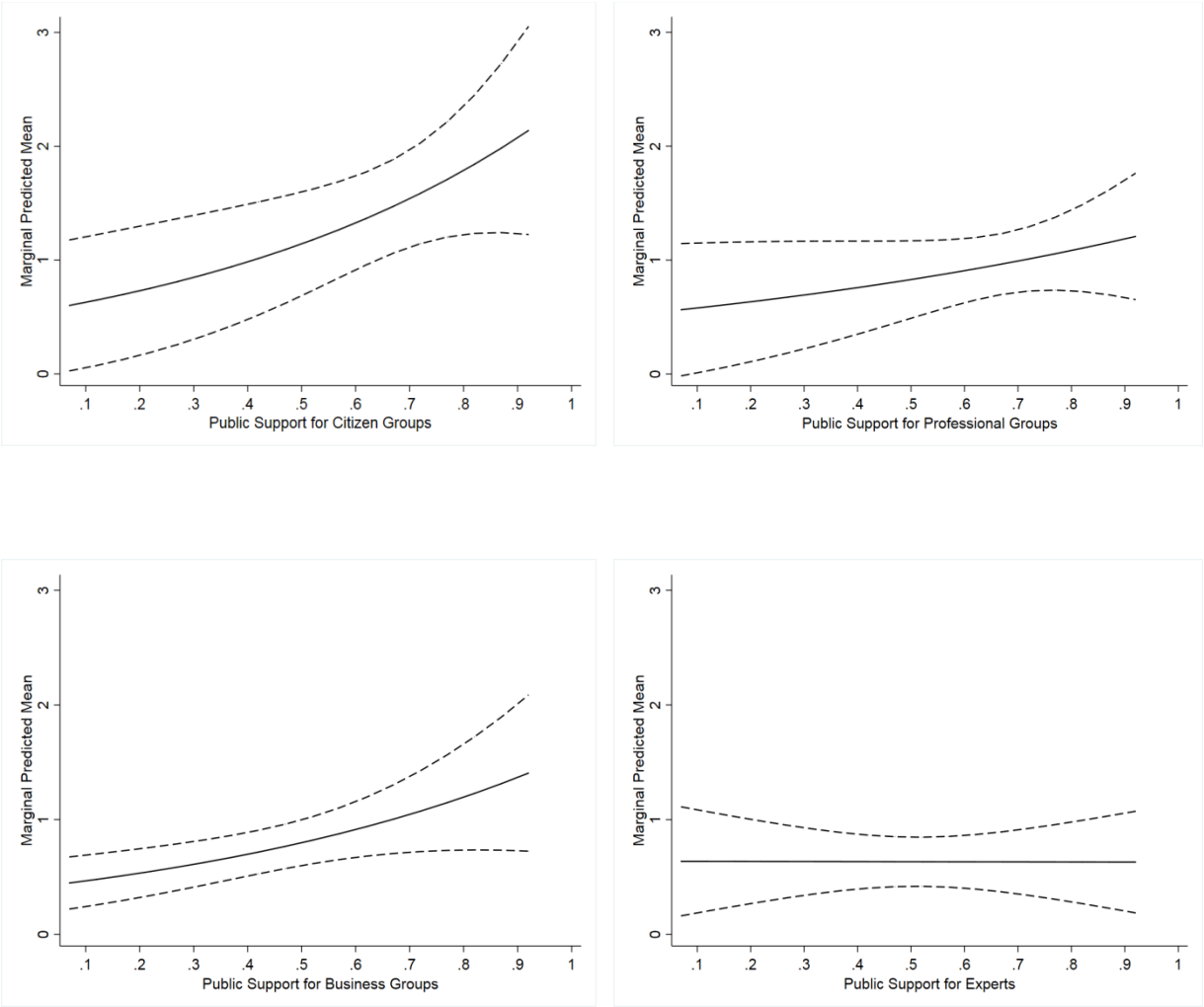


Figure F2 shows the effects of public support for the different types of actors with 95% confidence intervals (based on Model F2).

Table G: Multilevel Negative Binomial Regression Analysis with random intercepts for policy issues predicting Information on Public Preferences using only one proxy (references to specific segments of society) (SEs in Parentheses)

Model	G1	G2
Dependent Variable	Info on Public Preferences	Info on Public Preferences
H1: Actor Type		
(Ref: Citizen Groups)		
Professional Groups	-0.57**	-0.49**
	(0.19)	(0.19)
Business Groups	-0.51**	-0.46*
	(0.19)	(0.19)
Experts and others	-0.95***	-0.86***
	(0.23)	(0.23)
H2: Pro Change	-0.80***	-0.80***
	(0.20)	(0.20)
H3: Public Support	1.25**	1.28***
	(0.38)	(0.36)
Control Variables		
Number of Arguments	0.14***	0.13***
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Technical information		-0.16
		(0.16)
Policy Type		
(Ref: Redistributive)		
Distributive		-0.45
		(0.73)
Regulatory		-1.56**
		(0.60)
Media Saliency (logged)		0.10
		(0.07)
Constant	-1.31***	-0.83*
	(0.30)	(0.37)
lnalpha	-2.04**	-2.13***
	(0.68)	(0.64)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes	Yes
N Cases (Issues)	356	356
AIC	700	689

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Chapter 4: The Costs of Interest Representation

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The Costs of Interest Representation –

A Resource Perspective on Informational Lobbying

Abstract

While expert information and information on public preferences are seen as key resources that interest groups provide to policymakers, little is known about the resources that are necessary to acquire such information. Existing scholarship argues that financial resources enhance a group's ability to supply information, which could be problematic as it suggests that resource poor groups are disadvantaged when lobbying policymakers. Applying a resource perspective to informational lobbying, this paper argues that different information types require different resources and that financial means are less important than assumed. The predictions are tested using a new dataset and survey of 383 advocates active on 50 specific policy issues in five West European countries. The results show that while economic resources are indeed associated with a higher amount of expert information, political capacities allow a group to provide both expert information and information on public preferences. This suggests that groups can rely on other than economic resources for information provision.

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4.1 Introduction

Information provision is a key aspect of lobbying. Policymakers need expert information, i.e. technical information to anticipate the effectiveness of a policy proposal as well as information on public preferences to anticipate electoral consequences (Baumgartner and Jones 2015; Truman 1951; Wright 1996). Consequently, information has often been seen as the 'currency in lobbying' (Chalmers 2013) or the 'stock in trade' (Nownes 2006) and as a resource that interest groups provide to policymakers in exchange for access and influence (Bouwen 2002, 2004; Chalmers 2013; De Bruycker 2016). The fact that policymakers need information that interest groups have leads to an information asymmetry (Ainsworth 1993: 47; Baumgartner and Jones 2015; Gilligan and Krehbiel 1989: 460) and makes information a potential source of influence for interest groups[25]. However, information gathering and transmission is costly and requires resources itself (Austen-Smith and Wright 1992; Wright 1996). Yet little is known about the costs of such information which is why the paper sets out to assess the costs of information provision. Given that advocates lobby, by and large, on *specific policy proposals* (Burstein 2014), the information that is necessary for legislative lobbying is not necessarily off-the-shelf information. For example, an organisation may have overall knowledge on the fuel emissions of cars but lacks information on the impact of auto exhaust fumes on humans. Obtaining such information requires resources such as staff, money or research capacities.

Scholars have argued that there is a relationship between financial resources and the amount of information they supply (Dür and Mateo 2014a; Klüver 2012), and that information provision is a function of a group's internal capacities (Bouwen 2002; De Bruycker 2016). This suggests that actors with more resources can provide more information and subsequently enhance their chances of lobbying success. However, variation in the extent to which advocates are able to provide information can cause bias and foster political inequality (Schattschneider 1960; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). This is problematic from a normative perspective as it favours actors that are able to pay the costs of information-gathering (Hall and Deardorff 2006: 81). Moreover, interest groups are often portrayed as transmission belts of the public (cf. Gilens and Page 2014; Lowery et al. 2015; Rasmussen et al. 2014; Truman 1951), by passing on information about public preferences to policymakers (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Eising and Spohr 2017). If more resources facilitate the

[25]Lobbying, thus, is defined as the strategic communication of information and "interest groups achieve influence through the acquisition and strategic transmission of information that legislators need to make good public policy and get reelected" (Wright 1996: 2).

transmission of such information, it poses a threat to representation as it favours those that are well-endowed (Schattschneider 1960). Hence, the cost of gathering information can introduce bias and favour resourceful groups (Schattschneider 1960) that do not only dominate in terms of sheer numbers (Baumgartner and Leech 2001; Schattschneider 1960) but may also provide more and better arguments. Understanding the costs of information may hence contribute to our understanding of bias in interest representation.

The paper contributes to this debate by applying a resource perspective on informational lobbying. While previous research argues that higher material resources lead to more information provision (cf. Klüver 2012), interest groups have other capacities that may be valuable as well. In addition to *economic resources*, which are defined as an organisation's financial means, groups possess *political capacities.* Political capacities refer to the ability to represent the public or a constituency (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Binderkrantz et al. 2015; Daugbjerg et al. 2018), to act as a mediating actor between citizens and policymakers (Berkhout, Hanegraaff, et al. 2017), but also to mobilise the public and generate support (Daugbjerg et al. 2018; Dür and Mateo 2013; Fraussen and Beyers 2016). The paper argues that while the provision of expert information indeed requires economic resources, information on public preferences can, above all, be acquired with a group's political capacities rather than its economic resources. Empirically, the paper relies on new data collected within the GovLis project[26]. The dataset comprises interest group activity on 50 specific policy issues in 5 West European countries (Denmark, Sweden, Germany, UK and the Netherlands) and relies on detailed media coding, expert interviews, desk research and a survey. This research design allows for analysing information that advocates have provided on a variety of specific policy issues and covers different systems of interest representation.

The findings indicate both similarities and differences in how resources affect the different types of information provision. While economic resources facilitate the provision of expert information, political capacities are also associated with a higher provision of expert information. This could suggest that even if groups do not have a lot of economic resources, they can still acquire expert information by using their political capacities. Political capacities also facilitate the provision of information about public preferences, while there is less evidence for economic resources. Actors drawing on their political capacities are therefore also more likely to provide both types of information. The paper adds to the literature on

[26] www.govlis.eu

informational lobbying (De Bruycker 2016; Nownes and Newmark 2016) by assessing the drivers of information provision, in particular, the type of resources that are necessary for gathering information. By showing a relationship between resources and information provision, it supports research that argues that information is costly and can be used strategically (Austen-Smith and Wright 1992; Wright 1996) but adds that the costs and resources may vary depending on the type of information. Moreover, it suggests that if groups do not spend economic resources on lobbying activities (Binderkrantz et al. 2016; De Bruycker 2016; Dür and Mateo 2013; Rasmussen 2015), they may have the potential to create a more level playing field by making strategic use of other resources.

4.2 The Costs of Information

As mentioned, policymakers need political and expert information, which interest groups are able to provide (De Bruycker 2016). *Expert information* in this paper is defined as information on technical details, the effectiveness of a policy, its legal aspects as well as its economic impact. Political information is often used to pressure policymakers and will be defined in this paper as *information on public preferences,* referring to information on public preferences, electoral consequences or moral concerns (ibid.: 601). Importantly, this is not restricted to general public opinion but also includes information of a specific constituency such as members or a somewhat broader constituency that will allegedly benefit from the lobbying efforts of a group. Information is often seen as a resource (Bouwen 2002; Chalmers 2013; Dür and De Bièvre 2007a), however information requires resources itself and the ability to provide different kinds of information varies across actors.

Moreover, much of the scholarly work uses group type as a proxy for the type and amount of information that is available (Coen 2007; Dür and De Bièvre 2007a; Dür and Mateo 2014a; Yackee and Yackee 2006), when in fact there are no differences across different types of groups regarding information provision (De Bruycker 2016; Nownes and Newmark 2016). Others regard an interest group's information supply as a function of its organisational capacity (Bouwen 2002; De Bruycker 2016). Indeed, some have shown that financial resources affect the amount of information an organisation is able to provide (cf. Klüver 2012) and that interest group influence is a function of the extent to which a group is capable of acquiring and transmitting information that is demanded by policymakers (Chalmers 2011: 472). Given that groups differ in the extent to which they can provide information, those with fewer resources may be disadvantaged. However, while economic

resources are undoubtedly important, actors may be able to use their political capacities to collect and provide information on public preferences.

4.2.1 What Resources do Interest Groups have?

Interest groups possess a variety of resources such as financial means, legitimacy, representativeness, knowledge, members or the ability to mobilise the public (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Binderkrantz et al. 2015; Binderkrantz et al. 2016; Dür and Mateo 2014a, 2016), which will be divided into *economic resources* and *political capacities*. First, all organisations have financial means which can be used on lobbying activities and fall under economic resources. This includes the material resources an interest group has spent on lobbying (De Bruycker 2016; Dür and Mateo 2013; Klüver 2012), such as expenses on lobbying staff or requesting a study. Second, groups have other resources, which will be defined as political capacities to which the literature has referred to in a number of ways. For the purpose of this paper, they are categorised as representation and mobilisation capacity.

Representation capacity is defined by a group's ability to speak on behalf of its constituents (Daugbjerg et al. 2018) or the public at large (Binderkrantz et al. 2015: 99) as well as its close interactions with its members or general citizens. It also refers to the number of people who are represented by that organisation as well as the knowledge of what the public thinks about an issue (Baumgartner et al. 2009) and a group's ability to operate as a mediating organisation that aggregates societal interests which are transmitted to the policymakers (Berkhout, Hanegraaff, et al. 2017).

Mobilisation capacity is defined as a group's ability to obtain and sustain political support (Daugbjerg et al. 2018) and encompasses the amount of public support a group can mobilise (Dür and Mateo 2013; Fraussen and Beyers 2016: 664). This requires communication skills, members and support (Daugbjerg et al. 2018), but not necessarily financial resources. The following section will elaborate on the underlying mechanisms of how economic resources and political capacities enable information provision; arguing that while economic resources may help with the provision of expert information, political capacities are more valuable for information on public preferences than economic resources.

4.2.2 A Resource Perspective on Informational Lobbying

First, economic resources allow an organisation to hire staff with the necessary expertise or buy expertise for a specific issue (Drutman 2015; Dür and Mateo 2016; Nownes and Newmark 2016; Schlozman and Tierney 1986: 97). Even if some ─ especially resourceful ─ organisations have (expensive) research units and in-house expertise for the overall policy area, they have to expand their portfolio and invest in research to gain information on the specificities of the issue in question. As an example, a government may want to discuss a new policy proposal regulating air quality by banning diesel cars in highly polluted areas. A car manufacturer has knowledge on fuel emissions of its cars but no evidence for the impact of auto exhaust fumes on humans. Having economic resources, the company could invest in air-pollution research conducted by external parties and use this information thereafter to provide it to policymakers. This illustrates how economic capacities allow an organisation to expand its issue portfolio (Fraussen 2014) and to acquire more specific information. Undoubtedly, this type of information is difficult to access and costly to acquire. Resource-poorer groups that lack financial resources have a disadvantage in acquiring and ultimately transmitting such information in a credible manner.

However, political capacities do not necessarily require a large budget (cf. Dür and Mateo 2013) and can potentially be used to compensate lacking financial resources (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Schlozman and Tierney 1986). To understand how such capacities allow the acquisition of relevant information, it may help to think of interest groups as transmission belts. Interest groups are commonly described as intermediates between citizens and the policymaking level by organising, aggregating and transmitting public preferences (Eising and Spohr 2017; Rasmussen et al. 2014; Truman 1951; Wright 1996). Yet it requires certain organisational features to generate policy-relevant information and act efficiently as a transmission belt and groups vary in their capacities to do so (Albareda 2018; Albareda and Braun 2018). The capacity to act as a transmission belt is thus, amongst other things, determined by how such groups organise their information flows, i.e., how they interact with their members and supporters and how such information can be channelled to the policymaking level (ibid.).

One important feature for acting as a transmission belt is therefore the capacity to accurately represent the interests of an organisation's constituents. Groups have to be responsive to their members and supporters to avoid risking that members leave the

organisation or withdraw their support, which would ultimately affect the group's chance of survival. Hence, groups have to know what their constituents want and how they could benefit from a policy. The relationship between members, supporters, clients and group leaders affects the information capacity of the organisation as group leaders learn through interactions with members and supporters about their preferences (Schlozman and Tierney 1986). This makes membership a resource which can help aggregate information (ibid.). Such interaction does not require a high budget but communication, which can take place via email, newsletters, events and social media. These interactions do not only help to generate information about what (parts of) the public want(s) but should also increase the likelihood of providing such information to policymakers, as members and supporters expect their group to use the available information, which can be used to pressure policymakers who care about electoral consequences.

A second important feature to act efficiently as a transmission belt is the ability to shift policies in a preferred direction (Albareda and Braun 2018). While this requires a certain degree of professionalisation and access that allow the transmission of information, groups can also rely on their mobilisation capacity, which demonstrates legitimacy and may help to transmit public preferences to the policymaking level. Groups that rely on members and supporters are more likely to use their mobilisation capacities to demonstrate their efforts and to satisfy their members (Maloney et al. 1994). Such mobilisation capacities require fewer financial resources[27] (Dür and Mateo 2013: 664), but rather, communication skills and members and supporters (Daugbjerg et al. 2018). The ability to mobilise large crowds requires that groups have a loyal member and supporter base with whom they interact and whose preferences they know. A group would be unlikely to start a campaign without knowing how its members would react to it. The mobilisation capacity allows group leaders to generate information about preferences (Austen-Smith and Wright 1992) and estimate effects and successes of grassroots campaigns (Wright 1996: 91). The ability to mobilise is also different from actual outside lobbying as it is about the *knowledge* of having the ability to mobilise, which can again be used to pressure policymakers (De Bruycker 2016). In sum, each type of resource has its advantage when providing either type of information, which results in the first two hypotheses.

[27] Dür and Mateo consider that some activities (such as massive campaigns) may require a high amount of economic resources, yet that others (such as press releases or internet campaigns) require considerably less which is why, by and large, these activities are assumed to require less economic resources (2013: 664).

H1: The effect of economic resources on the provision of expert information is stronger than the effect of political capacities.
(Economic Resources Hypothesis)

H2: The effect of political capacities on the provision of information on public preferences is stronger than the effect of economic resources.
(Political Capacities Hypothesis)

An alternative and competing hypothesis could argue that actors cannot use their political capacities as economic resources are key for providing information about public preferences. However, in order to judge whether one type of resource can compensate for the (potential) lack of the other it is necessary to consider the ability of groups to provide both types of information. Since policymakers usually demand both expert information and information on public preferences, interest groups should strive to offer a combination to meet these demands as this might increase their chance of lobbying success. Undoubtedly, a group may provide one type more than the other, but groups are generally able to provide a combination (De Bruycker 2016). However, groups with high economic resources may be able to also access information on public preferences, which allows for the provision of a combination of both types of information. Economic resources can be invested in polling the general public about their position on an issue or in an expensive media campaign, aimed at shaping public opinion. Especially groups that cannot make claims of broad appeal and that convey a message that is contested "will avoid free but potentially unflattering media coverage" and invest in a campaign which they can control (Schlozman and Tierney 1986: 171-2). Again, since resourceful groups can expand and adjust their portfolio, a larger budget can also help a group acquire information on public preferences, which results in a third hypothesis:

H3: Higher economic resources increase the likelihood of a group providing a combination of expert information and information on public preferences.
(Persistence Hypothesis)

4.3 Research Design

The model will be tested using data collected within the larger GovLis project (Rasmussen, Mäder, et al. 2018). The dataset pools information on public opinion and interest group activity on 50 specific policy issues in five West European countries (Germany, Denmark,

Sweden, the UK and the Netherlands). Information provision can determine access to policymakers (Bouwen 2004; Tallberg et al. 2018), which is why the inclusion of different countries considers variation in the degree to which interest groups are involved in policymaking; the UK being a country in which the interest group system is characterised as pluralist while the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden and Denmark experience moderate or strong degrees of corporatism (Jahn 2016; Siaroff 1999).

While much of the research on informational lobbying has surveyed interest groups about general information provision in their lobbying activities (cf. Chalmers 2011; Klüver 2012; Nownes and Newmark 2016), this study applies a design which takes into account that information by advocates is typically provided *on specific aspects of a proposal* and not policymaking in general. While some interest organisations may mobilise to push general policy in a more right or left wing direction, most lobbying activities are targeted at specific policy proposals (Berkhout, Beyers, et al. 2017; Beyers et al. 2014). The 50 specific policy issues in the data were selected as a stratified random sample from issues that occurred in nationally representative public opinion polls. Each policy issue constitutes a concrete policy proposal, which suggests a change of the status quo. The 50 issues in the sample vary moreover with regard to salience, public support and policy type as these aspects are likely to have an impact on lobbying activities and lobbying success. Issues in the sample concern, for example, the question whether to ban smoking in restaurants or to cut social benefits (see Appendix A for more information on the sampling and for a full list of the policy issues). It should be considered though, that opinion polls are likely to be conducted on relatively salient policy issues. Hence, a sample based on issues that a pollster considered worth asking does not constitute a completely random sample of policy issues (Burstein 2014). However, citizens should have at least somewhat informed opinions if interest groups are expected to transmit their preferences meaningfully (Gilens 2012: 50-6). Moreover, the stratified sample ensures variation with regard to media saliency, which is always added as a control variable.

The final unit of analysis in this paper is an actor on an issue. Actors (or interest groups) are defined based on their observable, policy-related activities which follows a behavioural definition of interest groups (Baroni et al. 2014; Baumgartner et al. 2009). Several steps were taken to identify the actors that mobilised on an issue. First, student assistants coded interest group statements on the specific policy issue in two major

newspapers[28] in each country for a period of four years (Gilens 2012) or until the policy changed. Second, interviews with civil servants that have worked on the issue during our observation period (82% response rate) helped to complete the list of advocates that have mobilised on the issues. Lastly, desk research of formal tools and interactions such as public hearings or consultations was conducted in order to identify more relevant actors. Although this triangulation may still have missed some actors, the interviews with civil servants should help ensure that actors who exclusively focused on less visible inside-lobbying strategies were also captured. From December 2016 until April 2017, an online survey was conducted with 1410 advocates identified as active on the specific issues. 383 answered the questions regarding the variables relevant for the analysis in this paper (see Appendix B1 for full overview of response rates), which results in a response rate of 27%.

4.3.1 Dependent Variables

Following De Bruycker (2016), the paper distinguishes between expert information and information on public preferences which results in two dependent variables. Information provision was measured by inquiring how often, on a 1-5 scale, an actor has used certain arguments (Appendix B2 provides an overview of the exact survey questions). *Expert Information* consists of arguments referring to facts and scientific evidence, the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed policy, the economic impact for the country as well as the compatibility with existing legislation (De Bruycker 2016: 601). The answer categories range from 1-5 with 1 meaning 'never' and 5 'very often'. The values for the different arguments were added and divided by the number of items so that the final dependent variable is ordinal and ranges from 1-5. Cronbach's alpha for this variable is 0.74.

Information on Public Preferences consists of arguments referring to public support on the issues (ibid.) as well as fairness and moral principles (Nownes and Newmark 2016). The latter has been added to ensure that not only information about general public opinion is considered but also about how a policy will affect organisations and/or certain segments of society (Burstein 2014; Nownes and Newmark 2016). Again, the items were added and divided by two so that the final variable ranges from 1-5. Cronbach's alpha for this variable is 0.77. Additionally, the paper tests whether an actor provided a combination of two types of

[28] Denmark: Politiken and Jyllands-Posten; Germany: Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung; Netherlands: De Volkskrant and NRC Handelsblad; Sweden: Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet; United Kingdom: The Guardian and The Telegraph

information and therefore provides a third dependent variable. The variable *Combination* is a binary variable and relies on the other two dependent variables. The variable takes a 0 if actors hardly provided any information at all or if an actor provided a lot of one type of information only, i.e., when an actor scores lower than 3 on both types of information or either type of information. The variable assigns a 1 if an actor scores above 3 on both information on public preferences as well as expert information. Appendix C1 provides a full overview of all variables and their distributions.

