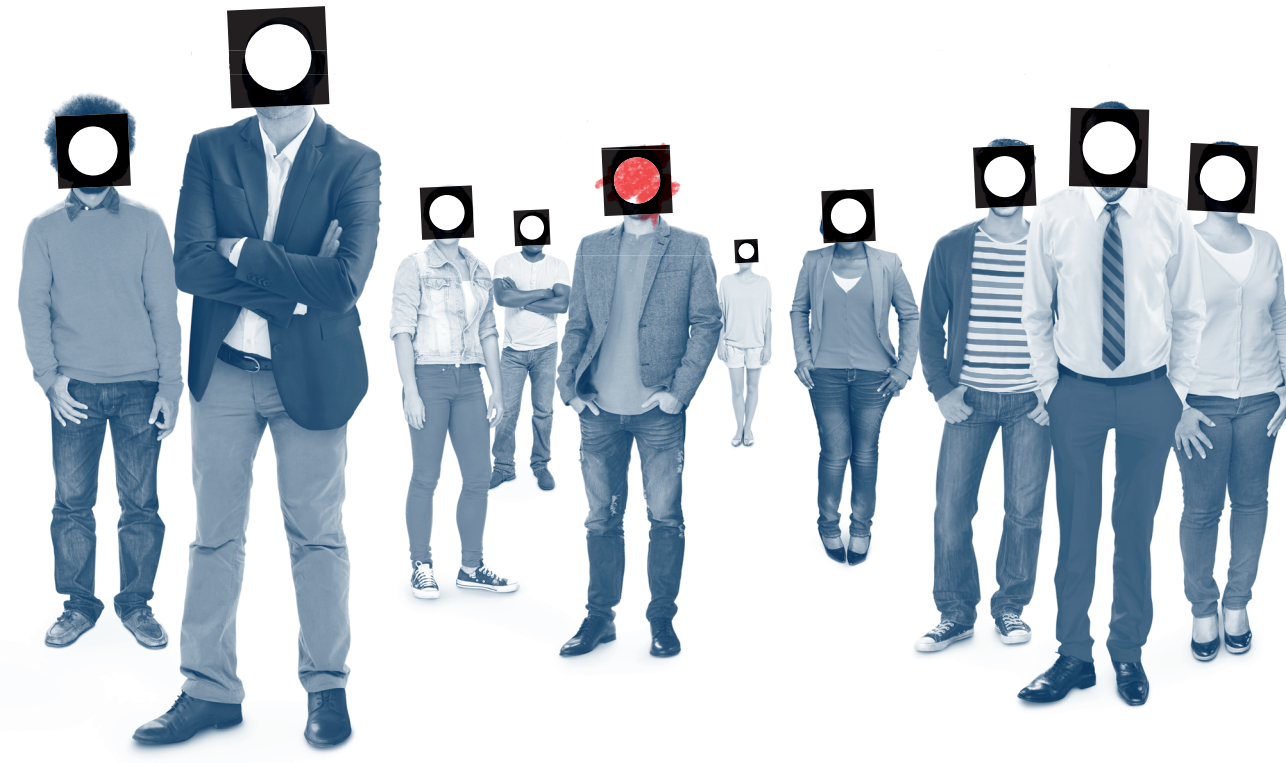
What's the issue? : the lobbying and representativeness of political parties on specific policy issues

Romeijn, J.



WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

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JEROEN ROMEIJN

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Prof. dr. A. Rasmussen (Leiden University & University of Copenhagen)

Co-promotor

Dr. D.D. Toshkov (Leiden University)

Doctorate committee

Prof. dr. E.H. Allern (University of Oslo)
Prof. dr. S.M. Groeneveld (Leiden University)
Dr. T.P. Louwerse (Leiden University)
Prof. mr. dr. E.R. Müller (Leiden University)
Prof. dr. A. Timmermans (Leiden University)

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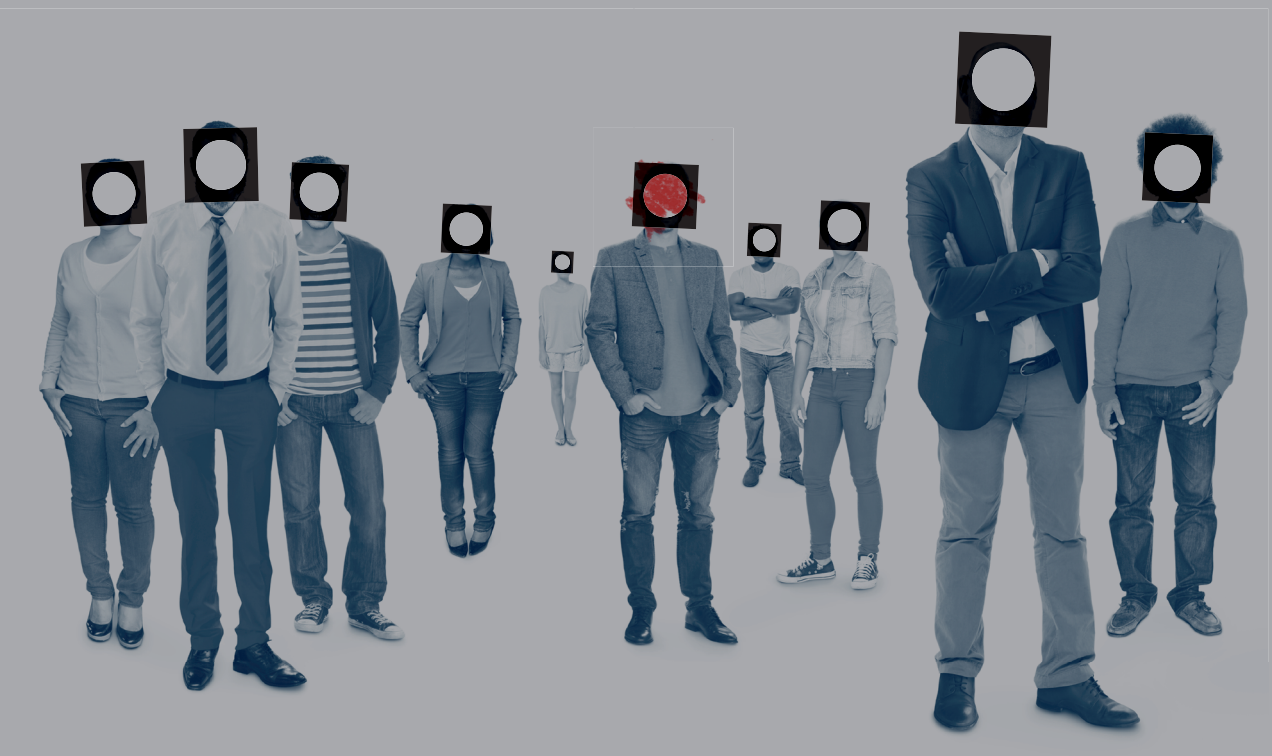
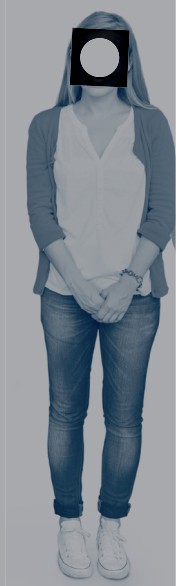


1

Introduction



1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis in the Netherlands, a policy proposal to raise the retirement age attracted large amounts of political and media attention. A hearing was organized in parliament, and major trade unions, employers' organizations, companies, experts, pension funds and individual pensioners were included in the media debate on the issue. The major trade union, the FNV even faced considerable internal tension over an initial plan to raise the retirement age from 65 to 66 years. In spite of the strong and vocal opposition to the increase from trade unions and senior organizations (ANBO), a majority of the advocacy organizations and experts that were active on the issue and featured in newspapers, the hearing in parliament or in touch with civil servants, actually supported the increase of the retirement age to 67. At the same time, a higher retirement age was very unpopular with the general public: according to the NKO (Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek) around 66% of Dutch voters disagreed with the policy plan.

So what happened on this issue where on the one hand interest groups and experts (on average) supported the policy proposal, and voters tended to disagree with it? In this case the government, composed of the center-right VVD and CDA parties and with the support of several political parties to their left, took the side of most policy advocates active on the issue and in July of 2012, the First Chamber of Dutch parliament passed the law regulating the increase of the Dutch retirement age.

The story presented here highlights how politics is often fought not just over broad ideological conflicts, but over specific policy issues. These policies determine many important aspects of citizens' lives, from the age at which they can retire to where their energy comes from. In most Western-European democracies, political parties are given the task of deciding on such policies and incorporating public preferences into policy-making – ensuring the representation of public preferences and interests (Mair, 2010).

However, we know little about how political parties fulfill their representative role when it comes to such specific policy issues, or what determines their positions on these issues. Considering the example of the Dutch retirement age above, there are multiple studies on the effects of public opinion on policy outputs that may help us understand how typical it is that a policy is introduced that is not supported by a public majority (e.g. Giger & Klüver, 2016; Gilens, 2012; Lax & Phillips, 2012; Rasmussen, Reher, & Toshkov, 2018). The influence of interest groups and other policy advocates on policy outputs has also been studied extensively, even if it remains hard to prove (e.g. Baumgartner, Berry, Hojnacki, Leech, & Kimball, 2009; Lowery, 2013; Rasmussen, Mäder, & Reher, 2018). However, if we want to understand the policy positions of the government parties VVD and CDA on raising the retirement age, we have little evidence from political science to help us.

Most of the literature on how political parties represent public opinion and take positions has not studied their positions on specific policy issues. Instead, the focus has been on party positions on ideological dimensions (left-right) and whether these overlap with or react to the electorate's ideological preferences or positions. While this has contributed tremendously to our understanding of whether and how political parties represent the general public, this dissertation contributes to this literature by studying the positions and actions of political parties on *specific policy issues* instead. Such a policy-centered approach (Hacker & Pierson, 2014) allows for studying how political parties take into account the preferences of voters on these specific policy issues. Doing so is important firstly because these specific policy issues actually directly impact the lives of citizens. Moreover, there is evidence that the preferences of the public on these issues are not strongly related to their self-positioning on ideological scales (Lesschaeve, 2017), meaning that representation on ideological dimensions does not necessarily imply representation on specific issues (Broockman, 2016).

Secondly, this dissertation helps to extend our knowledge about whether a second set of actors may help (or thwart) the translation of public preferences into policy and to political parties: interest groups and other policy advocates. Studies in the field of interest groups studies have tended to generally take a more policy-centered approach (Hacker & Pierson, 2014). We therefore know a lot more about the extent to which they (try to) influence specific policy than we do political parties. Due to the GovLis project, of which this dissertation is a part, there is also evidence that while imperfectly, interest groups may have the potential to help establish links between public preferences and policy (Flöthe & Rasmussen, 2019; Rasmussen & Reher, 2019). This dissertation contributes to these studies by tracing a set of specific policy issues over time, to provide a more detailed assessment of the ability of interest groups and other policy advocates to fill the representational gaps that may be left by political parties.

Thirdly and finally, a policy-centered approach (Hacker & Pierson, 2014) allows for studying these two sets of important interest aggregators, political parties and interest groups, in conjunction. There is increasing evidence for the existence of ties and contacts between organized interests and political parties and existing studies often assume that these ties matter a great deal for policy-making (e.g. Allern, 2010; Rasmussen & Lindeboom, 2013; Thomas, 2001). However, we do not know whether this is actually the case. Focusing on specific policies allows for placing the actions and preferences of political parties and policy advocates on a shared metric and studying these actors together. This dissertation therefore contributes to existing studies by investigating whether contacts and ideological overlap between these two sets of actors matter for policy-making.

This introductory chapter discusses the specific literatures that the different parts of this dissertation contribute to. It starts with a discussion of the representative role of political parties in Western European democracies, outlining why existing studies may

overestimate the ability of political parties to act as representatives of public preferences. The discussion then continues with a similar discussion of the role of interest groups. Subsequently, the literature that has integrated the study of these two sets of actors is presented. For each of these parts, the specific contribution of this dissertation is highlighted. A discussion of some of the methodological choices is then presented, followed by an overview of the chapters of the dissertation.

1.2 POLITICAL PARTIES AS REPRESENTATIVES OF PUBLIC PREFERENCES

One central assumption in representative democracies is that public preferences ought to affect the policies that are introduced by elected politicians. The idea being that in order for substantive representation to take place, there should at a minimum be a correlation between the policy preferences of the public and the policies it receives (Dahl, 1956). It is important to avoid conflating this with the idea that democratic politics should always or simply follow the preferences of public majorities. In many cases, political parties and politicians have to combine or balance their function as representatives of the public with other obligations (Mair, 2010). For example, where the protection of minorities or fundamental human rights is concerned, following public opinion may turn decidedly undemocratic. Similarly, politicians are expected to behave 'responsibly' towards other interests like international treaties, the environment or future generations (Mair, 2010). Notwithstanding these important reservations it is difficult to conceive of a democratic system without any correlation between the preferences of the general public and the policy decisions made (Dahl, 1956; Lax & Phillips, 2012; Rasmussen, Reher, et al., 2018).

Over the last century, political parties have been the main actors ensuring the strength of this linkage in Western democracies (Mair, 2008). This is especially true in the political systems of Western Europe, where multiple and generally well-organized and disciplined parties tend to dominate politics. Through elections these parties were and are expected to organize and aggregate the preferences of citizens into government and public policy in what has been called the 'representative' function of political parties, helping to ensure that policy decisions are perceived as legitimate (Keman, 2014; Mair, 2010; Mansbridge, 2003). While there are other sources of such legitimacy, making policies that reflect public preferences is an important constituent part of the legitimacy of representative democracies (Dahl, 1956) and has been shown to affect citizens' satisfaction with democracy (Reher, 2015).

1.3 (LIMITATIONS TO) EXISTING STUDIES OF THE REPRESENTATIVE ROLE AND CAPACITY OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Political scientists have studied the extent to which political parties are able to live up to this ideal by evaluating whether political parties' positions reflect the preferences of citizens. To measure the congruence, or overlap, between public opinion and the policy positions of parties and governments, such studies have generally relied on measures of *ideological* congruence (Golder & Stramski, 2010). Following the pivotal work of Downs (1957), these studies assume that most political conflict is organized along a central ideological left-right axis. Scholars working in this tradition have developed methods to compare the positions and distributions of the policy preferences of (members of) the general public with those of political parties and government (coalitions) (Golder & Stramski, 2010).

Regardless of the measure used, these studies of ideological scales typically find rather high levels of congruence between public preferences and the policy positions of political parties (and government coalitions) in Western Europe (Ferland, 2016; Golder & Ferland, 2017). What is more, some scholars have suggested that along this left-right axis, congruence has even increased strongly in a country like the Netherlands (Andeweg, 2011). The general picture painted is therefore one that is rather positive about the representative capacity of political parties. Much academic attention has subsequently shifted to studying what may explain differences in levels of ideological congruence across political systems, focusing predominantly of the role of electoral (and other) institutions (Blais & Bodet, 2006; Ferland, 2016; Golder & Ferland, 2017; Powell, 2006, 2009). Specifically, there is an ongoing debate about whether majoritarian or first-past-the-post political systems offer more accurate representation than more proportional electoral systems (Ferland, 2016; Wlezien & Soroka, 2012). Although the jury is still out, there is evidence that such differences may depend on the time period studied (Ferland, 2016), and that institutional configurations may not have direct or only conditional effects when it comes to congruence between public preferences and policy-making on specific issues (Rasmussen, Reher, et al., 2018).

These studies of ideological congruence have contributed much to our understanding of representative democracies. However, their focus on a single left-right ideological dimension conceals large parts of the political conflict and decision-making that affects both politics and representation. Formulated most clearly by Hacker and Pierson (2014), the criticism of existing studies relying heavily on Downsian analytical frameworks boils down to the idea that they do not capture that often "the key struggle is not over gaining office but over reshaping governance in enduring ways" (p. 644). Focusing on the idea that political parties also aim to take ideological positions that increase their vote share

(vote-seeking) and entering office (office-seeking), analyses relying on ideological scales almost always stop short of analyzing what is another very important driver of politics in (modern) Western democracies: influencing policy (ibid.). Or as Schattschneider (1948, p. 21) wrote well before Hacker & Pierson when referring to the importance of policy: "Public office simply cannot be an end in itself".

A policy-centered perspective allows for the more direct study of the policy-seeking behavior of political parties, and its possible consequences for representation. A large share of every day politics, including the formation of government coalitions and legislative processes is driven by politicians in political parties that seek to change or affect policy (Hacker & Pierson, 2014). The fact that political parties do indeed spend considerable efforts on policy-related activity is evidenced by a strand in the literature that has fruitfully applied a policy-centered approach to the study political parties: studies that investigate whether political parties fulfill the pledges they make during election campaigns (Costello & Thomson, 2008; Louwerse, 2012; Naurin, 2014; Thomson et al., 2017). These studies show that across Western democracies, parties that enter government (coalitions) manage to implement around 60% of the promises they make in their election manifestos (Thomson et al., 2017).

Secondly and crucially, rather than general left-right ideological shifts, it is concrete policy decisions like raising the retirement age and setting environmental standards or taxation levels that affect the daily lives of citizens. Importantly, there is evidence that citizens' positions on left-right scales are rather weakly correlated to their preferences on such specific policy issues (Lesschaeve, 2017). This matters, because it suggests that congruence measured on left-right scales only partially captures the public policy preferences that ought to be represented by political parties. The low correlation between ideological positions and public preferences for specific policy also means that even when finding high levels of congruence on left-right scales, policy-making or party positions need not actually be congruent with the policy preferences of citizens on specific issues (Broockman, 2016). In a study of roll-call voting by American senators, Lax, Phillips, and Zelizer (2019, p. 4) call this the "False Substitutes Problem":

> *"It is, in our view, too lenient a test to praise democratic representation for, say, making abortion policy more liberal when it is opinion on immigration issues that got more liberal, or vice versa—yet indices and ideological scores do just that. To care about responsiveness as a matter of normative democratic theory, one must surely think that the actual contents of the policy basket matter, and not just the ideological tone of the basket."*

Surprisingly, we know little about the policy positions of political parties on specific issues, nor do we know whether these positions are related to the preferences of the

general public, or those of a party's supporters. There is, however, a separate literature that studies the congruence between public opinion and policy *outputs* (not party positions), that has made considerable contributions to our understanding of representation. In a seminal study, Gilens (2012) shows that although there are strong connections between the policies that the public wants and gets, this relationship is mainly driven by the preferences of wealthy citizens. Studies using a similar approach show that this is also the case in the Netherlands and Germany: countries with a different political system, lower levels of economic inequality and a much smaller role for campaign donations (Elsässer, Hense, & Schäfer, 2017; Schakel, 2019). Other studies have successfully applied similar methods to study the effect of institutions on the relation between public opinion and policy at the country (Rasmussen, Reher, et al., 2018), or US state level (Lax & Phillips, 2012).

In parallel to these developments in the literature, studies of the representativeness of political parties have started to move beyond the study of the left-right dimension. Although stopping short of studying specific policy-issues, such studies increasingly consider salient policy dimensions or scales like Europeanization or immigration. They show, for example, that while the positions of political parties (in government) are strongly related to the preferences of citizens on the left-right dimension, there are much larger gaps between public preferences and policy positions on these other issue dimensions (Dalton, 2017). Similarly, the observation in studies of specific policy issues that policy correlates more closely with the preferences of rich citizens is echoed in these studies of dimensions (Giger, Rosset, & Bernauer, 2012; Peters & Ensink, 2015): the inequality in congruence between the policy positions of the rich and poor is much larger on more specific ideological dimensions like Europeanization than on the general left-right dimension (Rosset & Stecker, 2019). These studies clearly present a step forward in the study of how political parties represent public preferences. They also show that the extent to which the political system represents public preferences may depend on the policy area. However, even these studies stop short of considering specific policy positions of political parties.

1.4 THE BENEFITS OF ADDING THE STUDY OF SPECIFIC POLICY ISSUES TO THE STUDY OF POLITICAL PARTIES

As noted above, empirical accounts of the representative capacity of political parties to continue to represent citizens are generally rather positive. At the same time, studies incorporating more than the central left-right dimension, or focusing on specific policy outputs rather than party positions, paint a much bleaker picture of the state of democ-

racy and highlight problems with inequality or conditional responsiveness (e.g. Dalton, 2017; Gilens, 2012).

In addition, more theoretically-driven accounts of the representative capacity of political parties also underline this skeptical image. One pivotal scholar in this regard is Peter Mair, who famously argued that when balancing representative and responsible governing, political parties in Western Europe have increasingly favored the latter (Mair, 2010). One important cause for this, according to Mair, is the increasing lock-in of political parties in commitments in international treaties and EU-power, as well as the tendency to depoliticize much of policy-making in regulatory agencies (Ibid). Acting responsibly also entails that government should be reliable, meaning that when a new government is elected it will not overturn policy decisions made by the previous administration – further limiting the ability of parties in government to act responsively. In addition, he argued that political parties have become increasingly detached from civil society. Firstly because, according to Mair, the weakening of traditional cleavages and ideological conflicts in Western European countries has simply made it harder for political parties to know what public preferences are. This dealignment of voters has also meant that when parties make hard decisions that may be unpopular, they are less able to appeal to the group identities, loyal voters, or cleavages that allowed them to enhance the legitimacy of their policy decisions in the past (Mair, 2010). Finally, Mair argued (together with Richard Katz) that most political parties have increasingly become agents of the state. Not only because political parties in Western Europe are increasingly dependent on state subsidies for their survival, but also because elections have increasingly started to revolve around a 'right to govern' and around proving which party is the most capable administrator (Katz & Mair, 1995, 2009).

Much of the skeptical image of the representative role of political parties painted above has been nuanced in subsequent studies. For example, van der Meer, Lubbe, van Elsas, Elff, and van der Brug (2012) show that ideology still plays an important role in the vote choices of Dutch citizens, even if they now choose more actively between ideologically related sets of possible parties. As mentioned, there is also evidence that political parties and systems have remained responsive to the preferences of either their voters or the general public (Golder & Ferland, 2017; Wlezien & Soroka, 2012). However, the findings that levels of congruence between the policy preferences of parties and the public vary across policy areas suggest that further research is warranted (Dalton, 2017).

Contribution 1: The ability of political parties to represent the general public on specific policy issues

So how can we unite these contradictory conclusions of high congruence between political parties and the public on the one hand, and more skeptical accounts of the representative role of political parties on the other? Chapter 2 of this dissertation proposes a way forward by studying the policy positions of political parties on 102 specific policy proposals in Germany. These are exactly the kind of issues that affect the lives of citizens like cutting specific social benefit programs, increasing taxes for employees who commute by car, or changes to the health insurance system. Combining survey data on the policy preferences of both the general public and the supporters of specific political parties with the policy positions of these parties, allows for analyzing whether the latter are related to public preferences. To do this, the chapter proposes a new application of Multilevel Regression with Poststratification (MRP) (Park et al., 2006) that helps to estimate the preferences of the supporters of a political party – especially in those instances where survey data contain a relatively small number of party supporters. Chapter 2 therefore offers a new way of studying the representative role of political parties and reveals a picture of this role that is much less positive than is often suggested in studies of the congruence between the policy positions of the public and political parties. Importantly, the findings show that the policy preferences of opposition parties are strongly correlated with those of the general public. However, this correlation breaks down once political parties enter government. To the extent that government parties have a stronger influence on government policy, this suggests that this may harm the representation of public preferences in policy.

Research question 1: Are the policy positions of political parties related to the preferences of the general public or their supporters on specific policy issues? And what are the covariates of these relationships?

1.5 INTEREST GROUPS AS ALTERNATIVES FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

If we follow the concerns of Mair outlined above, as well as some of the findings from Chapter 2, other organizations than political parties alone may have to (help) ensure the representation of public preferences in policy. Mair even came to the rather grim conclusion that:

> *"Meanwhile, the representation of the citizens, to the extent that it still occurs at all, is given over to other, non-governing organizations and practices – to interest groups, social movements, advocacy coalitions, lobbies, the media, self-representation, etc. – that are disconnected from the party system"* (Mair, 2010, p. 6).

Among these alternative organizations, interest groups and other policy advocates especially stand out as potential organizations that may help transfer public preferences to political elites and ultimately policy. Unlike the literature on political parties, the literature on interest groups generally does not focus on a single ideological dimension, but studies specific policies instead (e.g. Baumgartner et al., 2009; Hacker & Pierson, 2014). The main reason for this is that most political activity by interest groups takes place at the level of specific policy issues: rather than pushing general public policy in a left- or right-wing direction, most lobbying and other interest group (political) activity is geared towards achieving more specific political goals (Burstein, 2014).

The literature on interest groups and policy advocacy has almost from its conception been interested in the potential of organized interests to work as transmission belts that help translate public preferences into policy (Truman, 1951). Simultaneously, there has been a persistent worry that such groups represent elite, rather general public preferences (Schattschneider, 1960). While there is a large number of studies that investigates the influence (or lobbying success) of interest groups (e.g. Baumgartner et al., 2009; Dür, Bernhagen, & Marshall, 2015; Lowery, 2013; Mahoney, 2007), there is much less work investigating the representative effects of lobbying and interest group politics (but see: Burstein, 2014; Gilens & Page, 2014; Gray et al., 2004).