4.3.2 Independent Variables

The main independent variables are economic resources and political capacities. The variable *Economic Resources* follows the logic of material resources (cf. Dür and Mateo 2013; Klüver 2012). However, instead of asking for the general budget or staff of the organisation, it asks about the extent to which the actor agrees with having spent economic resources on lobbying activities on that issue. The advantage is that this measures resources that have been devoted to lobbying on the issue and not the financial or personnel capacity of an organisation in general. This is an ordinal variable ranging from 1-5 with 5 indicating strong agreement.

The variable *Political Capacities* is measured with four different survey items, which capture both the representation as well as mobilisation capacity. Two items ask about how important it was to the actor to interact with members or relevant stakeholders on the specific issue, and about the importance of representing the public on the issue. This operationalisation follows research that argues that political capacities refer to the legitimacy and representativeness a group can provide (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Daugbjerg et al. 2018; Fraussen and Beyers 2016). Arguably, the question is more about the importance, rather than a group's actual capacity. The measure therefore implies that actors who considered a certain tactic as important on the specific issue also used it. While this measure is certainly not ideal, it allows for empirically approaching political capacities such as representativeness and legitimacy. Two other items ask about the extent to which an actor had public support and media attention on an issue (again, see Appendix B2 for exact survey questions). This operationalisation follows research that argues that political capacities refer to the ability to mobilise citizens and volunteers (Binderkrantz et al. 2015: 99; Dür and Mateo 2013: 664; 2014a; Kollman 1998). This ability is likely to cause a lot of visibility, which will result in higher media attention and news reports. All questions range from 1-5, with 5 indicating strong agreement or high importance. The four measures were added and divided by four so

that the final variable ranges from 1-5. Cronbach's alpha for this scale is 0.62. To ensure that the relationship between political resources and information provision is not in fact a relationship between the outside activities of a group and information provision the analysis will control for that. Appendix C2 provides a correlation matrix, which shows that economic resources are correlated with political capacities representation at 0.37, which suggests that these resources are in fact different.

4.3.3 Control Variables

The analyses control for the type of actor providing information as this might influence both the resources that an actor has as well as the type of information that is provided. The variable *Interest Group Type* follows the categorisation of the INTERARENA project (Binderkrantz et al. 2015) with the addition of firms and experts since these actors are similarly likely to provide information to policymakers (see Appendix D for an overview of the different actor types).[29] The category citizen groups includes public interest groups as well as hobby & identity groups, thus groups that represent a collective good, rely on members, organise campaigns and typically have limited financial resources (De Bruycker 2016; Dür and Mateo 2013). Second, trade unions and occupational groups are membership organisations which can interact a lot with their members and rely on their hands-on expertise while at the same time have a fair amount of financial resources due to membership fees (Dür and Mateo 2013: 663; Rasmussen 2015: 277). The third category includes firms and business associations, thus groups that do not rely on individual members, avoid outside activities and are likely to be endowed with financial resources and market power (Dür and Mateo 2013: 663; Klüver 2011b: 5). Lastly, individual experts, think tanks and institutional associations are assumed to be less endowed with material resources than business groups but more than citizen groups as their strength is their in-house expertise and research they can provide.

The analysis furthermore includes a control variable for *Media Saliency* as advocates may be more likely to provide information on public preferences on highly salient issues, whereas expert information may be more likely on less salient issues. Saliency is measured by the log of the average number of newspaper articles containing a statement on the issue per day based on the two newspapers that were used for the coding. Moreover, a variable that reports the *Policy Type* is included which distinguishes between redistributive, distributive

[29] An intercoder-reliability test on the same sample resulted in a Krippendorff's alpha of 0.92 in distinguishing these different actor types (effective n=50, 2 raters).

and regulatory issues (Lowi 1964). Whereas expert information may be more likely on regulatory issues, information on public preferences may be more likely on redistributive issues which are likely to cause more conflict (Dür and Mateo 2013: 665). Third, a variable controlling for *Outside Activities* is included in the analysis to rule out that the relationship between political capacities and information provision is in fact a relationship between outside activity and information[30] (Dür and Mateo 2013; Hanegraaff et al. 2016). The variable is based on two items, each of them surveying advocates about how important they considered activities such as protest or other activities mobilising the public, or targeting the press for their work on the issue. All items were asked on a five-point scale and were added and divided by the number of items. Arguably, this variable could also be interpreted as a measure of mobilisation capacity. However, it measures actual activity, whereas the mobilisation capacity variables measures resources the actors could rely on.

Another variable controls for the *Organisational Salience*, that is, how important an actor considered the issue in question compared to other issues. The importance an actor attributed to an issue may both affect the amount and the type of information provided as well as the amount of resources invested. If an issue is not a priority for an organisation the amount of information provided can be expected to be considerably lower compared to an issue that is high on the organisational agenda. Similarly, it could be assumed that organisational salience affects the amount of resources that are spent on collecting information, i.e., that an organisation is willing to spend much more resources if a topic is of high importance compared to issues that are less relevant. This variable ranges from 1 to 5, 5 indicating that the issue was much more important compared to the average issue an organisation is working on.

Lastly, a control for the *Position* of an actor has been included as some argue that actors lobby differently depending on their position on the issue (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Burstein 2014). As such, it has been argued that those aiming to challenge the status quo need to invest more to convince policymakers to risk unforeseeable consequences (Baumgartner et al. 2009), which could influence the amount as well as the type of information provided. Positions were coded while identifying the actors and thus rely on manual coding based on media statements, official documents and expert opinion.[31] If an actor's position was missing

[30] Outside activity and information on public preferences indeed significantly correlate at 0.64.
[31] An intercoder-reliability test on the sample resulted in Krippendorff's alpha of 0.78 for identifying positions on the issue.

or coded as neutral the self-reported position based on the survey was added. Again, a full overview of all variables can be found in Appendix C.

4.4 Analysis

Before turning to the regression analyses, the following section will briefly explore the distribution of the main variables. Overall, actors tend to provide more expert information (mean of 3.5) than information on public preferences (mean of 3.1). Furthermore, a majority of the actors provide a combination of both types of information (60%). A visual inspection illustrates (see Appendix E) that economic resources as well as political capacities are positively associated with either type of information. It shows that each type of resource could compensate for the (potential) lack of the other as each resource shows a positive effect on either type of information. The following part turns to the multivariate regression analyses to test the hypotheses. All analyses are run as multilevel models with random intercepts for policy issues to account for the heterogeneity of different issues and fixed effects for countries to control for unobserved differences across countries. Since the dependent variables to test hypothesis 1 and 2 are ordinal, multilevel ordered logistic regression models are employed as displayed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Multilevel ordered logistic regression models with random intercepts for policy issues and standard errors in parentheses.[32]

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
DV	Expert Info	Expert Info	Info on Public Preferences	Info on Public Preferences
Economic Resources	0.32***	0.24*	0.19*	0.17+
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Political Capacities	1.15***	0.73***	1.56***	0.99***
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.14)	(0.17)
Actor Level Controls				
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)				
Professional Groups		0.20		-0.21
		(0.31)		(0.29)
Business Groups & Firms		0.35		-1.00**
		(0.32)		(0.31)
Experts & Others		0.77**		-0.06
		(0.29)		(0.27)
Position (Ref: Pro Change)				
Neutral		-0.78*		-0.71+
		(0.34)		(0.37)
Against		-0.11		0.25
		(0.21)		(0.20)
Organisational Salience		0.34**		0.10
		(0.10)		(0.10)
Outside Activities		0.44***		0.68***
		(0.12)		(0.12)
Issue Level Controls				
Media Salience (log)		0.05		0.04
		(0.10)		(0.08)
Policy Type (Ref: Distributive)				
Regulatory		-0.22		0.83*
		(0.41)		(0.34)
Redistributive		0.06		0.26
		(0.42)		(0.34)
Country (Ref: Germany)				
UK	1.14**	1.09*	0.62	0.36
	(0.44)	(0.50)	(0.46)	(0.43)
Denmark	-0.04	-0.31	0.09	-0.31
	(0.38)	(0.43)	(0.40)	(0.37)
Sweden	-0.25	-0.45	-0.07	-0.27
	(0.41)	(0.45)	(0.44)	(0.38)
Netherlands	0.26	-0.08	1.06**	0.79*
	(0.38)	(0.42)	(0.41)	(0.36)
Policy Intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Advocates	383	383	383	383
Number of Issues	45	45	45	45
AIC	1901	1871	1486	1416

+p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

[32] VIF scores range from 1.19 to 3.03, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a problem.

Hypothesis 1 predicts that higher economic resources result in a higher level of provided expert information. Model 1 does indeed show a positive and significant effect for economic resources ($p<0.001$). Model 2 adds actor and issue level controls. Although the effect size decreases and the significance drops from $p<0.001$ to $p<0.05$, the main effect remains. In line with hypothesis 1, the results show a positive association between economic resources and the provision of expert information. However, Model 2 shows that a group's political capacities are valuable as well ($p<0.001$). The magnitude of the coefficients indicates that the effect of political capacities on the provision of expert information is even stronger than of economic resources, which is also supported by Figure 4.1a[33]. The figure shows the effect of each type of resource on expert information, comparing the effects for low levels to high levels of either type of resource. While both economic resources and political capacities show a significant increase from low (blue, left) to high (red, right) levels, the increase for low to high levels of political capacities is somewhat steeper. This suggests that groups without economic resources can gather and provide expert information by relying on their political capacities. In fact, an additional analysis (not shown) run on a sample excluding actors that score 3 or higher on economic resources shows strong and significant ($p<0.001$) effects for political capacities. Hence, actors with no or low levels of economic resources can make use of their political capacities and still provide expert information.[34]

Models 3-4 test hypothesis 2, i.e., whether an actor's political capacities are related to the provision of information about public preferences; the idea being that groups learn through interactions with members and constituents about their preferences. Model 3 shows a significant and positive effect for political capacities ($p<0.001$) as well as economic resources ($p<0.05$). However, adding actor and issue level controls in Model 4, the effect for economic resources decreases and the significance drops to $p<0.1$, while the effect for political capacities stays significant ($p<0.001$). Figure 4.1b illustrates that the increase from low (blue, left) to high (red, right) levels of economic resources is marginal, while higher levels of political capacities are associated with more information on public preferences. Hence in line with hypothesis 2, the analysis shows a positive relationship between an actor's political capacities and the level of provided information about public preferences.

[33] The figures show the predicted margins calculated with mixed effect models instead of multilevel ordered logistic models for high and low levels of resources and with 95% confidence intervals.
[34] An additional test interacting economic resources with political capacities shows a negative significant effect ($p=0.06$), i.e., the effect of political capacities is especially strong for low levels of economic resources (not shown).

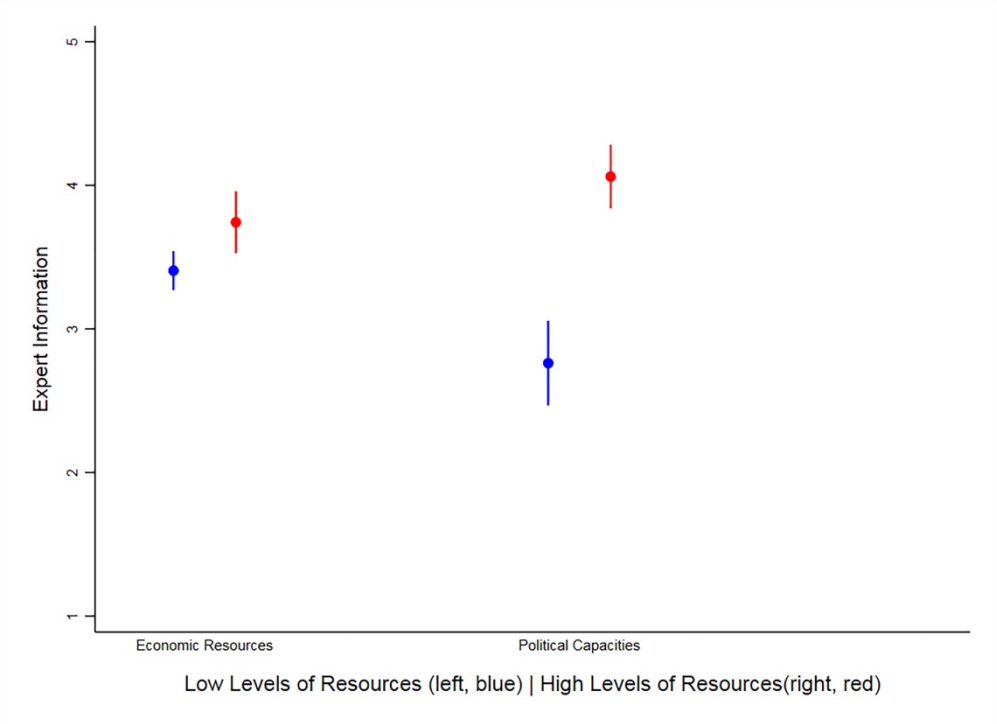


Figure 4.1a: Predicted Amount of Expert Information for low (blue, left) and high (red, right) levels of resources with 95% Confidence Intervals

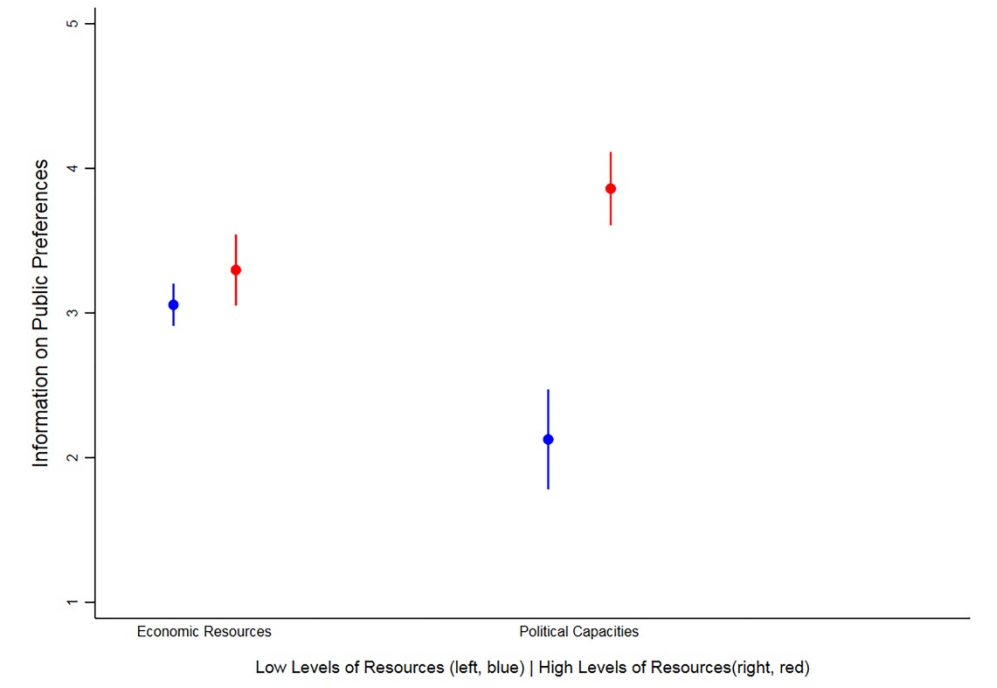


Figure 4.1b: Predicted Amount of Information on Public Preferences for low (blue, left) and high (red, right) levels of resources with 95% Confidence Intervals

With regard to the added control variables, Model 2 shows that the different types of actors do not differ from citizen groups with regard to the amount of expert information they provide. Only experts are more likely to provide expert information compared to citizen groups ($p<0.01$), which does not come as a surprise. According to Model 4, business groups provide significantly less information on public preferences than citizen groups ($p<0.01$). Thus, those that typically have more interactions with members and the public, i.e., citizen groups, are more likely to provide information on public preferences. Running the models without controlling for actor types reveals similar results, whereby the effect of economic resources on information on public preferences even fails to achieve significance at the 0.1 level (not shown). This demonstrates that it is more important what kind of resources a group has, irrespective of the type of organisation.

For both types of information the effect of outside activities is positive and highly significant ($p<0.001$). While the inclusion of this variable does not take away the effect of political capacities, it is an important independent factor. The correlation between *Outside Activities* and *Political Capacities* is quite high (0.63, see also Appendix C2), however, the VIF test suggests that correlation between the variables does not introduce problematic multicollinearity to the model. Nevertheless, the analysis has been run excluding the variable outside activities (See Appendix F). The effects for economic resources and political capacities on expert information remain unchanged (Model F1). However, the effect for economic resources on information about public preferences becomes significant at $p<0.05$ (instead of $p<0.1$), while the effect of political capacities stays the same (Model F2). This could suggest that economic resources are quite important for outside activities such as big campaigns and events, yet less so for acquiring more politicised information.

Furthermore, the more an actor considers an issue to be relevant, the more expert information the actor provides ($p<0.01$). Surprisingly, more information on public preferences is provided on regulatory issues than on distributive issues ($p<0.05$). However, this could also be caused by the types of issues that made it into the sample, which is why this finding should be interpreted with caution. The same holds for the finding that information on public preferences is more likely in the Netherlands compared to Germany ($p<0.05$) and that expert information is more likely in the UK than in Germany ($p<0.05$).

The analyses only test for effects of two types of resources on, firstly, expert information and, secondly, information about public preferences. It does not allow for making

any inferences as to whether one resource is more valuable for one type of information than the other type of information. That is, the analysis does not test whether economic resources are more important for expert information than for information about public preferences, nor whether political capacities have stronger effects on information about public preferences than on expert information. Appendix J provides an analysis of such an alternative way of approaching this question. It shows that political capacities are more important for information about public preferences than for expert information. Furthermore, economic resources are more important for expert information, yet the differences are not significant. While this additional analysis compares the effect for one resource across different types of information, the main hypotheses intend to compare the effect of two types of resources on either type of information.

Table 4.2 finally presents the models to test hypothesis 3, which argues that economic resources are likely to affect the provision of a combination of both types of information. Given that the dependent variable to test hypothesis 3 is binary, multilevel logistic regression analysis is employed.

Table 4.2: Multilevel logistic regression models with random intercepts for policy issues and standard errors in parentheses.

Model	(5)	(6)
DV	Combination	Combination
Economic Resources	0.17	0.09
	(0.13)	(0.15)
Political Capacities	1.52***	0.88***
	(0.20)	(0.24)
Actor Level Controls		
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)		
Professional Groups		-0.11
		(0.46)
Business Groups & Firms		-1.23*
		(0.48)
Experts & Others		-0.16
		(0.41)
Position (Ref: Pro Change)		
Neutral		-1.10*
		(0.53)
Against		0.09
		(0.30)
Organisational Salience		0.35*
		(0.14)
Outside Activities		0.65***
		(0.17)
Issue Level Controls		
Media Saliency (log)		-0.10
		(0.12)
Policy Type (Ref: Distributive)		
Regulatory		0.13
		(0.50)
Redistributive		-0.31
		(0.50)
Country (Ref: Germany)		
UK	0.99	0.49
	(0.62)	(0.63)
Denmark	-0.18	-0.58
	(0.52)	(0.53)
Sweden	-0.21	-0.27
	(0.57)	(0.54)
Netherlands	0.80	0.47
	(0.54)	(0.51)
Constant	-5.17***	-5.47***
	(0.78)	(1.14)
Policy Intercept	Yes	Yes
Number of Actors	383	383
Number of Issues	45	45
AIC	418	382

+p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Model 5 shows the effects for providing a combination of information. Surprisingly, yet in line with the previous results, political capacities have a positive and significant effect on providing a combination of information (p<0.001), which does not change after adding actor and issue level controls. Hence, contrary to what was expected in H3, economic resources

have no effect and do not result in providing both types of information. In contrast, more political capacities allow for the provision of a combination of information as shown in Figure 4.1c. The predicted probability of providing a combination of information types increases from 58% to 63% for the observed range of economic resources and from 26% to 82% across the observed range of political capacities.

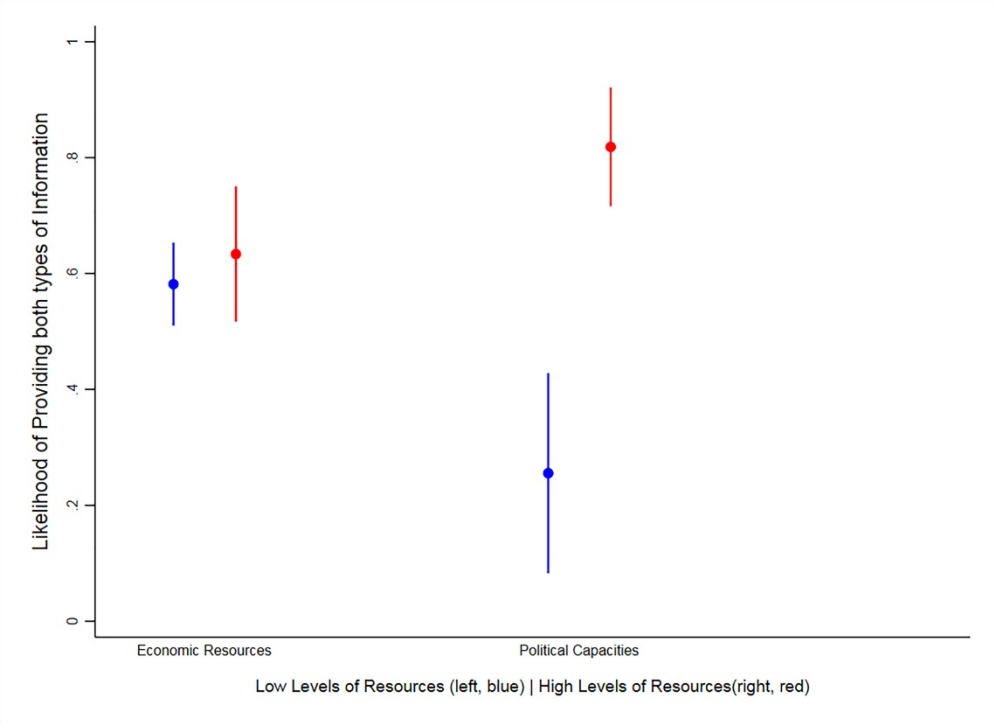


Figure 4.1c: Predicted Probabilities of an actor providing a combination of information at low (blue, left) and high (red, right) levels of resources with 95% Confidence Intervals

The control variables for these models show that citizen groups are more likely to provide a combination than business groups ($p<0.05$). Again, organisational salience as well as outside activities have a positive and significant effect on the provision of a combination ($p<0.05$ and $p<0.001$).

Summarising the findings for the hypotheses, the paper shows that while economic resources are arguably valuable for information provision (cf. Klüver 2012), it depends on the *type* of information and, moreover, that other resources are valuable as well. It confirms the argument by Dür and Mateo (2013) on strategies: Not all interest group activity requires a high budget and the interaction with members and supporters generates information and knowledge as well (ibid. 2013). This also speaks to a line of research that looks more at the internal organisation of groups and how they interact with their members. Groups that want to

transmit the preferences of their members and constituents to policymakers have to be attentive to their members' preferences (Albareda 2018). This, however, requires certain organisational features that facilitate the alignment of preferences with members (Kohler-Koch 2010) such as consultations, internal surveys, plenary discussions, meetings and working groups (Albareda 2018). These types of interactions allow group leaders to learn about their members preferences. Importantly, these interactions also allow groups to learn more about technical aspects of a policy proposal as many members may have hands-on experience (Wright 1996: 94).

This also supports the idea that political capacities may help compensating potentially lacking economic resources when providing expert information, which becomes even more obvious in the last model that considers when actors provide both types of information. The results for the effect of resources on providing both types of information shows that it is not actors with economic resources that persist but that the knowledge and information gained through political capacities may help groups provide information. Moreover, the few differences across actor type suggest that the mechanism works via the resources a group has, irrespective of the type of group. This would also mean that group type cannot necessarily be used as a proxy for the types of information a group possesses (cf. Dür and Mateo 2014a) and explain why empirical studies have not found differences across group types with regard to expert information (De Bruycker 2016; Nownes and Newmark 2016).

4.5 Robustness

The effects have also been tested with different model specifications. First, the ordinal models have been run as multilevel OLS regression models (see Appendix G). The effects for both resources on expert information stay the same. While the effect for political capacities on information on public preferences also stays the same, the significance for the effect of economic resources fails to reach significance (Model G2). As an alternative operationalisation of economic resources, Appendix H provides models that use a logged version of an organisation's staff size on the issue. This variable was measured with a survey question asking about staff efforts in full-time equivalents that only received 226 answers. In line with the results, the effect for organisational staff is significant for expert information but not for information on public preferences or a combination of information. Moreover, in spite of the missing data the effects for political capacities on political and expert information are similar. Lastly, the two ordinal dependent variables have been recoded into binary variables

(see Appendix I). Values above 3.5 were coded as 1, indicating that this type of information was provided often and values below were coded as 0, indicating that this information has rarely been provided. Again, the results show a positive and significant effect of economic resources and political capacities on expert information (Model I1), yet only a positive and significant effect for political resources and not economic resources in a model testing for the provision of information on public preferences (Model I2). In sum, the different analyses show robust results for the strong positive effect of political capacities on the provision of information on public preferences. Furthermore, there is evidence that economic resources increase the level of provided expert information. There is also quite robust evidence that political capacities are relevant for the provision of expert information. This could suggest that even when advocates have only low economic resources, they could draw on their political capacities and still provide expert information. Moreover, political resources are relevant for providing information on public preferences as well as a combination of information, rejecting the idea that economic resources are key for informational lobbying.

4.6 Conclusion

This paper started out to explore the resources that are necessary for an interest group to provide information to policymakers as it argued that information is not only a resource when lobbying policymakers, but requires resources in itself. While much of the academic literature has highlighted the importance of economic resources and the power of financially well-endowed groups, the paper argued that different information types may require different types of resources. The paper puts forward predictions arguing that political capacities are more important for information on public preferences than economic resources while economic resources are more relevant for expert information than political capacities. Furthermore, it hypothesised that financially well-endowed actors can use their financial resources to nevertheless access information on public preferences. The predictions were tested using a novel dataset on interest group activity on 50 specific policy issues in five West European countries.

The results show a positive relationship between economic resources and the provision of expert information as well as between political capacities and the provision of information on public preferences. Interestingly, the availability of political capacities also seems to enable groups to provide expert information. These findings suggest that groups can use political capacities to access expert information even if they do not have high levels of

economic resources. This also explains why groups with political capacities are able to provide a combination of both types of information, which, ultimately, may allow more efficient lobbying through the provision of different types of information. A potential explanation is that groups do not only learn about preferences when they interact with their members and supporters but also gather policy relevant expert information (Albareda 2018; Johansson and Lee 2014; ; Wright 1996). Hence, close interactions with citizens and knowledge on public preferences seem to be valuable resources for an interest group that can be used for providing information to policymakers. Such interactions do not necessarily require a budget to be spent on hiring expertise or conducting a study but are relatively easily accessible.

Thus, even though the present study illustrates that information provision is costly (Austen-Smith and Wright 1992; Wright 1996), the costs vary and are not only of a financial nature which means that informational lobbying does not necessarily favour economically well-endowed groups (Schattschneider 1960). Moreover, assuming that interest groups act as transmission belts by transmitting information to policymakers (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Eising and Spohr 2017), the paper illustrates the ability for interest groups to work as such a transmission belt, independent of the financial resources they have.

Arguably, there are limits as to how much one can generalise based on a sample of five West European countries and 50 policy issues. However, relying on issues that represent a broad range of topics and vary with regard to media salience, public support and policy type, should at least increase the likelihood of generalisability to a broader set of issues. It is important to bear in mind, though, that the issues in the sample may be more salient than an average issue given that they were sampled from opinion polls. This could mean that access to information – especially information on public preferences – may have been somewhat easier and therefore less costly than on less salient issues. A potential next step would be to look more closely at how organisations acquire their information and also when they do so to see how and whether this is determined by the issue context. Moreover, although the paper does not offer direct proof that the findings are generalisable to other countries, the theoretical mechanisms outlined in the paper should also apply to other European democracies. Nevertheless, a future contribution could look at informational lobbying in younger democracies in which interest groups may be less involved in policymaking. Another caveat is that the study only includes interest groups that have mobilised on the issue, which means these groups had some resources that allowed them to mobilise and provide information. This

could suggest that the findings underestimate potential biases introduced by information transmission and the resources that are necessary to do so. Future research could analyse the internal information flows of an organisation with a more qualitative approach to uncover the causal pathways of information. Lastly, the present study only sheds light on the supply side of information. Given that policymakers need both types of information and that interest groups should be more effective in lobbying if they provide a combination of information types, the findings indicate that at least with regard to the information they provide, it is not only those with a high budget that are able to inform policymakers. Yet we also know from the literature that interest groups predominantly provide expert information (Burstein 2014; De Bruycker 2016; Nownes and Newmark 2016). This may be because they consider this the most important and efficient type of information, in which case economically well-endowed groups are similarly well-equipped. Future research could thus go one step further and test what type of information policymakers actually want and, ultimately, consider the most, that is, what type of information is most influential.

4.7 Appendices

Appendix A: Sampling Strategy and Overview of Policy Issues

One of the challenges in interest groups research is how to draw a representative sample as it is hard to define a clear population. This study follows an issue-centred approach (Beyers et al. 2014), rather than an actor-centred sampling strategy to also account for varying context factors that may affect lobbying behaviour. There are different starting points from where to sample policy issues. While some rely on a legislative database (Beyers et al. 2014; Burstein 2014), or the media (Bernhagen 2012), the starting point for the project's dataset were nationally existing public opinion polls between 2005-2010. The survey item had to be a specific policy issue rather than an overall policy area, present a suggestion for policy change, was measured on an agreement scale and had to fall under national competences (as opposed to EU or national level). These criteria have led to a list of issues, whereby the number of issues varies per country. From the selected set of issues, a final sample was selected in a way that ensures variation with regard to issue type, media salience and public support for the issue. By ensuring such variation, we aim to increase our ability to draw more generalisable conclusions.

The advantage of this approach over sampling issues from the legislative agenda is that the sample also captures interest group activity before an issue was introduced in the parliament, which makes the chance of policy change slightly higher. Sampling from existing opinion polls, however, means that the sample only includes issues that were somewhat salient so that they were worth polling on (Burstein 2014). In that sense, also this sample is not a completely random sample of issues. However, citizens should have at least somewhat informed opinions if interest groups are expected to transmit their preferences meaningfully (Gilens 2012). The advantage is thus that the dataset includes issues the public has an opinion on instead of issues the public does not care about or has no meaningful opinion on. The stratified sample, moreover, ensures variation with regard to media saliency, which is always added as a control variable.

Table A: Overview of Policy Issues

Country	Policy issue
Denmark	Building of a bridge for vehicles and trains across the Kattegat
	Reducing mortgage interest deduction from 33% to 25%
	Granting asylum to families with children among rejected Iraqi asylum seekers
	Reducing the unemployment benefit period by half from four to two years
	Strengthening the control of the Danish agriculture in order to take action against the misuse of antibiotics
	Controlled delivery of heroin for particularly vulnerable drug addicts at special clinics as a pilot scheme
	Introducing differentiated VAT
	Making schools' average test results public
	Cutting the allowances paid to young people between 25 and 29 years by half
	Creation of an equal pay commission
Germany	Financial support of Arcandor through public money
	Guaranteeing a pension above the poverty line for pensioners who have paid contributions for many years
	Supplying citizens with consumption vouchers to boost the economy
	Establishing a wealth tax
	State control of electricity prices
	Banning of computer games that glorify violence
	Cutting the tax exemption for night, Sunday, and holiday supplements
	Cutting coal subsidies
	Making it illegal to carry out a paternity test without the consent of the mother
	Cutting social benefits
Netherlands	Allowing all illegal immigrants who have lived in the Netherlands for a long time to stay
	Raising the retirement age to 67
	Abolishing the mortgage interest
	Spending more money on development aid
	Obligating stores to be closed on Sunday
	Ban of smoking in restaurants
	Banning embryonic stem cell research
	Allowing more asylum seekers
	Banning euthanasia
	Building new nuclear power plants
Sweden	Permanent introduction of a congestion charge in Stockholm
	Reinstating the wealth tax, which was abolished in 2007 and meant that anyone with a fortune of 1.5 million paid 1.5% in taxes
	Rescuing Saab through government funds
	Banning the construction of minarets in Sweden
	Reducing third-world aid
	Introducing a language test for Swedish citizenship
	Restricting the right to free abortion
	Making household and domestic services tax deductible
	Allowing free download of all films and music from the Internet
	Increasing the old age retirement age
UK	Giving amnesty to illegal immigrants who have spent ten years in Britain without getting into trouble with the police
	Scrapping ID cards
	Requiring food manufacturers to reduce the fat/salt content in their products
	Introducing a graduate tax, where graduates would pay an extra income tax on their income after graduating
	Allowing a third runway to be built at Heathrow Airport
	Reducing corporation tax

	Increasing Air Passenger Duty, to be paid by people taking both short-haul and long-haul flights
	Subsidising the building of new nuclear power stations
	Increasing the tax on large executive-style, estate, and 4x4 vehicles
	Downgrading ‘ecstasy’ from a class-A drug to a class-B drug

Appendix B: Overview of Survey Data

B1. Response Rates Per Country for the GovLis Survey

Country	Not Completed	Completed	Total Invited
Germany	175	50	225
	77%	22%	100%
UK	339	73	412
	82%	18%	100%
Denmark	114	134	248
	45%	54%	100%
Sweden	173	96	269
	64%	36%	100%
Netherlands	131	125	256
	51%	49%	100%
Total	932	478	1,410
Total rate (%)	66%	34%	100%

B2. Survey Questions

The appendix B2 lists a template of the survey questions. The actual survey was individualised for each specific policy issue (*policytitle*) and time of observation (*period*). Furthermore, all questions were adjusted according to the advocate's specific actor type (*membership organisation/firm/expert*).

Arguments

Regarding the issue of #u_policytitleshort# #u_periodlong#, how often did you/your organisation/your company use arguments…

… referring to facts and scientific evidence	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)	DK
… referring to the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed policy	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)	DK
… referring to the economic impact for the country	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)	DK
… referring to compatibility with existing legislation	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)	DK
… referring to public support on the issue	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)	DK
… referring to fairness and moral principles	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)	DK

Resources and Capacities

Regarding the issue of #u_policytitleshort#, please indicate whether you agree that you/ your company/ your organization…

Political Capacity

… had media attention.	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree or disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	DK
… had public opinion on your side.	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree or disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	DK

On the issue of (policytitleshort), how important was it for you *(experts)*/ your organisation *(associations)*/ your company *(firms)* to represent…

…the general public	Not Important (1)	Somewhat Important (2)	Moderately Important (3)	Important (4)	Very Important (5)	DK

Please indicate how important the following activities were to you *(experts)/*your organisation *(associations)*/ your company *(firms)* on the issue of (policytitleshort) (periodshort).

Interaction with members or stakeholders, such as in newsletters or discussion events	Not Important (1)	Somewhat Important (2)	Moderately Important (3)	Important (4)	Very Important (5)	DK

Economic Resources

Regarding the issue of #u_policytitleshort#, please indicate whether you agree that you/ your company/ your organization…

… spent a high level of economic resources.	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree or disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	DK

Outside Activity

Please indicate how important the following activities were to you/your organization/your company on the issue of #u_policytitleshort# #u_periodshort#:

Protest or other activities mobilising the public	Not Important (1)	Somewhat Important (2)	Moderately Important (3)	Important (4)	Very Important (5)	DK
Commenting in the press or conducting media campaigns	Not Important (1)	Somewhat Important (2)	Moderately Important (3)	Important (4)	Very Important (5)	DK

Organisational Salience

This survey addresses the issue of #u_policytitleshort#. #u_explainissue# How important was the issue of #u_policytitleshort# to you compared to other policy- related issues you work on?

5 = Much more important
4 = More important
3 = Equally important
2 = Less important
1 = Much less important

Appendix C: Overview of Variables

C1. Descriptive Statistics of all Variables

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Info on Public Preferences	383	3.138381	1.240847	1	5
Expert Information	383	3.519582	.9446087	1	5
Combination	383	.5979112		0	1
Economic Resources	383	2.355091	1.177569	1	5
Political Capacity	383	3.334856	.8188185	1	5
Interest Group type (Categorical)	383			1	4
Position (Categorical)	383			0	2
Organisational Salience	383	3.375979	1.148478	1	5
Media Saliency (log)	383	-3.441598	1.373981	-6.614726	-.7323679
Outside Activity	383	2.840731	1.205121	1	5
Policy type (Categorical)	383			1	3
Country (Categorical)	383			1	5

C2. Correlation Matrix

	Economic Resources	Political Capacity	Media Saliency	Outside Activity	Orga. Salience	Group Type	Pro Change	Policy Type
Economic Resources	1							
Political Capacity	0.3732	1						
Media Saliency	0.2394	0.0183	1					
Outside Activity	0.3434	0.6302	0.0582	1				
Org. Salience	0.3346	0.4434	0.1204	0.4954	1			
Group Type	-0.1050	-0.1757	-0.0616	-0.3491	-0.0983	1		
Pro Change	0.0527	0.0447	-0.1397	0.0622	0.0001	-0.0435	1	
Policy type	0.0395	-0.0271	0.0419	0.0429	0.0082	-0.0059	-0.0856	1
Country	-0.0170	0.0447	-0.0469	0.1081	0.1315	-0.0044	-0.0481	0.1819

N=383

Appendix D : Interest Group Categorisation

The coding scheme relies on the INTERARENA project (Binderkrantz et al. 2015) to which firms and think tanks have been added.

Public interest groups
Environment and animal welfare
Humanitarian – international
Humanitarian – national
Consumer Group
Government reform
Civil liberties
Citizen Empowerment
Other public interest

Business associations
Peak-level business group
Sector-wide business group
Breed associations
Technical business associations
Other business group

Firms

Labour groups and occupational associations
Blue-collar union
White-collar union
Employee representative committee
Other labour groups
Doctors' associations
Other medical professions
Teachers' associations
Other occupational associations

Identity, hobby and religious groups

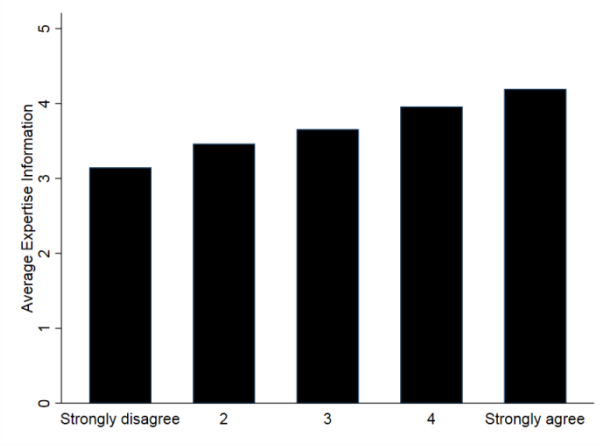
Patients
Elderly
Students
Friendship groups (i.e. non-specific groups related to a country)
Racial or ethnic
Women
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transsexual
Other – undefined - identity group
Sports groups
Other hobby/leisure groups
Groups associated with the protestant church
Roman/Catholic groups
Other religious group

Expert organizations, think tanks and institutional association
Expert organizations
Think tanks

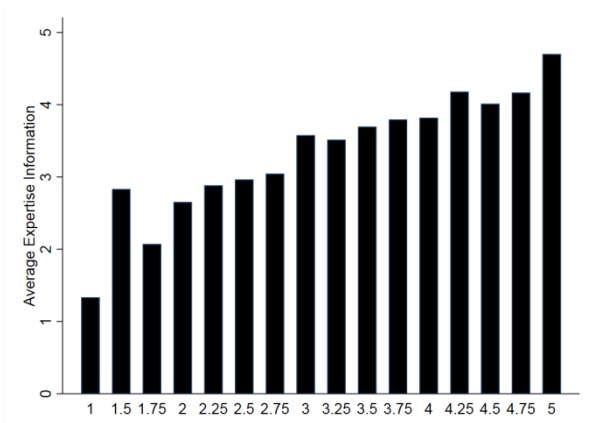
Associations of local authorities
Associations of other public institutions
Associations of managers of public institutions
Other Institutional associations

Appendix E-I: Descriptive Statistics and Different Model Specifications

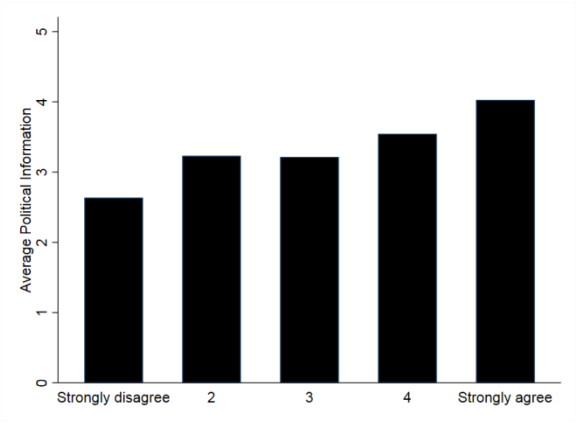
E: Visual Inspection of Main Variables



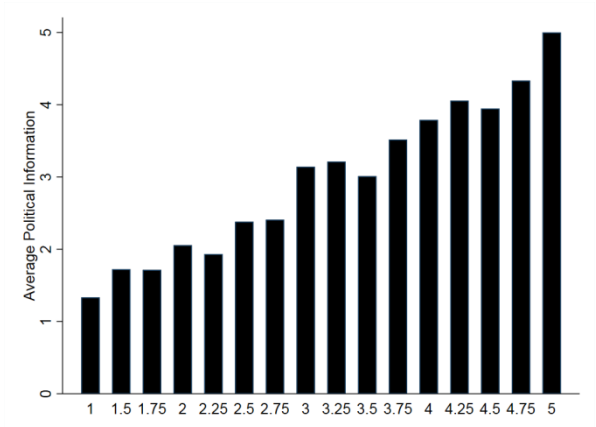
E1: Economic Resources on Expert Info



E2: Political Capacity on Expert Info



E3: Economic Resources on Info on Public Pref.



E4: Political Capacity on Info on Public Pref.

F: Multilevel ordered logistic regression with random intercepts for policy issues and SEs in parentheses, excluding Outside Activity

	(F1)	(F2)
	Expert Information	Info on Public Preferences
Economic Resources	0.26**	0.21*
	(0.09)	(0.09)
Political Capacities	0.99***	1.42***
	(0.15)	(0.15)
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)		
Professional Groups	0.14	-0.19
	(0.30)	(0.28)
Business Groups & Firms	0.11	-1.27***
	(0.31)	(0.30)
Experts & Others	0.48+	-0.40
	(0.27)	(0.26)
Position (Ref: Pro Change)		
Neutral	-0.91**	-0.96**
	(0.34)	(0.36)
Against	-0.01	0.31
	(0.21)	(0.20)
Organisational Salience	0.44***	0.23*
	(0.10)	(0.09)
Media Saliency (log)	0.07	0.04
	(0.10)	(0.08)
Policy Type (Ref: Distributive)		
Regulatory	-0.07	1.17***
	(0.41)	(0.33)
Redistributive	0.17	0.54
	(0.42)	(0.34)
Country (Ref: Germany)		
UK	1.18*	0.54
	(0.50)	(0.42)
Denmark	-0.31	-0.24
	(0.43)	(0.37)
Sweden	-0.43	-0.20
	(0.45)	(0.38)
Netherlands	-0.02	0.91**
	(0.42)	(0.35)
Random Intercept	Yes	Yes
Number of Cases	383	383
AIC	1884	1447

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

G: Multilevel Regression Analysis with random intercepts for policy issues (OLS Regression with SEs in Parentheses)

Model	(G1)	(G2)
DV	Expert Information	Info on Public Preferences
Economic Resources	0.08*	0.06
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Political Capacities	0.32***	0.43***
	(0.06)	(0.07)
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)		
Professional Groups	0.10	-0.11
	(0.12)	(0.14)
Business Groups	0.10	-0.50***
	(0.12)	(0.14)
Experts & Others	0.34**	-0.07
	(0.11)	(0.13)
Position (Ref: Pro Change)		
Neutral	-0.31*	-0.30+
	(0.14)	(0.16)
Against	-0.04	0.10
	(0.08)	(0.10)
Organisational Salience	0.15***	0.04
	(0.04)	(0.05)
Outside Activity	0.17***	0.37***
	(0.05)	(0.05)
Media Saliency (log)	0.02	0.00
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Policy Type (Ref: Distributive)		
Regulatory	-0.09	0.39*
	(0.15)	(0.15)
Redistributive	0.02	0.15
	(0.16)	(0.15)
Country (Ref: Germany)		
UK	0.39*	0.19
	(0.19)	(0.19)
Denmark	-0.10	-0.18
	(0.16)	(0.17)
Sweden	-0.18	-0.15
	(0.17)	(0.17)
Netherlands	-0.02	0.38*
	(0.16)	(0.16)
Constant	1.24***	0.23
	(0.31)	(0.34)
Random Intercept	-1.82***	-27.90***
	(0.40)	(3.00)
Level-1 Residual	-0.34***	-0.15***
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Number of Cases	383	383
AIC	883	1009

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

H: Multilevel ordered logistic regression with random intercepts for policy issues and SEs in Parentheses, using organisational staff as an alternative measure for economic resources

Model	(H1)	(H2)	(H3)
DV	Policy Info	Info on Public Preferences	Combination
Organisational Staff (log)	0.19*	0.04	0.12
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.14)
Political Capacities	0.94***	1.21***	1.10**
	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.37)
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)			
Professional Groups	0.39	-0.43	0.13
	(0.37)	(0.35)	(0.58)
Business Groups & Firms	0.77*	-1.05**	-1.16*
	(0.38)	(0.36)	(0.57)
Experts & Others	1.23**	-0.66	-1.03
	(0.47)	(0.45)	(0.68)
Position (Ref: Pro Change)			
Neutral	-0.68	-0.29	-1.37
	(0.50)	(0.51)	(0.93)
Against	-0.12	0.39	0.05
	(0.28)	(0.27)	(0.41)
Organisational Salience	0.30*	0.06	0.31
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.21)
Outside Activity	0.61***	0.81***	0.83***
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.24)
Media Saliency (log)	-0.05	0.02	-0.22
	(0.12)	(0.10)	(0.17)
Policy Type (Ref: Distributive)			
Regulatory	0.28	1.15*	0.18
	(0.54)	(0.48)	(0.73)
Redistributive	0.51	0.56	0.21
	(0.55)	(0.46)	(0.76)
Country (Ref: Germany)			
UK	1.52*	0.35	1.04
	(0.65)	(0.61)	(0.92)
Denmark	-0.20	0.00	-0.40
	(0.55)	(0.52)	(0.73)
Sweden	-0.64	-0.12	-0.23
	(0.56)	(0.52)	(0.75)
Netherlands	-0.17	0.58	0.29
	(0.53)	(0.51)	(0.72)
Constant			-7.54***
			(1.86)
Random Intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Cases	226	226	226
AIC	1112	854	229

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

I: Multilevel logistic regression models with random intercepts for policy issues and SEs in Parentheses

	(I1)	(I2)
	Expert Information	Info on Public Preferences
Economic Resources	0.26*	0.21
	(0.13)	(0.14)
Political Capacities	0.74***	1.24***
	(0.22)	(0.25)
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)		
Professional Groups	-0.20	-0.32
	(0.42)	(0.41)
Business Groups & Firms	0.03	-0.85+
	(0.44)	(0.45)
Experts & Others	0.47	0.16
	(0.38)	(0.39)
Position (Ref: Pro Change)		
Neutral	-1.07*	0.01
	(0.49)	(0.56)
Against	-0.42	0.20
	(0.29)	(0.29)
Organisational Salience	0.35*	-0.06
	(0.14)	(0.15)
Outside Activity	0.32*	0.72***
	(0.15)	(0.16)
Media Saliency (log)	0.10	0.05
	(0.15)	(0.11)
Policy Type (Ref: Distributive)		
Regulatory	-0.30	0.68
	(0.58)	(0.47)
Redistributive	-0.07	-0.11
	(0.60)	(0.47)
Country (Ref: Germany)		
UK	0.77	0.26
	(0.71)	(0.56)
Denmark	-1.06+	-0.00
	(0.62)	(0.51)
Sweden	-0.96	-0.14
	(0.65)	(0.52)
Netherlands	-0.73	0.77
	(0.60)	(0.47)
Constant	-3.87**	-7.55***
	(1.19)	(1.20)
Random Intercept	Yes	Yes
Number of Cases	383	383
AIC	456	393

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Appendix J: Comparing resource effects across different types of information

An alternative way of looking at the resources that are necessary for the provision of information is to compare each type of resource across different types of information. Following a similar theoretical reasoning as outlined in the paper, one could expect that economic resources are more important when providing expert information than information about public preferences. In a similar vein, one could expect political capacities to have stronger effects on information about public preferences than on expert information. In order to test this alternative way, the dataset will be transformed into a stacked dataset. Each individual actor on an issue appears now twice in the dataset, once for the provided expert information and once for the information about public preferences. The dependent variable is now the overall extent of information that is provided. A new binary variable identifies the amount of expert information as well as the amount of information about public preferences. This variable will be interacted with the independent variable to allow direct comparison between one type of resource across two types of information. Since observations are now nested within actors and policy issues, the analysis employs multilevel modelling with information nested within actors and within issues. Table J provides the results. Note that the effects do not change if each independent variable is interacted with the identifier. The results show a positive and significant effect for political capacities and information on public preferences which is in line with what one would expect. This suggests that political capacities are more important for the provision of information about public preferences than for the provision of expert information. However, it does not mean that such resources do not allow also the provision of expert information, simply that they are more relevant for political information. The effect for economic resources is in the expected direction, i.e., economic resources are less important for information about political information than for expert information, but the effect fails to achieve significance. Again, it does not allow drawing any conclusions as to how important economic resources are for either type of information, which the paper's main analysis does.