The GovLis project that this dissertation is part of, *has* empirically studied this transmission belt function of public opinion using an approach focusing on specific policy issues. In a study that underlines the representative potential of interest groups, Flöthe and Rasmussen (2019) studied the positions of interest groups and other policy advocates on 50 policy issues in Western Europe for which public opinion surveys were available. They show that in around half of all instances, policy advocates take the same side as the public opinion majority on issues. When disaggregating the results, they also show that public interest groups, like NGOs, are on the same side as the public opinion majority around 78% of the time, with business actors aligning with the public in just under 45% of cases. In a study including a large number of European countries, Rasmussen and Reher (2019) also show that the larger the share of the public that is a member of (politically active) voluntary associations in a policy area, the higher the likelihood that policy in that policy area is in line with public opinion. Their findings also suggest that interest groups, in this case in the shape of voluntary associations, can help translate public preferences to policy. These studies are clearly indicative of the representative potential of interest groups and policy advocacy.

Contribution 2: Studying the representative potential of policy advocacy on specific issues over longer time periods

To further investigate this representative potential of interest groups, Chapter 3 (co-authored with Anne Rasmussen and Dimiter Toshkov) studies the influence of both public opinion and media advocacy on four regulatory policy issues over relatively long time periods in Sweden. For policy advocates to have the potential to contribute to the representation of the policy preferences of the general public, they ought to at least have some influence over policy-making – *and* not shift it away from public preferences. Hence, the dataset used for this study brings together measures of public support for specific policies with data on the attention politicians pay to these issues in the Swedish parliament. In addition, it traces policy developments over time and maps the preferences of advocates as expressed and reported in two Swedish newspapers. Focusing on a relatively limited number of cases allows for adding more detailed qualitative analyses of policy-making on the issues to the quantitative analyses. It also allows for tracing the issues over much longer time periods than previous studies. While the quantitative models focus on the main effects of public opinion and media advocacy on political attention, the in-depth discussion of the cases makes clear that their effects on policy are neither straightforward nor deterministic. A closer look at the cases also suggests that party government and political parties are still very important for policy-making – including in instances where it is incongruent with public preferences.

Research question 2: Do public opinion and media advocacy influence (attention to) regulatory policy?

1.6 THE POLICY IMPACT OF TIES BETWEEN INTEREST GROUPS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

The studies cited above show that interest groups may have some potential for transmitting public preferences into policy, but they do not include political parties in their models or theoretical frameworks. However, a related literature has emerged that does study the ties between interest groups and parties, and scholars of party politics and interest groups alike have called for a closer integration of the empirical study of interest groups and political parties (Allern & Bale, 2012; Fraussen & Halpin, 2018; Heaney, 2010).

Usually focusing on Northwestern Europe, empirical studies of party-group ties often start with investigating the traditional links between political parties and interest groups (Allern et al., 2007; Thomas, 2001). Especially the traditionally close ties between

social democratic parties and trade unions have received much attention (Allern et al., 2007; Allern & Bale, 2017). In part due to their shared origins in labour movements in the early 20th century, ties between trade unions and social democratic parties were often close and for example evident from the strong organizational integration between them. However, the links between these parties and the labour movement have slowly weakened during the second half of the 20th century (Allern et al., 2007; Öberg et al., 2011), even if there is cross-national variation in the extent of this decline (Allern & Bale, 2017). This development has been ascribed to a decreased utility of these strong relations for both sets of actors. Importantly, the increased volatility of voters and declining membership means that trade unions have lost some of their appeal to social democratic parties: after all, it has made them less able to reliably deliver voters (Allern et al., 2007). Similar developments have also been recorded for the links between business groups and center-right parties (Christiansen, 2012) and the environmental movement and green parties (Blings, 2018).

While such privileged relationships may still persist, there is evidence that most ties between interest groups and political parties are now not driven by such ties, but have become more strategic (depending on the policy issue at stake). Rasmussen and Lindeboom (2013) demonstrate the more ad-hoc nature of such contacts between parties and groups in a cross-national study. There is also indirect evidence that relationships and contacts between groups and parties are driven by more than historical ties alone. Importantly, the fact that traditional ties have weakened means that contacts and links between groups and parties have become more strategic and resource dependent. Allern et al. (2019), for example, show that in Europe monetary donations by trade unions are related to the strength of ties between trade unions and political parties, even when controlling for the presence (or absence) of historic ties between them.

Drawing on assumptions that both parties and interest groups are relatively strategic actors, current studies generally focus on two factors that dominate contacts between parties and groups. Both tend to assume that most of these contacts are initiated by groups (DeBruycker, 2016), who need political parties to achieve the implementation of their policy preferences. The first factor that increases the appeal of political parties to interest groups is the *power* of a political party. Political parties that wield more influence over policy-making are more attractive contacts for interest groups than parties that do not (DeBruycker, 2016; Marshall, 2015; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017). In these studies, sources of a party's power tend to be its size in the legislature, its participation in government or its control over (the agenda of) specific legislative committees. Secondly, groups generally prefer contacting parties that are ideologically close to them (DeBruycker, 2016; Marshall, 2015), reflecting debates in the American literature on lobbying that lobbyists generally prefer to lobby their friends over their foes (Baumgartner & Leech, 1996; Hojnacki & Kimball, 1998). The assumption is that it

is easier for groups to convince parties of their policy preferences when the parties are already ideologically pre-disposed to agree with their positions. While empirical studies generally find support for this assumption (ibid.), there is evidence that in the stages where a legislative proposal is about to be voted on, it may become more important to contact opponents instead of 'friends' (Crombez, 2002). The electoral system, specifically government turnover after elections, may also be related to the extent to which political parties and interest groups lobby political parties that are ideologically close to them (Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017). Finally, this combination of power and ideology may explain how interest groups deal with radical right-wing populist parties, which tend to be both ideologically far-removed from interest groups and less powerful as they generally do not enter government – making groups much less likely to contact these parties (Berkhout, Hanegraaff, & Statsch, 2019).

While these assumptions about the utility of political parties to groups' lobbying efforts help explain contact patterns between these two sets of actors, we do not know whether these contacts actually have consequences for policy-making. This is surprising, because both interest groups and political parties are seen as important aggregators of public preferences in Western democracies. What is more, both are often considered powerful sets of actors in policy-making (even if the influence of interest groups on policy is hard to prove empirically (Lowery, 2013)). Current studies of ties between groups and parties generally assume that these contacts are very important for policy (e.g. Allern & Bale, 2012; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017; Thomas, 2001), but do not provide empirical evidence for this assumption.

To understand the effects of the contacts between these two sets of actors on policy-making and, ultimately, representation, it is important to study parties and groups simultaneously. Again, the framework of policy-centered research provides a useful angle for studying these questions (Hacker & Pierson, 2014). The main reason for this is that it allows for placing the policy preferences and actions of interest groups and political parties on a common metric: as argued above most interest group activity focuses on specific policy issues, and while parties may generally pursue broader and more diverse goals, they too spend considerable amounts of their time and energy on pursuing specific policy-goals. To cite Schattschneider (1948, pp. 22-23) in what is arguably the earliest call to study political parties and interest groups together: "The relations between pressure groups and political parties can be illustrated by an examination of the role of the political parties in the formation of policy".

Contribution 3: The lobbying of political parties

Chapter 4 (co-authored with Anne Rasmussen) investigates whether interest groups and other policy advocates that work with some political parties are more likely to attain their preferences than others. Relying on data from the GovLis survey on the lobbying activities of 478 advocates in 5 countries and 50 policy issues (10 per country), the chapter makes a first step towards understanding the policy implications of contacts between interest groups and parties. Following existing studies, the chapter first considers whether contacting political parties in general is associated with higher rates of preference attainment. It then moves on to consider two established drivers of contacts between interest groups and political parties: the power and position of the party. Here the assumption is that advocates that work with powerful parties are more likely to attain their preferences. Similarly, we expect that advocates that work with parties that agree with them are more likely to get their way. Finally, we expect a multiplicative effect: advocates that lobby powerful parties that also agree with them on the issue are most likely to attain their preferences. The results show that working with political parties is not as clearly correlated with preference attainment as one may expect based on the assumptions in previous studies. In fact, we only find evidence for the idea that working with parties that are powerful *and* agree with the advocate is correlated with higher levels of preference attainment.

Research question 3: Is working with (which) political parties related to the preference attainment of policy advocates?

Contribution 4: How ties to political parties shape the preference attainment of policy advocates after elections

Chapter 5 of this dissertation studies the preference attainment of policy advocates after the Dutch general election of 2017. This chapter uses a unique data source in order to study lobbying during coalition negotiations and the conditions under which policy advocates attain their preferences in the coalition agreement. It compares the letters with policy requests that policy advocates sent to the negotiators at the coalition table with the policy positions of the negotiating parties in their election manifestos *and* the final coalition agreement. By placing the policy preferences of policy advocates and political parties on a common scale – requests and positions on specific policy plans – the study can help inform us about the relative strength of the two sets of actors. The data also allows for a test of the extent to which historic ties between a specific set of interest groups, business actors, and the parties at the negotiation table affect the policy choices made in the coalition agreement: providing empirical evidence for the assumption that these historic ties between policy advocates and parties indeed shape policy-making. However, the results also suggest that rather than historical ties it may be the electoral importance of the subgroup that is represented by a policy advocate that matters for its preference attainment – suggesting that the effects of ties between advocates and parties may be affected by the electoral strategy of the political party. Like the results of chapter 4 also suggested, these findings indicate that the policy implications of both ties and contacts with political parties are less straightforward than is often assumed (but not tested) in the literature.

Research question: Under which conditions do policy advocates attain their preferences after elections?

1.7 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This dissertation is part of the GovLis project[1], which studies links between interest groups, public preferences and policy with an emphasis on Northwestern European democracies (Rasmussen, Mäder, et al., 2018)[2]. The chapters of this dissertation all draw on data from five countries within this region: Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden

1 Funded through Sapere Aude Grant 0602-02642B from the Danish Council for Independent Research and VIDI Grant 452-12-008 from the Dutch NWO.

2 Appendix 1.1 outlines the contribution of the author to the data collection and research design of each of the chapters.

and the United Kingdom. With the exception of the inclusion of the United Kingdom in Chapter 4, the political systems studied in this dissertation share a number of important features. For one, they are proportional electoral systems with high levels of party discipline – meaning that political parties in the legislature tend to vote unanimously. Similarly, and again with the exception of the United Kingdom, these countries have neo-corporatist systems of state-society relations, meaning that interest group access to the political systems has historically been relatively limited to a specific set of 'privileged' actors (Schmitter, 1974). While these characteristics will affect the studied mechanisms differently for each of the chapters (as discussed research design and conclusion sections of each chapter), one can generally expect the findings of this dissertation to best generalize to other (North) Western European democracies with (neo-)corporatist traditions and proportional electoral systems.

As can be seen in the overview of the dissertation provided in Table 1, Chapters 2, 3 and 5 all rely on data from a single country. While this may imply some 'loss' of external validity compared to cross-national studies, an approach that keeps many institutional variables constant has important benefits. One advantage is that it allows for stronger internal validity. As an example, Chapter 2, which focuses on Germany, has both the disadvantage of studying only a limited number of parties *and* the advantage that it allows for high quality measurement of public opinion across a large set of policy issues. Simultaneously, this research design has additional benefits for policy-centered research (Hacker & Pierson, 2014). Given that one of the major advantages of this analytical approach is that is allows for an analysis of the policies that actually affect the lives of citizens directly, a focus on a specific institutional setting facilitates the discussion and comparison of such specific policy issues. In addition to quantitative analyses, chapter 3 therefore provides more detailed discussions of specific policy issues, which helps to illustrate and understand some of the quantitative findings and facilitates the evaluation of the hypotheses (Toshkov, 2016, pp. 318-323).

To analyze specific policies, it is necessary to make choices regarding the policy issues that are (not) included in the analyses. Even if it were possible to construct a universe of cases consisting of all policy issues (in a country), it would be practically impossible to study them all (Burstein, 2014). Instead, the chapters in this dissertation rely on samples of policy issues. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 all follow the sampling strategy taken by the GovLis project. Given the project's (and Chapters 2 and 3's) focus on public opinion, the sampling started by identifying public opinion polls that concerned specific proposals to change the status quo (Gilens, 2012; Rasmussen, Mäder, et al., 2018). This approach allows for tracing the development of policy on these issues for a number of years after the poll was held (or until the end of the time series in the case of Chapter 3). In addition, the question had to be about a single specific policy proposal that respondents could answer on an agreement scale. Generally, the sampling also ensured that

there was variation on a number of important characteristics like the type of policy (kept constant in Chapter 3), the policy area, the amount of public support for the issue and its salience in the media. The latter can be argued to be especially important, as there are concerns in the literature that issues sampled from public opinion polls are more salient, i.e. attract more media and political attention than the average policy issue (Burstein, 2014). While this may be the case, it is also necessary that citizens are informed about issues and hold real preferences on them when analyzing public opinion: meaning that the oversampling of salient issues may not be as problematic as it first appears (Gilens, 2012; Rasmussen, Mäder, et al., 2018). The issue sampling in chapters 2, 3 and 4 therefore includes issues of varying salience and the analyses contain control variables for the amount of media coverage of the issues.

Chapter 5 follows a somewhat different definition of both policy issues and sampling strategy. It relies on methods developed for studies of the pledge fulfillment of political parties (to what extent do parties implement their election promises?) to identify specific policy requests made by policy advocates (Thomson et al., 2017). Like in the sampling of the public opinion items, these only included requests for which it was possible to determine whether they were implemented (in 2017 Dutch coalition agreement). Unlike the other samples, the requests were formulated by policy advocates themselves meaning that they were on average more detailed and specific than those included in the other chapters. At the same time, this means that while the study analyzed all requests made in letters sent to the 2017 Dutch coalition formation negotiators, it does not study a stratified sample of policy issues or requests. The fact that it includes many more policy issues than the other chapters (over 750 compared to the 102 in chapter 2) does have the benefit that the studied issues span a wide range of policy areas and issue types.

Finally, chapters 3 through 5 all include interest groups and other policy advocates in the analyses. They use an encompassing and behavioral approach to identify policy advocates (Baroni et al., 2014), meaning that they include all non-state actors who observably tried to influence policy-making, including individual experts, think tanks and international organizations in addition to traditional membership based interest associations like trade unions, employers' associations and identity and public interest groups. There are two general exceptions to this rule, however: firstly, individual members of the public (with no clear expertise on the topic) writing op-ed in newspapers or letters to the *informateur* (chapter 5) were excluded from the analyses. Similarly, unlike in chapters 3 and 4, the models in chapter 5 include subnational government actors (like municipalities) – although the findings do not change when these are excluded.

Especially in chapter 5, which empirically strongly relies on the historical ties between business advocates and center-right political parties this may be somewhat problematic: while some large individual firms may also have maintained such historic ties with political parties, many companies have not. It is therefore important to note

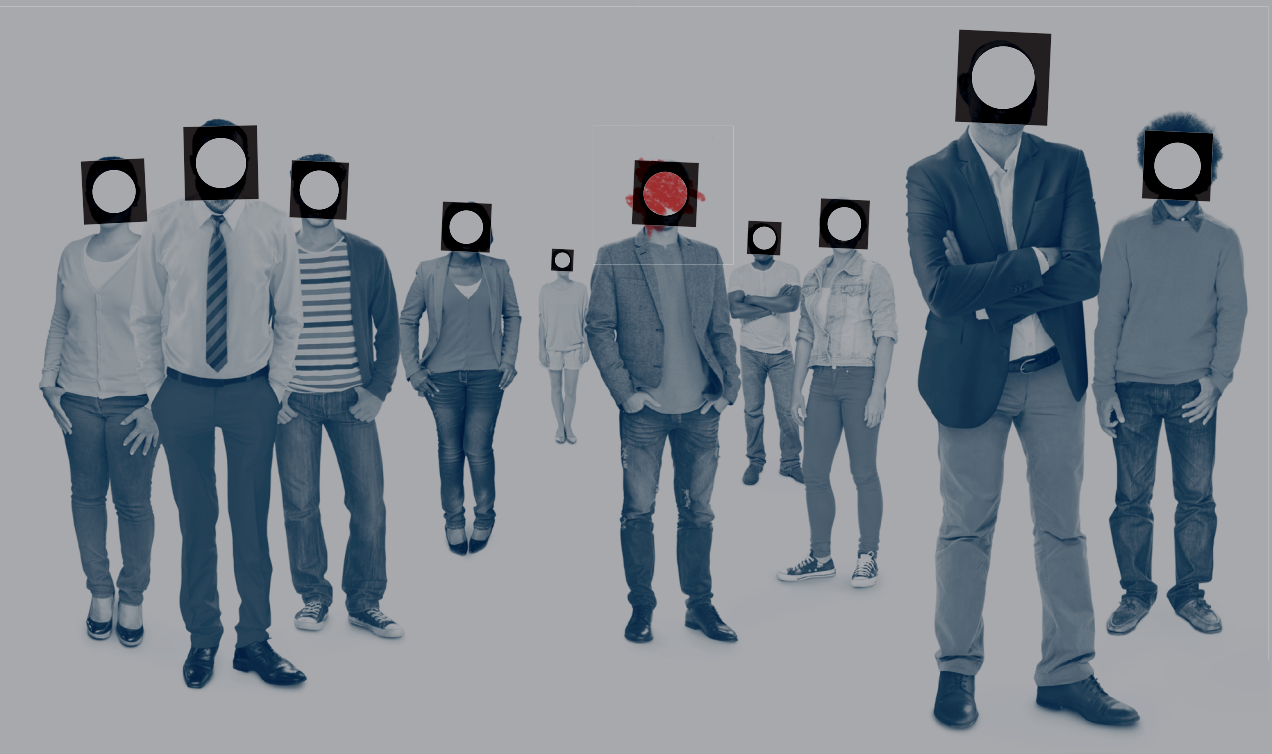
that results do not change substantially when individual firms are removed from the analysis (and only business associations and employers' organizations included). Keeping other types of organizations (like experts or think tanks) in the analysis helps to show how the preference attainment of (interest group) advocates that have these ties differs from those that do not – be they traditional interest associations or other types of policy advocates.

1.8 OVERVIEW AND OUTLOOK

The studies in this dissertation all highlight the benefits of applying a policy-centric approach (Hacker & Pierson, 2014) to the study of political parties and how such an approach can help both our understanding of their representative role, as well the consequences of their ties to interest groups. Table 1 outlines the buildup of and specific questions asked in the different chapters of this dissertation. It also provides a very brief summary of the case selection and choice of methods for each of the chapters. Chapter 2 studies the relation between public opinion and the positions of political parties on 102 specific policy issues in Germany. The third chapter then looks at the joint impact of media advocacy and public opinion on (political attention to) four regulatory policy issues in Sweden. Chapter 4 analyses whether working with which political parties is related to the preference attainment of policy advocates in five countries. The final empirical chapter 5 studies whether policy advocates that sent letters to the (in)formateur during the Dutch 2017 coalition negotiation attain their preferences and under which conditions.

Table 1: Overview of the dissertation

Chapter	Question	Country studied	Policy Issues	Method
1	Introduction			
2	Are the policy positions of political parties related to the preferences of the general public or their supporters? And what are the covariates of these relationships?	Germany	102 specific policy proposals from public opinion surveys	Multilevel regressions predicting the positions of political parties on 102 specific policy issues. Applying an extension of multilevel regression with post stratification to estimate the policy preferences of the supporters of political parties
3	Do public opinion and media advocacy influence (attention to) regulatory policy?	Sweden	4 regulatory policy issues included in multiple consecutive public opinion surveys	Public opinion data and public preferences on four policy-issues over longer time series, combined with an in-depth analysis of the issues.
4	Is working with (which) political parties related to the preference attainment of policy advocates?	Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom	50 specific policy proposals from public opinion surveys	Multilevel regressions predicting preference attainment of advocates who answered the GovLis survey
5	What explains the preference attainment of policy advocates after elections?	The Netherlands	2281 policy requests formulated by policy advocates	Multilevel regressions predicting the preference attainment of policy advocates
6	Conclusion			



2

Do political parties listen to the(ir) public? Public opinion-party linkage on specific policy issues

An adapted version of this chapter was published as an article in Party Politics as:

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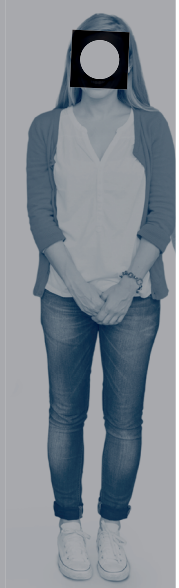

ABSTRACT

Political parties are a crucial link between the public and policy outcomes. However, few studies have considered who political parties are responsive to when they take positions on *specific* policy proposals. This chapter explores the links between public opinion and the policy positions of political parties on 102 specific policy proposals in Germany using a novel application of multilevel regression with poststratification to estimate the policy preferences of party supporters. Whilst there is a link between general public preferences and the positions of political parties, this connection weakens considerably once political parties are in government. In fact, the study shows that the link between party positions and general public opinion is severed once parties enter government, whereas it is only weakened in the case of party supporters. Finally the chapter finds mixed evidence for differences between niche parties and mainstream parties.

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

In many normative definitions of democratic systems, political parties are expected to represent their voters and pursue the policies they promised to deliver (e.g. Mair, 2008) to ensure a link between the preferences of the public and policy outcomes (Dahl, 1956). It is thus unsurprising that a literature has emerged studying who political parties represent when they take policy positions[3]. One influential strand of literature argues that niche parties are different to mainstream parties, because mainstream parties seeking to maximize their vote share will cater to the median voter, whereas niche parties, which are more policy-seeking will respond to the preferences of their supporters (e.g. Adams et al., 2006). Recently, scholars have also argued that political parties in government are constrained by coalition agreements and their responsibility to implement election promises. This means that unlike parties in opposition, they are less able to respond to the issue priorities of the public (Klüver and Spoon, 2016).

Such studies of party positions tend to study left-right or other policy dimensions like Europeanization. They have yielded many valuable insights, but are not directly aimed at understanding how political parties make decisions on concrete policy issues. Yet it is these specific policy issues like whether the pension age should be raised or extending more rights to same-sex couples that end up affecting the lives of citizens. There is also evidence that public preferences on specific policy issues are not strongly linked to the public's positions on dimensions, indicating that studying specific issues is a valuable addition to the field (Lesschaeve, 2017).

Studies on the link between public opinion and policy *outputs* have studied specific policy issues (e.g. Gilens, 2012, Lax and Phillips, 2012), allowing them to complement findings from previous studies that considered policy scales (e.g. Stimson et al., 1995). Although the approach has its drawbacks, it is increasingly propagated because it provides insights into the concrete policies that are delivered to citizens and ensures a direct match between public preferences and policy (Wlezien, 2016).

This chapter contributes to both the literature on the public-party and the public-policy linkages by exploring the link between public opinion and political parties on *specific policy issues*. It considers whether the policy positions of political parties are related to the preferences of the general public or their supporters, and whether this relationship is dependent on whether a party is a niche or mainstream party and in or out of government.

To do this, this chapter assesses the positions of political parties in the German Bundestag on 102 specific policy proposals in the period between 1998 and 2010. The issues concern possible policy changes like raising the taxes on petrol or increasing the

3 For a review, see Fagerholm, (2016).

size of the German military deployment in Afghanistan. The chapter records statements by political parties about these policy issues in two major newspapers to investigate whether the preferences of the general public and party supporters are represented in these claims.

This chapter complements existing methods of measuring the preferences of party supporters through an innovative application of multilevel modelling with post-stratification (MRP) to individual survey responses. This method fits multilevel models to predict support amongst different sub-groups of party supporters, and then weights these predictions to obtain a final estimate (Lax and Phillips, 2012). The approach helps address concerns about small sample sizes for supporters of the smaller political parties.

The results show that there is a link between public preferences and the positions of political parties. However, the chapter finds little evidence for the expected differences between niche and mainstream parties. The results indicate that the link between public preferences and party positions disappears once parties enter government, whereas the link with the preferences of party supporters is weakened but not severed. The chapter thus contributes to the literatures on policy and party representation and illustrates the advantages of studying specific policy issues.

2.2 POLICY OUTCOMES AND REPRESENTATION OF THE PUBLIC

Whilst there is disagreement over *how* the preferences of the public should be taken into account by politicians in democratic systems (Mansbridge, 2003), there is more agreement *that* there ought to be a general connection between what the public wants and what it gets in democracies (Dahl, 1956). Even if may not be desirable that public opinion influences all policies, like the rights or protection of minorities, there is a long tradition of studies investigating this link between public preferences and policy (for reviews, see: Burstein, 2014, Wlezien, 2016).

Early studies argued that policy was often in line with public opinion (Monroe, 1979) and that policies shifted in line with changes in public preferences (Page and Shapiro, 1983). By moving towards designs that measured public preferences and policy on a common scale, later scholars could study public opinion over time and found strong links with policy (Stimson et al., 1995). Moreover, Wlezien (1995) demonstrates that public preferences and levels of spending react to one another - even if the relationship is conditioned by institutional factors (Wlezien and Soroka, 2012).