Table J: Multilevel ordinal logistic regression with observations nested within actors and issues, SEs in parentheses

	(J1)
DV	Extent of Information
Identifier *(Ref Cat: Expert Information)*	
Information on Public Preferences	-3.35*** (0.58)
Economic Resources	0.25* (0.10)
Economic Resources * Information on Public Pref.	-0.08 (0.12)
Political Capacities	0.55*** (0.16)
Political Capacities * Information on Public Pref.	0.83*** (0.18)
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)	
Professional Groups	-0.04 (0.25)
Business Groups & Firms	-0.36 (0.27)
Experts & Others	0.43+ (0.24)
Position (Ref: Pro Change)	
Neutral	-0.74* (0.31)
Against	0.06 (0.18)
Organisational Salience	0.20* (0.09)
Media Saliency (log)	0.04 (0.07)
Outside Activity	0.64*** (0.10)
Policy Type (Ref: Distributive)	
Regulatory	0.46 (0.28)
Redistributive	0.18 (0.29)
Country (Ref: Germany)	
UK	0.70* (0.35)
Denmark	-0.25 (0.31)
Sweden	-0.30 (0.32)
Netherlands	0.48 (0.29)
Number of Cases	766
Actor Level	Yes
Policy Intercept	Yes

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Chapter 5: The Effects of Information on Lobbying Success

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Technocratic or Democratic Interest Representation? How different Types of Information affect Lobbying Success

Abstract

What type of information helps interest advocates get their way? While it is widely acknowledged in the academic literature that information provision is a key aspect of lobbying, few scholars have directly tested the effect of information on lobbying success. Policymakers need information both on technical aspects and public preferences to anticipate the effectiveness of a policy proposal and electoral consequences. However, scholars have found that interest groups predominantly provide the former rather than the latter, which suggests that technical information is seen as more efficient. The paper argues that lobbying success is not solely a function of the provision of *any* information but of the specific type of information and its composition. It furthermore argues that the relevance of different information types for lobbying success depends on issue characteristics such as public opinion, salience or complexity. Relying on new original data of advocacy activity on 50 specific policy issues in five West European countries, the paper highlights that the provision of expert information increases the likelihood of lobbying success, while the effect of information about public preferences is, if anything, negative. The study ultimately contributes to our understanding of informational lobbying, interest representation and interest group influence.

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5.1 Introduction

Policy outcomes are often the result of multiple actors promoting competing interests (Austen-Smith and Wright 1992; Dahl 1961; Truman 1951). Who wins and who loses in such a game has attracted lots of academic and public attention. Ever since Schattschneider's (1960) claim of bias in the 'heavenly chorus' interest groups are seen as a potential risk that may thwart public policies away from what the public wants (Gray et al. 2004). Pluralist accounts of interest representation, on the other hand, portray interest groups as important intermediaries between the public and the policymaking level (Rasmussen et al. 2014; Truman 1951). Interest groups face a constant organisational tension between catering to their constituents and meeting demands from policymakers, possibly at the expense of what their members and supporters want (Berkhout, Hanegraaff, et al. 2017). The latter situation may reflect a perspective on participatory democracy that is less political and receptive to public pressures, but rather technocratic (De Bruycker 2016) and could explain why interest groups primarily engage in expertise-based information provision rather than transmitting information on what the public wants (Baumgartner et al. 2009; De Bruycker 2016; Nownes and Newmark 2016).

The academic literature considers information as a key aspect of lobbying (cf. Austen-Smith 1993; Hall and Deardorff 2006; Wright 1996), yet has rarely tested the direct effect of information transmission on lobbying success empirically. Moreover, the information transmission capacity of a group has often been seen as an implicit benchmark for its ability to exert influence without examining to what extent such a group actually engages in informational lobbying. Following Wright 'interest groups achieve influence through the acquisition and strategic transmission of information that legislators need to make good public policy and to get reelected' (Wright 1996: 2). This suggests that both policy expertise and information about public opinion are important when lobbying policymakers. Yet, research so far has mostly tested the effect of either information in general (Klüver 2011b; Tallberg et al. 2018) or technical information only (cf. Burstein and Hirsh 2007; Dür et al. 2015), not considering that interest groups provide different types of information (De Bruycker 2016). An important question remains, therefore, to what extent information provision affects lobbying success of interest groups.[35] This paper considers both expert information and information about public preferences. *Expert information* is defined as information about

[35] Influence here is referred to as lobbying success (Mahoney 2008; Rasmussen, Mäder, et al. 2018), which does not assume causality but allows gauging who wins and who loses with regard to shaping public policy.

technical details, the effectiveness of a policy, its legal aspects as well as its economic impact (De Bruycker 2016). *Information on public preferences* refers to information on public preferences, electoral consequences or moral concerns (ibid.: 601) and is not restricted to general public opinion but also includes information of a specific constituency such as stakeholders, members or a somewhat broader constituency.

Drawing on research exchange theory, the paper argues that while both types of information are expected to increase the chance of lobbying success, also the composition of information matters. Hence, emphasising expert information may increase the chance of success as the demand for and the strategic advantage of a group having such information is higher. It will moreover be argued that the relevance of providing either type of information for lobbying success increases as public pressure and the demand for information increases. Using measures of perceived influence and preference attainment, the theoretical argument is tested using a novel dataset collected within the larger GovLis project. Drawing on a media content analysis, interviews, desk research and a survey, the dataset pools information on interest group activity of 380 actors on 50 specific policy issues in five West European countries (Denmark, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK). While existing research focused on the US or EU context, this paper provides an account of informational lobbying in a set of Western European countries applying a cross-sectional cross-national research design.

The results suggest that only the provision of expert information increases the chance of lobbying success, while the effect of information about public preferences is, if any, negative after controlling for media attention and expert information. This is intriguing given that policymakers need both types of information and that interest groups are assumed to influence policymaking by meeting these demands (Nownes 2006; Wright 1996). A possible explanation is that weaker groups use information about public preferences as an attempt to compensate for their lack of expertise (Kriesi et al. 2007). Likewise, policymakers' demand for such information may be lower as they have other channels to get informed about public preferences. While this study supports existing research showing that lobbying success is a function of information provision (Austen-Smith 1993; Nownes 2006; Wright 1996), it highlights the importance of distinguishing between different types of information.

5.2 Informational Lobbying

Information is commonly seen as a key aspect for gaining access to policymakers and influence over policy decisions (cf. Nownes and Newmark 2016; Wright 1996). Moreover, some factors are often assumed to explain lobbying success because of the informational value they carry. For example, Bouwen (2004) argues that large and resourceful groups enjoy more access to EU institution because of the amount and type of information they are able to provide. Others assume that business groups are especially influential because of the informational advantage they have compared to other groups (Dür 2008a; Eising and Spohr 2017; Yackee and Yackee 2006). However, relatively little research has tested the direct effect of information on lobbying success. While formal theoretical accounts of informational lobbying illustrated how information can influence decision-making (Austen-Smith 1993; Austen-Smith and Wright 1992; Hall and Deardorff 2006; Lohmann 1998), some notable exceptions examine informational lobbying empirically and give valuable insights this paper aims to expand on.

For example, Dür et al. (2015) test the effect of technical information on lobbying success in the EU context and conclude that technical information decreases the positional distance between the EU commission and the advocate. Similarly, Burstein and Hirsh (2007) test the effect of information on bill enactment and observe an effect for information about the effectiveness provided by supporters on whether a policy proposal was enacted. Klüver (2011b), finds that the information that is supplied by a camp increases lobbying success. Lastly, Tallberg et al. (2018) study lobby influence in International Organisations (IO) and find information to positively affect perceived influence in some IOs. While these studies provide evidence that information is effective, they consider either one type of information only or information in general. Knowledge about the effect of information about public preferences remains scarce as well as conditions under which information is more effective. This paper considers that interest groups possess *different kinds* of information and gauges the effects of such types on lobbying success. It also examines whether the effect of information on lobbying success depends on issue characteristics.

5.3 Resource Exchange and Dependency

The relationship between interest groups and policymakers has often been portrayed as an exchange relationship as both have to rely on each other for some resources (for a review see

Berkhout 2013). One of the resources policymakers have to rely on interest groups for is information (Bouwen 2002).

Following De Bruycker's (2016) two modes of information supply, the paper distinguishes between *expert information*, referring to information on technical details, the effectiveness of a policy, its legal aspects and the economic impact (ibid.: 599) and *information on public preferences*, considering information on public and constituents' preferences, electoral consequences or moral concerns (De Bruycker 2016: 601). So how can such information help an actor to achieve its goals? Policymakers strive to develop good public policy and to get reelected (Wright 1996: 82). To do this, policymakers need information about the effectiveness of a proposal or whether it will be supported by the public and relevant stakeholders (De Bruycker 2016; Wright 1996). Policymakers often lack this information which interest groups can provide. This resource dependency creates an information asymmetry and information becomes a source of influence (Ainsworth 1993; Gilligan and Krehbiel 1989), which bears the risk of groups presenting information to their favour (Tallberg et al. 2018). Consequently, policymakers decide on an outcome that reflects a result, which would have been (slightly) different without the exchange with the interest group, which implies some degree of influence (ibid.).

As mentioned, policymakers need expert information in order to design policies that will be effective and feasible (Wright 1996: 82). Interest advocates possess such information because of their daily work, their members' hands-on-experience or because they or their constituents are directly affected by the policy issue (Michalowitz 2004; Wright 1996). Such information is privately held by the advocates and not necessarily accessible for policymakers who therefore have to rely on the advocates for the information. For example, the national farmers' association has information about the consequences of a ban of glyphosate for their members. They may even have studies and empirical evidence because they interact with their members and know how such a policy would affect them. This is a strategic advantage over others that lack such information on technical details, facts and the economic impact of a new regulation.

Policymakers furthermore need information about what the public wants to reduce uncertainties regarding the support for a new policy (Wright 1996). Scholars have often referred to this as a strategy of information-politics, usually employed by financially weaker actors to compensate the lack of expertise (Beyers 2004; Kriesi et al. 2007). Given that it can be seen as an alternative route to success, it seems important to consider it in the equation.

Democratic governments are expected to decide on policies that reflect public preferences (Dahl 1961) and policymakers rely on people's vote during the next election (Mayhew 1974). For this reason they need information on how people would react to a new policy proposal. Interest groups learn through interactions with members, supporters and clients about their constituents' preferences and therefore possess such information (Michalowitz 2004; Wright 1996). Given the policymakers' need and interest groups' ability to provide either type of information, the provision of expert information and information about public preferences is expected to increase the likelihood of lobbying success.

H1a: The more interest groups engage in the provision of expert information, the higher the likelihood of lobbying success. (Volume Hypothesis I)

H1b: The more interest groups engage in the provision of information on public preferences, the higher the likelihood of lobbying success. (Volume Hypothesis II)

Yet, although interest groups provide both types of information (De Bruycker 2016), the emphasis may vary. Hence, the composition of information that is provided plays a role as well. By virtue of the organisational tension (Berkhout, Hanegraaff, et al. 2017) some advocates may consider the provision of expert information as more relevant, whilst others prefer to predominantly transmit information on public preferences to represent their constituents' interests.

Looking at the information portfolios of interest groups, previous studies found that groups provide more expert information than political information (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Burstein 2014; Nownes and Newmark 2016). Interest groups consider this type of information possibly as more efficient for increasing their likelihood of success. Moreover, the strategic advantage of expert information may be higher which allows for negotiating from a better position. Expert information typically refers to private information that only particular groups can provide, whereas information on public preferences may be more accessible to policymakers so that they do not have to rely on interest groups for the information (Dür 2008a). Moreover, policymakers may learn about constituency preferences through other channels at lower costs. Hence, the strategic advantage to have such information as an interest group is considerably lower. The third hypothesis therefore expects:

H2: The higher the relative emphasis on expert information, the higher the likelihood of lobbying success. (Composition Hypothesis)

However, because of the resource interdependency 'organizations can become subject to pressures from those organizations that control the resources they need' (Bouwen 2002: 368). De Bruycker argues that information on public preferences allows interest groups to exert a considerable amount of pressure which could aid advocacy success under certain circumstances. Thus, under which conditions are policymakers especially vulnerable to such pressures?

Public support and scrutiny are factors that are likely to increase the chance of success of strategies that exert pressure on policymakers (De Bruycker 2016: 600; Kriesi et al. 2007). For example, if public support for an actors' position increases, so should the amount of pressure the actor can exert on policymakers. Public support is a valuable resource for interest groups to have. Public opinion plays an important role for decision-making as policymakers rely on the public's votes for the next election (Mayhew 1974). Interest groups may want different things than the public in which case policymakers have to weigh the costs of going one way or the other. However, the likelihood of lobbying success should be considerably higher when the advocates have a high share of the public on their side (Rasmussen, Mäder, et al. 2018). It allows interest groups to demonstrate public support and compliance and will make it difficult for policymakers to go against public opinion. Hence, the provision of information on public preferences may be more effective when the actor credibly enjoys large public support as it increases the pressure.

Moreover, public salience of an issue may effect whether an actor increases the chances of success when providing information on public preferences. Research has found that political information is used more when public salience is higher (Mahoney 2008). Hence, if an issue is under higher public scrutiny, policymakers cannot easily follow particular interests but have to critically evaluate the positions of all actors. The pressure that actors exert if public scrutiny is higher can be ignored less when the public is able to critically monitor how policymakers act upon a policy decision.

Lastly, scholars have argued that policymakers need information particularly on complex issues (Klüver 2011a) which require predominantly technical and specialised expert information (Mahoney 2008). The need for information on such aspects should therefore increase with the complexity of an issue (Klüver 2011a) and so should the chance of lobbying success for the actor providing such information. Regulatory issues, as an example, are very technical and require more expertise on specific details than redistributive or distributive issues. Hence, actors that have expert information are more likely to be successful where the

demand for such information is greater. In sum, some issue characteristics are expected to determine the effectiveness of both types of information on lobbying success.

H3a: The effect of information about public preferences on lobbying success increases with the share of public support the actor providing the information enjoys.
(Pressure Hypothesis I)

H3b: The effect of information about public preferences on lobbying success increases with the public salience of a policy issue.
(Pressure Hypothesis II)

H3c: The effect of expert information on lobbying success is higher on regulatory issues than on other issues.
(Demand Hypothesis)

5.4 Research Design

The hypotheses will be tested using data collected within the larger GovLis project (Rasmussen, Mäder, et al. 2018). The dataset includes information on public opinion and interest group activity on 50 specific policy issues in five West European countries (Germany, Denmark, Sweden, the UK and the Netherlands). The selection of cases considers variation in the degree to which interest groups are involved in policymaking; the UK being a country in which the interest group system is characterised as pluralist while the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden and Denmark show different degrees of corporatism (Jahn 2016). Although some interest organisations may mobilise to push general policy in a more right or left wing direction, most lobbying activities are targeted at specific policy proposals (cf. Berkhout, Beyers, et al. 2017), which is why the effect of information on lobbying success will be tested on specific policy issues. Each issue constitutes a concrete policy proposal to change the status quo and the issues in the sample were selected as a stratified random sample from issues that occurred in nationally representative public opinion polls. The issues vary moreover with regard to salience, public support and policy type as these aspects are likely to have an impact on lobbying success. Issues in the sample concern for example the question whether to raise the retirement age or to cutting coal subsidies (see Appendix A for a full list of the policy issues).

In addition to information at the level of policy issues, the dataset considers variables at the actor level because the final unit of analysis is an actor on an issue. Actors are defined based on their observable, policy-related activities which follows a behavioural definition of interest groups (Baumgartner et al., 2009). Different steps were taken to identify the actors that mobilised on an issue. First, student assistants coded interest group statements on the specific policy issue in two major newspapers[36] in each country for a period of four years (Gilens 2012) or until the policy changed. Second, interviews with civil servants that have worked on the issue during our observation period (82 % response rate) helped to complement the list of advocates that have mobilised on the issues. Lastly, desk research of formal tools and interactions such as public hearings or consultations was conducted in order to identify more relevant actors. From December 2016 until April 2017 an online survey was distributed amongst 1410 advocates identified as active on the specific issues. 380 answered the questions regarding the variables relevant for the analysis in this paper (see Appendix B1 for response rates), which results in a response rate of 27%.

5.4.1 Dependent Variable

There are different ways of measuring lobbying success. While many studies use the preference attainment approach (Dür 2008b; Mahoney 2008; Rasmussen, Mäder, et al. 2018), this paper measures 'perceived influence' (Binderkrantz and Rasmussen 2015; Tallberg et al. 2018). While similar, these two approaches capture different meanings of influence (Pedersen 2013). The preference attainment approach is a rather 'hard' way of measuring lobbying success, predominantly capturing the first face of power, i.e., directly controlling the policy outcome. This measure does not consider that actors may have achieved smaller successes or side-deals. While this objective way of measuring success ensures a higher external validity (Dür 2008b), it may underestimate the effect of a subtle mechanism like information provision. The perceived influence measure, on the other hand, allows gauging the impact of such an unobtrusive mechanism and to capture both formal and informal ways of influence (Binderkrantz and Rasmussen 2015). Given that one piece of information is not necessarily expected to change a policy, but result in smaller, more subtle changes, the effect of information provision on lobbying success is thus assessed using the perceived influence approach (Tallberg et al. 2018).

[36] Denmark: Politiken and Jyllands-Posten; Germany: Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung; Netherlands: De Volkskrant and NRC Handelsblad; Sweden: Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet; United Kingdom: The Guardian and The Telegraph

Perceived Influence was measured by a question in the survey asking about the perceived impact an actor had on a policy issue, 1 meaning no impact at all, while 11 notes extremely high impact. There are some disadvantages regarding the measure of perceived influence. First, groups may have incentives to over- or underestimate their influence to demonstrate their supporters how powerful they are or to downplay their influence to avoid counter-mobilisation (Binderkrantz and Rasmussen 2015; Dür 2008b; Tallberg et al. 2018). Yet Pedersen did not find that any type of group is more likely to be dishonest (2013), which is supported by Tallberg et al. (2018). Moreover, over- or underestimation should be less of a problem in an anonymous survey where neither members nor other groups to which the group may want to signal its relevance have access to the information (Binderkrantz and Rasmussen 2015). Second, groups may have unreliable knowledge as to how influential they are (ibid.). Yet, given that the paper looks primarily at the difference between the two types of information, there is no reason to suspect that the lack of knowledge plays out more for one dimension than for the other (cf. ibid. for a similar argument). While both measures have advantages and disadvantage, the paper takes the perceived influence approach, allowing gauging also smaller lobbying success that may result from information provision. Nevertheless, the paper provides an analysis using the preference attainment approach as an alternative measure in the robustness section.

5.4.2 Independent Variables

Hypothesis 1 tests the effect of providing different types of information on lobbying success. Information provision was measured by asking survey respondents how often certain arguments have been used (Appendix B2 provides an overview of the survey questions). *Expert information* consists of arguments referring to (a) facts and scientific evidence, (b) feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed policy, (c) economic impact for the country and (d) compatibility with existing legislation (De Bruycker 2016: 601). The answer categories range from 1-5 and the values for the different arguments were added and divided by four.

Information on Public Preferences is based on arguments referring to public support on the issues (ibid.) as well as fairness and moral principles (Nownes and Newmark 2016). The second proxy ensures that not only information about general public opinion is included, but also how a policy will affect organisations and/or certain segments of society (Burstein 2014; Nownes and Newmark 2016). Again, the items were added and divided by two so that the final variable ranges from 1-5. Hypothesis 2 tests the effect of an actor placing a higher

emphasis on expert information.[37] *Relative Expert Information* is calculated by subtracting the amount of information on public preferences from expert information, which is then divided by their sum.[38] Values larger than zero indicate that the actor emphasised expert information, while values smaller than zero indicate a higher emphasis on information on public preferences.

Hypothesis 3a tests the moderating effect of public support for information about public preferences. The variable *Public Support for an Actor* measures the share of the public an actor had on its side on an issue and is based on public opinion data and the actor's position.[39] Hypothesis 3b explores whether the effect of information about public preferences increases when public salience increases. *Saliency* measures the log of the average number of articles containing a statement that have been published on an issue per day in the two coded newspapers during the observation period. Hypothesis 3c assesses the effect of expert information on regulatory issues. The variable *Policy Type* distinguishes between redistributive, distributive and regulatory issues (Lowi 1964), whereby the final binary variable reports a 1 for regulatory and a 0 for redistributive and distributive issues.

5.4.3 Control Variables

Influencing policy outcomes is a complex endeavour and success depends on multiple factors. The analysis therefore controls for a number of aspects. First, the analysis considers the alternative explanation that lobbying success is a function of other resources than information and hence includes *Economic Resources* as well as *Perceived Media Attention* (Tallberg et al. 2018). One survey question asks about the extent to which an actor agreed to have spent a large amount of economic resources on lobbying activities for the policy issue. A second question probes the extent to which the actor agreed to have a high level of media attention for their activities to scrutinise the effect of outside lobbying strategies. Respondents could answer on a five-point agreement scale with 5 indicating strong agreement.

[37] One could argue that it may be difficult for survey respondents to clearly distinguish between the two types of information as technical arguments can also include a normative judgment. De Bruycker (2016) compares how often interview respondents indicated to have used different information types to how often such information types have been identified using hand-coding and comes to the same conclusion, which suggests that respondents can identify different information types.

[38] This resembles a measure used by Dür and Mateo (2013) to calculate the relative inside strategy compared to outside strategies by interest groups.

[39] As an indicator of the extent to which the actor could rely on public expressions of support, one could potentially also use a variable asking how important respondents considered organising protests or other activities mobilising the public. All analyses have been run using such an alternative measure instead, which, however, does not alter the results (see Appendix H).

The analysis furthermore considers different types of advocates, because business actors are often assumed to more likely attain their preferences (Bunea 2013; Yackee and Yackee 2006). The variable *Interest Group Type* (see Appendix C for an overview of the different actor types)[40] distinguishes between (1) citizen groups, including public interest groups and hobby & identity groups, (2) professional groups, covering trade unions and occupational groups, (3) business groups, including firms and business associations and (4) experts and others, encompassing individual experts, think tanks and institutional association.

The variable *Camp Support* considers that lobbying is a collective enterprise (Klüver 2011b) and controls whether a more one-sided mobilisation is likely to increase lobbying success (Mahoney 2008). It is operationalised as the share of advocates on the same side of an actor. The variable *Pro Change* indicates a 1 for actors favouring policy change and a 0 for those that want to keep the status quo which is included as actors aiming to challenge the status quo need to invest more to convince policymakers to risk unforeseeable consequences and are hence less likely to achieve their goal (Baumgartner et al. 2009). Lastly, *Organisational Salience* controls how important an actor considered an issue as this may affect the lobbying strategy and intensity and hence success. This variable is measured on a five point scale, asking how important an actor considered an issue compared to other issues. Appendix D presents an overview of all variables including a correlation matrix.

5.5 Analysis

The level of observation are advocates who are nested in policy issues. Given that the models include variables both at the actor and the issue level, all models are run as multilevel models with random intercepts for policy issues to account for the heterogeneity of different policy issues and country fixed effects. The models presented in the analysis are OLS regression models.[41] All models have been built stepwise (Appendix F), whereas Table 5.1 presents only the full models including all controls.

[40] An intercoder-reliabilty test on the same sample resulted in a Krippendorff's alpha of 0.92 in distinguishing these different actor types (effective n=50, 2 raters).
[41] See Appendix E for alternative model specification.

Table 5.1: Multilevel OLS Regression for Perceived Influence (SEs in Parentheses)[42]

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
H1a: Expert Info	1.03***		1.03***	1.03***	1.04***
	(0.17)		(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.21)
H1b: Info Public Preferences	-0.43**		-0.45	-0.65*	-0.43**
	(0.13)		(0.29)	(0.27)	(0.13)
H2: Relative Expert Info		3.08***			
		(0.70)			
H3a: Public Support for Actor*			0.02		
Public Info			(0.48)		
H3b: Salience*Public Info				-0.06	
				(0.07)	
H3c: Regulatory*					-0.02
Expert Info					(0.26)
Actor Level Controls					
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)					
Professional Groups	0.53	0.58	0.53	0.52	0.54
	(0.38)	(0.39)	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.38)
Business & Firms	-0.84*	-0.91*	-0.84*	-0.85*	-0.84*
	(0.39)	(0.40)	(0.39)	(0.39)	(0.39)
Experts & Co	-0.68*	-0.67+	-0.68*	-0.68*	-0.67*
	(0.34)	(0.35)	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.34)
Economic Resources	0.14	0.22+	0.14	0.15	0.14
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Perceived Media Attention	0.91***	1.11***	0.91***	0.91***	0.91***
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Pro Change	-0.03	-0.06	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03
	(0.27)	(0.28)	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.27)
Camp Support	1.11+	0.95	1.11+	1.13+	1.11+
	(0.61)	(0.63)	(0.61)	(0.61)	(0.61)
Public Support for Actor	1.11+	1.15+	1.04	1.04	1.12+
	(0.65)	(0.66)	(1.54)	(0.65)	(0.65)
Org. Salience	0.06	0.20+	0.05	0.06	0.06
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Issue Level Controls					
Salience	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.22	0.01
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.25)	(0.10)
Regulatory Issue	0.58*	0.53*	0.58*	0.57*	0.66
	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.25)	(0.94)
Country (Ref: Germany)					
UK	-0.56	-0.35	-0.56	-0.62	-0.56
	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.49)
Denmark	-0.36	-0.48	-0.36	-0.38	-0.36
	(0.45)	(0.46)	(0.45)	(0.45)	(0.45)
Sweden	0.53	0.45	0.53	0.51	0.53
	(0.47)	(0.48)	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.47)
Netherlands	1.26**	1.26**	1.26**	1.21**	1.26**
	(0.44)	(0.45)	(0.44)	(0.45)	(0.44)
Constant	-2.01*	-1.27	-1.97+	-1.23	-2.05*
	(0.89)	(0.89)	(1.16)	(1.22)	(1.01)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N Actors	380	380	380	380	380
N Issues	46	46	46	46	46
AIC	1751	1768	1753	1752	1753

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

[42] Vif scores range from 1.15-3.07, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a problem.

Model 1 tests hypotheses 1a and 1b which argued that higher amounts of either type of information increase the likelihood of lobbying success. In line with hypothesis 1a, there is a positive and significant effect for expert information ($p<0.001$). Hence, in line with previous work in the US or EU context that argues that information is a valuable exchange good (Bouwen 2002), the results confirm that expert information increases the likelihood of lobbying success (Burstein and Hirsh 2007; Dür et al. 2015). However, Model 1 also shows that hypothesis 1b cannot be confirmed. In fact, the effect of information on public preferences is negative ($p<0.01$). Figure 5.1 presents the predicted margins and compares the effect of expert information and information on public preferences on lobbying success. While the red, dashed line shows a positive increase on perceived influence from low levels of expert information to high levels of expert information, the black, solid graph shows a reversed pattern for information on public preferences.

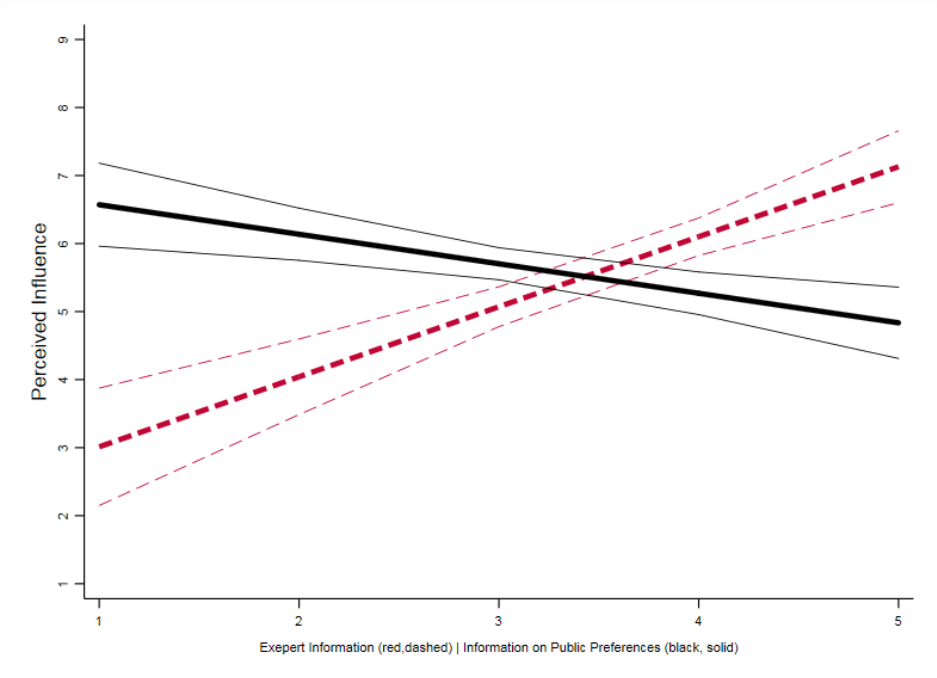

Figure 5.1: The effect of Expert Information (red, dashed) and Information about Public Preferences (black, solid) on Perceived Influence.

However, stepwise model-building shows that the coefficient for information on public preferences only becomes negative in the full model when controlling for media attention or expert information (see Appendix F). Outside lobbying has often been seen as a 'weapon of the weak' (Berkhout 2013) and the negative effect of information on public preferences may rather be a result of weaker actors than the information itself. However, this also means that

while some argue that information-politics is used by actors with less resources (Beyers 2004; Kriesi et al. 2007), providing such information cannot be seen as an alternative route to lobbying success. Furthermore, the coefficient of information on public preferences also becomes negative when controlling for expert information. Interest groups often provide both types of information and the possession of one type is likely to affect the provision of another type.[43] Yet when controlling for expert information it becomes clear, that eventually it is expert information that matters. Hence, one should thus consider both types of information, irrespective of whether one aims at explaining information provision (De Bruycker 2016; Mahoney 2008) or lobbying success as a function of information provision (Chalmers 2011; Klüver 2011b; Tallberg et al. 2018). Another potential reason for the negative effect for information about public preferences might lie in the issue itself as some issues cannot be easily addressed with technical expertise. For example, some issues are quite controversial as they imply a moral or ideological stance. Public exposure resulting from the controversy of the issue may make it difficult for policymakers to change sides. Interest groups trying to lobby policymakers by providing information about public preferences may find it hard to get their preferred outcome. Appendix G looks more into this, including a model controlling for the controversy of an issue, which, however, does not alter the results.

Model 2 tests hypothesis 2, which argued that the composition of information has an effect on lobbying success. The effect for this relative measure is positive and significant ($p<0.001$), which suggests that actors who emphasise expert information perceive their lobbying efforts as more successful. This contributes to research arguing that information provision increases lobbying success (Bouwen 2002; Chalmers 2011; Klüver 2011b; Nownes 2006; Tallberg et al. 2018; Wright 1996) by showing that it is not about any type of information but primarily about expert information. However, the effect only becomes significant when controlling for actor level variables, the interpretation should therefore be cautious.

Models 3-5 test hypotheses 3a-c, scrutinising whether the effect of either type of information is stronger under certain circumstances. Yet none of the interaction effects shows significant results. So while some research argues that information provision and lobbying success is context-dependent (De Bruycker 2016; Mahoney 2008), the results here do not indicate that the two modes of information supply are more effective under certain

[43] The correlation between these two variables is 0.52, but not problematic (Vif<2).

circumstances. This also means that, in order to be successful, advocates have to provide a certain amount of expert information, irrespective of how much public pressure or demand there is.

With regard to the control variables, Models 1, 2 and 5 show positive effects for public support for an actor on lobby success ($p<0.10$), which confirms recent results (Rasmussen, Mäder, et al. 2018). Moreover, four of the five models show a positive effect of having a camp's support for lobbying success ($p<0.10$) (Mahoney 2008). There is little to no effect of economic resources, which is also in line with previous studies (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Mahoney 2008). Business groups as well as experts perceive their lobbying activities as less successful than citizen groups ($p<0.10$ or lower). Perceived media attention has a strong positive effect on lobbying success in all models ($p<0.001$), which indicates that those that have gained more media attention consider their activities as more successful. However, a potential reason for this effect could be the perceived influence measure itself. For example, actors might see placing an item on the public agenda as successful lobbying. Yet, the theoretical argument is about how information provision affects advocacy success when lobbying policymakers and the survey question asks about success on political decisions. The variable perceived media attention, therefore, is included to control for any kind of media success. Nevertheless, Appendix I discusses this more in detail and provides further analysis. For example, Table I presents models excluding media attention, showing that the effect for expert information stays the same while the significance for information about public preferences drops to $p=0.052$.

Furthermore, the effect for organisational salience is significant in one of the five models, which does not indicate strong evidence that the importance actors devote to an issue affects their perceived lobbying success. Four models show furthermore positive and significant effects for regulatory issues ($p<0.05$), which means that on such issues the chance of lobbying success increases. Even though the interaction term was not significant, it could suggest that the demand for interest groups is highest on such issues which increases the chance of success. Lastly, interest groups in the Netherlands perceive themselves as more successful than in Germany ($p<0.01$). A potential reason could be that the Netherlands has become more corporatist over the years (Jahn 2016: 60) which could explain why Dutch advocates feel more included in policymaking. However, this certainly needs further research with a larger sample of countries.

5.6 Robustness and Limitations

As discussed in the research design section, the perceived influence measure has some disadvantages as it is a measure based on perception. As a robustness check, the analyses therefore have been conducted with the alternative preference attainment approach (Dür 2008b). Preference attainment measures whether a policy outcome is congruent with an actor's position on an issue (see Appendix J for how preference attainment was measured). Using this alternative measure of lobbying success reveals similar results (see Appendix J): The effect of expert information is positive ($p<0.1$), while the effect of information about public preferences is negative ($p<0.05$). Moreover, the composition of information has a positive and significant effect ($p<0.05$). Figure 5.2 shows the predicted probabilities for success across the observed range of the combined measure. The predicted probabilities range from 40% for actors predominantly providing information on public preferences to 73% for actors predominantly focusing on expert information.

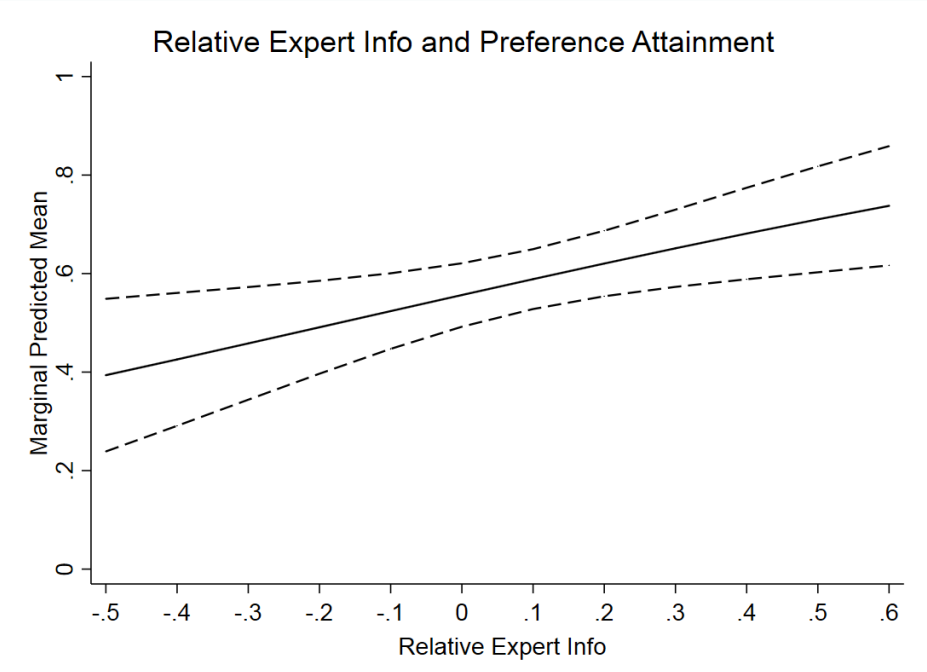

Figure 5.2: Predicted Probabilities for Preference Attainment for different levels of Relative Expert Information.

These results, however, should be interpreted with caution. All models have been built stepwise, yet the main effects only become significant in the full model. This underlines the caveat mentioned earlier that the test of an effect of information types on preference

attainment is a hard test for a subtle mechanism. However, it also highlights that lobbying success is determined by many factors and not one single factor alone. The effects become significant after controlling for economic resources and camp support. This could indicate that the effect of information on lobbying success depends on how good the information is and that the actual effect of information is only significant after taking out variation of factors determining the quality of the information. It is unclear what makes information 'good' information, yet we know that in order to be efficient information has to be costly (Wright 1996). Moreover, information provided by an actor who enjoys broad support can signal information in a much more credible manner and policymakers are especially receptive for credible information (Beyers 2004; De Bruycker 2016).

Some other limitations of the study concern the venue and target of information provision as the study did not consider that interest groups use different channels to provide their information. The amount and the effect of information on public preferences may be different when considering the outside arena only. However, the study intended to look at information transmission to policymakers to gauge effects on decision-making on policies. Yet again, information provision may differ depending on whether the target of information is a bureaucrat or a parliamentarian, which the analysis cannot distinguish. Studies that can do so may find more fine-grained effects for different targets of information. Another caveat may refer to non-response bias of the survey respondents. While the overall response rate is within the margin of what is considered to be typical for interest group surveys (Marchetti 2015), there are some differences across countries. Yet, the paper does not aim at theorising about country differences but rather at generalising towards North West European policy advocates, which should be kept in mind when interpreting the findings.

Summarising, the results do not provide crystal clear evidence and indicate some of the challenges of analysing the subtle effects of information transmission on policymaking. Yet, given that a lot of research works with the assumption that information matters, the empirical assessment in a cross-sectional cross-national context yields new insights and allows the tentative conclusion: The provision of expert information enhances the chance of lobbying success, while the effect of information on public preferences is, if any, negative.

5.7 Conclusion

The paper started from the argument that lobbying success is a function of the information that interest groups provide. While information has long been seen as a key aspect of lobbying success (Austen-Smith 1993; Hall and Deardorff 2006; Wright 1996), little research has directly tested the effect of information provision on lobbying success empirically. This paper offers an empirical assessment of *different types of information* on lobbying success in a set of five West European countries on a variety of specific policy issues. Few studies in the US or at the EU level have either looked at information in general or at the provision of technical information only (Burstein and Hirsh 2007; Dür et al. 2015; Klüver 2011b; Tallberg et al. 2018). Given that theories of informational lobbying argue that policymakers need both expert information and information on public preferences (Nownes 2006; Wright 1996), the paper argued that in order to understand the effectiveness of informational lobbying and interest representation more generally, political information needs to be added to the equation.

The results show that actors increase their likelihood of lobbying success when they provide expert information. This confirms existing studies (Burstein and Hirsh 2007; Dür et al. 2015) but expands these insights to a cross-national context. However, contrary to the expectation that both types of information should matter, the findings highlight that lobbying success is only the result of the provision of one of them. In contrast, actors engaging in more pressure-based information provision do not increase their chance of achieving their goals across issues in the sample. So while information politics has often been seen as a weapon of the weak (Beyers 2004; Kriesi et al. 2007), the analysis illustrates that such information cannot compensate. Moreover, the effect of either type of information does not increase as demand for such information or public pressure increases.

The findings have implications for democratic interest representation. The fact that groups need expert information (instead of information on public preferences) could disadvantage those that are less well equipped to provide such information. Moreover, it could mean that policy decisions are rather made in the light of technical considerations than of what different constituents want (De Bruycker 2016). It speaks to the organisational dilemma interest groups face (cf. Berkhout, Hanegraaff, et al. 2017), i.e., the tension whether to cater to constituents or meet the demands of policymakers, which results in a more technocratic (and maybe less democratic?) form of interest representation. For interest groups it seems to be more valuable to provide expert information, potentially because its strategic value is

considerably higher. Expert information is difficult to access for policymakers and other actors not working in the respective policy field. Therefore, having such information seems to be the comparative advantage for interest groups. Moreover, the demand for information on public preferences may be lower as policymakers have other sources to acquire such knowledge, which makes the strategic value of this type of information lower. Nevertheless, interest groups employ various strategies when lobbying policymakers and may consider expertise-information supply as most efficient to also represent their constituents' interest. For example, advocates may simply frame their constituents' demands in a much more technical way to convince policymakers of their preferred direction. As this paper shows: they are well advised to provide expert information for to be successful.

5.8 Appendices

Appendix A: Overview of Policy Issues

Country	Policy issue
Denmark	Building of a bridge for vehicles and trains across the Kattegat
	Reducing mortgage interest deduction from 33% to 25%
	Granting asylum to families with children among rejected Iraqi asylum seekers
	Reducing the unemployment benefit period by half from four to two years
	Strengthening the control of the Danish agriculture in order to take action against the misuse of antibiotics
	Controlled delivery of heroin for particularly vulnerable drug addicts at special clinics as a pilot scheme
	Introducing differentiated VAT
	Making schools' average test results public
	Cutting the allowances paid to young people between 25 and 29 years by half
	Creation of an equal pay commission
Germany	Financial support of Arcandor through public money
	Guaranteeing a pension above the poverty line for pensioners who have paid contributions for many years
	Supplying citizens with consumption vouchers to boost the economy
	Establishing a wealth tax
	State control of electricity prices
	Banning of computer games that glorify violence
	Cutting the tax exemption for night, Sunday, and holiday supplements
	Cutting coal subsidies
	Making it illegal to carry out a paternity test without the consent of the mother
	Cutting social benefits
Netherlands	Allowing all illegal immigrants who have lived in the Netherlands for a long time to stay
	Raising the retirement age to 67
	Abolishing the mortgage interest
	Spending more money on development aid
	Obligating stores to be closed on Sunday
	Ban of smoking in restaurants
	Banning embryonic stem cell research
	Allowing more asylum seekers
	Banning euthanasia
	Building new nuclear power plants
Sweden	Permanent introduction of a congestion charge in Stockholm
	Reinstating the wealth tax, which was abolished in 2007 and meant that anyone with a fortune of 1.5 million paid 1.5% in taxes
	Rescuing Saab through government funds
	Banning the construction of minarets in Sweden
	Reducing third-world aid
	Introducing a language test for Swedish citizenship
	Restricting the right to free abortion
	Making household and domestic services tax deductible
	Allowing free download of all films and music from the Internet
	Increasing the old age retirement age
	Giving amnesty to illegal immigrants who have spent ten years in Britain without getting into trouble with the police
	Scrapping ID cards
	Requiring food manufacturers to reduce the fat/salt content in their products
	Introducing a graduate tax, where graduates would pay an extra income tax on their

UK	income after graduating
	Allowing a third runway to be built at Heathrow Airport
	Reducing corporation tax
	Increasing Air Passenger Duty, to be paid by people taking both short-haul and long-haul flights
	Subsidising the building of new nuclear power stations
	Increasing the tax on large executive-style, estate, and 4x4 vehicles
	Downgrading ‘ecstasy’ from a class-A drug to a class-B drug

Appendix B: Overview of Survey Data

B1. Response Rates Per Country for the GovLis Survey

Country	Not Completed	Completed	Total Invited
Germany	175	50	225
	77%	22%	100%
UK	339	73	412
	82%	18%	100%
Denmark	114	134	248
	45%	54%	100%
Sweden	173	96	269
	64%	36%	100%
Netherlands	131	125	256
	51%	49%	100%
Total	932	478	1,410
Total rate (%)	66%	34%	100%

B2. Survey Questions

The appendix B2 lists a template of the survey questions. The actual survey was individualised for each specific policy issue (*policytitle*) and time of observation (*period*). Furthermore, all questions were adjusted according to the advocate's specific actor type (*membership organisation/firm/expert*).