However, some studies argue that the ties between policy and the public are not that strong. Gilens (2012) shows that policy in the United States is more responsive to the preferences of the wealthy than to those of the poor. This study faces criticism for not

distinguishing between the preferences of the poor and the rich – and overlooking the fact that policy changed in line with the preferences of the rich and those of the poor in equal measure when the two disagreed (Branham et al., 2017). However, another study focusing on Europe and employing different methods finds results similar to those of Gilens (Peters and Ensink, 2015). Even if the jury is still out concerning whether policy outcomes reflect the preferences of the public, it is important to consider the mechanisms through which this connection may (not) come about. Existing studies do cover some of these and have argued that the saliency of policy issues (Lax and Phillips, 2012), institutions (Wlezien and Soroka, 2012) and interest groups (Gilens 2012; Lax and Phillips, 2012) may matter in this regard. However, these studies have paid scant attention to the role of political parties, even if these act as important intermediaries between the public and policy outcomes.

2.3 POLITICAL PARTIES AND REPRESENTATION OF THE PUBLIC

In parallel to these studies there is an extensive literature that considers the role of political parties in representing the public. Through elections political parties are argued to obtain a mandate to represent their voters, which should ensure a connection between public opinion and policy (Mair, 2008). Numerous studies investigate these links between political parties and the public on left-right and other ideological dimensions and generally find a link between party positions and public opinion (for a review, see: Fagerholm, 2016). This work argues that parties have strategic reasons to respond to public preferences, but that they are constrained by both party characteristics and external conditions.

Public preferences and policy positions are usually measured on left-right scales. Recently, authors have started to study more concrete dimensions (like immigration or environmental policy), furthering our understanding of how these impact both the policy choices of political parties (Dalton, 2017) and their attention to policy issues (e.g. Klüver and Spoon, 2016, Giger and Lefkofridi, 2014). Some studies employing policy dimensions may have the drawback that they measure the consistency of public preferences as opposed to ideological positions (Broockman, 2016): especially when scales are constructed from the preferences of citizens on specific policy issues, a citizen who holds extreme views in two directions will be rated as moderate. However, more consistent elite actors like the leaders of political parties will be rated as more extreme because their preferences consistently fall on one side of the scale. This becomes problematic when comparing the distance between public preferences and those of elite actors. To address this the following section outlines an exploratory theoretical framework on

how political parties take public preferences into account when deciding upon specific policy issues.

2.4 THEORIZING THE POSITIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES ON SPECIFIC POLICY ISSUES

Apart from addressing potential methodological problems, a focus on specific issues also matters because these are the policies that end up affecting the lives of citizens. There are theoretical reasons to expect that political parties will indeed aim to represent (parts of) the public. Parties are often assumed to be office-seeking actors who seek to maximize their vote share (Riker, 1962). Whilst they may pursue other goals (such as policy change), these are not mutually exclusive and will often overlap (Strøm and Müller, 1999b; Spoon and Klüver, 2014). Generally, politicians in political parties will, at least partially, be driven by a desire to get (re-)elected and are expected to pursue policies that are popular with their supporters or the general electorate (Stimson et al., 1995). If a specific policy is popular amongst the general public then, all else being equal, political parties will prefer to take a position that is in line with these public preferences. Hence, the first hypothesis is:

> *Hypothesis 1: The higher the public support for a specific policy issue, the more likely that a political party takes a position in favour of the specific policy issue.*

Moreover, different parties may be inclined to relate differently to parts of the public. One relevant party characteristic concerns the distinction between niche parties and mainstream parties (Meguid, 2005) and scholars have argued that they act differently in a number of ways (e.g. Adams et al., 2006, Giger and Lefkofridi, 2014). Based on the idea of issue ownership (Petrocik, 1996), Meguid (2005) defined niche parties as those that reject the class-based orientation of politics, emphasize new issues that do not coincide with the traditional left-right division and focus on a narrow set of issues. Similarly, Wagner (2012) postulates that niche parties compete on a few non-economic issues, and that the 'nicheness' of a political party is a matter of degree rather than a dichotomous choice. Both definitions have been critiqued for excluding economic issues, because a party can emphasize 'niche' economic topics and because mainstream parties can also choose to emphasize typical niche issues like the environment or immigration (Meyer and Miller, 2015). Meyer and Miller (2015) and Bischof (2017a) have relaxed this definition and define a niche party as a party that emphasizes other policy areas than its competitors and consider nicheness as a matter of degree. These authors posit that the 'nicheness' of a political party is related to its issue profile. A party's nicheness depends

on the extent to which it emphasizes issues that other political parties do not. Since parties can change their issue offers over time, their nicheness can vary. An example would be a green party that enters parliament heavily emphasizing environmental issues. If it is the only party emphasizing the issue, this means that its issue emphasis gives it a strong 'niche' issue profile. However, if other political parties start to pay more attention to the environment, or if the environmental party starts competing on economic issues, its issue profile becomes more like that of other parties and the party becomes more mainstream. This thus addresses the concern that niche parties may become more mainstream, whilst mainstream parties may adopt 'niche' issues in response to the rise of niche parties (Bischof, 2017a; Meguid, 2005; Meyer and Miller, 2015). In contrast to previous studies, this chapter adopts the continuous definition of Bischof (2017a).

Turning to the public opinion - party position linkage, the argument in previous studies (using a dichotomous definition) is that mainstream parties are driven by vote and office-seeking goals and respond to shifts in preferences on a left-right scale of the median voter. On the other hand, niche parties are more policy-seeking and more responsive to shifts in preferences of their core party supporters (Adams et al., 2006, Ezrow et al., 2011). This expectation can be translated to specific policy issues: mainstream parties take issue positions in line with the preferences of the general public and niche parties take position in line with the preferences of their supporters.

Recent studies have refined this claim, and argue that niche parties are only more responsive to the issue *priorities* of their supporters on issue dimensions that they own (Klüver and Spoon, 2016; Giger and Lefkofridi, 2014). However, it is less clear whether such theories of issue-ownership apply to the level of specific policy issues. Even if a policy area or dimension is owned by a party, this does not necessarily mean it is associated with a specific proposal in the area. As an example: a Green party may generally 'own' environmental issues, but another party may be associated with a specific plan to store emitted CO2 underground. Still, Appendix 2.5 outlines a discussion and test of this argument regarding niche parties and issue ownership. Summarizing, and taking into account the continuous conceptualization of nicheness, the following hypotheses can be derived:

Hypothesis 2A: The policy positions of a more mainstream political party on specific policy issues are more likely to be positively related to the preferences of the general public than those of a more niche party.

Hypothesis 2B: The policy positions of a more niche party on specific policy issues are more likely to be positively related to the preferences of their supporters than those of a more mainstream party.

Even if political parties generally aim to take popular positions on issues, they face constraints regarding the policy positions that they can take. One such constraint is participation in government and Klüver and Spoon (2016) argue that government parties are indeed less responsive to the issue priorities of the public than opposition parties. They claim that government parties are less able to emphasize the issues voters find important, because they are held more accountable for the implementation of their campaign promises than opposition parties, and thus have less room to manoeuvre.

Moreover, there are good reasons to expect that political parties in government are more restrained than those in opposition regarding the policy positions they can take. Firstly, the need to agree with coalition partners on an issue constrains a party's ability to choose a position that is popular amongst either the public or its supporters. Secondly and unlike opposition parties, parties in government have to directly take into account constraints like the government budget and international commitments and are thus more limited in the positions they can take. Finally, parties sometimes blur their positions, for example when their policy position is unpopular with the public (Rovny, 2012). Translating this to a specific issue like raising the retirement age, it is likely that government parties will be put under more pressure (for example by opposition parties) to take a position on the issue as they are responsible for its implementation, especially once it comes on the political agenda (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2010). So where opposition parties may be able to avoid declaring their unpopular positions, government parties have less opportunity to do so. This should limit the ability of a party in government to take policy positions that are related to the preferences of both the general public and their supporters leading to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3A: The policy positions of a government party on specific policy issues are less likely to be related to the preferences of the general public, than the positions of an opposition party.

Hypothesis 3B: The policy positions of a government party on specific policy issues are less likely to be related to the preferences of its supporters, than the position of an opposition party.

2.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The relationship between political parties and public opinion

Since specific policy issues are different to the scales that are normally used in the literature on the public opinion - party position linkage, this chapter adopts a different approach. It relies on existing studies on the link between public opinion and policy

outcomes and studies the correlation between public preferences and party positions across issues (Lax and Phillips, 2012)[4]. In this definition of the linkage, one cannot say that a single party position is 'related' to public opinion, but rather that the positions of a political party are linked to public preferences in general – meaning the party is more likely to support a policy the more the public supports it. This definition does not assume a causal link between public preferences and party positions, but is more agnostic regarding whether political parties are influenced by public preferences, or vice versa. This differs from the general approach in the literature on political parties, where the relationship is called responsiveness and defined as a positional shift by a political party in response to a change in public opinion (e.g. Adams et al., 2006). Finally, the analyses also consider whether the results are robust to operationalizing the linkage as *congruence*, which is achieved when a political party takes a position that is in line (congruent) with the majority of either its own supporters or the general public on an issue (for the same definition regarding policy outcomes instead of party positions, see: Lax and Phillips, 2012).

Case selection

This chapter focuses on Germany for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is one of few countries for which enough high-quality survey data is available for many policy issues, that could also be disaggregated to allow for the estimation of the preferences of party supporters. Moreover, the bi-weekly German Politbarometer can be leveraged for the approximation of the demographic profile of party supporters in a given year, which is a prerequisite for the expansion of MRP used in this chapter.

Focusing on Germany has the added benefit of keeping institutional and other country-level variables that may impact the public opinion-party linkage constant. The country can be regarded as a typical case for studying the public-party linkage in (West) European countries with proportional or mixed electoral systems for several reasons (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). For one, the parties that are in parliament are all of major party families, and many (Western) European countries have similar parties and patterns of party competition. Moreover, during the observation period, which runs from 1998 to 2010, the composition of government coalitions varied and covered left-wing, right-wing and broad coalitions meaning that four out of five political parties in the country were in government at some point. The German case thus covers all kinds of government coalitions in proportional or mixed-electoral systems except for minority coalitions, which strengthens the inferences about the effect of being part of government.

4 Lax and Phillips (2012) define this as "responsiveness". To avoid confusion and the causal implications of the term, this study calls this the public opinion-party position linkage instead.

In addition, levels of party discipline are comparable to Western-European countries, especially within the Bundestag (Brettschneider, 1996; Sieberer, 2006). This means that the assumption in this study that the politicians from the same party in the Bundestag tend to be or present themselves as unified on most policy issues should hold.

The policy issues are selected from the high-quality Politbarometer surveys that were held across a stratified random sample of the German population between 1998 and 2010. For a policy item to be included in the study, it has to meet three criteria. Firstly, it has to be about a *specific* policy proposal. Secondly, the policy issue has to fall under the national jurisdiction so that national political parties can reasonably be assumed to engage with the issue. Thirdly, the answer has to be measured on an agreement scale. A total number of 102 policy issues meet these criteria and cover topics like the construction of a Holocaust memorial in Berlin and whether German soldiers should be withdrawn from Afghanistan. Appendix 2.7 provides an overview of all issues[5]. An advantage of this selection strategy is that it also includes issues that never make it on to the legislative agenda (Gilens, 2012).

Sampling issues from opinion polls means that these issues do not constitute a completely random sample of a potential universe of all policy issues, because the sampled issues will be more salient (Burstein 2014). However, it is necessary that citizens have at least somewhat informed opinions if we expect political parties to engage with these preferences, rendering the oversampling of somewhat salient issues less problematic (Gilens 2012, 50-56).

Estimating parties' policy preferences

There is extensive debate about measuring party positions on specific policy issues (e.g. Gemenis, 2013). This chapter relies on claims that representatives from political parties make about issues in two major newspapers (the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and the Süddeutsche Zeitung)[6]. These newspapers are on the right (FAZ) and left (SZ) side of the political spectrum. Although there is evidence that their political orientation does not steer the choice of topics (i.e. the likelihood covering an issue) there is variation in how these papers discuss political actors (Kühne, 2011). So it is important to code both newspapers to increase the likelihood that all party positions are covered. Student coders recorded each statement by representatives of the political party for a four year period after public opinion was measured, or until a policy change was implemented

5 For some issues the proportion of respondents who answered "don't know" is high. The results from the chapter are robust to excluding issues where more than 10% of respondents answered "don't know".

6 This only included statements by national party leaders, spokespeople on the issue in the Bundestag, and cabinet members. Statements by local, EU and Bundesrat politicians were excluded as they are subject to somewhat different electoral pressures (Bäck, Debus, & Klüver, 2016). If no statements were found, student coders also looked at other broadsheet newspapers and reports from ARD and ZDF.

(Gilens, 2012). Statements were coded as either in favour of, neutral or against the policy proposal. The final analysis excluded neutral positions. If multiple positions were found, all were recorded and the statement closest to the date of the poll was used in the analysis, but conflicting statements on the same issue from the same party were rare.

Of course, parties may vote differently on issues than they claim in the media, or take other positions in their election manifestoes. Yet especially in a country where internal party discipline is high, one can expect that statements in the media do reflect the unified party's position (Brettschneider, 1996) and there is evidence that European political parties do 'walk like they talk' on nuclear policy (Bischof, 2017b). Moreover, other methods like manifestoes or voting in the Bundestag, are not feasible for measuring the positions of political parties on this predefined set of issues, because most were not mentioned in party manifestos or voted on. Even though media coding provides the best coverage of party positions, eight issues in the dataset received so little media coverage that no party positions were found, meaning that the final models include 94 policy issues. Policy positions were found for 72% of all 510 possible issue-party combinations (the positions of 5 political parties on 102 issues). Coverage was lower for smaller parties and issues that received less attention in the media, which is why the analyses control for party size and the media salience of an issue.

Estimating the preferences of the public and party supporters using MRP

To measure general public support for a policy change this analysis relies on the Politbarometer. To estimate the preferences of the supporters of a specific party, however, a novel application of multilevel regression with poststratification (MRP) was used. MRP was developed to improve estimates for smaller subgroups of the population in survey research (Park et al., 2006; Kastellec et al., 2010). It has been shown to be especially effective in providing accurate estimates of public opinion when compared to disaggregation (Lax and Phillips, 2009b). The method uses a multilevel model employing several demographic categories to obtain predicted support for a policy issue for each demographic cell in the data[7]. Census data is then used to weight each cell to obtain a representative prediction. The advantage is that the multilevel models use more data than just that in the specific cell, leading to better estimates when there are few observations in specific sub-groups – like the supporters of smaller parties.

The Politbarometer surveys have an average sample size of around 1500. To estimate the level of support for the policy issue among supporters of a party, one would ideally know the demographic composition of the supporters of a party in a given year. Since such data is unavailable, this study pools all observations from the bi-weekly Politbarom-

7 For example: a 40 to 50 year old woman with a university degree who voted for the CDU.

eter in a year to obtain a large annual and nationally representative sample. This pooled annual dataset is used to estimate the demographic composition of the supporters of a party in terms of age, gender and education level – the same variables used by the regular Politbarometer weights. Two survey questions are combined to identify party supporters. The first asks whether a respondent generally and in the long term tends to support a political party. Respondents who indicated they support a specific party were then asked how strongly they support that party on a five-point scale. Those who respond 3 (somewhat) through 5 (strong) are coded as party supporters[8]. For each issue, multilevel models are then run to predict support for each cell that intersects gender, age (ten categories), education (four categories) and party support. These estimates are weighted to obtain estimates of support for an issue amongst a party's supporters. This method allows the estimation of the composition of party supporters on an annual basis, which is an advantage over other sources like election surveys.

Measurement of other variables

Following Bischof (2017a), the *nicheness* of political parties is established through the coding of party programs by the Comparative Manifestos Project (Volkens et al., 2017). This definition considers nicheness as a matter of degree, rather than a dichotomous distinction. The extent to which a party uniquely focuses on niche topics in an election manifesto is used as the basis of the definition. The nicheness of a party can thus vary from election to election, based on its issue emphasis. The measure combines two components: the first is the extent to which a party emphasizes niche topics (the environment, Euroscepticism, radical right sentiment, agrarianism and regionalism) in its party manifestos (measured as the percentage of all quasi-sentences in the manifesto dedicated to these topics). These topics are selected because they meet three criteria. Firstly, they were located at the periphery of the party system at some point in many European countries. Secondly, they could and in some cases have been used to destabilize traditional left-right competition between political parties. Thirdly, all five topics are non-economic in nature and thus concern competition on another dimension than the main economic right-left dimension (Bischof 2017a, 225). Scholars working on issue-ownership have described the environment as a valence issue, arguing that parties tend to take similar positions on the issue (i.e. no party wants to damage the environment) (Budge, 2001; Van der Brug, 2004). However, the conceptualization of niche topics used here focuses issue emphasis rather than position, meaning that it is compatible with the idea of competition on issue ownership. In addition, the issues of Euroscepticism and the environment may have become less 'niche' over the 1998 – 2010 period.

8 Rerunning the models with only those who scored 4 (rather strong) or 5 (strong) on this variable did not change the estimates substantially. Appendix 2.1 contains the exact questions.

To address this, the second part of the measure indicates the degree to which the party's emphasis on these issues is unique to the party. In other words this component measures whether the party emphasizes issues that its competitors do not focus on. As an example, this means that a party's focus on Euroscepticism counts relatively less towards its nicheness when other parties start to emphasize the issues more. Based on this definition, the nicheness of a party can thus vary between elections. The combination of these two factors provides an estimate of the nicheness of a political party on a scale with higher values indicating a higher nicheness score (for technical details: see Bischof, 2017a). The score derived from a given manifesto is then assigned to all statements made during the year before the election for which the manifesto was written (as this is the period during which is was written) until a year before the previous election**.** The final continuous measure thus indicates the degree of nicheness of a party at an election. Averaged across elections within parties during the observation period, the measure indicates that Die Grüne and Die Linke focus most on niche topics (relative to other parties), with CDU/CSU, FDP and SPD having (somewhat) more mainstream profiles. Although the nicheness of these parties varies from election to election and is measured as a matter of degree, the Greens and Die Linke would also be the two German parties that Adams et al. (2006) would rate as niche parties – giving face validity to the new measure. The *government status* of a party is a binary variable that indicates whether the political party was in government when the statement indicating the party's position was made.

Studies on the public opinion-party position linkage also include other factors. As an example political parties which are organized in a way that gives more power to their members, are more responsive to their supporters, whereas more leadership-driven parties tend to respond more to the median voter (Schumacher et al., 2013, Lehrer, 2012). These alternative explanations are important and since most vary at the party level, the analyses include dummies for political parties. The control variable of the media *salience* of a policy issue was measured as the average number of articles per day about issue in the observation period in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and the Süddeutsche Zeitung (see Appendix 2.5). Finally, *party size* is the percentage of seats a party had in the Bundestag when the statement about the issue was made. An overview of the variables is provided in Table 2.1.

Modelling strategy

The final unit of analysis is a political party on an issue. Appendix 2.2 shows the structure of the stacked dataset for two hypothetical policy issues. The observations are nested in political parties and policy issues. That is why all models are run with random intercepts for issues and fixed effects for parties. Since the observations may also be clustered in government coalitions, the models contain fixed effects indicating whether the party

Table 2.1: Overview of variables.

Variable	Values	Range	Mean (std. dev)	Description
Party position	0,1	0-1	.52 (.50)	Dep var: party position on an issue
Public support	0 - 1	.06-.97	.52 (.22)	Proportion of public in favour of policy change
Party support	0 – 1	0-.98	.52 (.24)	Proportion of party supporters in favour of policy change
Nicheness	0 - 2	.12 - .88	.31 (.46)	Degree of nicheness of a political party
Government party		0-1	.47 (.50)	Whether party is in government (1) or not (0)
Party	1,2,3,4,5	1-5		Identifies each political party
Party size	0 – 100	4-41.5	22.02 (13.73)	Percentage of seats in Bundestag
Media salience	0 - ∞	.002-2.46	.200 (.35)	Average number of articles on the issue per day
Coalition	1,2,3,4,5	1-5		Whether a party is a member of a specific coalition

was a member of any of the coalitions that occurred during the observation period. Effectively, this should control for any effects that were specific to a coalition[9]. It should be noted that the preferences of the public and those of the supporters of a specific party on an issue are highly correlated (.82) and cannot be included in the same model[10]. Instead, separate models are run for the general public and party supporters. Results are shown for models predicting the former, whereas those for the latter are included in Appendix 2.3. Where the results differ, this is noted in the text. The correlation between the preferences of the public and those of party supporters also has substantive implications: it may mean that public preferences regarding these specific policy issues are not related (strongly) to the ideological preferences of voters (see also: Lesschaeve, 2017) and that parties often do not have to choose between their supporters and the general public.

2.6 ANALYSIS

Table 2.2 shows the results of a series of models that predict whether a political party supports a policy proposal. Model 1 directly assesses the relationship between public preferences and party positions outlined in Hypothesis 1, which is in the expected direc-

9 The observations may also be clustered in party-coalition combinations. Running the models with fixed-effects for these combinations does not change the results.

10 The preferences of the supporters of SPD, FDP and CDU/CSU correlate strongest with general public opinion (>.9), but correlations are also >.7 for Die Grüne and Die Linke.

Table 2.2: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting whether a party was in favour of a policy issue.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Public support	1.82***	1.85***	-2.14	3.96***	2.22
	(0.55)	(0.55)	(1.69)	(0.89)	(2.38)
Nicheness		2.80*	-0.88	3.03*	1.59
		(1.34)	(2.00)	(1.39)	(2.29)
Public support * Nicheness			7.09*		2.65
			(2.90)		(3.40)
Government party		0.55	0.55	2.63***	2.38**
		(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.77)	(0.82)
Public support* Government party				-4.28***	-3.79**
				(1.19)	(1.33)
Controls					
Party (Ref: SPD)					
CDU/CSU	-0.04	-1.02	-0.96	-1.15+	-1.12+
	(0.43)	(0.64)	(0.65)	(0.66)	(0.66)
FDP	-0.49	-0.47	-0.44	-0.20	-0.21
	(0.98)	(0.99)	(1.00)	(1.07)	(1.06)
Grüne	0.29	-0.44	-0.44	-0.20	-0.22
	(1.05)	(1.09)	(1.10)	(1.19)	(1.18)
Linke	0.19	-0.48	-0.49	-0.22	-0.25
	(1.02)	(1.06)	(1.07)	(1.15)	(1.14)
Party size	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.03
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Media salience	0.10	0.11	0.12	0.08	0.09
	(0.33)	(0.32)	(0.33)	(0.34)	(0.34)
Constant	-1.25	-2.79+	-0.71	-4.44*	-3.46
	(1.28)	(1.52)	(1.75)	(1.74)	(2.12)
Coalition fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Policy-Level Random intercept	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of cases	334	334	334	334	334
AIC	460	457	455	446	448
BIC	510	510	516	507	513

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

tion and significant: the higher public support for an issue, the higher the chance that a political party supports it.

The interaction effects between public preferences and nicheness in Models 3 and 5 show that contrary to Hypothesis 2A (mainstream parties' positions are more likely to be positively related to the preferences of the general public than those of a niche party), the effect of public opinion on the position of a party is stronger for parties emphasizing niche issues than for parties focusing on mainstream topics. The effect disappears once

the interaction between public preferences and government parties is included in Model 5, however. Appendix 2.3 shows similar results for the relationship between the preferences of party *supporters* and party positions. This provides some evidence for Hypothesis 2B that the positions of parties with niche issue profiles are more strongly related to the preferences of their supporters than those of parties with mainstream issue profiles. Again, the effect disappears once the interaction with government status is included. Taken together, these results provide little evidence for the expectation that niche parties respond to their supporters and mainstream parties to the general public. If anything, the evidence suggests that the positions of parties with more niche issue profiles are more likely to be related to the preferences of the general public *and* those of supporters, which may be due to fact that niche parties are also more often opposition parties.

Models 3 through 5 in Table 2.2 show that the difference between government and opposition parties is much more pronounced, however. The interaction between government status and public support for an issue is negative and significant in both Models 3 and 5, indicating that the policy positions of parties in government are generally *less* related to public opinion than those of opposition parties, in line with Hypothesis 3A. Based on Model 5, an increase in public support for a policy proposal from 40% to 70% raises the probability of an opposition party supporting the policy from 36% to 56%. The same increase in public support does not change the probability that a government party is in favour of a policy issue.