Perceived Influence

How would you rate your impact*(experts)*/the impact of your organisation*(associations)*/the impact of your company*(firms)* on political decisions on the issue of (policytitleshort) on a scale from 0 (no impact at all) to 10 (extremely high impact) (periodlong)?

Note that respondents could use a slider to indicate their response.

Arguments

Regarding the issue of #u_policytitleshort# #u_periodlong#, how often did you/your organisation/your company use arguments…

… referring to facts and scientific evidence	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)	DK
… referring to the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed policy	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)	DK
… referring to the economic impact for the country	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)	DK

… referring to compatibility with existing legislation	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)	DK
… referring to public support on the issue	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)	DK
… referring to fairness and moral principles	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)	DK

Economic Resources

Regarding the issue of #u_policytitleshort#, please indicate whether you agree that you/ your company/ your organization…

… spent a high level of economic resources.	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree or disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	DK

Perceived Media Attention

Regarding the issue of #u_policytitleshort#, please indicate whether you agree that you/ your company/ your organization…

… had media attention.	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree or disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	DK

Organisational Salience

This survey addresses the issue of #u_policytitleshort#. #u_explainissue# How important was the issue of #u_policytitleshort# to you compared to other policy- related issues you work on?

5 = Much more important
4 = More important
3 = Equally important
2 = Less important
1 = Much less important

Appendix C : Interest Group Categorization

The coding scheme relies on the INTERARENA project (Binderkrantz et al. 2015) to which firms and think tanks have been added.

Public interest groups
Environment and animal welfare
Humanitarian – international
Humanitarian – national
Consumer Group
Government reform
Civil liberties
Citizen Empowerment
Other public interest

Business associations
Peak-level business group
Sector-wide business group
Breed associations
Technical business associations
Other business group

Firms

Labour groups and occupational associations
Blue-collar union
White-collar union
Employee representative committee
Other labour groups
Doctors' associations
Other medical professions
Teachers' associations
Other occupational associations

Identity, hobby and religious groups

Patients
Elderly
Students
Friendship groups (i.e. non-specific groups related to a country)
Racial or ethnic
Women
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transsexual
Other – undefined - identity group
Sports groups
Other hobby/leisure groups
Groups associated with the protestant church
Roman/Catholic groups
Other religious group

Expert organizations, think tanks and institutional association
Expert organizations
Think tanks

Associations of local authorities
Associations of other public institutions
Associations of managers of public institutions
Other Institutional associations

Appendix D: Overview of Variables

D1. Descriptive Statistics of all Variables

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Perceived Influence	380	5.623684	2.888969	1	11
Preference Attainment	380			0	1
Info on Public Pref.	380	3.182895	1.232304	1	5
Expert Info	380	3.538158	.9484701	1	5
Economic Res.	380	2.394737	1.183427	1	5
Perceived Media Attention	380	3.85	1.040664	1	5
Group Type (Categorical)	380			1	4
Pro Change (Binary)	380			0	1
Camp Support	380	.5206762	.2175081	0	1
Public Support for Actor	380	.5151905	.213892	.0795441	.9204559
Org. Salience	380	3.397368	1.152029	1	5
Media Salience (log)	380	-3.512.584	1.400314	-6.614726	-.7323679
Regulatory Issue (Binary)	380			0	1
Country (Categorical)	380			1	5

D2. Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Info on Public Pref.(1)	1											
Expert Information (2)	0.52	1										
Economic Res. (3)	0.26	0.29	1									
Media Attention (4)	0.42	0.44	0.27	1								
Group Type (5)	-0.23	-0.01	-0.09	-0.05	1							
Pro Change (6)	-0.07	-0.02	-0.06	-0.00	0.06	1						
Camp Support (7)	0.08	-0.06	0.08	0.02	-0.06	0.18	1					
Public Support for Actor (8)	0.19	0.01	0.09	0.02	-0.11	-0.31	0.29	1				
Org. Salience (9)	0.41	0.42	0.30	0.35	-0.11	-0.01	0.04	0.08	1			
Media Salience (10)	0.06	0.11	0.26	0.03	-0.11	0.16	-0.08	-0.05	0.15	1		
Regulatory Issue (11)	0.15	-0.03	0.03	0.12	-0.13	0.02	0.12	0.08	0.09	-0.10	1	
Country (12)	0.16	-0.04	-0.04	0.04	-0.01	0.05	-0.01	-0.01	0.16	-0.04	0.06	1

N=380

Appendices E-J: Different Model Specification

The models in the paper are run as OLS regressions. However, the analysis has also been run using ordered logistic regression models which give the same results (see Appendix E).

Appendix E: Multilevel ordered logistic regression models (SEs in Parentheses)

	(E1)	(E2)	(E3)	(E4)	(E5)
H1a: Expert Info	0.82***		0.82***	0.82***	0.82***
	(0.14)		(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.17)
H1b: Info Public Preferences	-0.32**		-0.36	-0.46*	-0.32**
	(0.10)		(0.22)	(0.21)	(0.10)
H2: Relative Expert Info		2.34***			
		(0.54)			
H3a: Public Support for Actor * Public Info			0.07		
			(0.37)		
H3b: Salience* Public Info				-0.04	
				(0.05)	
H3c: Regulatory* Expert Info					0.01
					(0.20)
Actor Level Controls					
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)					
Professional Groups	0.41	0.42	0.41	0.40	0.41
	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.29)
Business & Firms	-0.66*	-0.71*	-0.66*	-0.66*	-0.66*
	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.31)
Experts & Co	-0.50+	-0.50+	-0.51+	-0.50+	-0.50+
	(0.26)	(0.27)	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.26)
Economic Resources	0.10	0.18*	0.10	0.10	0.10
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Perceived Media Attention	0.71***	0.84***	0.71***	0.71***	0.71***
	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Pro Change	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01
	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.21)
Camp Support	0.88+	0.77	0.88+	0.89+	0.88+
	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.49)
Public Support for Actor	0.92+	0.98*	0.70	0.87+	0.92+
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(1.21)	(0.50)	(0.50)
Org. Salience	0.04	0.16+	0.04	0.05	0.04
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Issue Level Controls					
Media Salience	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.15	0.01
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.19)	(0.07)
Regulatory Issue	0.46*	0.43*	0.46*	0.46*	0.44
	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.74)
Country (Ref: Germany)					
UK	-0.31	-0.19	-0.32	-0.35	-0.31
	(0.40)	(0.39)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.40)
Denmark	-0.20	-0.34	-0.20	-0.21	-0.20
	(0.37)	(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.37)	(0.37)
Sweden	0.53	0.40	0.53	0.52	0.53
	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.38)
Netherlands	1.02**	0.96**	1.01**	0.98**	1.02**
	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.36)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Cases	380	380	380	380	380
AIC	1621	1639	1623	1623	1623

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Appendix F: Stepwise Model building OLS Regression (SEs in Parentheses)

	(F1)	(F2)	(F3)	(F4)
H1a: Expert Info	1.29***			
	(0.14)			
H1b: Info Public Preferences		0.59***		0.21
		(0.12)		(0.13)
H2: Relative Expert Info			0.86	
			(0.77)	
Actor Level Controls				
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)				
Professional Groups				0.82+
				(0.43)
Business & Firms				-0.48
				(0.44)
Experts & Co				-0.22
				(0.38)
Economic Resources				0.35**
				(0.13)
Pro Change				0.05
				(0.31)
Camp Support				0.65
				(0.69)
Public Support for Actor				0.49
				(0.73)
Org. Salience				0.42**
				(0.13)
Issue Level Controls				
Media Salience				-0.05
				(0.11)
Regulatory Issue				0.50+
				(0.29)
Country (Ref: Germany)				
UK	-0.70	-0.46	-0.23	-0.45
	(0.58)	(0.57)	(0.65)	(0.55)
Denmark	0.28	0.20	0.25	-0.45
	(0.51)	(0.50)	(0.57)	(0.51)
Sweden	0.70	0.51	0.53	0.28
	(0.55)	(0.55)	(0.62)	(0.53)
Netherlands	1.24*	0.82	1.46*	0.79
	(0.52)	(0.52)	(0.59)	(0.50)
Constant	0.66	3.44***	5.06***	1.60+
	(0.65)	(0.55)	(0.48)	(0.93)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Cases	380	380	380	380
AIC	1809	1862	1884	1843

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Note: Model 1-3 show the single effects of each information variable, while Model 4 shows the full model excluding expert information and perceived media attention.

Appendix G: Public Controversy

Table G looks at the nature of the issue itself. For example, one could argue that some issues are simply easier to frame in more technical terms, while other issues cannot be expressed in technical terms as they have an ideological or moral dimension to them. Such issues also typically provoke quite some controversy and public attention. Moreover, such issues are relatively difficult to respond to by policymakers as they have to favour one side over the other or take an ideological stance. Therefore, lobbying by information about public preferences might be less effective. Table G1 controls for conflict through an interaction between two variables. The first measures the distance of public support to an evenly split public (50-50). This measure of how divided the public is, is interacted with the media salience of an issue: if the public is divided and the issue attracts a lot of attention this should make it very likely that the issue is controversial. The interaction effect is insignificant but controlling for it does not change the negative and significant effect of information on public preferences.

Table G: Multilevel OLS Regression for Perceived Influence (SEs in Parentheses) controlling for controversy*saliency

	(G1)	(G2)
H1a: Expert Info	1.01***	
	(0.17)	
H1b: Info Public Preferences	-0.42**	
	(0.13)	
H2: Relative Expert Info		2.97***
		(0.70)
Actor Level Controls		
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)		
Professional Groups	0.55	0.58
	(0.38)	(0.39)
Business & Firms	-0.87*	-0.97*
	(0.39)	(0.40)
Experts & Co	-0.69*	-0.72*
	(0.34)	(0.35)
Economic Resources	0.14	0.22+
	(0.12)	(0.12)
Pro Change	-0.05	-0.09
	(0.27)	(0.28)
Camp Support	1.10+	0.98
	(0.61)	(0.63)
Perceived Media Attention	0.92***	1.12***
	(0.14)	(0.13)
Public Support for Actor	1.14+	1.14+
	(0.65)	(0.66)
Org. Salience	0.06	0.21+
	(0.12)	(0.12)
Issue Level Controls		
Salience	-0.09	-0.12
	(0.14)	(0.14)
Controversy	2.80	4.47
	(3.05)	(3.10)
Salience*Controversy	0.74	1.03
	(0.72)	(0.73)
Regulatory Issue	0.55*	0.45+
	(0.27)	(0.27)
Country (Ref: Germany)		
UK	-0.59	-0.38
	(0.49)	(0.50)
Denmark	-0.35	-0.44
	(0.45)	(0.46)
Sweden	0.57	0.55
	(0.47)	(0.48)
Netherlands	1.25**	1.28**
	(0.44)	(0.45)
Constant	-2.36*	-1.86+
	(0.96)	(0.97)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes	Yes
Number of Cases	380	380
AIC	1754	1770

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Appendix H: Multilevel OLS Regression for Perceived Influence (SEs in Parentheses), using Organising Protest as an alternative measure for Public Support for an actor

	(H1)	(H2)	(H3)	(H4)	(H5)
H1a: Expert Info	1.07***		1.07***	1.06***	1.06***
	(0.17)		(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.21)
H1b: Info Public Preferences	-0.53***		-0.54*	-0.80**	-0.53***
	(0.14)		(0.21)	(0.27)	(0.14)
H2: Relative Expert Info		3.64***			
		(0.74)			
H3a: Organising Protest*			0.00		
Public Info			(0.08)		
H3b: Salience*Public Info				-0.08	
				(0.07)	
					0.02
H3c: Regulatory* Expert Info					(0.26)
Actor Level Controls					
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)					
Professional Groups	0.54	0.59	0.53	0.51	0.53
	(0.38)	(0.39)	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.38)
Business & Firms	-0.80*	-0.83*	-0.80*	-0.82*	-0.80*
	(0.40)	(0.41)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.40)
Experts & Co	-0.50	-0.44	-0.50	-0.51	-0.50
	(0.35)	(0.36)	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.35)
Economic Resources	0.11	0.17	0.11	0.12	0.11
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Perceived Media Attention	0.87***	1.03***	0.87***	0.87***	0.87***
	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Pro Change	-0.14	-0.17	-0.14	-0.14	-0.14
	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.25)
Camp Support	1.55**	1.42*	1.55**	1.55**	1.55**
	(0.58)	(0.59)	(0.58)	(0.58)	(0.58)
Organising Protest	0.27*	0.33**	0.25	0.27*	0.27*
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.34)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Org. Salience	0.02	0.14	0.02	0.03	0.02
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Issue Level Controls					
Salience	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0.25	-0.01
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.25)	(0.10)
Regulatory Issue	0.58*	0.54*	0.58*	0.57*	0.52
	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.94)
Country (Ref: Germany)					
UK	-0.63	-0.40	-0.63	-0.70	-0.63
	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.49)
Denmark	-0.27	-0.38	-0.27	-0.30	-0.27
	(0.45)	(0.46)	(0.45)	(0.45)	(0.45)
Sweden	0.56	0.51	0.56	0.53	0.56
	(0.47)	(0.48)	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.47)
Netherlands	1.24**	1.24**	1.24**	1.18**	1.24**
	(0.44)	(0.45)	(0.44)	(0.44)	(0.44)
Constant	-1.79*	-1.21	-1.76+	-0.87	-1.76+
	(0.86)	(0.86)	(1.01)	(1.18)	(0.98)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Cases	374	374	374	374	374
AIC	1594	1609	1596	1595	1596

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Appendix I: Media Attention

As mentioned in the main paper, media attention can also be seen as a success. Table I therefore provides the analyses without controlling for perceived media attention, showing that the results stay robust. Instead of using perceived media attention, one could also control for the extent to which actors considered outside activities or mobilising the public as relevant, which would be more in line with how Tallberg et al. (2015) have operationalised outside lobbying. Outside Activity relies on two survey questions. The first item asks respondents how important they considered protest or other activities mobilizing the public as important, while the second item asks about how important survey respondents considered activities that would engage their members or stakeholders. The two items were added and divided by two so that the final variable ranges from 1-5. Table Ib provides an analysis controlling for outside activity instead of media attention, again not changing the results. The main analysis in the paper still considers perceived media attention as a variable as media attention (especially together with media saliency) should control out any kind of perceived media success, whereas the outside lobbying variable cannot do that. However, one could argue that actors who considered outside lobbying as quite important are also more likely to perceive media attention as a success. Table Ic therefore excludes actors that have considered organising protests or other activities to mobilise the public as important or very important which reduces the N to 290. Irrespective whether we control for perceived media attention in such a model or not, the effects stay the same.

Table I: Multilevel OLS Regression for Perceived Influence (SEs in Parentheses) not controlling for Perceived Media Attention

	(I1)	(I2)	(I3)	(I4)	(I5)
H1a: Expert Info	1.29***		1.28***	1.28***	1.30***
	(0.17)		(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.22)
H1b: Info Public Preferences	-0.27+		-0.21	-0.50+	-0.27+
	(0.14)		(0.30)	(0.29)	(0.14)
H2: Relative Expert Info		2.65***			
		(0.76)			
H3a: Public Support for Actor*			-0.11		
Public Info			(0.51)		
H3b: Salience*Public Info				-0.07	
				(0.07)	
H3c: Regulatory* Expert Info					-0.03
					(0.27)
Actor Level Controls					
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)					
Professional Groups	0.56	0.65	0.56	0.54	0.56
	(0.40)	(0.42)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.40)
Business & Firms	-0.85*	-0.99*	-0.85*	-0.86*	-0.84*
	(0.41)	(0.44)	(0.41)	(0.41)	(0.42)
Experts & Co	-0.63+	-0.60	-0.62+	-0.64+	-0.63+
	(0.36)	(0.38)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)
Economic Resources	0.24+	0.42***	0.24+	0.25*	0.24+
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Pro Change	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01	-0.02	-0.00
	(0.28)	(0.30)	(0.29)	(0.28)	(0.29)
Camp Support	1.15+	0.85	1.16+	1.17+	1.15+
	(0.65)	(0.69)	(0.65)	(0.65)	(0.65)
Public Support for Actor	0.86	0.98	1.17	0.79	0.87
	(0.68)	(0.72)	(1.63)	(0.69)	(0.69)
Org. Salience	0.17	0.50***	0.17	0.18	0.17
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Issue Level Controls					
Salience	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03	0.20	-0.03
	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.27)	(0.10)
Regulatory Issue	0.71**	0.71*	0.72**	0.70**	0.83
	(0.27)	(0.28)	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.99)
Country (Ref: Germany)					
UK	-0.76	-0.48	-0.76	-0.82	-0.76
	(0.51)	(0.54)	(0.51)	(0.52)	(0.51)
Denmark	-0.39	-0.61	-0.39	-0.41	-0.39
	(0.48)	(0.50)	(0.48)	(0.47)	(0.48)
Sweden	0.49	0.32	0.49	0.47	0.49
	(0.49)	(0.52)	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.49)
Netherlands	1.14*	1.14*	1.14*	1.09*	1.14*
	(0.47)	(0.49)	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.47)
Constant	-0.60	1.48	-0.76	0.23	-0.66
	(0.91)	(0.91)	(1.21)	(1.27)	(1.05)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Cases	380	380	380	380	380
AIC	1792	1834	1794	1794	1794

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table Ib: Multilevel OLS Regression for Perceived Influence (SEs in Parentheses) using Outside Lobbying instead of Perceived Media Attention

	(I6)	(I7)	(I8)	(I9)	(I10)
H1a: Expert Info	1.23***		1.23***	1.23***	1.24***
	(0.17)		(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.22)
H1b: Info Public Preferences	-0.48**		-0.40	-0.73*	-0.48**
	(0.15)		(0.30)	(0.29)	(0.15)
H2: Relative Expert Info		3.76***			
		(0.77)			
H3a: Public Support for Actor* Public Info			-0.15		
			(0.50)		
H3b: Salience*Public Info				-0.08	
				(0.07)	
H3c: Regulatory* Expert Info					-0.02
					(0.27)
Actor Level Controls					
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)					
Professional Groups	0.46	0.51	0.47	0.44	0.47
	(0.39)	(0.41)	(0.40)	(0.39)	(0.40)
Business & Firms	-0.93*	-1.01*	-0.93*	-0.95*	-0.93*
	(0.41)	(0.42)	(0.41)	(0.41)	(0.41)
Experts & Co	-0.36	-0.20	-0.35	-0.37	-0.36
	(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)
Economic Resources	0.18	0.27*	0.18	0.19	0.18
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Pro Change	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.05
	(0.28)	(0.29)	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.28)
Camp Support	1.20+	1.04	1.21+	1.23+	1.20+
	(0.64)	(0.66)	(0.64)	(0.64)	(0.64)
Public Support for Actor	0.85	0.78	1.29	0.77	0.86
	(0.68)	(0.70)	(1.62)	(0.68)	(0.68)
Org. Salience	0.08	0.25+	0.08	0.08	0.08
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Outside Activity	0.55***	0.79***	0.55***	0.54***	0.55***
	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Issue Level Controls					
Salience	-0.04	-0.05	-0.04	0.21	-0.04
	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.26)	(0.10)
Regulatory Issue	0.73**	0.73**	0.74**	0.72**	0.81
	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.98)
Country (Ref: Germany)					
UK	-0.77	-0.50	-0.77	-0.84	-0.77
	(0.51)	(0.52)	(0.51)	(0.51)	(0.51)
Denmark	-0.30	-0.42	-0.30	-0.32	-0.30
	(0.47)	(0.49)	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.47)
Sweden	0.58	0.52	0.58	0.55	0.58
	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.49)
Netherlands	1.21**	1.22*	1.21**	1.15*	1.21**
	(0.46)	(0.47)	(0.46)	(0.46)	(0.46)
Constant	-0.99	0.17	-1.23	-0.09	-1.03
	(0.91)	(0.90)	(1.21)	(1.26)	(1.04)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Cases	374	374	374	374	374
AIC	1753	1777	1755	1754	1755

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table Ic: Multilevel OLS Regression for Perceived Influence (SEs in Parentheses) excluding actors that considered Outside Lobbying as important or very important

	(I11)	(I12)	(I13)	(I14)
H1a: Expert Info	1.14***		1.41***	1.41***
	(0.18)		(0.19)	(0.19)
H1b: Info Public Preferences	-0.55***		-0.42**	-0.42**
	(0.15)		(0.16)	(0.16)
H2: Relative Expert Info		3.49***		
		(0.75)		
Actor Level Controls				
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)				
Professional Groups	0.45	0.55	0.42	0.42
	(0.45)	(0.46)	(0.47)	(0.47)
Business & Firms	-1.29**	-1.37**	-1.28**	-1.28**
	(0.46)	(0.47)	(0.48)	(0.48)
Experts & Co	-0.67+	-0.63	-0.61	-0.61
	(0.39)	(0.40)	(0.41)	(0.41)
Economic Resources	0.32*	0.40**	0.46**	0.46**
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Pro Change	-0.06	-0.13	0.00	0.00
	(0.30)	(0.31)	(0.32)	(0.32)
Camp Support	1.27+	1.23+	1.19	1.19
	(0.71)	(0.74)	(0.75)	(0.75)
Public Support for Actor	0.99	0.86	0.82	0.82
	(0.70)	(0.71)	(0.73)	(0.73)
Org. Salience	-0.03	0.09	0.07	0.07
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Perceived Media Attention	0.82***	1.02***		
	(0.14)	(0.14)		
Issue Level Controls				
Salience	0.01	0.00	-0.04	-0.04
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Regulatory Issue	0.31	0.24	0.43	0.43
	(0.29)	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Country (Ref: Germany)				
UK	-0.28	-0.04	-0.46	-0.46
	(0.53)	(0.55)	(0.56)	(0.56)
Denmark	0.01	-0.16	0.09	0.09
	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.51)	(0.51)
Sweden	0.97+	0.82	1.02+	1.02+
	(0.51)	(0.52)	(0.54)	(0.54)
Netherlands	1.27**	1.26*	1.16*	1.16*
	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.51)	(0.51)
Constant	-1.96*	-1.19	-0.96	-0.96
	(0.99)	(0.99)	(1.03)	(1.03)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Cases	290	290	290	290
AIC	1335	1351	1364	1364

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Note: Model 11-12 control for media attention, while Model 13-14 do not.

Appendix J: Testing the Effect of Information Types on Preference Attainment

The positions were coded while identifying the actors and thus rely on manual coding based on media statements, official documents and expert opinion. An actor's position was coded in favour, neutral or against the policy issue in question. If an actor's position was missing or coded as neutral, the self-reported position based on the survey was added. Policy change was coded relying on minutes of parliamentary meetings, legislative texts and media sources and were validated by the expert interviews. The final binary variable takes a value of 1 if the policy outcome was in line with the actor's position and a 0 if it was not.

Table J: Multilevel logistic regression model using Preference Attainment (SEs in Parentheses)

	(J1)	(J2)	(J3)	(J4)	(J5)
H1a: Expert Info	0.35+		0.36+	0.35+	0.32
	(0.19)		(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.23)
H1b: Info Public Preferences	-0.31*		-0.61+	-0.29	-0.31*
	(0.15)		(0.32)	(0.31)	(0.15)
H2: Relative Expert Info		1.86*			
		(0.80)			
H3a: Public Support for Actor*			0.56		
Public Info			(0.55)		
H3b: Salience*				0.01	
Public Info				(0.08)	
H3c: Regulatory*					0.09
Expert Info					(0.30)
Actor Level Controls					
Group Type (Ref: Citizen Groups)					
Professional Groups	-0.40	-0.40	-0.42	-0.40	-0.42
	(0.46)	(0.46)	(0.47)	(0.46)	(0.47)
Business & Firms	-0.48	-0.51	-0.49	-0.48	-0.49
	(0.45)	(0.45)	(0.46)	(0.45)	(0.45)
Experts & Co	-0.57	-0.59	-0.60	-0.57	-0.58
	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.40)
Economic Resources	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.03
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Perceived Media Attention	0.00	0.03	0.01	0.00	0.00
	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Pro Change	-0.81**	-0.83**	-0.79*	-0.81**	-0.81**
	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.31)
Camp Support	4.74***	4.77***	4.74***	4.73***	4.73***
	(0.79)	(0.79)	(0.79)	(0.79)	(0.79)
Public Support for Actor	2.38**	2.32**	0.75	2.38**	2.35**
	(0.74)	(0.73)	(1.73)	(0.74)	(0.74)
Org. Salience	-0.16	-0.14	-0.17	-0.16	-0.16
	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Issue Level Controls					
Media Salience	0.14	0.14	0.15	0.12	0.14
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.32)	(0.16)
Regulatory Issue	0.59	0.58	0.56	0.59	0.28
	(0.42)	(0.42)	(0.42)	(0.42)	(1.13)
Country (Ref: Germany)					
UK	-0.23	-0.19	-0.23	-0.22	-0.23
	(0.71)	(0.70)	(0.71)	(0.71)	(0.71)
Denmark	-0.45	-0.48	-0.45	-0.45	-0.44
	(0.65)	(0.65)	(0.65)	(0.65)	(0.65)
Sweden	0.77	0.78	0.77	0.78	0.77
	(0.72)	(0.72)	(0.73)	(0.72)	(0.72)
Netherlands	0.44	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.44
	(0.67)	(0.67)	(0.67)	(0.67)	(0.67)
Constant	-2.02+	-2.05+	-1.17	-2.12	-1.88
	(1.18)	(1.16)	(1.43)	(1.52)	(1.28)
Policy Issue Intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Cases	380	380	380	380	380
AIC	433	431	434	435	435

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The following chapter will summarise the dissertation's main argument and findings and discuss them in light of the existing literature. Thereafter, I will reflect on some limitations and discuss new avenues for future research before providing some concluding remarks.

6.2 Summary of the Argument

The dissertation started with a discussion of whether interest group help or hinder democratic policymaking, which is the key question of the broader GovLis project on interest groups and policy representation of which my dissertation forms part. As illustrated in the opening quote, Dahl discusses the risk that quasi guardians (or the political elite) pose to democratic governance (Dahl 1989: 338). To "prevent the drift toward government by de facto quasi guardians" (ibid.), so he argues, we should focus on the demos itself. The ultimate question the dissertation set out to study was therefore a question about the extent to which interest groups act as transmission belts of public preferences and how they do so. Specifically the focus of my dissertation was on the role of information as I argued that information is a mechanism through which representation may occur.

An answer to these questions is important both academically, but also for society. Lobbying has a rather negative connotation and the involvement of interest groups is often criticised and feared amongst the public. However, interest groups play an important role in Western democracies and are supposed to enhance the legitimacy of democratic policymaking by linking citizens with policymakers. Such a role seems to be even more important in a time in which participation through parties is declining (Van Biezen et al. 2012) and in which scepticism towards the political elite is increasing as people feel disconnected from what policymakers are doing (OECD 2014).[44]

There are several hints in the existing academic literature that the interest group landscape is overcrowded with actors that represent business interests (Baumgartner and Leech 2001; Berkhout, Hanegraaff, et al. 2017; Rasmussen and Carroll 2014; Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Wonka et al. 2010), which has often been used as a proxy for interest group bias. Yet, there is mixed evidence for whether interest groups strengthen the opinion-policy link or whether they thwart policies away from what the public wants (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Gilens 2012; Gray et al. 2004; Klüver and Pickup 2019; Lax and Phillips 2012;

[44] https://www.oecd.org/gov/ethics/lobbyists-governments-trust-vol-3-highlights.pdf, last accessed 04.03.2019.

Rasmussen et al. 2019; Rasmussen and Reher 2019). While this dissertation did not necessarily aim at proving one side wrong and the other side right, it sought to offer a more nuanced picture of interest representation. More specifically, instead of looking at whether purely economic groups mobilise, the dissertation intended to focus on citizens and their preferences as a benchmark for assessing whether negative stances on lobbying are warranted.

To answer the overall question about the extent to which interest groups represent citizens, I conceptualised interest groups as transmission belts, which represent their constituents' preferences by transmitting information about such preferences to the policymaking level. Representation, therefore, occurs by means of information. The theoretical framework I used to explain whether and how groups work as transmission belts is rooted in the literature on representation (Pitkin 1967; Rehfeld 2018; Saward 2006) as well as literature on informational lobbying (Nownes 2006; Wright 1996).

I started with discussing classic concepts of representation, which are based on Pitkin's work (1967). I defined representation in this dissertation as a substantive 'acting for' someone and not a mere 'standing for' in the descriptive sense of representation. I also discussed the problems with Pitkin's concept if we want to apply it to interest groups; the reason being that classic concepts of representation are mainly applicable to elected representatives. This becomes problematic for nonelectoral forms of representation such as representation through interest groups, which do not have a clear mandate to act in the interest of someone. Often, they claim to represent someone or something. Hence, they act as self-authorised representatives (Urbinati and Warren 2008). Clearly, it is less straight-forward to hold such groups accountable and therefore more difficult to prevent bias and unequal representation (Urbinati and Warren 2008). Turning to Saward (2006), who defines representation as claims-making, the focus then was much more on the process of 'making present' as well as on the actor of making claims to represent someone or something. To enhance our understanding of the transmission belt mechanism, I developed a framework that considered elements both from Pitkin as well as Saward, which are then linked to the literature on informational lobbying. Bridging these two literatures, so I argued, will help understand better the extent to which groups represent citizens.

Linking representation to information was especially helpful for understanding *how* interest groups represent citizens. Even more so, it allowed focusing on the act of 'making present'. I discussed how the literature on interest groups has recognised that information is a

key aspect, which is why some scholars have defined lobbying as the strategic transmission of information (Wright 1996). I argued that policymakers need different types of information to develop efficient policies and anticipate electoral consequences, and that interest groups are able to provide such information in exchange for access and/or influence. Especially information about public preferences, so I argued, is a means by which interest groups transmit public preferences to the policymaking level. Hence, I defined representation as information transmission by interest groups who inform policymakers about public preferences.

6.3 Answers to the research question

Conceptualising interest groups as transmission belts who inform policymakers about what the public wants allowed me to narrow down the overarching question into sub questions. Eventually, these sub questions have helped answering the bigger question, that is, to what extent interest groups represent citizens. The box below revisits the dissertation's sub questions.

To what extent do interest groups represent the opinion of citizens?

- To what extent do interest groups and the public want the same things?

- To what extent do interest groups inform policymakers about what the public wants?

- Under which conditions are interest groups more likely to provide such information?

- What resources are necessary for groups to acquire information?

- Do interest groups increase their chance of lobbying influence when providing information?

6.3.1 To what extent do interest groups and the public want the same things?

So what have we learned? One core argument, as stated in the theory chapter (1.3.6.), contended that interest groups and the public have a higher potential to act as a transmission belt if they agree on an issue. This was rooted in Kohler-Koch's work, who argued that as a first step of successful representation, the public and interest groups have to agree on an issue (Kohler-Koch 2010). This idea drew on Pitkin's concept of substantive representation, which is defined as an 'acting for' the interest of someone. The first empirical chapter of the

dissertation (co-authored article with Anne Rasmussen), therefore, looked at the extent to which the general public and interest groups align their positions on an issue. We furthermore argued that we should use public opinion as a benchmark for assessing whether the interest group community is biased. So to answer the first sub question asking whether interest groups and the public want the same thing, one can, based on the analysis in chapter 2, answer that groups represent public preferences roughly half the time. Yet the story is of course a little more complex.

Chapter 2 also showed that there is variation across group types in the extent to which groups represent the public. Yet the differences are a little less severe than conventional wisdom may lead us to expect. The analysis also showed that even if citizen groups are more likely to represent the opinion of the majority of the public, also a large share of actors that represent a very narrow and specific type of interest align their position with the majority of the public. Moreover, the analysis at the issue level does not provide significant evidence that a more diverse interest group community decreases the distance between what the public wants and what the public gets. Hence, when studying a larger share of policy issues that vary on a number of aspects, we may get less of a grim picture than what conventional wisdom may lead us to expect. While this first empirical chapter is valuable for studying the extent to which interest groups represent citizens, it does not allow understanding *how* they do so.

6.3.2 To what extent and under which conditions do interest groups inform policymakers about public preferences?

The second empirical chapter, therefore, built on Saward's work (2006) on representative claims and argued that information provision is a mechanism through which interest groups transmit public preferences to the policymaking level. Thus, representation was still understood as 'acting for', yet the chapter paid more attention to the process of 'making present'. A second argument, therefore, asserted that interest groups should transmit information about public preferences when lobbying policymakers if they are to act as transmission belts.

Chapter 3 assessed the questions about the extent to which groups provide such information, whether actors differ in the extent to which they do so, as well as scrutinising conditions under which they are more likely to do so. Similar to what we saw in chapter 2, the analysis revealed variation across group types and the extent to which they transmit

information about public preferences. Hence, one answer is that interest groups do represent the public, maybe more than we might have thought, yet there is also some variation as some groups (claim to) represent the public more than others. Chapter 3 also showed that under some conditions actors are more likely to transmit information about what their constituents want. For example, actors that enjoy a larger share of public support on an issue are more likely to transmit information and actors that aim at preventing policy change are more likely to inform policymakers about what their constituents want. Consequently, one could conclude that sometimes actors represent citizens more than other times, namely when they can strategically make use of public support or when they perceive their constituents' interest to be at risk. At the same time, this could also serve as an explanation for the overall status-quo bias: pointing out the negative consequences for different constituents may facilitate risk-aversion and foster uncertainty and may eventually be a factor driving the status quo bias in the first place.

6.3.3 What resources are necessary for groups to acquire information?

After analysing the extent to which interest groups provide information about public preferences, I argued that we should look at how interest groups acquire the information they provide to policymakers. Existing scholarship has often treated information as a resource and scholars have argued that financial resources enhance a group's ability to provide information. This could be problematic as it could suggest that groups with limited economic resources are disadvantaged when lobbying policymakers. I applied a resource perspective to informational lobbying and argued that information is not only a resource when lobbying policymakers but requires resources in itself.

Accordingly, chapter 4 tapped into the democratic element of interest representation by looking if the resources that are necessary for acquiring and transmitting information can be a source of bias. Furthermore, I argued that interest groups can also rely on other than economic resources when acquiring information, especially information on public preferences. Hence, I suggested that groups can make use of their political capacities, that is, their ability to interact with their members or the general public, their ability to speak on their behalf as well as to mobilise and generate support. The chapter's analysis showed that, generally, groups are equally well equipped to acquire and transmit information and it is not necessarily economic resources that are key for information provision. As such, actors can

also rely on their political capacities for information, which may ease concerns that predominantly economically powerful actors can get information.

6.3.4 Do interest groups increase their chance of lobbying influence when providing information?

The argument has been that successful representation becomes more likely when interest groups and the public agree on an issue (as discussed in Chapter 2), but also when interest groups and policymakers agree on an issue. So, for interest groups to successfully act as transmission belts, they should be able to influence policymakers by means of information. Existing research has often worked with the assumption that information is a key resource that interest groups exchange for influence. Yet little research has looked at this empirically. Moreover, most research has looked at information in general or expert information only, not considering that interest groups provide different types of information. Yet a lot of the existing theories work with the assumption that interest groups work as transmission belts and influence policymakers by informing them about what the public wants.

Thus, in order to answer the last question, chapter 5 analysed whether interest groups increase the degree of their influence on policymaking when transmitting their constituents' preferences. The analysis showed that having information about public preferences is not sufficient for successful representation. Instead, it is technical policy expertise that increases the chance of lobbying success, suggesting that policymaking is made rather in the light of technical considerations and may revolve less about what the public wants. This is not to conclude that interest groups are not successful in transmitting preferences, yet they have to provide expert information in order to lobby successfully. Fortunately, in democratic terms, chapter 4 showed that it does not necessarily require economic resources to provide expert information but that interest groups can also rely on their political capacities to acquire such information.

6.4 Discussion of the findings: Interest groups – a blessing or a curse?

The dissertation's puzzle started from the discussion of whether interest groups help or hinder democratic policymaking. Two perspectives were laid out in order to help understanding why interest groups may or may not hurt democratic policymaking (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017). The optimistic view follows Truman's pluralist understanding of interest groups, who organise and aggregate public preferences and therefore ensure that all voices of society are

heard. Hence, interest groups could be a blessing for democratic policymaking. This view was challenged by elitist theorists such as Schattschneider (1960) and Olson (1965) who argued that the opinions that are transmitted by interest groups are not representative of the public but skewed to economic interests. Such a view seems to mirror the public perception of lobbying, which often sees lobbying as a threat to democratic policymaking. So are these sceptical stances on lobbying warranted?

Again, it may be disappointing for the reader to learn that I do not have proof for one side or the other. Yet, the empirical chapters provided evidence that, by and large, we could be less sceptical about those 'shadowy agitators' than public perception may lead us to expect. I shall come to the normative implications of my study later, but first wish to highlight some specific contributions my dissertation makes to the academic literature. While I did not aim to ultimately answer the question of whether lobbying is a blessing or a curse, I intended to offer a more nuanced picture of interest group representation by zooming in to some of the underlying mechanisms. As mentioned, I developed several sub questions that contributed to the overarching question, that is, to what extent interest groups act as transmission belts of public preferences.

6.4.1 Academic contribution

The theoretical framework was largely informed by classic theories of representation in order to get a better understanding of *representation* through interest groups. The biggest contribution my dissertation makes is therefore, in my opinion, to the interest group literature. Anne Rasmussen and I argued in our co-authored paper that we should focus more on the citizens and use the public as a benchmark for assessing whether negative stances on lobbying are warranted. As said, interest groups are supposed to organise and aggregate interests of the people, which are thus at the core of interest representation. Yet, the vast share of the literature has predominantly looked at interest groups' strategies, mobilisation patterns, resources and influence and less at the essence of representation, namely the people (but see important exceptions Claassen and Nicholson 2013; Gilens 2012; Lax and Phillips 2012; Page et al. 1987; Rasmussen 2018; Rasmussen et al. 2019; Rasmussen, Mäder, et al. 2018; Rasmussen and Reher 2019; Rasmussen, Romeijn, et al. 2018).

While very valuable and insightful, I think if we want to understand unequal representation we should get closer to the public's interest and consider them in the equation.

Maybe quite surprisingly, the findings in chapter 2 showed not only that interest groups represent the majority of the public in 50% of the cases, but that also a large share of the actors who are feared the most, namely business actors, promote a view that is similar to the majority of the public. Hence, while we see some differences across group types, it suggests that representation through interest groups may be less biased than often assumed. Consequently, Anne Rasmussen and I argued that when assessing unequal representation, it may make sense to not only assess who dominates in terms of sheer numbers (Gray and Lowery 2000; Rasmussen and Carroll 2014; Schlozman and Tierney 1986), but to also look at the extent to which these actors actually differ from what the public wants.

Moreover, my dissertation gave insights into the underlying mechanisms of representation, which are helpful for understanding how groups can help democratic policymaking. Even more so, unpacking the mechanisms helped explain why some groups are more likely to contribute to democratic policymaking and under which conditions groups are more likely to do so. Such knowledge contributes to the literature on interest groups in general and theories on informational lobbying in specific. To delve into the underlying mechanisms I conceptualised the transmission belt mechanism and offered an empirical test of it. Many studies, so far, have worked with the assumption that interest groups work as transmission belts without engaging in a discussion whether and how they do so (cf. Gilens and Page 2014; Kohler-Koch 2009; Lowery et al. 2015; Rasmussen et al. 2014).

Some notable exceptions suggest that interest groups act as intermediary between citizens and policymakers by means of information provision (Bevan and Rasmussen 2017; Eising and Spohr 2017; Rasmussen and Reher 2019). Yet these studies have not considered information as a variable in the equation. By conceptualising the transmission belt mechanism and linking it more explicitly to information, my dissertation showed that, by and large, groups use information in order to inform policymakers about what their constituents want. However, the findings in chapter 3 also showed that groups predominantly make references to specific segments in society. This teaches us that we should understand interest groups less as a transmission belt of the general public, but rather for their specific constituencies. While this it at the core of Truman's pluralist theory, it is empirically difficult to get such disaggregated data. The idea of claims-making has helped to get more accurate insights into who interest groups (claim to) represent.

Moreover, the findings could maybe also help explain why existing research has found mixed evidence for whether there is bias in the interest group system. For example, many studies have used group type as a proxy for the type and amount of information that groups are able to provide and argued that business groups are more advantaged because of the expert information they have (Coen 2007; Dür and De Bièvre 2007a; Dür and Mateo 2014a; Yackee and Yackee 2006). However, none of my findings suggested that there are differences amongst group types in the extent to which they provide expert information (see also De Bruycker 2016; Nownes and Newmark 2016). Even more so, my analysis suggested that actors do not necessarily need economic resources for the provision of expert information. Eventually, however, actors with expert information are more successful in securing policy outcomes. This suggests that there is less potential bias then often assumed, but we may get the wrong impression if we assume that predominantly business actors can provide expert information.

The discussion of the classic concepts of representation has shown that the application of these concepts to interest groups is difficult as we cannot really judge whether interest group involvement fosters equal representation (Urbinati and Warren 2008). I did not claim to have found a solution to this problem, but I suggested looking at the costs of information, to assess whether information provision introduces bias. The findings in chapter 4 suggested that information does not necessarily introduce bias as actors may not need economic resources for providing information. Hence, the information they transmit may actually contribute to democratic policymaking in the sense that actors with fewer financial resources are not necessarily disadvantaged. This could potentially also explain why we see that business groups, so groups that represent sectoral and specific interests quite often promote the same view as the public as shown in chapter 2. They may involve their members quite well and use them as a source of information. Moreover, labour unions are classic membership organisations which may have some internal structure that facilitates information to flow between members and group leaders.

Lastly, it was argued that for successful representation, interest groups and policymakers have to agree (Kohler-Koch 2010). Many studies look at factors that determine interest group influence. While some have indeed included information as a variable, the studies have either looked at information in general (Klüver 2011b; Tallberg et al. 2018) or expert information only (Burstein and Hirsh 2007; Dür et al. 2015). However, if we want to understand the last chain of the transmission belt mechanism, so I argued, we should also look

at whether the provision of information about public preferences increases lobbying success. Interestingly, the findings suggested that only the provision of expert information increases lobbying success. This could be problematic, from a democratic point of view, as often an argument has been made that business actors are associated with expert information (Coen 2007; Dür and Mateo 2014a; Yackee and Yackee 2006). Yet, chapters 3 and 4 showed that interest groups do not differ in the extent to which they provide expert information, which is in line with existing studies (De Bruycker 2016; Nownes and Newmark 2016). Moreover, chapter 4 showed providing expert information does not necessarily require economic resources. Thus, the fact that expert information is the currency for successful lobbying does not necessarily disadvantage those with fewer economic resources. However, it also suggests that policymaking is more about technical details and revolves less about what the public wants.

Thus, the dissertation contributes to discussions on bias in the interest group landscape by proposing to look more closely at public preferences. However, it also contributes more specifically to the literature on informational lobbying. Even though scholars increasingly approach informational lobbying empirically, knowledge about informational lobbying is still scarce (Nownes and Newmark 2016). This is surprising giving the importance of information for understanding policy change (Burstein 2014). My dissertation adds to this literature by offering new theoretical and empirical insights as to who uses information, when information is used, the costs of information as well as the effects of information.

Another contribution my dissertation allows me to make is to the literature on representation, especially on nonelectoral forms of representation. Representation through nonelected representatives is thought to be ever more important but comes with severe conceptual and normative challenges (Urbinati and Warren 2008: 389). As discussed already, there are some difficulties when applying classic concepts of representation to nonelected actors such as interest groups. One of the main reasons is that we cannot judge whether the representatives actually contribute to democratic policymaking or if they foster unequal representation (ibid.). The same answer applies as the one given to the interest group literature: It may be less bad than we might think. While I may not have solved problems of delegation and accountability for nonelectoral forms of representation, I also think here the focus on the public as a benchmark may be helpful for assessing whether interest groups represent citizens or not. Moreover, I think conceptualising interest groups as transmission belts helps also for this literature to get a better (theoretical and empirical) understanding of

what representation through interest groups could look like. Linking it more specifically to representative claims (Saward 2006) and issue-specific activity (Severs 2012) has proven useful to provide new empirical insights to a literature that is predominantly theoretical.

Lastly, I think the dissertation can also be interesting for scholars studying the responsiveness of governments to the public and the role of interest groups therein. The dissertation offered an explanation of how interest groups could potentially affect the ability of governments to respond to public preferences by arguing that information transmission is the underlying mechanism. In that sense, information about public preferences could be seen as a potential variable that could be expected to either strengthen or weaken the effect of interest groups on responsiveness. My guess would be that, based on what we have seen in this study, information provision by interest groups in general should strengthen the opinion-policy link. The effect may be even stronger if such information is provided by citizen groups given that they promote the same view as the public slightly more often than business groups.

6.4.2 Normative implications and societal relevance

Next to some contributions to the academic literature, my dissertation also offers valuable insights that are, in my view, of societal relevance. First of all, the findings suggest that the knowledge that citizens and constituency groups bring into policymaking is valuable and much needed. Policymakers need information on the consequences of policy decisions. They need information as to how policies will affect certain segments of society, but they also need information about the effectiveness and feasibility of a policy decision (De Bruycker 2016; Wright 1996). Especially the latter type of information, so expert information, is information that policymakers value the most as chapter 5 has shown. Citizens have such knowledge as they are affected by those decisions on a daily basis both in private life but also at work. For example, a doctor has a much better idea of how the introduction of a consultation fee would affect doctors and their offices than a policymaker. A farmer may have more accurate information about the consequences of potential alternatives to glyphosate. Arguably, the doctor and the farmer alone have very little means to affect policymaking. Yet, they can participate in an interest group, which represents a specific interest the person cares about. Or they participate in a labour union or professional group. In this way, individual persons can contribute their knowledge to a discussion held within such a group. Hence, a group can use its members as sources of information both about preferences, but also more in technical questions. I think, therefore, that the findings of my dissertation could be seen as a plea for

more citizen engagement to participate in organisations and associations. This also fits more recent research that argues that engagement in civil society associations increases correspondence between public opinion and policy outcomes (Rasmussen and Reher 2019). At the same time, it should also encourage interest groups to involve their members and constituents in their own internal decision-making processes as their members constitute a valuable source for any kind of information (Albareda 2018). This supports the seminal work by de Tocqueville (1840) who argues that democratic quality is linked to civic engagement and also scholarly work that argues that knowledgeable citizens are more likely to secure representative policy outcomes (Jaeger et al. 2017) by proposing that interest groups are the link through which such knowledge or information may flow. At the same time, we should not forget that it is often highly educated and wealthy citizens that are more likely to get politically involved. Thus, we should not forget that some interests may not even mobilise in the first place or are not heard by existing groups.