To demonstrate this Figure 2.1 plots the probability of a party supporting a policy issue at different levels of public support. In a scenario where party positions are tightly linked to public opinion, the likelihood of being in favour of a policy increases as public support rises, and increases most sharply around the 50% mark, from which point a majority of the public is in favour of the policy change. The figure shows that, at least when it comes to the statements in the media, German opposition parties (red, dashed line) are close to this 'ideal' linkage. However, once they are in government (black, solid line), the relationship between public support and party positions flattens. This suggests that whilst political parties may aim to make statements about policy issues that are popular, they weigh other interests much more strongly once the constraints of being in government are in place. To the extent that these government parties are also much more likely to get their way and decide whether a policy change is enacted, this may negatively affect the link between public opinion and policy. The negative interaction in Appendix 2.3 (results table) that is plotted in Appendix 2.4 (figure) shows a similar result regarding Hypothesis 3B that the positions of government parties are also less related to the preferences of their supporters than those of opposition parties. The main difference is that whereas the positions of government parties are unrelated to public preferences, they remain related to those of their supporters (but more weakly so than the positions of opposition parties). This may indicate that when political parties are constrained by

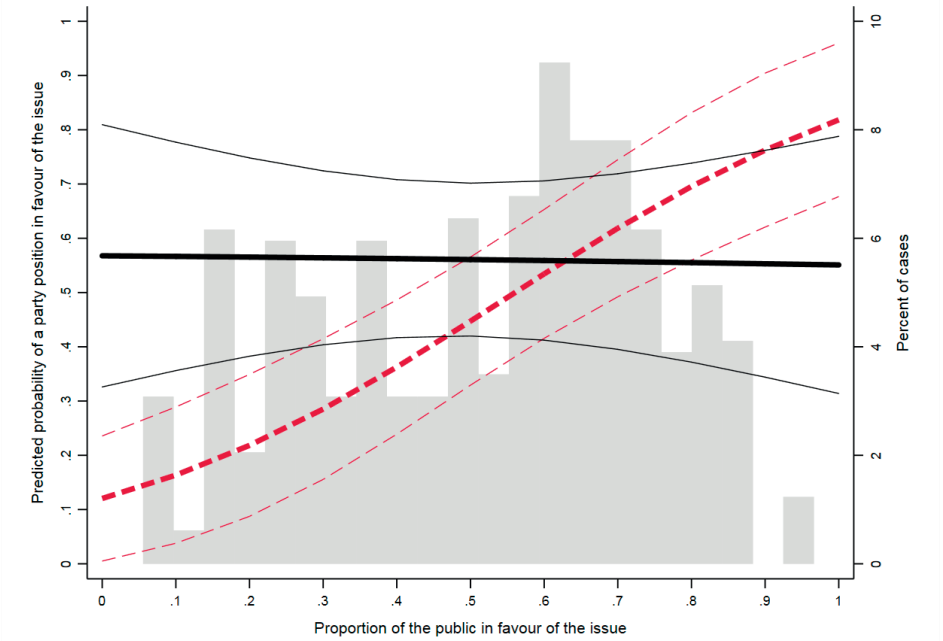


Figure 2.1: Predicted probability of a position in favour of a policy issue for government parties and opposition parties (left axis) and the distribution of cases (right axis).
Figure note: The black solid line indicates the predictions for government parties and the red dashed line for opposition parties (left axis) with 95% confidence intervals, based on Model 5 in Table 2.2. The shaded grey area indicates the distribution of the cases (as a percentage of the total N) across public support (right axis).

being in government, they choose to align with their supporters more than with the general public. The finding ties in with previous studies of statements by coalition parties in several countries, who argue that these parties also use parliamentary debates to flag responsiveness to their supporters (Martin and Vanberg, 2008).

Assessing the results and robustness

To better understand whether (government) parties indeed follow their supporters when facing constraints (and following the logic of Branham et al. (2017)), we can consider only those 38 cases, or about ten percent of the total, where the majority of the public and party supporters support different sides of the issue[11]. In these cases parties side with their supporters 84% of the time. An example is the position of the CDU/CSU regarding increasing the rights of registered same-sex couples. The supporters of the party were against this policy, whilst the general public supported it. The party took a

11 Appendix 2.7 indicates which parties faced this situation on which policy issues.

position against extending the rights of registered same-sex couples[12]. Although based on a limited number of cases, this supports the inference that when faced with the choice between the preferences of the general public and those of their supporters, political parties choose the position of their supporters most of the time.

In addition, a number of alternative specifications and robustness checks were run to validate the results. Appendix 2.5 demonstrates that the results for niche and mainstream parties remain when issue ownership is taken into account (Klüver and Spoon, 2016, Giger and Lefkofridi, 2014). It also explores the effect of media salience on the relationship between public preferences and party positions. In Appendix 2.6, Table A2.6.1 shows that results stay the same when taking congruence (whether the majority of the public and the position of a political party are on the same side of an issue) as an alternative dependent variable. Table A2.6.2 then shows that the results are robust to the exclusion of each political party[13].

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter used a novel application of MRP to study the representation of the public through political parties on specific policy proposals in Germany to explore whether niche and opposition parties incorporate public preferences differently than mainstream and government parties, respectively. The chapter finds little evidence for the expectation that the positions of parties with more niche issue profiles are more related to their supporters' positions and parties with mainstream issue profiles more strongly linked to the general public's. Given that these results differ from those found in other studies (e.g. Adams et al. 2006) it should be noted that the conclusions in this chapter are based on a comparison across a limited set of political parties[14]. Although this chapter used a more dynamic conceptualization of nicheness within parties (Bischof, 2017a), more comparative work on specific policy issues is needed to draw definitive conclusions.

That being said, this chapter was the first to show that parties in opposition are very effective in taking policy positions that are popular with the public. Yet once they are in government, the relationship with general public opinion disappears, whereas the link with supporters' preferences weakens. The idea that political parties tend to take positions in line with what their supporters want when put under pressure is further underlined by the finding that when the public and a party's supporters disagree on an

12 In 2017 (after the observation period) the party did allow a vote on the introduction of opening marriages to same-sex couples, but only after a majority of its voters also supported the issue.

13 The results also do not change substantively when controls for political parties are not included in the models

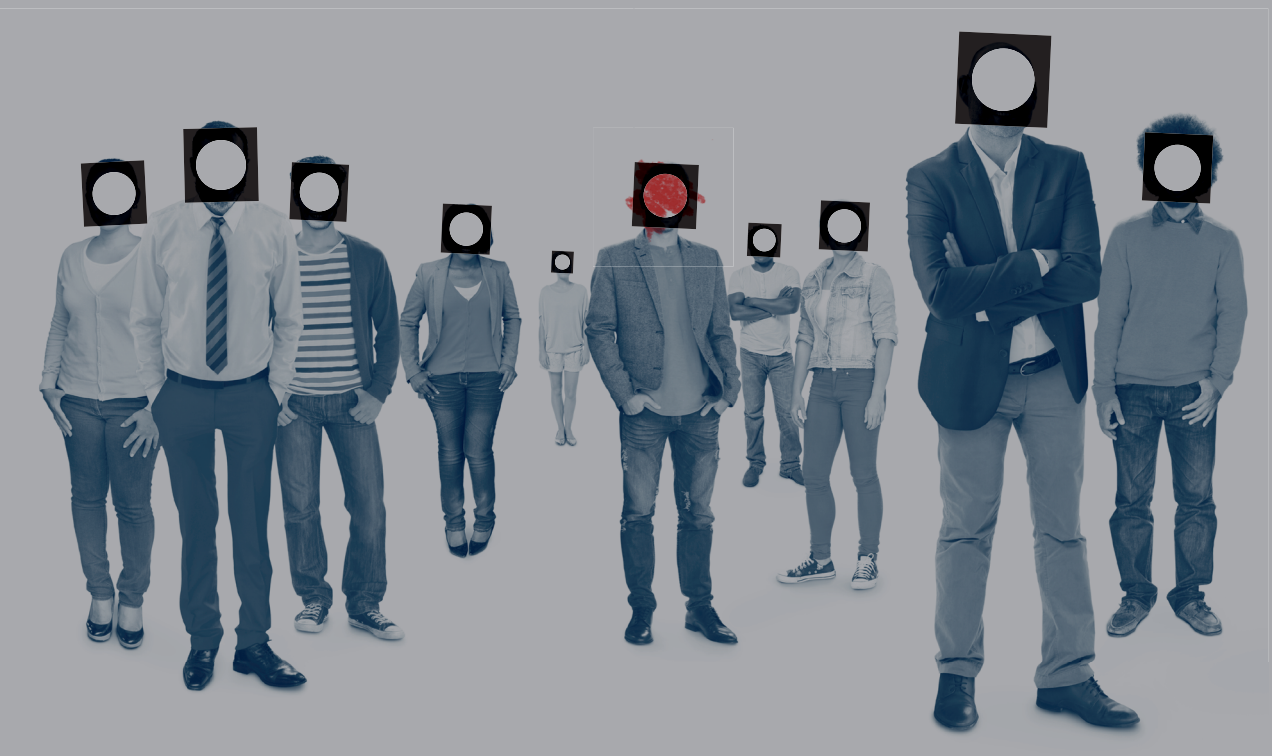
14 The models (not shown) were rerun using the dichotomous definition used by Adams et al. (2006), according to which die Linke and die Grüne were classified as niche parties. This did not change the results substantively.

issue, parties take the side of their supporters 84% of the time. Whilst mainly considering the preferences of one's constituency is not problematic for representation, it might become more problematic if at this stage, the link between general public opinion and final policy outcomes is severed since government parties probably have a much stronger impact on policy outcomes.

Of course, the weakened linkage for government parties may also be a reflection of the need for parties in coalition governments to take the preferences of their coalition partners into account. Moreover, opposition parties may be better placed to avoid making statements in the media when they have an unpopular position on a policy issue than government parties, which could somewhat impact the results (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2010; see also Appendix 2.5). Future studies could compare the German case to a country with single-party coalitions or adopt other measures of party positions to rule out a media effect.

Although this chapter included controls for political parties and the results were not reliant on any one specific political party (see Table A2.6.2 in Appendix 2.6) the inferences in the chapter are based on a limited number of parties. Whilst the chosen approach enabled studying a large number of policy issues it limits the extent to which inferences can be drawn across political parties. Future comparative work taking a similar approach could study other party characteristics such as whether ideologically extreme parties act differently than more moderate parties.

Still, the chapter demonstrates the added value of studying the positions of political parties on specific issues. The finding that on these issues, the general public and the supporters of a political party often want the same thing is important. It means that on most specific policy issues the supporters of a party agree with the general public and that political parties do not face a choice between the two and that studies using ideological dimensions miss part of the story (see also: Lesschaeve, 2017). This chapter has pinpointed at least one potential point in the chain from the public to policy where the link between public preferences and policy outcomes may be weakened, and shown that studying representation through political parties on specific policy issues is possible and can help generate new insights in the study of political representation.



3

Dynamics of Regulatory Policymaking in Sweden: The Role of Media Advocacy and Public Opinion

This chapter is co-authored with Anne Rasmussen and Dimiter Toshkov.
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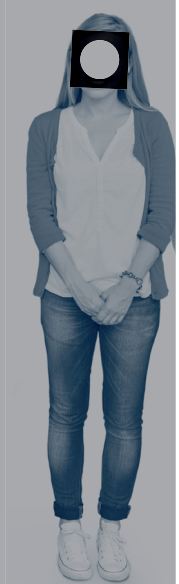

ABSTRACT

While extensive literatures study the responsiveness of policy to public opinion and the influence of interest groups, few studies look at both factors simultaneously. We offer an analysis of the influence of media advocacy and public opinion on political attention and policy change for four regulatory issues over a relatively long period of time in Sweden. Our data pools together measures of public support for specific policies with new data on attention to the policy issues in the Swedish parliament, policy development over time, and detailed coding of the claims of interest advocates in two major Swedish newspapers. Analysing this data, we reveal a complex picture without a general tendency for either public opinion or media advocacy to act as dominant forces in producing policy change, although we find some evidence that the public is successful in stimulating political attention when it supports policy proposals aimed at changing the status quo.

Acknowledgements

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

The question who gets the policies they desire is one of the central problems in the study of democratic governance. Normative accounts of democracy usually posit that the public's preferences should have an impact on the policies delivered by politicians (Dahl, 1956). Accordingly, a large literature investigates the extent to which public opinion is related to policy (for reviews, see Shapiro, 2011, Wlezien, 2016). In parallel to this literature, another body of research considers an additional force in public policy making: the role of interest groups. In recent years, the extent to which lobby groups influence public policy has gained renewed interest and new designs to study interest group influence have been introduced (for an overview, see: Binderkrantz & Rasmussen, 2015, Dür, 2008, Helboe Pedersen, 2013, Bernhagen et al., 2014, Rasmussen et al., 2018). Although the question of how strong interest group influence really is remains unsettled (see, e.g. Lowery, 2013), there is considerable normative criticism of strong interest group influence, which may not be desirable due to the risk of interest groups persuading policy makers to adopt policies that differ from those desired by the median citizen.

While large bodies of literature exist that examine policy responsiveness to the public and to interest groups separately, studies of public policy that integrate both factors are limited (for recent reviews see Burstein and Linton, 2002, Burstein, 2014). Moreover, the evidence in the few existing studies (Burstein, 2014, Gilens, 2012, Gilens and Page, 2014, Lax and Phillips, 2012, Giger and Klüver, 2016, Gray et al., 2004, Bevan and Rasmussen, 2017) that examine both the impact of public preferences and interest groups on policy change is mixed. Most of these studies do not examine the evolution of policies over time even if a diachronic perspective is crucial for judging the potential causal impact of interest groups and public opinion on public policy.

In this chapter, we seek to deepen our understanding of how the public and interest groups active in the media (referred to as *media advocates*) influence public policy by examining two aspects of policy making – political attention (the attention to specific policy issues in the legislature) and policy change. We focus on four policy issues for which public opinion has been measured over a relatively long time period in Sweden: the phasing out of nuclear energy, the introduction of a six-hour working day, allowing the sale of beer, wine and liquor in supermarkets, and lowering taxes on alcohol. The four issues are selected so that they exhibit variation in the extent of public and media advocacy support for policy change both between and within issues over time.

For each policy issue, we carefully trace the policy developments over 10- to 16-year time periods using a variety of data sources. We link this policy information to data on public opinion on these four issues provided by the SOM-institute (See online supplementary material). In addition, to track media advocacy on these issues, we conduct a

detailed media content analysis of all claims made by advocates on the policy issues in two major Swedish newspapers for the entire period of analysis. Our definition of media advocates covers a broad selection of non-state actors including 'traditional' interest advocates like labour unions, business associations and companies, but also actors such as scientists and think tanks.

We analyse the impact of media advocates and public opinion on public policy making in a mixed-methods design. We start with a quantitative analysis identifying the general patterns related to the dynamics of political attention and policy change in our dataset before examining these patterns at greater resolution in a set of in-depth studies of the individual policy cases. In this way we are able to scrutinize the mechanisms that drive political attention and produce change and to interpret the general findings in the context of the individual cases. Such a strategy is especially well-suited to the study of policy change, as this is typically a rare event that is not easily modelled statistically (Goemans, 2007).

We find some support for the hypothesis that public opinion affects political attention, but our findings invite scepticism as to the ability of either public opinion or media advocacy to strongly influence policy making. The evidence is particularly striking with respect to the production of actual policy change where neither the media advocates nor public opinion seem to play a leading role in any of our cases. Despite the high public support *and* considerable media advocacy support that some of the proposals for policy change have enjoyed, we observe only one genuine case of policy change in our dataset (and, remarkably, this one case has occurred in a context of modest public support and net opposition from media advocates).

These findings are important given the common expectation that the extent to which these two types of actors affect policy change should be inversely related. The worries about interest group influence are voiced because such influence is expected to come at the expense of diminished influence of the public, based on the expectation that groups, such as those active in the media, are not representative of broader public opinion. However, rather than finding a trade-off in the influence of these two types of actors, we discover little evidence that any of them play a strong role in our cases. This matters because, especially in a country with strong democratic credentials like Sweden, one would expect public opinion to have a stronger impact on both the attention paid to policy issues and policy change than in other countries. The implication is that neither advocacy nor public opinion may impact political attention or specific policy changes as much as is often assumed by the academic literature and citizens alike.

3.2 PUBLIC OPINION AND INTEREST GROUPS AS DRIVERS OF PUBLIC POLICY

Most of the studies of policy responsiveness (for reviews, see: Shapiro, 2011, Wlezien, 2016) examine either static congruence between public opinion and concrete policies (e.g. Lax and Phillips, 2012) *or* dynamic responsiveness between public opinion and indirect proxies for policy, such as spending (Mortensen, 2010, Soroka and Wlezien, 2010), attention (Alexandrova et al., 2016, Bevan and Jennings, 2014, Mortensen, 2010), or latent constructs, such as the 'policy mood' (Stimson et al., 1995). Attention to policy issues during the agenda-setting stage and policy change are typically studied in isolation, while both of these aspects are important for understanding public policy making. In this chapter we study the influence of both public opinion and interest groups on political attention *and* on policy change in a diachronic design that analyses concrete policy proposals with a methodology integrating quantitative analysis with in-depth case evidence. Combining a dynamic approach with a focus on concrete policy proposals provides us with additional leverage to assess the causal relationships between opinion, interest groups, and policy.

Empirical studies of the link between public opinion and policy generally find ample evidence that the two are related, although some studies are somewhat sceptical regarding the strength of the link between public opinion and (US state) policy. In a comparison across policies and jurisdictions, Lax and Phillips emphasize that the likelihood of policy being in line with the public opinion majority is roughly speaking equal to flipping a coin (2012, p. 149). Dynamic approaches to the study of the link between public policy and policy usually find stronger links between public opinion and policy and argue that public opinion drives policy change. Yet, as they mostly use indirect and/or aggregate policy indicators, it remains difficult to connect their insights to the study of specific policy changes.

Studies of the representation of the public in policy have been criticized for not considering other factors, such as group advocacy that may confound the relationship between public opinion and policy – leading to fears that the impact of public opinion on policy is overestimated (Burstein, 2014, Burstein and Linton, 2002). However, just as with public opinion, it is not straightforward to assess the causal impact of interest groups and advocates on policy. For many years, this led scholars to examine other questions (De Bièvre and Dür, 2007), but lately there has been a growth in studies that have presented new research designs for studying influence (for a review, see Dür, 2008). While groups may act as a transmission belt helping to transfer public views to policy makers (Rasmussen et al., 2014), group involvement in politics might also lead to bias in policy-making. This happens if decision makers listen to interest groups due to the resources they may offer, even when groups do not represent the median voter. So it may

seem surprising that, for a very long time, separate bodies of literature have examined how public opinion and interest advocates influence policy making.

The few studies that do include both interest groups and public opinion find varying results about the impact of groups on policy making. Some reach the conclusion that they matter (Gilens, 2012, Gilens and Page, 2014, Lax and Phillips, 2012). Others present a more mixed view (Gray et al., 2004, Bevan and Rasmussen, 2017) echoing a trend in existing interest group scholarship of influence to find "only mixed or weak results" (Lowery, 2007). The differences in findings are interesting given that the vast share of existing research focuses on the US political system. However, rather than being contradictory, it is possible that they result from differences in analysis designs and operationalisations. It may for example be harder to find strong relationships in studies using crude indicators of groups and policy (such as when group counts are related to either policy liberalism (e.g. Gray et al., 2004) or attention to broader policy areas (e.g. Bevan and Rasmussen, 2017)) than in studies linking policy positions to outcomes on specific policies (Gilens, 2012, Gilens and Page, 2014). In the latter there may be a closer match between the explanatory and outcome variables since we can be confident that the interest group measures and outcomes relate to the *same* policies.

Moreover, even among studies of specific policies, it may matter how information about group preferences is collected. Those that measure interest group preferences based on the views of the most powerful interest groups only (e.g. Gilens, 2012, Gilens and Page, 2014, Lax and Phillips, 2012) could for example be more likely to find a relationship between their measures and policy outcomes than those which consider (activities of) a wide selection of groups (Burstein 2014). Ultimately, it is important to be sensitive to such differences in approaches when comparing the findings from the different studies.

We opt for an issue-specific approach measuring advocacy and public opinion on concrete topics, which has the advantage that we do not have to assume that politicians react to general ideological views of the population or overall volumes of group activity when adopting specific policies. Moreover, we emphasize the need for studies to look at interest group opinions and activities, on the one hand, and the trajectory of these *specific* policies over long periods of time, on the other, while considering the potentially competing or complementary effects of public opinion.

To date, only a few US studies on social movement activity and specific policies adopt such a design, and they typically focus on one type of policy or interest only (Agnone, 2007, Burstein and Freudenburg, 1978, McAdam and Su, 2002, Olzak and Soule, 2009, Soule and King, 2006, Soule and Olzak, 2004). We supplement these studies with a detailed analysis of how claims reported in the media by a wide range of advocates are related to political attention and policy change on four different policy issues over long time periods, while accounting for the dynamics of public opinion as well.

3.3 THE HYPOTHESIZED EFFECTS OF PUBLIC SUPPORT AND MEDIA ADVOCACY ON POLITICAL ATTENTION AND POLICY CHANGE

Theoretically, there are at least two ways in which politicians can respond to citizens and media advocates in the process of public policy making. The first focuses on *political attention,* meaning that politicians discuss and consider issues that citizens and interest groups care about. The second puts emphasis on substantive *policy outcomes* and examines whether the opinions of citizens and groups are in fact reflected in actual policy outcomes (Berry et al., 2002) and whether *policy changes* are in line with public preferences. Political attention and policy change can be considered as two steps in the policy-making process that provide opportunity for responsiveness to public opinion and interest groups. Not only is political attention (and discussions in the legislature) a necessary step for policy change, but the former can also substitute to some extent for the latter. Discussing an issue can signal responsiveness to the wishes of the general public or special interests even when policy change is not feasible. Therefore, we analyse both outcome variables in the current chapter.

The public opinion–policy linkage

There are good theoretical reasons to expect that politicians in democratic political systems will be responsive to the public. As politicians are – at least partially –driven by the desire to be re-elected (Stimson et al., 1995), they would want to respond to shifts in the public desire for a given type of policy by introducing policy changes. When the public exhibits strong support for a policy proposal that is different from the status quo, politicians and political parties can increase their appeal to the citizens by enacting the policy proposal. Otherwise, they risk being viewed as unresponsive to the wishes of the public and out of touch with what the citizens want, with negative electoral consequences. This dynamic is reinforced when party elites have positive views of the rationality of public opinion (as is the case in Sweden), which increases the likelihood that they consider the public's wishes (Ekengren and Oscarsson, 2011).

However, even when policy change is impossible – for political, technological, or other reasons – politicians can still signal responsiveness to the public by bringing the issue to the political agenda and discussing it in the legislative arena. When the public, and especially the part with strong opinions on the policy issue, favours an alternative policy proposal, it implies that it is dissatisfied with the policy status quo. In that case, there are political points to be scored by debating the underlying policy problem and putting it on the political agenda. And, in any case, making and debating policy proposals is of course a necessary step before actual policy change – a point corroborated by a study finding that the attention paid to a policy area in the Danish parliament is related

to spending on that same issue (Mortensen, 2010). Therefore, we expect that public opinion will affect both political attention and policy change:

*Hypothesis 1A**:** The higher the public support for a policy proposal (that is different from the policy status quo), the more attention politicians will pay to the issue.*

*Hypothesis 1B**:** The higher the public support for a policy proposal, the more likely that the policy proposal will be enacted.*

Media advocates and representation

But even when the public strongly supports a policy alternative, it needs to compete for political attention and influence with other actors, amongst which interest groups and advocates loom large. The media are an important venue for advocates and have become increasingly important in the communication between politicians and citizens (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999). Advocates that want to raise awareness of an issue or change policy often have to rely on the media in addition to other strategies to achieve their goals (Binderkrantz, 2005), and media advocacy in European countries has received increasing attention recently (Binderkrantz et al., 2015, Binderkrantz et al., 2017). That many interest groups rely on media attention is also evidenced by the fact that news coverage in the media offers a somewhat closer reflection of the overall composition of the Danish interest group population than other arenas (Binderkrantz et al., 2015).

In theoretical terms, advocates use the media to pursue at least two goals. Firstly, actors who want to change the status quo will likely try and raise attention for the policy issue. Previous studies have shown that advocates tend to actively lobby at specific points in time and on specific issues (Baumgartner et al., 2009), usually around policy junctures when policy may change. Hence, we expect claim-making by advocates to occur around specific periods in time and to drive political attention to the policy issue.

*Hypothesis 2**:** The higher the number of advocates making claims in the media on an issue, the more attention politicians will pay to the issue.*

Theoretically, we should not expect that the number of media advocates on an issue as such should influence the likelihood of policy change. This is because the media advocates can split in supporting conflicting proposals for policy change or face a counter-mobilization in defence of the status quo. Therefore, it is the *relative* support by the population of media advocates that a policy proposal receives that should affect the likelihood of policy changes, rather than the overall *volume* of advocacy. In other words, when the population of advocates is dominated by actors supporting a policy alternative different than the status quo, there should be a higher chance that policy will

change in the direction that these advocates prefer (Gilens, 2012, Gilens and Page, 2014, Lax and Phillips, 2012). Similarly, we expect that if there is high relative support among the media advocates in support of a policy proposal (that is currently not the policy in place), this will put more pressure on politicians to address it – thus increasing political attention to the issue. To summarize the preceding discussion:

Hypothesis 3A: The higher the relative media advocacy support for a policy proposal that would change the policy status quo, the more attention politicians will pay to the issue.

Hypothesis 3B: The higher the relative media advocacy support for a policy proposal, the more likely that the policy proposal will be enacted.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

We examine the hypotheses presented above in an empirical study of four policy issues in Sweden. Sweden distinguishes itself by the availability of high-quality longitudinal data on public opinion on specific policy questions enabling us to examine a period of time that is relatively long compared to existing studies of policy responsiveness. Focusing on a single country also allows us to keep the institutional context constant across policy issues and over time. Sweden is a vibrant representative democracy with a stable party system, free media, and a well-established system of interest representation: all features that should make Sweden a likely case for finding responsiveness to public opinion compared to other political systems. In contrast, Sweden might offer less favourable conditions for media advocacy to influence policy making as a result of its corporatist tradition where policy is often decided in collaboration with the types of interest groups who have been granted privileged insider access to the political system itself (Öberg et al., 2011, Siaroff, 1999).