I think my dissertation also offers a more nuanced assessment of whether the interest group landscape is biased. As discussed, chapter 2 showed that a large share of business groups also promote the same view as the public. This is not to say that there is no problem with undue influence and dominance of business actors. There are enough illustrative cases such as the Dieselgate, or the debate about banning glyphosate where we cannot help but get the impression that interests of big players prevail over the public interest. Yet, if we look at a larger number of issues that vary on various aspects such as public support, salience and type, we find a less grim picture. Even more so, when we look at what the public thinks or the extent to which citizens are actually represented through policy advocates, we might find that these two sets of actors are not so far removed from each other after all. So ultimately, I think, we can be quite optimistic about the role of interest groups in policymaking as they are an important part of our democracies, not in the least because they may know much better than policymakers how the world works as they experience the consequences of policies on a daily basis. This hands-on information is information they can use when lobbying and this is also why I argued that information transmission is key for representation.

6.5 Limitations and Future Research

Arguably there are some limitations in this study, which should be kept in mind when interpreting the findings. First, there are limits as to how much one can generalise based on a sample of five West European countries and 50 policy issues, which was the set up for the

majority of the research articles presented in the chapters here. However, relying on issues that represent a broad range of topics and vary with regard to media salience, public support and policy type, should at least increase the likelihood of generalisability to a broader set of issues within these countries, or even countries that share similar characteristics such as other Northern and Western European democracies. It is important to bear in mind, though, that the issues in the sample may be more salient than an average issue given that they were sampled from opinion polls. This could mean that access to information – especially information on public preferences – may have been somewhat easier and therefore less costly than on less salient issues. Furthermore, it could imply that the level of conflict on these issues is higher than average due to higher mobilisation. Yet, it also suggests that on issues the public cares about, interest groups take on their concerns and transmit their preferences.

Second, although the chapters did not offer direct proof that the findings are generalisable to other countries, the theoretical mechanisms outlined in the chapters should also apply to other Northern and Western European democracies. Nevertheless, a future contribution could look at informational lobbying in younger democracies in which interest groups may be less involved in policymaking.

Third, the dissertation repeatedly made the argument that interest group represent their constituents by providing information about their preferences. However, advocates can obviously also represent the interests of their members by providing expert information. Even though this would not be counted as representation in Saward's sense, it does not mean that such actors do not act in the interest of a constituency. This could imply that also business groups and professional groups transmit *more* constituency preferences than the dissertation's analysis might lead us to expect, simply by relying on other types of information. Yet, the same could be said for citizen groups, that is, the measure might also miss more of their attempts to act as representatives by providing technical expertise. Moreover, the consequence would be that we would see even more representation through interest groups by means of information, if also technical information is used to inform policymakers about what the people want.

Fourth, using public opinion as a benchmark for assessing bias somehow implies that the closer public opinion and interest groups are in their positions, the better we see the former represented through the latter. This approach neglects that minority preferences should be considered as well and the dissertation does not look at the extent to which minority

preferences are represented. However, while only the congruence measure of chapter 2 uses the opinion majority as a benchmark for assessing bias, the chapter also looks at the volume, distance and – most importantly – at the correlation between public preferences and the position of interest groups. Moreover, chapter 3 tries to move beyond a general public opinion measure by distinguishing that groups make references to the general public, but, more importantly, about their constituents, which can also refer to minority interests. Nevertheless, the interest group literature would benefit from studies that look at whether there are inequalities in who gets represented through interest groups.

Finally, the dissertation focused on interest groups as a channel of public preferences. Arguably, there are alternative routes through which citizens can transmit their preferences to policymakers such as political parties or directly approaching policymakers. Likewise, policymakers have other sources for the information that interest groups provide. For example, also policymakers can directly approach citizens, especially during election campaigns and use the media as sources of such information. Hence, there are alternative transmission belts that one should not forget. In a similar vein, one should not forget that I looked only at one direction of how the transmission belt can work. That is, I only looked at the extent to which interest groups transmit public preferences to policymakers, irrespective of how those preferences were formed and whether interest groups shaped such preferences in the first place. While this one-directional conceptualisation of interest groups as transmission belts was the core objective of the dissertation, it should be kept in mind that the study therefore only sheds light on one out of the two directions.

There are a couple of other things the dissertation could not do, but which could make for promising avenues for future research. I think the field would benefit from looking more at the internal organisation of groups (Albareda and Braun 2018; Halpin et al. 2017), to see what measures are in place to represent their members. In light of my findings it would be especially interesting to link the internal organisation to information flows to get more (qualitative) insights as to how exactly interest groups acquire information, to what extent they include their members and how information is processed to form a position as a group. It would also be interesting to look at the receiving end of information to identify policymakers' sources of information. It could teach us something about governmental decision-making and, more specifically, about when policymakers decide to consider information and when they decide to ignore such information. Furthermore, it would be interesting to study civil servants to understand how they judge the representativeness and legitimacy of a source and type of

information. Another interesting avenue for future research would be to look how information supply affects a governments' responsiveness to citizens. Unfortunately, this was not quite feasible within this dissertation as this would require having more cases at the issue level, whereas the focus now was much more on the actor level. I do think, however, it would add an interesting variable to the studies examining the role of interest groups on the opinion-policy link.

6.6 Concluding Remarks

We started this endeavour with Dahl on quasi guardianship and the cure for undemocratic policymaking, which, following the opening quote, is the demos itself. Throughout the dissertation I have, so I hope, made a case for why we should include citizens' preferences in the equation when answering the question as to how much interest groups represent the citizens. I would like to be optimistic and conclude that interest groups are not all bad and indeed have the potential to act as transmission belts of public preferences: Some more than others. Sometimes more than other times.

I have also made a case for conceptualising information more clearly to assess whether interest groups refer to the general public and/or segments of society. The latter, I think, is valuable information that only interest groups have. Policymakers may have access to opinion polls, or know what the general public wants. But they should also know how a policy will actually affect the lives of certain people. And they should know what those people that are affected by a policy think about the new proposal. This is important information and this is information that it is difficult to access. But this is information that interest groups have.

7. References

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Summary

English Summary

Do interest groups help or hinder democratic policymaking? Normatively speaking, democratic governments ought to develop policies that are in line with what the public wants. Yet policymakers constantly have to balance competing interests of different actors in society. Who wins such a battle is one of the core questions in political science. 'Pluralists', on the one hand, have a more optimistic perspective on interest representation, arguing that interest groups act as important intermediaries between the public and the policymaking level. Elitist theorists, on the other hand, are more skeptical, warning of the involvement of interest groups as unequal opportunities and undue influence might bias the interest group landscape towards special interests. The latter perspective reflects many of the public concerns about lobbying. Lobbying has a rather negative reputation among the general public. There is no shortage of news articles reporting about the dominance and power of big players in policymaking, criticising that policies tend to favour industry interests rather than ordinary citizens. The public perception of lobbying is likely to account, at least partly, for an increasing scepticism towards the political elite. In fact, the OECD reports that public trust in governments is waning as a result of the perception that policies are made by private interests at the expense of what the public wants. It is crucial for political science as well as representative democracy to know to what extent these stances on lobbying are warranted. Do groups actually represent the public and can contribute to democratic legitimacy? More specifically, can groups act as transmission belts of public preferences and how could they do so? Understanding these mechanisms is important for understanding how groups can help strengthening the extent to which governments respond to public demands.

With my dissertation I aim to contribute to these debates. I show that different interest groups represent public opinion to varying degrees, but that the differences in their congruence with public opinion are smaller than conventional wisdom would lead us to expect. Moreover, and this helps answering the question how interest groups can act as transmission belts, I argue that *one mechanism through which interest groups transmit public preferences is the information they provide to policymakers*. The overall aim of the dissertation, therefore, is to look at the extent to which interest groups act as transmission belts of public preferences and understand how they do so. I argue that we have to go to the core of interest representation and bring the people back in. The focus is hence on the constituents of an interest group. Combining classic theories of representation with theories on informational lobbying I develop a theoretical framework which conceptualises interest

groups as transmission belts who provide policymakers with information about what the people want.

The empirical chapters rely on data collected within the GovLis project, pooling information on interest group activity, public opinion and policy outputs. Specifically, the dissertation relies on two main datasets. The first dataset integrates information about public opinion and interest group activity on 50 specific policy issues in 5 West European countries (Denmark, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK). Another dataset includes information about public opinion and interest groups on 102 specific policy issues in Germany. Data collection methods such as media-content analysis, desk research, expert interviews, a survey amongst policy advocates as well as content coding of policy documents were used to form the data bases.

To answer the question about the extent to which interest groups act as transmission belts of public preferences and to understand how they do so, the dissertation relies on four empirical research articles. Chapter 2 (Bias Article co-authored with Anne Rasmussen) examines the question to what extent and under which conditions interest groups and the public are more likely to hold congruent positions on a policy issue. Moreover, it introduces the discussion on bias in the interest group community and elaborates on its implications for opinion representation. The chapter's analysis shows that the public and interest groups agree roughly half the time, yet some groups seem to do a better job. For example, citizen groups are more likely to align their positions with the public than other actor types. However, the differences between the representativeness of different group types were not as strong as expected. We also see that a lot of those groups that are feared the most (such as business groups and firms) agree with the majority of the public on an issue. A potential reason for these group differences could be that groups vary in the extent to which they fulfil their function as representatives. Moreover, some may have more information about what their constituents want, which they transmit to policymakers.

Chapter 3 (Transmission Belt Article) builds on these findings and conceptualises interest groups as transmission belts, arguing that information is the mechanism through which representation occurs. It shows that interest groups inform policymakers about public preferences, but also scrutinises who does so and under which conditions actors are more likely to do so. More specifically, it argues that citizen groups are more likely to share the same opinion as the public as they are better informed about what the public wants. This is

why they are also more likely to transmit that information to policymakers. The analysis finds that those actors that are more likely to align their positions with the public are also those that are more likely to inform policymakers about public preferences. Moreover, actors that have a higher share of the public on their side provide more of this type of information. Hence, the chapter's analysis shows that, by and large, interest groups have the potential to act as transmission belts by informing policymakers about public preferences, yet there is variation in the degree to which they act as one. Additionally, it shows that those advocates that generally provide more information (irrespective of the type) provide more information on public preferences. Linking this to research that argues that more resources lead to more information provision, leads to the question if resourceful groups are better able to provide information.

Chapter 4 (Resource Article) explores this further and argues that it depends on the type of information. While policy expertise may require more economic resources, political information can be acquired and transmitted by other means. The findings show that economic resources indeed facilitate the provision of expert information. However, interest groups can also rely on other resources (such as political capacities) for providing expert information. What is more, groups are less dependent on economic resources for providing information about public preferences (which is how the transmission belt mechanism works). In fact, here it is predominantly political capacities that seem to matter. Hence, using information for representation does not necessarily introduce bias in the sense that only the well-off are able to transmit it.

Finally, chapter 5 (Success Article) examines the question with what type of information interest groups are more likely to get their way. So far the empirical chapters have shown that interest groups qualify to act as transmission belts (some more than others, sometimes more than other times) by means of information. Yet, the fifth empirical chapter shows that only those actors that provide expert information are able to increase their likelihood of lobbying success. The effect of information about public preferences on lobbying success is, if anything, negative. This is intriguing, given that policymakers are assumed to need both types of information and that interest groups are said to be influential because they provide both types of information. However, from chapter 4 (Resource Article) we know that groups that rely a lot on their members are able to generate such expert information as well. Moreover, we also know from this chapter that most of the time, groups provide both types of information. Hence, interest groups can only fulfil the last step of the

transmission belt chain if they provide at least a considerable amount of expert information (for which they can rely on their members' expertise). Yet, this also suggests that 'evidence-based lobbying' seems to be more successful and that policy is rather made in the light of technical considerations and perhaps revolves less about what the public wants.

So what have we learned? Are sceptical stances on lobbying warranted? The dissertation does not offer proof for one side or the other. Yet, the empirical chapters provide evidence that, by and large, we could be less sceptical about those 'shadowy agitators' than public perception may lead us to expect. Moreover, the chapters offer a more nuanced picture of interest group representation by zooming in on some of the underlying mechanisms. For example focusing more on the people and constituents and what they want seems a promising benchmark for assessing bias in the interest group landscape. My dissertation also adds to the literature on interest representation by offering new theoretical and empirical insights as to who uses information, when information is used, the costs of information as well as the effects of information, especially with regard to information about what the people want.

Throughout the dissertation I have, made a case for why we should include citizens' preferences in the equation when answering the question as to how much interest groups represent citizens. I would like to be optimistic and conclude that interest groups are not all bad and indeed have the potential to act as transmission belts of public preferences: Some more than others. Sometimes more than other times.

Samenvatting Nederlands

Helpen of beperken belangengroepen democratische beleidsvorming? Normaal gesproken moeten democratische overheden beleid maken dat een afspiegeling is van wat burgers willen. Beleidsmakers moeten echter continu verschillende en concurrerende belangen uit de maatschappij afwegen. Wie er wint en wie er verliest is één van de kernvragen in de politieke wetenschap. 'Pluralistsen' zijn optimistisch over de betrokkenheid van belangengroepen in beleidsvorming, omdat deze de belangrijke functie hebben de belangen van de burgers naar politici over te brengen. 'Elitist theorists' zijn sceptischer, omdat het betrekken van belangengroepen tot ongelijke kansen en invloed van bepaalde groepen, meestal grote bedrijven of groepen die heel specifieke belangen representeren, kan leiden. Dit meer negatieve perspectief domineert vaak de publieke beeldvorming over lobbyen. Er zijn veel nieuwsberichten en verhalen in de media over de invloed en macht van grote bedrijven en organisaties. Het gaat vaak over hoe beleid meer het belang van deze grote bedrijven zou dienen dan dat van de meerderheid van de burgers. Dit negatieve beeld is dan ook een reden voor de groeiende scepsis richting de politieke elite. Zo geeft een OESO rapport bijvoorbeeld aan dat het publieke vertrouwen in de overheid afneemt, omdat deze te vaak het belang van de industrie dient en niet de burgers. Het is voor zowel voor de politieke wetenschap als ook voor de representatieve democratie belangrijk om te weten in hoeverre deze (negatieve) houdingen gerechtvaardigd zijn. Vertegenwoordigen belangengroepen de belangen van hun leden en kunnen ze zo helpen democratische legitimiteit te verbeteren? Kunnen belangengroepen als *transmission belts* ageren en hoe kunnen ze dat doen? Het begrijpen van deze mechanismen is belangrijk om inzicht te krijgen in hoeverre belangengroepen er aan kunnen bijdragen dat dat beleid een afspiegeling vormt van de wensen van burgers.

Met dit proefschrift lever ik een bijdrage aan deze debatten. Ik laat zien dat er variatie is in de mate waarin belangengroepen publieke opinie representeren, maar dat de verschillen in hoeverre hun mening congruent is (overlapt) met publieke opinie kleiner zijn dan verwacht. Verder beargumenteer ik dat belangengroepen informatie gebruiken om de voorkeuren van burgers naar beleidsmarkers over te brengen. Dat helpt om beter te begrijpen hoe belangengroepen als *transmission belt* zouden kunnen ageren. Het doel van deze dissertatie is dus om te kijken in hoeverre belangengroepen als *transmission belt* van publieke voorkeuren kunnen werken en hoe ze dat doen. Ik beargumenteer dat we daarvoor naar de kern van belangenvertegenwoordiging moeten gaan en dus meer aandacht moeten besteden aan burgers en hun voorkeuren. Door het combineren van klassieke theorieën over representatie met

theorieën over *informational lobbying* maak ik een theoretisch kader waarin ik belangengroepen als *transmission belts* conceptualiseer, die beleidsmakers van informatie voorzien over wat mensen eigenlijk willen.

Voor de empirische hoofdstukken maak ik gebruik van data die we binnen het GovLis project verzameld hebben. Dit databestand brengt informatie samen over de activiteiten van verschillende belangengroepen, publieke opinie en beleidsuitkomsten. Het proefschrift is op twee GovLis databestanden gebaseerd. Het eerste verzamelt de bovenstaande informatie voor 50 specifieke beleidskwesties in vijf Europese landen (Denemarken, Duitsland, Zweden, Nederland en het VK). Het andere databestand is gebaseerd op 102 specifieke beleidskwesties in Duitsland. Om de gegevens te verzamelen hebben we gebruik gemaakt vaan media-inhoudsanalyse, *desk research*, interviews met experts, een enquête met belangengroepen en een inhoudsanalyse van beleidsdocumenten.

De vraag in hoeverre belangengroepen als *transmission belt* ageren en hoe ze dat doen heb ik aan hand van vier empirische hoofdstukken onderzocht. Hoofdstuk 2, bijvoorbeeld, (het 'Bias-Artikel', geschreven met Anne Rasmussen) onderzoekt in hoeverre en wanneer belangengroepen en burgers dezelfde beleidsuitkomst willen. Verder leidt dit hoofdstuk de discussie in over *bias* in de gemeenschap van belangengroepen en wat dit betekent voor het vertegenwoordigen van publieke opinie. De analyse laat zien dat burgers en belangengroepen in rond 50% van de gevallen dezelfde mening hebben over een beleidskwestie, maar ook dat sommige groepen en grotere kans maken hetzelfde te willen dan andere. Bijvoorbeeld, voor *citizen groups*, dus organisaties die het belang van een bredere groep mensen vertegenwoordigen, is de kans groter dat zij dezelfde positie de hebben als de meerderheid van de bevolking dan voor groepen die een specifieke industrie vertegenwoordigen. De verschillen tussen de verschillende soorten groepen zijn echter niet zo sterk als verwacht. We zien dan ook dat een groot deel van groepen die een negatieve reputatie hebben (werkgeversorganisaties en bedrijven) weldegelijk dezelfde mening hebben als de meerderheid van de bevolking. En mogelijke reden voor de verschillen die we wel zien kan zijn, dat de groepen variëren in hoeverre ze hun functie als vertegenwoordiger van hun leden uitvoeren. Verder zou het kunnen dat sommige groepen wat meer informatie hebben over wat hun leden willen, wat ze vervolgens makkelijker naar de politici kunnen over brengen.

In hoofdstuk 3 (Transmission Belt-Artikel) bouw voort ik op deze bevindingen op en conceptualiseer belangengroepen als *transmission belts* en argumenteer dat informatie een

mechanisme is waardoor belangengroepen hun leden representeren. Het artikel kijkt in hoeverre belangengroepen informatie gebruiken om politici over publieke voorkeuren te informeren, maar kijkt ook wanneer de kans groter is dat ze dat doen. Specifiek beargumenteer ik ook dat *citizen groups* een grotere kans maken publieke opinie te vertegenwoordigen, omdat ze dichter bij de mensen zitten en dus beter weten wat die willen. Dit is dan ook een reden waarom het waarschijnlijker is dat informatie over publieke voorkeuren over te brengen. De analyse vindt dan ook inderdaad dat actoren wiens mening meer op publieke opinie lijkt meer informatie over de publieke voorkeuren overbrengt. Het hoofdstuk laat dus zien dat belangengroepen wel als *transmission belts* kunnen ageren, maar er is verscheidenheid in de mate waarin zij dat doen. Verder vind ik in deze analyse dat belangengroepen die over het algemeen meer informatie overbrengen (en hier maakt het niet uit wat voor informatie) ook meer informatie over publieke voorkeuren overbrengen. Dat roept de vraag op of groepen met meer middelen (een reden waarom groepen in het algemeen hebben meer informatie hebben) ook meer mogelijkheden hebben informatie te over brengen. Als dat zo is, zou dat ook weer een oorzaak van *bias* kunnen zijn.

Hoofdstuk 4 (Resource Artikel) gaat hier verder op in en beargumenteert dat de middelen *(resources*) waarover een organisatie beschikt inderdaad belangrijk zijn, maar dat het wel afhankelijk is om welke type informatie het gaat. Het zou bijvoorbeeld zo kunnen zijn dat voor *beleidsexpertise* meer economische middelen (geld) nodig is, terwijl je ook andere niet-economische middelen kan gebruiken om *politieke informatie* over te brengen. De empirische analyse laat zien dat economische middelen inderdaad het verzamelen en overbrengen van beleidsexpertise faciliteren, maar dat belangengroepen ook gebruik maken van andere middelen (zoals politieke capaciteiten). Sterker nog, belangengroepen zijn minder afhankelijk van economische middelen als ze informatie over publieke voorkeuren willen overbrengen (en dat is de cruciale informatie als ze als *transmission belt* willen werken). Zoals verwacht blijk dat hier vooral politieke capaciteiten voor nodig zijn. Dus het gebruiken van informatie om belangen te vertegenwoordigen impliceert niet per se een *bias*, waarbij alleen welgestelde groepen dit soort informatie zouden kunnen overbrengen.

Ten slotte gaat hoofdstuk 5 (Success Artikel) in op de vraag welk type informatie belangengroepen het meest helpt bij het beïnvloeden van beleid. De empirische hoofdstukken hebben tot nu aangetoond dat belangengroepen wel als *transmission belt* kunnen ageren (sommige meer dan andere, en soms meer dan andere keren) als zij informatie over publieke voorkeuren overbrengen. Hoofdstuk 5 laat echter zien dat alle actoren die expertise

overbrengen een grotere kans op lobbysuccess hebben. Het effect van informatie over publieke voorkeuren op lobbysuccess is zelfs negatief. Dit is intrigerend, aangezien beleidsmakers beide soorten informatie nodig hebben. We weten echter uit hoofdstuk 4 (Resource Artikel) dat belangengroepen vaak hun leden betrekken om expertise te verschaffen. Verder weten we uit dit hoofdstuk ook dat belangengroepen vaak allebei typen informatie gebruiken. Dus belangengroepen kunnen alleen maar aan de laatste stap van de *transmission belt* (beleidsbeïnvloeding) voldoen als ze óók expertise overbrengen. Dit suggereert ook dat *evidence-based lobbye* succesvol is. Het lijkt er op dat beleidsvorming eerder plaatsvindt in het licht van technische overwegingen en misschien minder draait om wat het publiek wil.

Wat hebben we nu geleerd? Zijn sceptische standpunten over lobbyen gerechtvaardigd? Deze dissertatie biedt geen bewijs voor de ene of de andere kant. Maar de empirische hoofdstukken laten zien dat we misschien iets minder sceptisch kunnen zijn over de 'schimmige lobbyisten' dan verwacht. Verder verschaffen de hoofdstukken een meer genuanceerd beeld van vertegenwoordiging door belangengroepen door in te zoomen op enkele van de onderliggende mechanismen. Bijvoorbeeld, meer aandacht voor de voorkeuren van burgers en de leden van belangengroepen kan helpen bepalen of er een bias is in de wereld van belangengroepen. Mijn dissertatie levert ook een bijdrage aan de literatuur over belangenvertegenwoordiging door nieuwe theoretische en empirische inzichten te geven over wie er informatie gebruikt, wanneer informatie gebruikt wordt, wat informatie kost en wat voor effect informatie heeft op beleidsprocessen, vooral informatie over publieke voorkeuren.

In mijn proefschrift heb ik beargumenteerd dat publieke voorkeuren een belangrijke factor zijn als we kijken in hoeverre belangengroepen de belangen van mensen vertegenwoordigen. Ik ben optimistisch en wil graag concluderen dat belangengroepen niet alleen maar kwalijk zijn, maar inderdaad de potentie hebben om als *transmission belt* te functioneren: sommige meer dan andere, en soms meer dan andere keren.

CV

Linda Flöthe was born on August 3rd 1989 in Kiel, Germany. After graduating from the Humboldt Gymnasium, she started her Bachelor studies in Literature and Political Science at Kiel University. An unexpected love for numbers led to a change of subjects to study Political Science in combination with Sociology to get more statistics training. After her Bachelor's degree, Linda moved to the Netherlands for the Research Master European Studies at Maastricht University. There she worked as a student assistant at different research projects and did a research internship at Statistics Netherlands (CBS). After her Master's she started her PhD at Leiden University at the Institute of Public Administration. Linda still loves numbers and therefore now works as data analyst in the private sector.