Selection of policy issues

The sampling frame from which we draw our four cases is constrained by the availability of longitudinal data on public opinion. However, the set of specific policy issues on which relatively long time series on public opinion data are available in Sweden does not seem biased towards policy issues on which policy change has not happened yet and involves issues of varying media saliency. To control for the fact that the policy type of an issue (Lowi, 1964) might affect the overall level of advocacy, we select regulatory policy issues only. In addition, our issues are selected to ensure variation in public opinion and media advocacy support both between the issues and within issues over time. As discussed below, our sample includes a policy proposal for which public support went from posi-

tive to negative to positive again, one that remained positive, and two that went from positive to negative during our study period. One proposal was supported by a minority of media advocates, another had majority support, and for the remaining two the level of support switched over time. The issues also vary in the volume of advocacy they generated, again both between issues and over time for the same issue (see Figure A3.1.2 in the Supplementary Material). The selection results in the following policy proposals: the phasing out of nuclear energy in the long run, the introduction of a six-hour working day, allowing the sale of alcohol[15] in supermarkets and lowering taxes on alcohol[16].

These four issues vary in terms of the amount of media debate they generate, both across issues and within them over time. As an example, *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter* wrote on average 28.3 articles a year about the phase-out of nuclear energy, but only five about allowing the sale of alcohol in supermarkets. Our issues also vary in terms of the amount of political attention they receive. At most, the nuclear issue featured in 3.5% of all documents produced by the Riksdag in a given year. As an example, this is comparable to the very salient (in Sweden) topics of NATO membership (3.9% of all documents in a year) and privatizing elderly care (3.6% of all documents) in the same observation period, which suggests that at its peak the nuclear issue was very high on the political agenda. The other issues were less salient. Having variation in media saliency is important since it may influence the ability of citizens and media advocates to influence policy making (Lax and Phillips, 2012).

Unit of analysis

We focus on *concrete* policy proposals to ensure a direct match between the way the public opinion survey items are phrased and the policy options we track, and we stick to a narrow interpretation of the survey questions (for example, we refrain from assuming that lack of public support for increasing taxes is equivalent to public support for decreasing taxes). The advantage is that our measures attain high face and construct validity. The concreteness of our definition of the unit of analysis raises a relatively high bar for finding responsiveness, but we see this as a positive feature of our approach enabling us to connect public opinion, media advocacy, and public policy directly, without further assumptions about the nature and dimensionality of the underlying policy space.

15 The formulation on the question of alcohol sales in Swedish refers to 'livsmedelbutiker', which is a slightly broader category of stores than just supermarkets.

16 The question on alcohol taxes refers to taxes on beer, wine and spirits, but since these cover most alcoholic beverages, we discuss them as taxes on alcohol.

Measurement and data

We consider both political attention and policy change. The former is defined as the attention to a policy issue in the legislature and measured as the number of documents that address a certain policy issue publicized by the Swedish parliament (Riksdag) in a year. The documents were retrieved from the online archive of the Riksdag and include the minutes from plenary sessions, motions, reports and legislative proposals by the government, reports by organizations that are associated with the Riksdag and plenary proposals by parliamentary committees. Since the measure includes documents that are presented by the government, it measures more than just the Riksdag's agenda and we consider it a proxy for the attention paid to the issue by politicians.

To measure the second outcome of interest we construct a comprehensive picture of the policy developments on the four issues during the period of analysis. For each hypothesis we thoroughly and systematically study and use a wide variety of written sources: legislative documents, policy briefs, media analyses, as well as existing academic literature. For the statistical analysis we construct a binary variable that tracks whether national policy changed in line with the policy proposal as expressed in public opinion in a particular year.

Turning to the explanatory variables, we rely on data from the SOM Institute at the University of Gothenburg (see Appendix 3.2) to measure public opinion. This is a rather exceptional data source as the public has been asked about its opinion on the exact same policy issues during at least ten years. This is important given that existing large-N scholarship on responsiveness has been criticized for not being able to assess the specificities and developments of specific policies (e.g. Petry and Mendelsohn, 2004). Based on this data, we constructed a measure of public support for a policy proposal defined as the percentage of the Swedish public who think the policy proposal is 'good' or 'very good' from those with an opinion (those who think the proposal is 'good', 'very good', 'bad', or 'very bad').

To capture our variables tracking media advocacy, we code statements in the media. For each of our policy issues, we conducted a search in two major broadsheet Swedish newspapers, *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter*. Whilst Sweden lacks a newspaper that clearly represents the left side of the political spectrum, we have selected two broadsheet newspapers that describe themselves as independent-conservative and independent-liberal, respectively. Differences in ideological orientation might affect which interest groups are covered (see Binderkrantz et al., 2017)[17].

17 While it is important to rule out such bias in coverage, we do not expect pronounced differences between them in practice. In fact, both newspapers also stress that they aim at providing neutral coverage except on their opinion pages. The fact that most statements by non-state actors about the six-hour work day (a policy on which one would expect these two newspapers to be ideologically opposed) were in favor of the policy, supports this expectation.

Having retrieved the relevant articles on all four issues for our entire observation period, we manually coded all 2,219 articles to identify all statements about the policy issue and classified the type of advocates who made the statement and the tone of the statement. We only coded one statement per advocate per article, but one advocate could have been included several times in each year. As mentioned, we use an encompassing, behavioural definition of interest advocates (Baroni et al., 2014) rather than limit the definition to non-state advocates with certain organizational structures. However, since we are interested in the impact of different societal actors on responses by politicians, we excluded statements by political actors, such as representatives from political parties and government officials, as well as private individuals.

To capture the volume of media advocacy, we track the *total* number of statements that was recorded in each year on an issue. This measure includes neutral statements as well, and serves as an indication of the extent to which advocates raised the issue in the media. Altogether, we record 401 statements by a total of 262 actors on our four policy issues.

To measure media advocacy support we calculated the percentage statements by advocates in the media in favour of a policy proposal published in a given year from all media statements that expressed an opinion, either positive or negative, on the specific policy proposal[18].

3.5 EMPIRICAL ANALYSES

Aggregate patterns

In this part of the chapter we present the results of the aggregate-level analyses starting with models of political attention. Since this outcome variable is a count measure and not normally distributed (see Figure A3.1.1 in the Appendix), we used negative binomial regression (King and Zeng, 2001). The distribution is also over-dispersed so that a standard Poisson count model would be a poor fit to the data. We present four models: Model 1 has the main variables of interest but no interactions; Model 2 adds the interaction between public opinion support and the policy status quo; Model 3 includes the interaction between media advocacy support and the status quo instead; Model 4 includes both interactions. In all models, we lagged the explanatory variables with one year to ascertain the causal direction of influence between attention, on the one hand, and public opinion and media advocacy activity, on the other. We also include separate intercepts for each policy issue (issue 'dummies') to take into account potential

18 More information on the coding scheme, the codebook and classification of actors can be found on www.govlis.eu

unobserved heterogeneity between them, and we add a lagged dependent variable to address potential auto-correlation in political attention over time.

Table 3.1 presents the results from the four estimated negative binomial regression models. According to the results, the (lagged) values of public support are positively and significantly associated with higher political attention. Moreover, the positive effect all but disappears for the cases when the policy proposal on which public support is expressed is in fact the policy status quo (see the negative interactions in Models 2 and 4, which however are not statistically significant at conventional levels; see also the left panel of Figure 3.1 for a graph of the effects).

Table 3.1: Negative binomial (quasi-poisson) statistical models of political attention to four policy issues in the Swedish legislature.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Public support (%)	1.13+ (0.63)	1.89* (0.79)	0.95 (0.60)	1.43+ (0.75)
Relative media advocacy support (%)	-0.07 (0.19)	0.00 (0.19)	0.19 (0.18)	0.18 (0.18)
Media advocacy volume	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Political attention in previous year	0.01+ (.00)	0.00 (.00)	0.01* (.00)	0.01+ (.00)
Status quo		1.25 (0.84)	0.55* (0.26)	1.31 (0.77)
Public support * Status quo		-1.63 (1.38)		-1.33 (1.27)
Media advocacy support *Status quo			-1.60*** (0.53)	-1.55* (0.53)
Controls				
Issues (Ref: Phase-out nuclear energy) Six-hour work week	-1.67*** (0.32)	-1.62*** (0.36)	-1.41*** (0.33)	-1.50** (0.34)
Alcohol taxes	-0.69*** (0.21)	-0.43 (0.29)	-0.41 (0.27)	-0.39 (0.27)
Sale of alcohol in supermarkets	-0.64* (0.22)	-0.35 (0.31)	-0.28 (0.28)	-0.24 (0.28)
Constant	3.29*** (0.38)	2.70*** (0.51)	2.88** (0.42)	2.66*** (0.47)
Dispersion parameter	3.84	3.69	3.11	3.08
Number of cases	47	47	47	47

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

Note: Raw coefficients; standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: number of documents addressing a particular policy issue in the Swedish parliament (Riksdag) in a year. All independent variables lagged with one year. One-year lagged values of the dependent variable included in all models.

Media advocacy support for a proposal as such does not seem to be significantly associated with the political attention to an issue in the legislature. However, the significant negative interaction with the status quo (see Models 3 and 4) implies that when media advocacy is supportive of the status quo, the political discussion of the policy issues tends to be minimal (see the right panel of Figure 3.1). Finally, we find no support for hypothesis 2 that the volume (number) of media advocate claims on a policy proposal affects political attention.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the scale of the effects by plotting the predicted probability of the number of agenda items discussed in the Swedish parliament as public support (left) and relative media advocacy support (right) range from the minimum to the maximum of their respective observed ranges (according the estimates of Model 4; other variables set at median or typical values; the thin lines present 95 percent confidence intervals of the means of the predictions). The figure also illustrates the interaction effects as the predictions are drawn separately for scenarios when the proposal is the status quo (dashed red line) and when it is not (solid black line). In line with our expectation in hypothesis 1A higher public support for a policy increases political attention when it signals dissatisfaction with the status quo, but not otherwise. When public support moves from its minimum to its maximum, the level of predicted political attention more than doubles (left panel; black line).

When relative media advocacy support moves from its observed minimum to its observed maximum, the predicted number of agenda items being discussed decreases three times, but only when the policy proposal being polled is the current status quo (right panel; red lines). This implies that high relative support for the status quo suppresses political attention to the issue. Importantly, however, there is no evidence that advocates interested in changing the policy status quo are successful in stimulating political attention, contrary to what we hypothesized. We should remind, however, that our sample includes relatively few observations for which the proposal is the status quo and that these all concern one policy issue from the four. This invites caution in interpreting the predicted probabilities plotted in Figure 3.1**.**

Below, we present a closer examination of the policy developments of policy on the four issues over time to scrutinize the mechanisms that drive political attention and produce change and to interpret the general findings presented above in the context of the individual cases.

In order to provide an analysis of policy responsiveness, the qualitative discussion of our cases below places specific emphasis on the instance in which policy changed in line with how the proposal was formulated in the opinion poll (i.e. the closure of the second reactor at Barsebäck), to improve our understanding of how this policy change came about. To facilitate the discussion of each case, we present several figures for each policy issue – with the first representing the overall attention paid to the issue in the

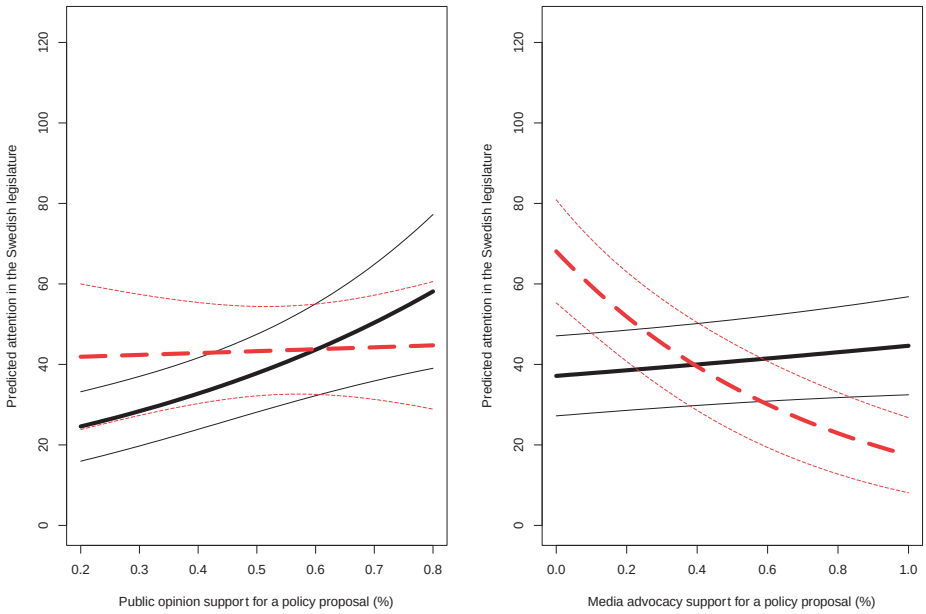


Figure 3.1: Predicted number of agenda items discussed in the Swedish parliament.
Note: Modelled as a function of lagged public support for a policy proposal (left panel) and lagged relative media advocacy support (right panel), according to the estimates of Model 4 (Table 1). Other variables held at mean or typical values. Black solid lines: proposal is not the status quo; Red dashed lines: proposal is the status quo. Plotted with 95 percent confidence intervals of the means of the predictions.

media and by Swedish politicians over time and the second representing the relative public and media advocacy support for a policy proposal related to the issue. For each case, we systematically examine the policy developments and their possible relationship with public opinion and media advocacy support to evaluate our hypotheses and the mechanisms behind the links.

Nuclear energy

Background

Nuclear energy corresponds to almost half of all Swedish energy and has been a salient topic in Swedish politics[19]. After a 1980 referendum, Sweden decided to phase-out nuclear energy by 2010, but this deadline was abandoned in 1997 in favour of a policy of long-term phase-out with no specific end-date (Holmberg and Hedberg, 2010). The policy change was part of a cross-party energy agreement between the parties that had advocated the 2010 phase-out deadline in the 1980 referendum, i.e. the Social

19 International Energy Agency (2014) *Sweden. Balances for 2014.* Date retrieved: 13-02-2017: https://www.iea.org/statistics/statisticssearch/report/?country=SWEDEN=&product=balances.

Democratic Party (Socialdemokraterna), the Centre Party (Centerpariet) and the Left Party (Vänsterpartiet). In 1998 the decision was made to close the first of two reactors at the nuclear power plant at Barsebäck. The decision was eventually carried out in 2001. In 2004 the then-governing Social Democratic Party and its energy-partners decided to close the second reactor at Barsebäck by 2005. This decision constitutes the one instance of policy change in our dataset that is in line with the proposal as phrased in the public opinion survey (namely, to phase-out nuclear energy). Later, the new right-wing government that came to power in 2006 reversed the phase-out and eventually abolished the phase-out plans in 2010.

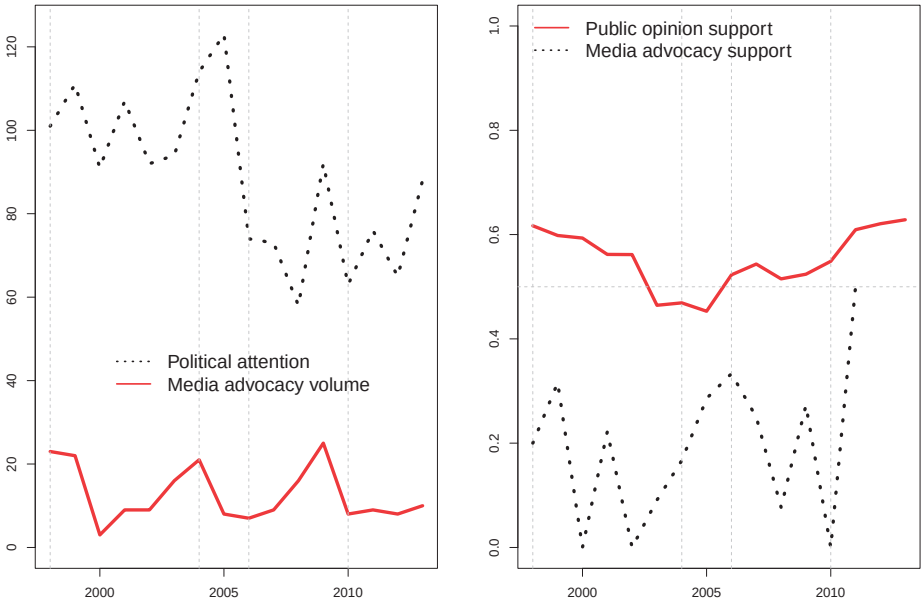


Figure 3.2: Political and media attention (left panel) and public opinion and advocacy support (right panel) regarding the proposal for phasing-out nuclear energy.
Note: Political attention: number of documents addressing a particular policy issue in the Swedish parliament (Riksdag) in a year. Media advocacy volume: number of relevant statements by interest groups and advocates on the policy proposal in Svenska Dagbladet and Dagens Nyheter in a year. Public opinion support: percentage of the public who think the policy proposal is 'good' or 'very good' from those with an opinion. Media advocacy support: percentage of statements by advocates in the media in favour of a policy proposal published in a given year from all media statements that expressed an opinion on the specific policy proposal. The vertical dotted lines indicate relevant policy events and Table A3.1.3 in the Appendix lists the specific policy changes.

Public opinion

While the plan to close the second reactor at Barsebäck was already discussed in 2001 and 2003, both the energy-partners in the government and other political parties argued that renewable energy sources were not developed enough to make up for the

expected loss in production from the shutdown. When the energy-partners did decide to close the second reactor at Barsebäck in 2004, as part of their long-term phase-out goal, they faced strong opposition from several directions. Not only were the other parties in the right-wing block strongly opposed, but public opinion and media advocacy (see next paragraph) had also turned against the phase-out (see Figure 2).

Hence, on the face of it, the actions of the Swedish government do not seem particularly responsive to public opinion at the time. However, while closing reactors at Barsebäck, the government actually allowed other developments that undermined the impact of the phase-out plans. For example, a large nuclear power plant in Oskarshamn was completely renovated to expand its life span, and another company (Fortum) was allowed to expand the production capacity of its existing reactors. Combined, these developments largely offset the effects of the closures at Barsebäck over the course of the following years.

This would seem to be an opportunity for the Swedish energy-partners to flag their responsiveness to public opinion, but surveying both the media and parliamentary debates at the time reveals that the government continued to present their policy as a long-term phase-out. But then, after the new right-wing government came to power in 2006, public support for a phase-out in the long run actually increased with a majority favouring a phase-out when the government decided to abolish the policy in 2010. The increase in public support for a phase-out after 2011 can be attributed at least to some extent to the Fukushima disaster (Holmberg, 2011, Holmberg and Hedberg, 2013). This shift in public opinion led to an increase in political attention, but no steps towards a phase-out of nuclear energy were taken in response.

Altogether, we can conclude that policy making regarding the nuclear phase-out was not directly responsive to public opinion (hypothesis 1B), even if, in line with our aggregate findings, more support for a proposal to change the status quo did seem to coincide with more political attention to the issue in 2011 (hypothesis 1A)[20].

Media advocacy volume and relative support

From the right panel of Figure 3.2, it is clear that statements in the media by advocates were more negative than positive about the phase-out policy throughout almost the entire observation period. Most of the statements were made by power companies owning Swedish nuclear power plants – with the owner of Barsebäck, Sydkraft, being especially vocal in its opposition. Other advocates, such as labour unions and experts warning of increased CO2 emissions also spoke out against the phase-out.

20 This finding is somewhat contrary to the interpretation of Holmberg and Hedberg (2010), who find a close match between public opinion and policy output in Sweden. This discrepancy may be due to their broader focus (on all nuclear power policy) *and* to the fact that their study covers the period before the Fukushima disaster.

There is no clear relationship between the number of statements in the media and political attention (hypothesis 2) (see the left panel of Figure 3.2), even if both political attention and the number of claims in the media spiked around the policy changes in 2004 (the decision to close Barsebäck) and 2009 (when the new right-wing government announced it would abolish the nuclear phase-out policy). However, these spikes in attention seem to be driven by counter-mobilization against government plans, by e.g. the owner of the Barsebäck reactors, rather than by proactive agenda setting through the media by these actors.

Media advocacy also did not have a clear impact on policy change (hypothesis 3B). However, several actors that made many of the negative claims about the phase-out policy do seem to have had a more subtle effect on the implementation of the decision to close the second Barsebäck reactor. By refusing government attempts to come to an agreement regarding the closure of nuclear reactors, industry actors (especially Sydkraft) were able to force the Swedish government to pay high levels of compensation for the closure[21]. Moreover, the same government allowed several energy companies to expand their production of nuclear in subsequent years.

The media advocates, who were largely against a phase-out, did attain their preferences after the 2006 election. However, this may be more a consequence of an overlap between the preferences of media advocates and those of the new pro-nuclear power government than the result of effective (media) advocacy. Additionally, in 2005 the Centre Party (previously part of the energy agreement and of the right-wing block) changed its decades-long position in favour of a phase-out to one against, which paved the way for the abolishment of the policy[22]. All in all then, the image emerges that even if policy sometimes did not follow the preferences of media advocates (as with the closure of Barsebäck 2), these actors did eventually attain their preferences or were compensated when they did not. When it comes to political attention, the relative increase in support for the phase-out by the media advocates in the wake of the Fukushima disaster (when the phase-out policy was not the status quo) was followed by increased political attention, providing some support for hypothesis 3A.

21 Sydkraft was compensated for all costs related to the closure and given ownership of a reactor with the same capacity as Barsebäck 2 that was owned by Vattenfal. Vattenfal, in its turn, was also compensated financially.

22 This interpretation is corroborated by other studies that have concluded that political considerations and partisan politics have historically been important in Swedish policy making on nuclear power (Nohrstedt, 2010, Roßegger and Ramin, 2013).

Six-hour working day

The next proposal for policy change we analyse is the introduction of a six-hour working day. The idea of shortening the working day to six hours has been around for decades and was experimented with by Swedish companies and public service providers as early as the 1980's. The idea is also regularly picked up in international news media. The Swedish government commissioned expert committee reports on the six hour working day (Rohdén, 2000), and in recent years also funded a trial at a care facility. Still, there has been no formal policy change on the issue.

Public opinion

In line with our general findings, it seems that the public was successful in spurring parliamentary debate of the issue, which received quite some attention in the Riksdag (hypothesis 1A). However, this attention did not lead to policy change (hypothesis 1B), even if public support for the proposal was very strong, if decreasingly so, over time: the public was more positive than negative in all years but 2010 (Figure 3.3).

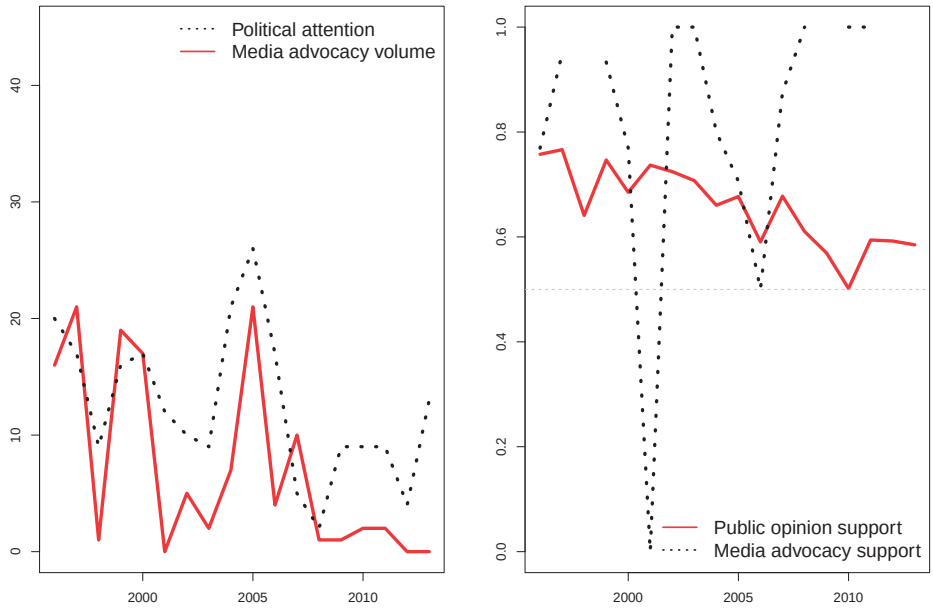


Figure 3.3: Political and media attention (left panel) and public opinion and advocacy support (right panel) regarding a six-hour working day. *For definitions of the variables, see the notes to Figure 3.2.*

Media advocacy volume and relative support

This lack of adoption of a policy proposal that is very popular among the public does not seem to have been caused by a strong counter-mobilization of advocates in the media.

The level of advocacy support fluctuated significantly, partly due to the overall low number of relevant statements. Moreover, these statements – made mostly by experts, LO (Sweden's largest labour organization), and companies – were mostly positive about the six-hour working day. The opponents may have considered the proposal so unlikely to be implemented that they did not feel the need to mobilize to defend the status quo and express their preferences in the media. In any case, advocacy efforts in the media did not lead to a policy change (hypothesis 3B). But the volume of advocacy claims and the amount of political attention both peeked around 2005, providing some support for hypothesis 2B. During this peak in the number of claims (see Figure 3.3), positive and negative claims were balanced, which may explain why the peak in attention did not lead to further policy activity or more future political attention (hypotheses 3A and 3B): when more actors did briefly mobilize and political attention increased, mobilization was stronger amongst those who were opposed to the six-hour work day.

The six-hour working day emerges as a very popular policy proposal, both among media advocates and the public, even if there is some reason to expect that countermobilization did not occur as actors did not deem the policy's introduction immanent. Given that the introduction of such a policy would be a major departure from international practices, it is perhaps not so surprising that the Swedish government has not implemented it yet, despite the support it enjoys.

Alcohol sale and taxes

The next two policy proposals we discuss relate to the regulation of alcohol use, so we discuss them together. Alcohol regulation policy in Sweden is more restrictive than in most other European countries (Karlsson and Osterberg, 2001) and has traditionally focused on a strategy to lower consumption that combines high prices with limited availability. Although Sweden has had to loosen some of its restrictive policies since joining the European Union, the country retains considerable freedom to formulate its own policies. This is evidenced by the two alcohol-related policies in our study: alcohol taxes, which are comparatively high in Sweden, and the sale of alcohol, which is only possible in Swedish stores under a state monopoly (called Systembolaget).

For both issues, political attention was high during the start of our observation period, but declined shortly after 2005 (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5). These relatively high levels of attention and media debate (in the case of lowering taxes) are likely related to several developments that increased attention. Importantly, 2004 was the year all EU member states were required to allow the import of alcohol for personal use, and fears existed that the Swedish policy of high pricing and restricted access would be undermined.

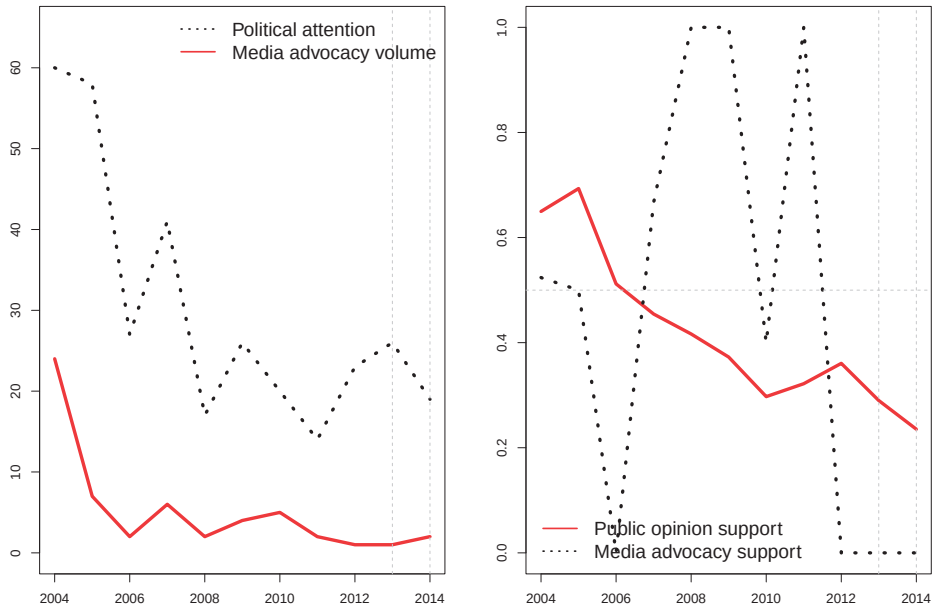


Figure 3.4: Political and media attention (left panel) and public opinion and advocacy support (right panel) regarding lowering alcohol taxes. *For definitions of the variables, see the notes to Figure 3.2.*

Public opinion

Both proposals for changing the policies (i.e. lowering alcohol taxes and relaxing the sale restrictions) were popular amongst the public at the start of our observation period (Figures 3.4 and 3.5). Whilst the main government party at the time, the Social Democrats, was not unfavourable to these proposals, it did not initiate policy change – possibly in order to accommodate its junior coalition partners. As expected in hypothesis 1A, and in line with the results in our aggregate analysis, as public support for the proposals declined throughout the observation period, so did political attention. Similarly, even when the right-wing political parties that had earlier expressed support for both proposals came to power in 2006, they did not lower taxes on alcohol or relax laws regarding alcohol sale. In fact, these parties *raised* taxes on alcohol in 2013 and 2014, whereas the sale of alcohol in supermarkets remained banned. Given that public support for both policies had sharply dropped at this point, this pattern is consistent with hypothesis 1B.

Media advocacy volume and relative support

It is worth noting that media advocacy support varies strongly on both issues, partly due to the low number of advocacy statements (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5). Most claims were made by health experts and actors involved in the sale of alcohol, and have not left an obvious mark on the enacted policy changes (hypothesis 3B). Moreover, even though the number of statements regarding alcohol taxes dropped as political attention also

declined (in line with hypothesis 2), most statements were *reactions* to political plans, rather than proactive strategies aimed at setting the agenda. Due to the low total number of statements, positive statements also did not clearly affect political attention for the issue (hypothesis 3A). To conclude, the story of alcohol regulation policies is one in which the Swedish public largely got what it wanted, while media advocacy was much less important and reactive.

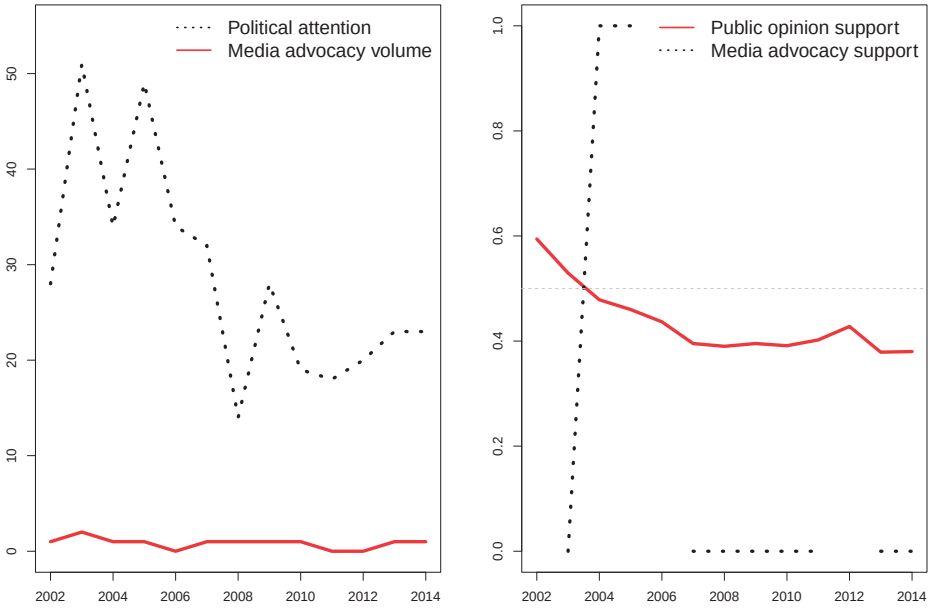


Figure 3.5: Political and media attention (left panel) and public opinion and advocacy support (right panel) with regard to allowing the sale of alcohol in supermarkets. *For definitions of the variables, see the notes to Figure 3.2.*

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we set out to investigate how the preferences of the general public and interest groups active in the media affect policy making. We focused on a small number of regulatory policy issues in Sweden and observed them over relatively long periods of time. We examined both the occurrence of policy change and the attention the policy issues received in the legislature using aggregate and issue-level analyses. The selection of a relatively low number of issues allowed us to analyse each one in depth and to trace the details behind the aggregate associations we found in the data.

Our findings reveal a complex picture, but the overall message is that there is not much evidence in favour of strong effects of either public opinion or media advocacy.

If anything, when the public strongly dislikes a proposal, policy might be adapted to reflect its wishes, as seems to have happened when taxes on alcohol were raised in 2013 and 2014. But strong support for a proposal is not necessarily translated into policy change. While in the two alcohol regulation related issues public opinion and regulation seemed to move in synchrony, when it comes to regulating the duration of the working day and nuclear phase-outs, there is quite some disconnect between the dynamics of public opinion and policy. Yet, stronger public support for a proposal is associated with more discussion of the issue in parliament.

We find even less evidence that media advocacy matters. The aggregate-level analysis revealed no clear effects of media advocacy on attention for an issue, other than very low levels of political attention when the media advocates are strongly in favour of the status quo. When looking more closely at the cases, there is some evidence that politicians sometimes find ways to accommodate media advocacy pressure without changing formal policy. An example is the phase-out of nuclear power, where, in spite of closing the Barsebäck reactor, the Swedish government allowed the expansion of existing plants, which was a policy action in line with advocate claims in the media and against public preferences. In this case, media advocates do not seem to have lived up to the ideal of acting as a transmission belt between the public and the government, but, if anything, worked to prevent public preferences from being turned into policy.

Some of these null findings might be due to the fact that policy change is rare and that the greatest potential for public opinion and interest groups to influence policy might be for "non-decision-making", i.e. to keep issues off the agenda. Although our study covers relatively long time periods compared to most existing analyses, our data still contains very few policy events. This is in itself a substantively interesting finding, as it reminds us that the policy status quo is rather stable, and the lack of policy change is possibly over-determined. One might need a very special confluence of factors to change policy, and strong support by the public and/or interest advocates might not be sufficient, and not even necessary for such change. In fact, there is some evidence in our case studies that political elites can play a strong role both when it comes to deciding to change policy as well as to keep popular issues off the political agenda. Rather than casting a view of policy making as involving a simple trade-off between responding to the views of either media advocates or the public, we find several instances where politicians decide to follow a third course (for a similar view of Swedish politics, see Esaiasson and Holmberg, 1996, Holmberg, 1997). This suggests that politicians are aware of and rhetorically responsive to public preferences, but that they are not always able or willing to implement popular proposals, contrary to what many in the literature assume. It also implies that studying political attention alone is not sufficient, since even politicians who are rhetorically responsive may not be able to then deliver actual policy. Finally, our results indicate that often interest groups may not be well placed to strengthen the

responsiveness of policy to public opinion. The case studies suggest instead that other considerations may take primacy over public preferences when it comes to the actual introduction of policies.

Our findings are even more significant given our initial expectation that Sweden would be a likely case for experiencing a high degree of responsiveness due to its strong reputation of political accountability and well-established system of interest representation. In addition, it is remarkable that we find no impact of public opinion on policy change on issues on which the public has been polled for its policy preferences. The continuous polling implies that the public has been assumed to have meaningful and well-formed preferences with regard to the policy options on these issues. Moreover, polls may be more likely to be conducted on salient issues where there is greater pressure on the policy-makers to be responsive. Still, when public preferences supported change in our cases, change did not occur[23].

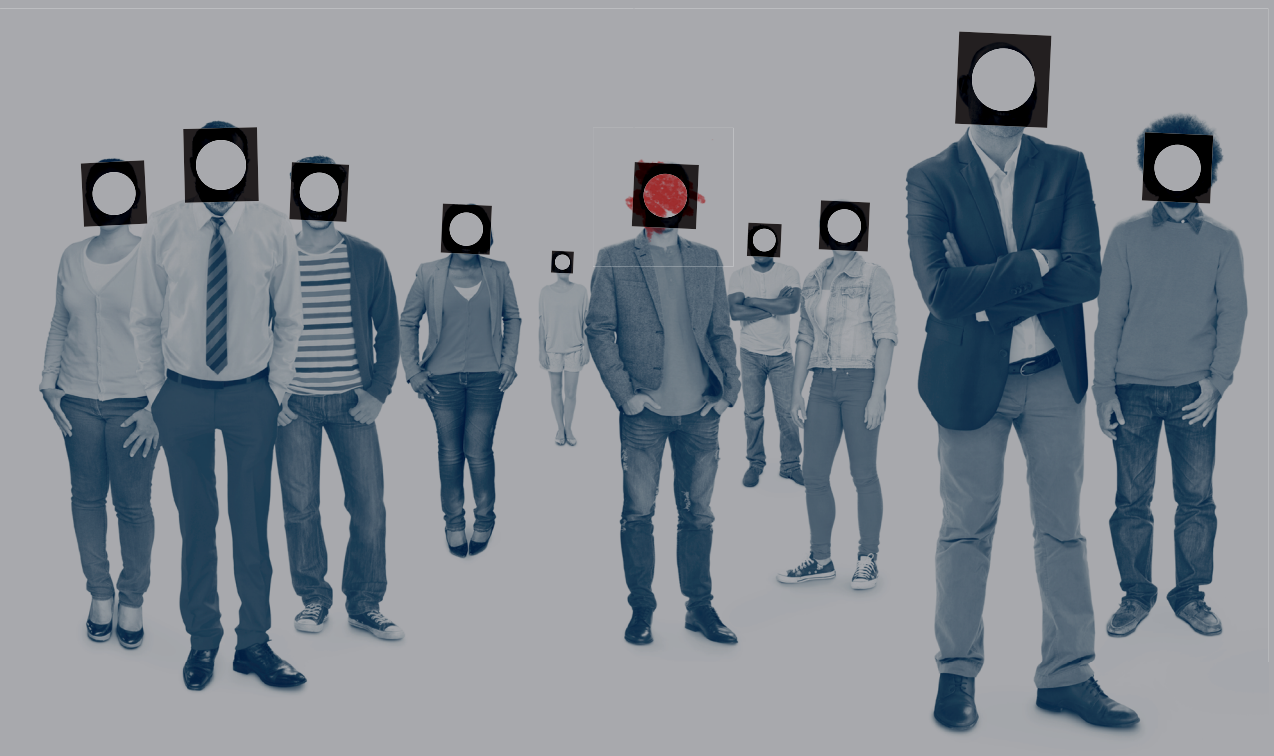
There is scope for future research to investigate these relationships further by expanding our approach to analysing a larger number of policies and a broader range of countries. The sample of policy issues we study implies certain limitations about the generalizability of our inferences. All four issues can be considered regulatory ones. It is possible that policy making on distributive and redistributive issues generates a different dynamic and is embedded in different institutional settings so that public opinion and/or interest groups play systematically different roles on such issues. Importantly, labour unions and employers' organizations have direct access to the negotiation table when it comes to issues related to employment conditions, labour market policy or pensions. Still, corporatism in Sweden has been on the decline (Lindvall and Sebring, 2005) and one of our issues - the introduction of the six-hour workday - has both regulatory and distributive aspects, so the relevance of our findings beyond the universe of regulatory policy issues should not be dismissed entirely.

It will also be possible in future research to expand our study beyond that of advocacy claims and statements in the media. Focusing on media advocacy means that we can map group involvement in a replicable way over a long time period without being dependent on the memory of experts or the use of formal ways of consultation on the issues. However, (print) media is but one strategy used by interest groups, and it remains possible that they have an impact through other, more covert channels. Our findings should therefore be scrutinized in future work comparing multiple channels of lobbying.

We also believe there are benefits to a continued use of a multi-method approach to explore the complex relationship between these different actors and policy. The

23 For interest groups, it is less clear whether salience weakens or strengthens their impact, which is likely to depend on whether their position enjoys public support (Rasmussen et al. 2017). On the one hand, interest groups may have a greater say over policies that the public cares less about, yet on issues where groups and the public are united increasing the public visibility of an issue may be positive for them.

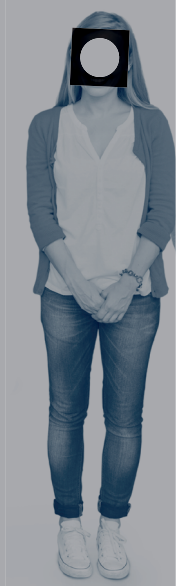
combination of methods we employed in the analysis allowed us to look beyond the aggregate patterns that the statistical analyses provided and interpret the results. We showed how our aggregate findings can be interpreted only in light of the specific policy issue context and in light of issue-specific information about the evolution of the policies. With this, our approach tries to bridge the quantitative literatures on policy responsiveness and interest group influence and the case-study scholarship on policy evolution. As we demonstrated, both the quantitative and case specific parts of our study had a lot to benefit from each other.



4

Party Collaboration as a Route to Advocacy Success? The Decision of Whom to Lobby

This chapter is co-authored with Anne Rasmussen.



ABSTRACT

Do policy advocates benefit from working together with (certain types of) political parties? Recent years have witnessed an expansion of studies mapping the ties between political parties and advocates but we know little about how these ties shape democratic decision-making. To address this lacuna, we analyze 50 specific policy issues across five countries relying on a survey of 478 advocates. We do not find higher levels of preference attainment for advocates who work with political parties. Despite frequent discussion whether groups should target friends or foes, there is also no strong evidence that preference attainment is higher for advocates working with either allied parties on an issue or powerful parties in the legislature. Instead, the two reinforce each other: advocates are more likely to attain their preferences when they emphasize the importance of working with powerful parties on the same side of an issue. Our study has important implications for not only the literature on party-interest group ties, but also the extensive interest group literature discussing whom to lobby.

Acknowledgements

The chapter benefitted from comments from Linda Flöthe and Dimiter Toshkov, as well as feedback from colleagues at the Institute of Public Administration at Leiden University. The chapter also received helpful responses to presentations at the ECPR General Conference 2018 in Hamburg, the 2018 Midwest Political Science Association's Annual Conference in Chicago 2018, as well as from a presentation at the University of Texas in Austin in March 2018. The authors also acknowledge the help of a great number of student assistants in conducting among other things the coding of newspapers and survey follow-up.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Collaboration between organized interests and political parties is at the heart of representative democracy. Both types of actors help to ensure that the demands of different types of citizens and stakeholders are aggregated and translated into policy. However, rather than acting as alternative intermediaries (Schattschneider, 1960), these two types of political organizations are often complementary. Parties act as gatekeepers for organized interests to affect public policy, while organized interests offer resources to decision-makers that help them adopt complex policy decisions and cater to their voters (Allern & Bale, 2012, Witko, 2009). Policy is therefore often made in collaboration between organized interests and political parties, who benefit from mutual cooperation.

Despite strong interdependences between organized interests and parties, the study of these two types of political organizations was for a long period largely conducted in separate communities. However, recent research has demonstrated a renewed interest in studying collaboration between organized interests and parties from both party politics (e.g. Allern, 2010, Poguntke, 2002) and interest group scholars (e.g. DeBruycker, 2016; Marshall, 2015; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017). These studies have examined the character of party-interest groups links as well as how these links vary across different types of parties, organized interests and political systems. The study of organized interests and political parties has also broadened from looking at traditional forms of institutionalized linkage between the two to examining the more informal, ad hoc types of contacts that dominate group-party interactions in the 21st century (Rasmussen & Lindeboom, 2013).

Yet, even if it is widely believed that collaboration between parties and organized interests is not merely symbolic but shapes democratic governance (e.g. Allern & Bale, 2012; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017; Thomas, 2001), we have limited systematic knowledge of the impact of such collaboration. Rather than being the object of analysis, the relevance and importance of interest group-party contacts are often taken for granted and used as a motivation why we should study these relations in the first place. As a result, we cannot say whether and how these contacts actually affect political decision-making. Importantly, we know little about whether they matter for the preference attainment of policy advocates on specific policy issues.

This may seem surprising since the literature on organized interests makes clear that lobbying success is strongly affected by support from other players, such as the rest of the group community (Mahoney, 2007, Dür & Marshall, 2015, Furlong, 1997) or public opinion (Rasmussen, Mäder, et al., 2018). Yet, contact with some of the key players in decision-making processes, i.e. the political parties themselves, is not considered in the models. Moreover, while a voluminous interest group literature is devoted to discussing which types of legislators organized interests should benefit from lobbying, the overwhelming majority of this research focuses on contact with individual legislators as

opposed to parties (e.g. Baumgartner & Leech, 1996; Hojnacki & Kimball, 1998; Wonka, 2017). The few studies that consider contact between political parties and organized interests are exclusively interested in explaining the shape and intensity of group contacts with the different types of parties rather than the consequences of these interactions (e.g. DeBruycker, 2016; Marshall, 2015; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017). This means that while recent research has expanded our knowledge of whether groups interact with allied or powerful parties, we know little about how these efforts ultimately affect their likelihood of obtaining their desired policies. Finally, while there has been a growth in research on the relationship between organized interests and political parties, only a limited share of this research is conducted at the level of specific policy issues despite the fact that there may be substantial variation in group-party connections across different issues (for exceptions, see Beyers, De Bruycker, & Baller, 2015; DeBruycker, 2016). The aim of this chapter is therefore to analyse whether working with political parties helps policy advocates attain their preferred outputs on specific policy issues and to consider differences in the gains derived from working with allied and powerful parties.

As a result, we theorize about not only why organized interests should benefit from political parties in their lobbying efforts but also how the potential gains of collaboration with parties may depend on the type of party. Specifically, we formulate expectations that these gains are larger for organized interests whose work on an issue involves friendly parties and/or more powerful parties. Moreover, we expect these two factors to reinforce each other so that the positive effect for groups of building up a working relationship to parties they agree with is stronger, the more powerful these parties are.

We test our predictions on a sample of 50 policy issues across five Western European countries, which have different systems of interest representation. We rely on a new dataset including a cross-national survey of 478 advocates that were active on these issues and asked how important different political parties were for the advocates' work on the issues. The survey is supplemented with data on public opinion about our issues, party characteristics, detailed coding of policy outputs and interviews with civil servants in all five countries.

Our cross-national study shows that groups do not benefit from interacting with all types of parties. We find no main difference in levels of preference attainment between advocates who emphasize the importance of parties for their work on an issue compared to those who do not. This main finding remains similar when comparing advocates who had direct contacts with members of parliament or the cabinet to those that did not report such contacts. Similarly, there is no clear relationship between working with powerful *or* allied parties and lobbying success. Instead, the two types of parties may have an effect in combination: advocates working with both types of parties are more likely to attain their preferences than those that do not, or work only with one or the other. Importantly, this result holds even when we control for the share of political parties

(both in total and amongst government parties) that already supports the advocate's position. As such, the chapter offers a first assessment of whether and how political parties matter for the preference attainment of policy advocates.

4.2 GROUP-PARTY LINKAGE IN EXISTING RESEARCH

Many of the seminal studies in the discipline of political science took a broad perspective on the political system paying attention to the role of both political parties and organized interests (e.g. Schattschneider, 1960; Truman, 1951). Later, the study of parties and interest groups became more "polarized" with scholars splitting into two different communities (Allern, 2010, Allern & Bale, 2012, Heaney, 2010, Rasmussen & Lindeboom, 2013, Witko, 2009). Recent years have witnessed something of a revival in studies that take an interest in the links between policy advocates and parties. For a while, most of this work discussed these links with parties as the starting point (Allern, 2010, Katz & Mair, 1995, Poguntke 2000, 2006), not least because many interest group scholars considered them less relevant in the era of corporatism (Allern & Bale, 2012). However, the interest group literature on the interaction between parties and organized interests has recently grown (e.g. Beyers et al., 2015; DeBruycker, 2016; Marshall, 2015; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017; Rasmussen & Lindeboom, 2013; Wonka, 2017). Many studies have moved beyond a focus on formal, institutionalized links to considering a broader range of actors and types of contacts (e.g. Allern, 2010; Marshall, 2015; Rasmussen & Lindeboom, 2013).

Yet, most studies focus on links between organized interests and parties without considering specific policy issues (e.g. Marshall, 2015; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017). As a result, they make general assumptions about which parties and interest group types should be ideologically aligned (trade unions and social-democratic parties) rather than consider that the congruence of the positions of these actors may vary between policies. On some issues these political organizations may not follow what would be expected from their ideological predispositions and side with their traditional allies. Recent years have witnessed important exceptions to this pattern with issue specific studies examining both which parties and groups are aligned (Beyers et al., 2015) and the frequency of contacts between them (DeBruycker, 2016). Yet, similar to the remaining literature these studies pay little attention to the outcomes of interest group-party interactions.

A comparative study of Western democracies by Thomas acknowledges this challenge emphasizing how "the importance of the party-group connection has long been taken for granted, falling largely into the realm of intuitive axioms" (Thomas, 2001: 1). While a study of the systematic impact of relations between parties and organized interests on democracy was also beyond the scope of their study, Thomas and coauthors make considerable progress by explicitly discussing the impact of party-group connec-

tions in their country chapters. One of the conclusions that emerges from their study is that organized interests with close and cooperative relations to parties are generally better able at securing benefits and resources in their political systems. Similarly, a study by McMenamin and Schoenman (2007) of firms' perceived lobbying success of Polish executives finds that big firms without relations to powerful politicians estimated their own success to be weaker than those with such relations, even if these firms are not significantly less likely to lobby than firms with party connections.

Yet, we do not know whether party-group relations are related to the preference attainment of a broad range of different organized interests on specific policy issues, nor whether there is variation in lobbying success of organized interests depending on the type of political party. Looking at specific issues allows us to take into account that collaboration patterns between parties and groups vary between policy issues (DeBruycker, 2016). It also allows adding to existing research on the lobbying success of organized interests. This literature has emphasized how preference attainment is not only a consequence of group and issue characteristics but also affected by support for advocacy positions by other actors (e.g. Dür, 2015, Furlong, 1997, Mahoney, 2007, Rasmussen et al., 2018). Yet, it has not systematically considered the role of group-party contacts.

4.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE BENEFITS FOR ORGANIZED INTERESTS OF WORKING WITH POLITICAL PARTIES

Parties and organized interests can be seen as intermediary organizations that in a representative democracy help aggregate and transmit the views of their constituencies into policy (Schattschneider, 1948, 1960). At the same time, they also differ in important respects. First, while interest organizations are external to the political system, parties run for public office. Second, organized interests typically represent a more narrow substantive focus than political parties, which need to relate to the broader political agenda to gain and maintain office (Allern & Bale, 2012; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017). We use a behavioral and broad definition of advocates in this chapter including all organized non-state actors with an interest in influencing policy (Baroni et al., 2014). In addition to traditional membership based interest groups, we also include experts and individual firms, all of whom we refer to as (policy) advocates or organized interests.

We assume that policy advocates are interested in affecting the content of policy-making to satisfy their stakeholders and ensure their long-term survival. To determine lobbying success, we rely on the strategy of preference attainment, which has been frequently used in recent studies (e.g. Dür et al., 2015). This approach aims to establish

the preferences of advocates or other actors on specific issues and then compares these to the final policy outputs. To assess whether advocates attained their preferences we compare the rates at which policy changed (or did not change) in line with the preferences of different sets of advocates. Even if our analysis includes a series of controls we do not assume a causal link between the actions of specific advocates and final policy. As a result, our analyses refer to "preference attainment" rather than "influence" (e.g. Mahoney, 2007). De Bruycker (2016) explains how even if interactions between groups and parties can be initiated by parties, organized interests often make the first move. Advocates have strong incentives to contact parties since they cannot introduce legislation, suggest amendments to legislative proposals or vote on such proposals. Through contacts with parties they therefore try to affect both a) which items (do not) appear on the political agenda and b) the content and fate of these items (Witko, 2009). They can do so in numerous ways e.g. by putting forward draft legislation and amendments or by presenting statistics and studies (Hojnacki & Kimball, 1998).

Political parties are expected to be interested in helping organized interests fulfill their policy goals since they provide them with valuable resources. Advocates can for example offer technical expertise, information about voter preferences and financial contributions (Allern & Bale, 2012) or help parties increase the public legitimacy of their policy decisions (Witko, 2009). Hence, we understand their decision to engage with political parties from an exchange perspective where advocates and parties exchange useful resources with one another (Allern & Bale, 2012, Rasmussen & Lindeboom, 2013, Warner, 2000, Witko, 2009). This means that rather than seeing the relationship between organized interests and political parties as a zero-sum game, we expect the two to engage in a plus-sum game where they mutually benefit from interacting (Allern & Bale, 2012).

According to Heaney, parties and organized interests act as "brokers" within one another's network and in the policy process. He mentions how "parties may help to put some interest groups into key positions of influence or exclude others from decision making" (2010: 56). Yet, policy impact is not the only good that parties offer to policy advocates. The parties themselves can also be seen as information providers. Hence, through party contacts, advocates can get valuable access to information about party preferences and future political agendas, which may help them develop more effective lobbying strategies (Witko, 2009). Moreover, Klüver (2018) demonstrates that the attention that German political parties pay to policy issues is in part determined by interest group mobilization on the issue: the more organized interests mobilize on an issue, the more political parties pay attention to it. This suggests that organized interests can indeed get their issues on the agendas of parties – a first step towards influencing policy outputs. In sum, because parties enjoy control over the policy agenda and can provide policy advocates with important information about policy processes, we would expect

advocates who work with political parties to experience a higher degree of lobbying success:

> *Hypothesis 1: The likelihood of congruence between the position of an advocate and the policy outcome on an issue increases when advocates work with political parties.*

While we might expect organized interests to benefit from working with any political party, advocates should get more out of certain types of parties. A substantial share of the literature on lobbying by organized interests has focused on the decision of which legislators (e.g. Austen-Smith, 1994, Crombez, 2002, Gullberg, 2008, Hojnacki & Kimball, 1998), or parties to lobby (DeBruycker, 2016; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017). While these studies are not about lobbying success as such, the arguments stating 'who to lobby' are ultimately motivated by an expectation of which types of legislators/parties would help groups obtain the biggest impact on policy.

According to one logic, advocates should be more likely to attain their preferences if they work with parties that are powerful and control decision-making within the legislature. In the US literature it has been suggested that it should be particularly beneficial for policy advocates to lobby legislators who hold powerful positions in Congress since they can decide on the future agenda and affect the decisions of their colleagues (e.g. Hojnacki & Kimball, 1998, Kingdon, 1989, but see Wonka, 2017). Although more unitary political parties, as opposed to individual legislators, are the focus of this chapter, this logic should also apply to parties, where certain types of parties may be more decisive for both whether legislation gets introduced and whether it gets adopted.

There are several potential sources of party power in (Western European) political systems. Firstly, the government status of parties should influence their impact of on policy. For one, it is the responsibility of the government to present an overall plan for their period in government and a corresponding budget proposal for each legislative term (Peter Bjerre Mortensen et al., 2011). Hence, they often act as gate-keepers determining which items appear on the legislative agenda. Empirically, too government parties are much more likely to fulfill their election pledges (Thomson et al., 2017)[24] than parties in opposition – underlining their influence over political decision-making. Due to this central role played by government parties at all stages of the policy process, advocates should therefore benefit especially from working with this set of parties.

A second potential source of party power is the share of parliamentary seats a party controls. Of course, this is related to government status in the sense that larger parties

24 We do not distinguish between majority and minority governments, as both can fulfill their pledges at comparable rates (Thomson et al., 2017) and are legislatively equally effective (Cheibub, Przeworski, & Saiegh, 2004).

are also more likely to enter government. Still, party size has traditionally been seen as linked to the political relevance of parties (Sartori, 1976). Larger parties often also have more resources at their disposal, at least in part because in many parliaments funds are allocated in proportion to party size (Brauninger & Debus, 2009), which should help them in their ability to introduce and develop legislative proposals.

Empirically, these characteristics often correlate strongly, which is why we follow the approach of previous studies (Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017) and combine party size and government status to identify more powerful political parties. Such an index has the added benefit of indirectly capturing other sources of party power. For example, larger government parties are statistically speaking also more likely to provide the prime minister (giving additional control over the policy agenda (Glasgow & Golder, 2011) and more likely to include the median legislator. We thus expect that working with powerful political parties should help advocates attain their preferences.

Hypothesis 2: The likelihood of congruence between the position of an advocate and the policy outcome on an issue increases when advocates work with powerful parties.

While working with powerful parties might be beneficial for groups, an alternative logic would argue that organized interests would benefit if they worked with parties which share their policy views. In the US literature discussing which individual legislators organized interests lobby, this is the perspective that has found most support (see Baumgartner & Leech, 1996; Hojnacki & Kimball, 1998). As an example, Hall and Deardorff (2006) describe lobbying as a process where lobbyists provide information to like-minded legislators as a "legislative subsidy" in return for policy influence. Parties with similar positions to the advocate's might ultimately be the ones most likely to grant access and help them attain their preferences. Hence, even if advocates can choose on a case by case basis who to work with "party-group relations are not one-shot contacts and 'collaboration' often has a longer time horizon than ad hoc lobbying contacts" (Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017: 98). Importantly, the lobbying process also involves creating and maintaining "relationships of trust" (Baumgartner & Leech, 1996: 531-32).

It can be expected that when it comes to persuading someone to table and introduce new legislation and keeping issues of the agenda, reliance on traditional likeminded allies is important (Hojnacki & Kimball, 1998). Hence to affect these processes requires more than persuading a certain party to change its vote. Relying on allies may have the spin-off effect that groups can also rely on these parties as *agents* that negotiate and bargain on their behalf (Hojnacki & Kimball, 1998; Wonka, 2017). Working with allied parties can therefore enable them to exert an impact on the efforts of a broader set of parties than the ones directly targeted by the groups. Even if the policy advocates have the resources to address different political parties, it may still be beneficial for them to

have other MPs act on their behalf and contact their fellow members of parliament. Hence, allied parties can often present their views in a more legitimate fashion than the advocates themselves who may be regarded as representing particularistic interests only. In sum, our third hypothesis therefore argues that working with likeminded political parties can be expected to result in substantial benefits for groups.

Hypothesis 3: The likelihood of congruence between the position of an advocate and the policy outcome on an issue increases when advocates work with parties with which they agree.

We expect that there should be independent benefits of working with both powerful and allied parties, but these effects may also re-inforce each other. Imagine a scenario where an advocate has convinced a party on its side of the issue to push for its introduction. This ally will be much more effective if it is not a small opposition party, but is instead a large government party enjoying more direct control over the policy agenda. The reverse is also likely. Working together with a government party will be more effective if the party is already positively predisposed towards the advocate and/or its policy position. In such a scenario, the advocate 'only' has to convince the party to actively push for the policy, rather than achieve a much more difficult position shift from the party in question. Summarizing, we expect the independent effects of working with a powerful or a party on the same side of an issue to re-inforce one another, leading to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: The positive impact of working with allied parties on the likelihood of preference attainment is stronger, the more powerful these parties are.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Case selection and sampling

We inc lude five countries in this study: Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK. Although we do not expect large cross-national differences, the countries vary on a number of variables to ensure that our results are likely to travel beyond their immediate context. The first is whether interest representation is organized in a pluralist (the UK) or corporatist (the other countries) fashion (Siaroff, 1999), as this may influence whether advocates rely on political parties as the main targets of their lobbying activity (Rasmussen & Lindeboom, 2013). Our study also contains countries with patterns of wholesale government alternation where new governments tend to be comprised of different parties than the incumbents (UK, DK, SE), a system where this replacement

is usually partial (NL) and one where both scenarios occur (DE). This matters, because organized interests may approach parties differently based on the pattern of government alternation (Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017).

As mentioned, we focus on specific policy issues. Whereas some organized interests might have an interest in pushing policy in a more left- or right-wing direction, most of their activities are directed at influencing specific policies (Berkhout et al., 2017). Unlike recent studies adopting an issue-level approach (Beyers et al., 2015, DeBruycker, 2016), we do not start from issues on the legislative agenda, but focus on 50 policy issues on which public opinion data was available (Appendix 4.1 contains a list of all issues and a description of the selection process), since the amount of public support for an advocate's policy position may affect its lobbying success (Rasmussen, Mäder, et al., 2018). Further criteria were that the policy issue should include a change to the status quo to allow us to track policy (change), that it fell under the national government's jurisdiction[25] (for a similar approach, see Gilens, 2012). This allows us to include issues at different stages of the policy process, rather than only those that have on the legislative agenda. It means that we can also study the preferences and activities of advocates who tried to get their issues on the agenda, or keep them off it (Berkhout et al., 2017). We also ensure variation in terms of the type of policy issue (Lowi, 1964), as redistributive issues may generate more contestation and debate than regulatory and distributive issues. There are some concerns that issues included in polls are more salient than the average issue (Burstein, 2014). To address this, we have selected policy issues that vary in terms of the amount of media attention they attracted and our analyses control for the media salience of a policy.

Our final unit of observation is an advocate on a policy issue. To identify advocates active on our issues, we tracked three sources over a four-year period after the poll, or until policy change occurred following the approach of Gilens (2012). Firstly, student assistants hand-coded all newspaper articles about the issue in two major newspapers in each country to record statements about the issue[26]. This coding was complemented with a face-to-face interview with a civil servant who worked on the issue (response rate of 82%). In a third step, we identified advocates that used formal consultation tools available in their countries (such as consultations on legislative proposals, or hearings in parliament). Through December 2016 and the first months of 2017, an online survey was sent to the 1,410 advocates that were identified as active on our issues. As mentioned, we

25 The data were collected for the GovLis project (www.govlis.eu).

26 We selected one left-leaning and right-leaning broadsheet newspaper per country to avoid bias in the coverage certain types of organized interests receive. The newspapers were *Politiken* and *Jyllandposten* in Denmark, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in Germany, *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph* in the UK, *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* in Sweden, and *de Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad* in the Netherlands.

included not just traditional membership associations, but focused on a much broader set of advocates including experts and businesses. A total of 410 advocates responded to the questions regarding political parties (29%, excluding "don't knows"), with 478 finishing the survey. Appendix 4.2 shows a non-response analysis of the likelihood of responding to the survey. The model shows that an advocate's likelihood of responding was not dependent on whether policy change occurred on the issue, nor on its media salience or policy type. However, firms and business groups were significantly less likely to respond to our survey than others, which means that we are more confident generalizing our results to non-business advocates. Similar to what we have seen in other interest group surveys, responses vary between countries (Binderkrantz & Rasmussen, 2015) with Dutch, Danish and to a lesser extent Swedish advocates significantly more likely to respond to the survey than invitees from Germany and the UK. Although this may limit generalizability, the fact that the UK and German respondent samples are similar to those in the other countries means that results are likely to apply to these countries, too. In the survey, we included all parties that were represented in parliament during the observation period, with at least 1% of the total vote share during the observation period[27].

Measuring preference attainment

As a first step, we measured whether the position of an advocate is congruent with the policy outcome on an issue. The positions of advocates were coded as in favor, neutral, or against changing the status quo on the policy issue. We initially relied on coding the positions from written sources (like the newspapers and consultations mentioned above). Where we identified the advocate but not their position or a neutral position, we complemented these with self-reported positions from the survey. To determine whether policy changed we used minutes of parliamentary meetings, legislative texts, and media sources and corroborated our coding during the interviews with civil servants. Our final dependent variable measuring preference attainment takes on a value of 1 if the final policy output was in the advocate's preferred direction, and 0 if it was not.

4.4 MEASURING THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Research on the collaboration between organized interests and political parties has relied on both attitudinal and behavioral measures (see also Allern & Bale, 2012; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017). Behavioral measures focus on interactions between organized

27 With the exception of the SNP and DUP in the UK and the Socialistisk Folkeparti in Denmark, which were not included in the interviews with civil servants.

interests and parties (e.g. Allern, 2010), whereas attitudinal ones typically ask organized interests to rate the importance and degree of cooperation with parties (e.g. Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017). Without discarding the value of behavioral measures, this chapter relies on an attitudinal approach, because we believe it best fits our research question. For one, it is complicated to retrospectively map all interactions between advocates and parties – especially on our specific policy issues. Although some formal communication might still be retrievable, many informal channels through which advocates may have worked with parties would be difficult to systematically assess. Secondly, the channels through which advocates sought to contact parties may vary across countries, further complicating the construction of a valid behavioral measure. The difficulty of pre-defining a set of possible contact channels is demonstrated by Rasmussen and Lindeboom (2013) who found that even when using an extensive list of possible contacts and parties based on previous studies, the "other" category was still selected most often. Moreover, Otjes and Rasmussen (2017) show that their measure, which asks about intensity of cooperation between an interest group and a party correlates very highly with measures enquiring about specific points of contact.

We therefore asked advocates to indicate how important each political party in their country was to their "work on the issue". We expect most advocates who say a party was important to their efforts to have at least (tried to) engage(d) with parties they deemed (very) important. This formulation has the dual advantage of not probing any specific activities, whilst at the same time still requiring that the party was important to a respondent's advocacy *work* on the issue.

However, there is a risk that parties that influenced policy-making on the issues are rated as "important" by advocates, independent of whether the party was contacted. We have taken two steps to address this concern. Firstly, all our analyses include a control variable that measures the share of political parties that was on the same side of the issue as the advocate. This should help ensure that the simple fact that many parties may have independently pushed for a policy does not affect the main effects[28]. Secondly and importantly, we also asked whether *direct contact* with both members of parliament and members of the government on the issue were important to the advocate. These measures correlate significantly and strongly with our measure; 85% of advocates who indicated at least one party was (not) important or very important to their work on the issue, also indicated that *direct* contact with members of parliament was (not) important or very important, and a Kruskall-Wallis equality of populations rank test of ordinal versions of the measures was significant ($p < 0.001$). Correlations are slightly less strong but

28 We also estimated our models using a measure that includes the share of parliamentary seats controlled by parties on the same side of an issue as the advocate, a measure for whether at least one and the number of government parties sharing the advocate's position (models not shown). All results remain substantively unchanged.

still significant for our question about direct contact with members of the cabinet. The full question formulation and alternative analyses are presented in Appendix 4.6

To measure whether advocates worked with political parties (H1), we construct a binary variable for all respondents who answered that at least one party was important or very important for their work on the issue (1) and those that did not (0).

For the hypotheses related to the power of the political party (H2) we create an index to measure the strength of how powerful the average party that advocates said was important to their work was. It is composed of two measures: the first related to the size of the average important party, the second to whether the average important party was in government[29].

We operationalized the size of the party as the average share of seats controlled by the parties that were deemed important or very important by the advocate. Since our observation period varies per issue and sometimes spans an election, the size of a party is measured as the average proportion of seats in the national parliament that was held by the party during the observation period, weighted by the number of days the party held those seats. So a political party that held 20% of all seats during half the observation period and 30% during the second half, is scored as having held 25% of all seats on the issue. The final advocate-level variable is then the average size of the average party that was deemed (very) important. To illustrate this, imagine advocate A, who deemed parties A and B important. Party A held on average 20% of all seats in parliament during the observation period, and party B held on average 10% of seats in the observation period. Advocate A is then scored as 15% on this variable, since this is the average share of seats held by the parties it deemed important. To measure working with government parties, we look at the share of all important parties that were in government at least 30% of the observation period. The cut-off point is set to ensure that we capture working with parties that spent a reasonable amount of time in government to make it feasible that the party could have pushed for a policy change. Both measures run from 0-1 (and are correlated at .78), which is why we summed them and divided by two to create our index. It runs from 0 (no party was important) to 1 (the average "important party" controls all seats in parliament and is in government). In our data, the variable runs from 0 to .78.

To capture whether advocates worked with parties they agreed with (H3) we first measured the positions of political parties through expert judgements. In interviews we asked civil servants to assess the positions of parties (against, neutral or in favor) on the issue. These expert assessments correspond well with our impressions from the

29 The centrality of a party in the political system is another potential source of party power. However, it is not immediately clear which party controls the median legislator on a specific policy issue, especially given that our observation period sometimes spans elections.

extensive coding of newspapers and other documents, giving them a high face-validity. Relying on interviews does mean that we did not obtain positions for some parties on some issues, leading to a lower number of parties included in the calculation of this variable. However, it has the advantage that we measure these positions relying on experts with considerable public and hard to access private information. Moreover, the amount of missing data would have been higher had we relied on party manifestos, which do not mention the vast majority of the issues in our sample. Expert interviews for the mapping of policy positions have successfully been used in studies of EU policy negotiations where experts have located actors' policy positions spatially (Thomson, 2006, Dür & Marshall, 2015). The final variable "Worked with parties on the same side" was then operationalized as the share of parties the advocate agreed with, out of the total number of political parties that the advocate found important for their work on the issue, meaning that the variable measures whether the advocate focused more (or less) on parties they agreed with.

Finally, we test whether the effect of working with parties with which advocates agree is stronger when these parties are powerful (H4) by interacting our measure of "Worked with parties on the same side" with the index of party power. Appendix 4.3 provides a full overview of our variables.

Control variables

Our analysis contains a number of controls. As mentioned the first control variable is the share of political parties in the system that agreed with the advocate, regardless of whether the advocate worked with them. The second control is the media saliency of an issue, which is measured as the average number of articles about the issue in the two coded newspapers per day during the observation period. We also include the type of advocate since business actors may be more likely to attain their preferences (but see Dür et al., 2015; Yackee & Yackee, 2006). Based on an organization's website, we distinguish the following actor types: a) trade unions and occupational associations, b) expert and think tank organizations and institutional associations, c) business associations, d) firms, e) religious, identity and hobby groups and f) public interest groups. An overview of the advocate coding is provided in Appendix 4.4.

Moreover, we control for resources, which have been linked to the preference attainment of advocates, although the evidence is mixed (e.g. Baumgartner et al., 2009). We use two survey questions to capture different types of resources. The first probes the extent to which an advocate agreed that they spent "a large amount of economic resources" on the issue to capture whether their advocacy was backed by financial resources. The second question asks whether the advocate agreed that they had "a large amount of media attention" for their work on the issue, to measure whether the advocate perceived their outside lobbing as successful. For the final binary variable those

who said they neither disagreed nor agreed, agreed or agreed strongly were coded as possessing these resources on the issue.

We also include the share of other advocates on the same side of an issue as the advocate, which should be positively related to the likelihood that the advocate gets its way (e.g. Mahoney, 2007). In addition, we control for whether advocates who have strong public support are more likely to attain their preferences (Rasmussen, Mäder, et al., 2018). The variable indicates the share of the public (as indicated in the opinion poll) that was on the same side of an issue as the advocate.

Finally, studies on policy change and organized interests show that, at least in the US, there is a considerable 'status quo bias' meaning that actors who want to change the status quo are at a disadvantage (Mahoney, 2007; Rasmussen, Mäder, et al., 2018) (Baumgartner et al., 2009; Gilens, 2012). We thus include a measure indicating whether the advocate wants to change the status quo.

4.5 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of a series of logistic multilevel models predicting whether an advocate attained its preference, with random-intercepts for policy issues to account for the nesting of our advocates in policy issues (Steenbergen & Jones, 2002). Models 1 through 3 each investigate the effects of hypotheses 1 through 3 separately. Models 4 and 5 then include interaction effects to test our fourth hypothesis arguing that there are additional benefits of working with parties on the same side as an advocate when they are also powerful.

Our results tell a somewhat different story than expected based on existing research arguing that party-group connections should increase the ability of organized interests to secure benefits and resources in their political systems (Thomas, 2001) and increase the perceived degree of lobbying success (McMenamin & Schoenman, 2007). Hence, against the expectations formulated in hypothesis 1, we see that – at least on specific policy issues –working with political parties on an issue is generally not related to higher rates of preference attainment, as there is no significant relationship between working with any party and preference attainment in model 1.

We also find little evidence that working with powerful parties is directly related to preference attainment (H2) in model 2, even if the effect is close to significant ($p < 0.1$) when we introduce the control variables (model 2 in Appendix 4.5). When it comes to working with parties on the same side, the results are somewhat mixed. The relationship between working with friends and preference attainment (H3) is not significant in Model 3 ($p<0.1$), but does become significant when the control variables are added to the model (see model 3 in Appendix 4.5). While we assume the full model including controls

Table 4.1: Multilevel logistic regression models for the preference attainment of an advocate on an issue.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
H1: Worked with any party	-0.04				
	(0.32)				
H2: Party power		0.40		-1.26	-0.92
		(0.64)		(0.91)	(1.08)
H3: Worked with parties on same side			0.91+	-1.13	-1.14
			(0.55)	(1.18)	(1.43)
H4: Worked with parties on same side*party power				6.97*	9.15*
				(3.35)	(4.22)
Controls					
Parties on same side	1.45***	1.45***	1.27**	1.18**	1.04*
	(0.43)	(0.43)	(0.45)	(0.46)	(0.53)
Articles per day					1.25
					(0.98)
Economic resources					-0.42
					(0.35)
Perceived media attention					-0.74
					(0.55)
Other actors' support					3.26***
					(0.97)
Public support					2.25**
					(0.78)
Pro policy change					-0.76*
					(0.34)
Actor type (ref: business)					
Religious & identity groups					-0.40
					(1.11)
Public interest groups					0.88
					(0.76)
Trade unions & occupational groups					-0.63
					(0.68)
Firms					-0.60
					(0.79)
Experts, think tanks and institutional associations					-0.02
					(0.64)
Constant	-0.58	-0.75	-0.87	-0.78	-2.88*
	(0.60)	(0.60)	(0.58)	(0.62)	(1.15)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Issue random intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of advocates	264	264	264	264	264
Number of issues	34	34	34	34	34
AIC	357	357	354	353	320
BIC	386	385	383	389	395

Standard errors in parentheses. + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

is the correct specification, the relatively large number of variables and low number of observations at the issue-level does make us reluctant to draw too firm conclusions about the effect of working with friends. If anything, however, the data are somewhat more consistent with the pattern that working with friends is related to preference attainment on an issue than vice versa.

In models four and five we assess the expectation that the effect of working with parties on the same side of an issue is stronger the more powerful these parties are on average (H4). The significant interaction term in model 4 supports this expectation ($p<0.05$). Moreover, we demonstrate that the effect holds once we add our remaining control variables in model 5. Figure 1 shows that the marginal effect of working with parties on the same side increases the more powerful they are. We also see that the effect of working with a party on an advocate's side is only significant when the advocate works with parties scoring on above 0.27 on our power index, although this exact point does vary somewhat depending on the specification of the model. Appendix 4.8 shows the inverse relationship: the effect of working with powerful parties only becomes significant when on average 36% of those parties are also on the same side of the issue as the advocate, again keeping in mind that this cut-off point is somewhat sensitive to different model specifications. These results confirm the expectations that the effect of working with parties on the same side of the advocate becomes stronger once those parties are also powerful.

Regarding our control variables we find a strong and significant effect of the share of parties that share the advocate's position on the issue. Keeping all other variables at their mean and based on model 5, the predicted probability of an advocate attaining their preferences when no parties support its position is around 47% and increases to 66% when all parties are on the same side as the advocate.

In addition, the share of organized interests on the same side as an advocate increases its likelihood of preference attainment. Similarly, the stronger the public's support for the advocate's position, the higher the likelihood that the latter attains its preferences. We also find evidence for a status quo bias (Mahoney, 2007; Rasmussen, Mäder, et al., 2018): advocates who want to change the status quo are less likely to attain their preferences than those who want to maintain it. We find no evidence of an effect of media salience, nor any systematic differences between business groups and the other types of advocates. Similarly, we echo recent conclusions in the literature that the relationship between lobbying resources and success might be less straightforward than often expected (Baumgartner et al., 2009). None of our measures of self-reported resources are significantly related to an advocate's preference attainment. Finally, we do not find any significant cross-national differences.

Taken together, the results provide very limited evidence that working with political parties is effective per se. The same applies when it comes to simply working with

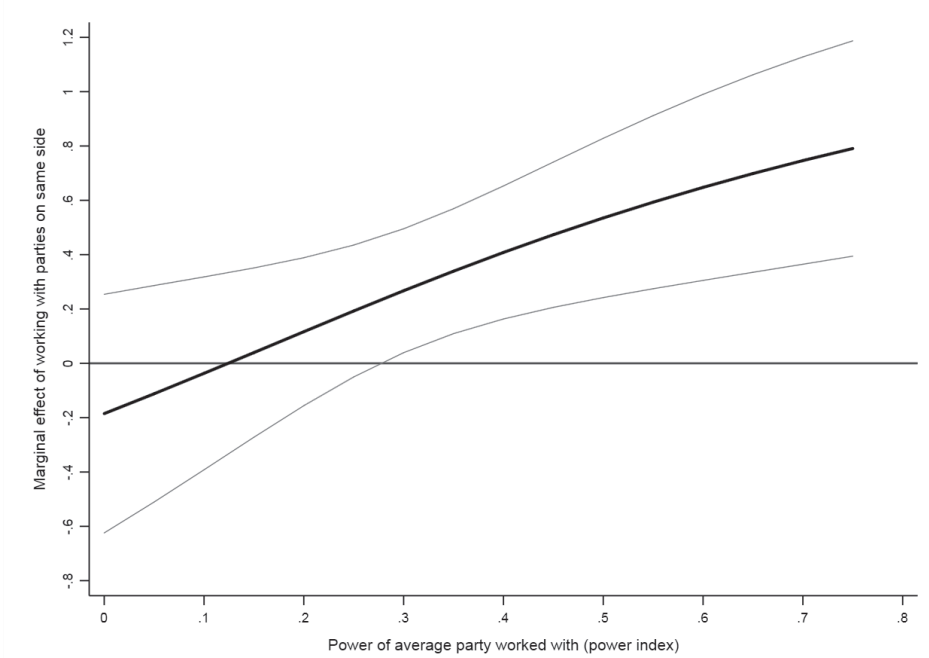


Figure 4.1: Marginal effect of working with parties on same side on preference attainment, by the power of the parties with 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 5.

powerful *or* friendly parties, where we find only weak evidence for the latter. Instead, our results suggest that the strategy is only related to preference attainment under certain conditions: when organized interests work with parties that are on average both powerful and on the advocate's side.

Robustness and model checks

We have run a number of robustness checks, which are shown in Appendices 6 and 7. Importantly, we considered more behavioral measures of working with political parties, relying on survey questions asking about the importance of *direct contact* with MPs and members of the cabinet. The models in Appendix 4.6 show that, in line with our findings regarding H1, there is also no difference in levels of preference attainment for advocates that directly contacted either MPs or the national government and their preference attainment.

To test the robustness of our interactions (H4), models 1 and 2 in Appendix 4.7 show that the results are robust to replacing the power index with each of its components. Model 1 interacts the party size component with the share of parties a group worked with that were on the same side of the advocate. Model 2 does the same for the share of parties a group worked with that were in government. Both interaction terms are

positive and significant, underlining that the findings are not driven by just one of these (correlated) aspects of party power. In addition, we reconstructed the index for party power counting parties as "in government" that were in government at least 20% of days of the observation period (instead of 30%) in model 3. Moreover, model 4 uses the *number of parties* a group worked with on the same side as the advocate rather than *the share of parties*. Both models produce results similar to those presented above.

To ensure that the interactions in our logistic models are accurately estimated (Ai & Norton, 2003), we also ran multilevel OLS regressions instead of logit models which does not change the main findings either, although p-values for our interaction effects do increase to just over 0.10 when we use clustered standard errors instead of random intercepts for issues (not shown). Our interaction effects also meet the assumption of linearity. To test this, we used the Interflex package by Hainmueller et al. (2018) and estimated models 7 and 8 as OLS regressions with robust standard errors for policy issues confirming that the interactions are indeed linear in this specification. Finally, some advocates indicated that no single party was important to their work on the issue. These advocates were scored a "0" on the power index and "worked with parties on their side" variables. To ensure that these observations do not affect the results in models 4 and 5, we re-ran the analysis with only the 150 advocates who said at least one party was important to their work on the issue and found similar results.

4.6 CONCLUSION

While interaction between organized interests and political parties is widely perceived as shaping democratic governance, the relevance of interest group-party linkage is often "taken for granted" in existing research (Thomas, 2001). We examined one important way in which interest group-party collaboration might matter by conducting the first systematic, cross-national study of how it affects the preference attainment of advocates on specific policy issues.

Our analysis finds little evidence to suggest a general relation between working with political parties and preference attainment. Even when replacing our survey measure about the "importance of a party for an advocate's work on the issue" with questions asking about direct contact with members of parliament or the cabinet, we still do not find higher levels of preference attainment for advocates using this strategy. There is also no strong evidence that groups benefit from working with either powerful or allied parties only, even if there is some indication that working with parties on the same side as the advocate may be related to preference attainment. The two do seem to work in combination, however: advocates stating that both powerful and allied parties are

important for their work on an issue are more likely to attain their preferences than advocates who state none or only one of them was important.

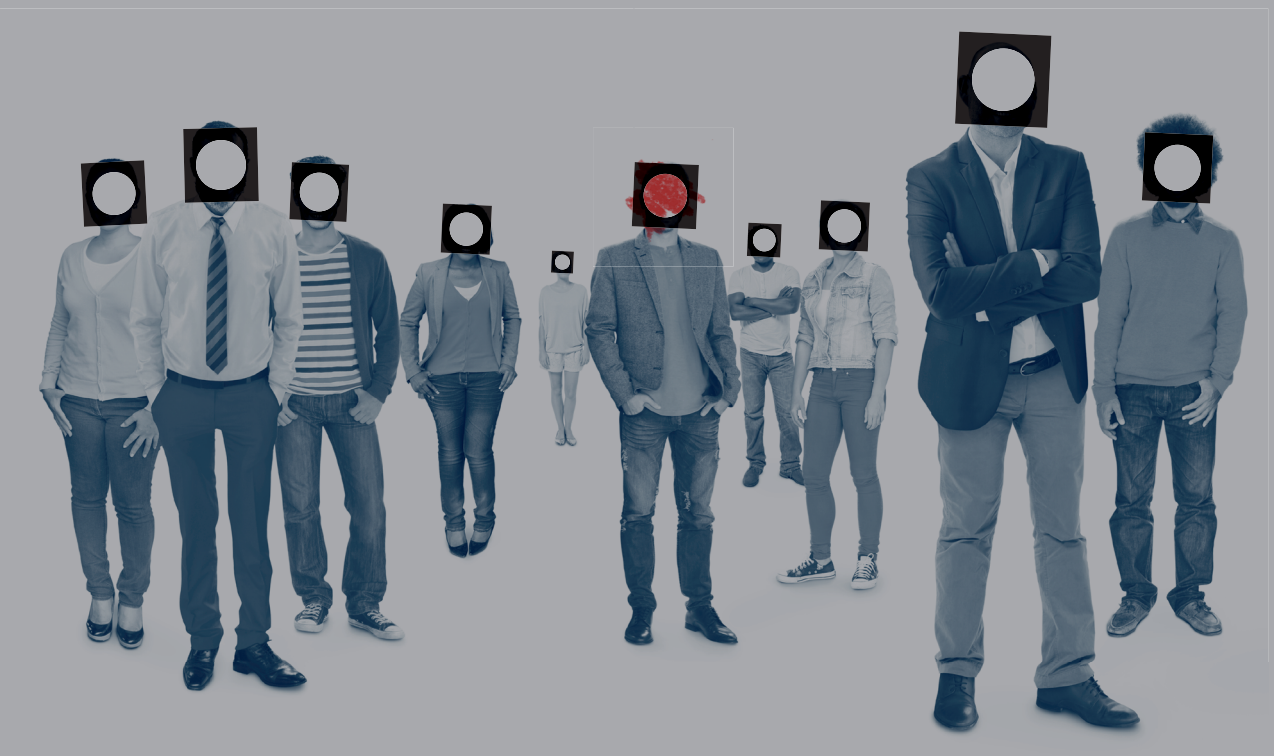
This chapter has important implications for not only the study of party-interest group links, but also the interest group literature discussing whom to lobby. It is particularly interesting that there is no general benefit of working together with powerful parties. Hence, findings that organized interests are more likely to collaborate with larger parties (DeBruycker, 2016; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017) would suggest that at least the advocates themselves *expect* to gain more from working with such parties. It is possible, however, that working with powerful players matters less in our sample of policy cases which includes issues at all stages of the policy cycle rather than just those that have made it on to the legislative agenda. Hence, it has been argued that lobbying powerful legislators should mainly be effective at the later stages of the decision-making process (Crombez, 2002), which is something future studies could consider.

The chapter also qualifies the view that advocates should lobby their friends (Baumgartner & Leech, 1996; Hojnacki & Kimball, 1998). We add that this strategy is more strongly related to preference attainment if the parties with which actors work are also powerful enough to affect policy. In this way, our study emphasizes an image of lobbying where preference attainment is more likely when advocates reach out to parties sympathetic to their policy ideas and influential enough to influence policy (change). Affecting policy outcomes through working together with allied powerful parties can be seen as a subtle form of lobbying success, because these parties and advocates held the same preferences from the outset (Kollman, 1997, Hojnacki & Kimball, 1998). It suggests that the influence of advocates on policy (through the lobbying of political parties) may work mainly through reemphasizing existing preferences, or by influencing whether issues make it on to the legislative agenda (Kollman, 1997, Klüver, 2018). At the same time, our findings are robust to controlling for the overall support of either all or only the governmental political parties for an advocate's position on the policy issue. This lends support for the conjecture that what (also) matters is working together with powerful allies and not just co-incidental agreement between advocates and parties.

There are two limitations that are worth emphasizing here, however. The first is the relatively low response rates among business. This means that we are less confident generalizing our findings to this particular set of policy advocates. Secondly, our survey measure does not allow us to disentangle the many possible ways in which advocates may seek to lobby political parties (for example: contacting members of parliament, working groups, or manifesto committees). Although we confirm our main finding regarding the lack of a main effect of lobbying parties with measures of direct contact with parliament and government, future studies could include more detailed strategy measures.

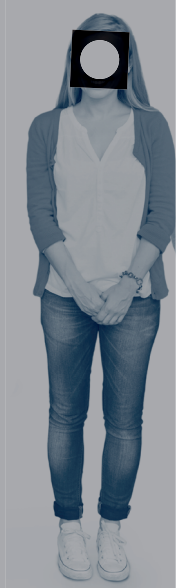
While this chapter presents an important step forward by considering the importance of political parties for the preference attainment of policy advocates, there are still many other questions that future research could take up. For one, although we ensured cross-national variation on a number of important variables, our study cannot fully distinguish important potential institutional factors. This matters because there are indications that such institutional mechanisms shape tie formation between advocates and parties (Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017). Future research could also examine in more detail which possible sources of a party's political power matter most, or compare issue at different stages of the policy cycle.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that while our examination of interest group-party ties and lobbying success makes an important contribution to the existing literature, this is only one possible way that such relationships may shape democratic governance. Future research should therefore also consider how (different types of) group-party interaction may affect more general patterns of influence between policy makers and organized interests and the effectiveness of democratic policy-making.



5

Lobbying during government formations: Do policy advocates attain their preferences in coalition agreements?



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ABSTRACT

Elections produce shifts in power and policy that give lobbyists incentives to influence the policy plans of new governments, but we know very little about such lobbying. This chapter directly observes lobbying during government coalition negotiations and its consequences for coalition agreements by studying the letters that policy advocates send to the chair of coalition formation negotiations. While political parties are crucial for the preference attainment of lobbyists, the analysis shows that advocates that are traditional allies of a negotiating party sometimes benefit more from making a request in line with the preferences of that political party than other advocates. This seems to be especially the case when advocates represent a constituency that is important to a party's electoral strategy, suggesting that the policy implications of ties between parties and organized interests are determined by more than the presence of historical ties between parties and groups alone. The findings also highlight the importance of non-partisan actors in coalition negotiations.

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

Democratic elections can produce changes in the party composition of government and future policy (Mansbridge, 2003). On average 60% of the pledges that political parties make in their manifestos are implemented by new governments (Thomson et al., 2017). In many Western democracies the political parties that form coalition governments outline their policy plans in coalition agreements (Strøm & Müller, 1999), which strongly constrain future legislative action by the government (Moury, 2010; Schermann & Ennser-Jedenastik, 2014; Zubek & Klüver, 2015). This influence on future policy-making makes coalition agreements attractive documents for policy advocates to influence. However, there are no existing studies of the impact of lobbying on coalition agreements. The goal of this chapter is therefore to study the conditions under which policy advocates can attain their preferences when trying to influence coalition agreements.

The existing literature on coalition agreements suggests that the direct influence of lobbying on coalition agreements is limited. A main purpose of such agreements is to reduce uncertainty about future actions by the other parties in the coalition (Klüver & Bäck, 2019; Schermann & Ennser-Jedenastik, 2012; Strøm & Müller, 1999; Timmermans, 2003). Given this primary focus and the (time) pressure on negotiating politicians, it seems unlikely that organized interests can exert much influence over the negotiations.

This chapter argues that that there are two ways through which advocates can attain their preferences, however. Firstly, policy advocates whose policy requests are in line with the policy position of a party entering the government coalition are hypothesized to be more likely to attain their preferences. Secondly, politicians negotiating about the agreement also pursue another goal in addition to reducing uncertainty about the future actions of their coalition partners: maximizing their party's ability to implement its preferred policies in the new coalition (Eichorst, 2014). When reaching compromises on specific policy pledges made during the campaign, politicians face uncertainty about which of their policy plans would be (un)popular with their voters and supporters. The second expectation in this chapter is therefore that political parties will rely on policy advocates they share historical and interpersonal ties with to provide them with such information. (e.g. Allern, Aylott, & Christiansen, 2007; De Bruycker, 2016, Öberg et al, 2011). These historical allies of political parties can therefore increase their likelihood of preference attainment in coalition agreements by emphasizing the popularity of specific campaign promises, as this signals to the negotiating parties which electoral pledges (not) to compromise on.

The hypotheses are tested using a dataset that covers lobbying after the 2017 Dutch general election. During the negotiations about a new government coalition, 775 advocates sent letters containing specific policy requests to the (in)formateur chairing the negotiations. They offer a direct observation of the policy requests of most active inter-

est groups and other lobbying organizations. Hand-coding of the letters using methods developed by studies on pledge-fulfillment by political parties (Thomson et al., 2017) identifies 1200 unique policy requests that are analyzed in the chapter. Coding whether these policy requests were fulfilled in the coalition agreement helps identify whether advocates attained their preferences (Dür, 2008). In addition, the policy requests of advocates are compared to the election manifestos of the negotiating parties to determine whether the party had a policy position on the request.

The findings underline the image that political parties are crucial for the preference attainment of policy advocates in coalition agreements. The multilevel regression models support the expectation that advocates whose policy requests are in line with policy positions held by negotiating parties are more likely to attain their preferences. Results are more mixed when assessing the impact of historical ties between groups and parties. Some policy advocates with ties to a political party are more likely to benefit from a policy request in line with a policy position from an allied party than other advocates, specifically business advocates who benefit more from overlap with the main liberal right-wing party than other advocates. However, the analyses indicate that these ties do not always increase the preference attainment of advocates and a discussion of the findings suggests that the usefulness of the ties may depend on the electoral strategies of political parties, rather than historical ties alone. The chapter therefore presents a mixed picture of lobbying influence on coalition agreement negotiations: while there are some indications of such influence, advocacy influence remains constrained, making it hard to establish whether lobbying after elections is more or less effective than at other stages of the policy-cycle.

These findings therefore align with and contribute to studies of the ties between groups and parties (Allern & Bale, 2012; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017; Thomas, 2001), which suggest that historical alliances between groups and parties have weakened in recent decades (Christiansen, 2012) and replaced by more ad-hoc cooperation (Rasmussen & Lindeboom, 2013). In addition, the study highlights an overlooked channel that interest groups use to try to influence policy-making in Western European political systems: lobbying during coalition agreement negotiations. Finally, the results are important for studies of coalition agreements (e.g. Bäck, Müller, & Nyblade, 2017; Schermann & Ennser-Jedenastik, 2012; Strom & Müller, 1999) as they highlight the limited but sometimes important role played by non-party actors in coalition negotiations in multiparty democracies.

5.2 COALITION AGREEMENTS AND THEIR APPEAL TO LOBBYISTS

In Western-European democracies, political parties that form government coalitions write coalition agreements in up to 80% of all formations (Eichorst, 2014), typically including election pledges the new government plans to implement (Schermann & Ennser-Jedenastik, 2012; Timmermans, 2003). Crafting these agreements is attractive to negotiating parties for at least three reasons: they help manage the diverging policy preferences of coalition partners by outlining policy plans for the future government. Secondly, they reduce uncertainty about and opportunism in the actions of future government partners and their freedom to shift policy into their preferred direction. Finally, they help parties explain the trade-offs and choices made to parties' audiences (their members or voters). Since not all coalitions have to solve these issues to an equal extent (their preferences may diverge more or less, for example), coalition agreements vary in the extent to which they are formalized, and range from very short documents containing few policy-specific details to long formalized agreements that outline comprehensive policy plans. Some contain not just policy plans, but also outline the 'rules of the game' within the coalition (Müller & Strøm, 2008).

In spite of this variation, the majority of European coalition agreements contains rather comprehensive policy plans, is crafted after elections and most of the content is indeed policy-related (Müller & Strøm, 2008, pp. 174-179). While it may depend on their degree of formality and policy-content, coalition agreements affect the legislative activity of the new government. In a study of Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands, Moury (2010) shows that 30% of all cabinet decisions relate directly to the coalition agreement, with up to 50% of all decisions constrained by the agreements in some way. Polish cabinets also implement on average 60% of the policy plans that they outline in coalition agreements (Zubek & Klüver, 2015), and election pledges by Austrian and Dutch political parties that are included in the coalition agreement are more likely to be turned into policy than those that are not (Schermann & Ennser-Jedenastik, 2014; Thomson, 2001). Bäck et al. (2017) also show the limiting effect of coalition agreements on government spending across Western Europe. There is thus strong evidence that both elections and coalition agreements play an important role in determining future policy change.

Their influence on (future) policy-making makes coalition agreements interesting targets for lobbyists. However, existing research does not directly study advocacy influence on coalition agreements. This is likely due to the fact that these are by their nature

inter-party negotiations, which makes political parties likely both the most powerful actors and logical object of study. However, this does not preclude other actors like policy advocates also exerting some influence over the agreements. In addition, if we accept the normative standard that politicians ought to implement the policies on which they were elected (Mansbridge, 2003), it makes sense to first evaluate the extent to which they do so (e.g. Thomson et al, 2017). However, if policy advocates affect whether and which election pledges end up in policy and lead parties to deviate from their pre-election promises, this may have important democratic implications.

What is more, there is empirical evidence that interest groups in Norway do indeed attempt to influence coalition negotiations (Allern & Saglie, 2008). Two interviews conducted for this chapter also suggest that both the run-up to general elections and the coalition formation period are very important to Dutch interest groups[30]. Moreover, while not directly related to coalition agreement negotiations, Brown (2012) shows that groups spend more on lobbying in the transition period between the election and inauguration of the American president than in the period before or after it. Although he does not systematically study preference attainment, he offers numerous examples of policy plans influenced by policy advocates – further emphasizing the importance of the period directly after election to policy advocates.

5.3 LOBBYING COALITION AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

In spite of these incentives for interest groups to try to affect the negotiations of coalition agreements, there are reasons to expect that actually exerting influence over the negotiations is difficult. For one, political parties in most European countries are funded through state subsidies and private contributions make up on average only 10% of the revenue streams of European parties (Biezen & Kopecký, 2017). At least compared to the US, this should reduce direct incentives for politicians to implement requests by advocates that may have supported a party's campaign[31].

More importantly, negotiating parties have limited incentives to accommodate policy requests from policy advocates. A main reason for writing coalition agreements is the desire of negotiating parties to reduce uncertainty about the cooperation with coalition partners (Laver & Shepsle, 1990; Moury, 2010; Strøm & Müller, 1999; Timmermans, 2003). Especially when policy preferences diverge politicians use a public coalition

30 In the fall of 2018 semi-structured interviews were held with representatives and employees of political parties involved in the drafting of the 2017 manifestos of two major political parties, as well as with employees from two major interest organizations.

31 Although even in the US the evidence of the effect of campaign donations on lobbying success is mixed (McKay, 2018).

agreement to reduce uncertainty and the possibility that coalition partners pull policy too much in their preferred direction. Negotiators therefore face the complicated task of finding ways to agree on policy and reach compromises, as well as the need to distribute cabinet portfolios (Laver & Budge, 1992).

Hence, political parties in negotiations are unlikely to be very receptive to lobbying, which means one may generally expect that advocates are unlikely to attain their preferences in the coalition agreement. However, advocates may still see their preferences included in coalition agreements. Firstly, parties are especially unlikely to be receptive to policy requests about issues that were not part of their own campaign promises and not already part of the negotiations: after all, granting such a lobby request would mean bringing more issues to the negotiation table that the coalition partner may potentially disagree with and further complicate the substantive compromises that have to be reached. One may therefore expect that advocates are more likely to see their policy requests fulfilled when at least one negotiating party holds a policy position in line with their request.

However, existing studies show that political parties put more emphasis on policy issue areas (like the environment or migration) where they disagree with their coalition partners, to prevent them from moving policy in an undesirable direction (e.g. Klüver & Bäck, 2019). This might lead to the expectation that advocate's preferences are especially likely to be reflected in the coalition agreement if one party shares a policy position with an advocate, and another opposes it (as the issue area is more likely to feature in the agreement). However, most lobbying occurs on much more specific policy proposals than the policy areas studied in the literature. Even when negotiating parties disagree on the policy area, like environmental policy, and therefore discuss it in the agreement, they will still want to signal to voters that they intend act on the issue and are therefore likely to include the specific policy plans they do agree on, for example: closing down a specific coal powered power plant. In short, while policy areas are more likely to feature in a coalition agreement when the negotiating parties disagree, this is not necessarily the case for the more specific policy preferences that policy advocates lobby for.[32] The following expectation can therefore be formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Policy requests by policy advocates are more likely to be fulfilled if the proposed policy position was part of a coalition party's manifesto.

32 To test whether this is indeed the case, Appendix 5.4 shows that there is indeed a positive correlation between the number of parties that has the same policy position as the advocate's request and the likelihood of preference attainment.

In addition, coalition agreements serve another purpose for politicians that can provide advocates with leverage to successfully lobby the negotiations: the function of 'advertising' how entering the government coalition allows the party to implement its election promises, to both their voters and party members (Eichorst, 2014; Müller & Strøm, 2008; Timmermans, 2003). Since parties that enter government often lose seats at the next election (Müller & Louwerse, 2018), it is important for them to show which election pledges they are able to implement by entering the coalition (Eichorst, 2014). Politicians have to decide on which of their electoral pledges they are willing to reach compromises and will want to implement those pledges that are popular with the general public and/or their voters. Coalition negotiations are generally closed off and take place under considerable time pressure (Timmermans, 2003). As a consequence, the regular ways of gauging voter preferences like media coverage, debates in parliament and consultations are not as readily available to politicians. Policy advocates can therefore try to use their lobbying to signal which election pledges are especially (un)popular with the voters of the negotiating parties.

Advocates that have strong historical ties with political parties will be especially able to use this mechanism. Studies of the relations between interest groups and parties emphasize the importance of such ties (Allern et al., 2007; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017; Thomas, 2001). They highlight the historical and institutional relations between trade unions and social democratic parties (Allern et al., 2007; Allern et al., 2019), as well as those between other types of parties and groups, such as the Danish employers' organization DA and the conservative party (Christiansen, 2012) and the environmental movement and Green parties (Blings, 2018).

In each of these cases, the interest group and the party it shares ties with were and often continue to be able to offer each other resources that make a long-term exchange relationship mutually beneficial from a rational-institutionalist perspective (Allern et al., 2007; Christiansen, 2012; Öberg et al., 2011). Parties can offer interest groups they share historical ties with a way to influence political decision-making, even if this influence remains an untested assumption in the literature (e.g. Allern & Bale, 2012; Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017; Thomas, 2001). Traditionally such groups had the ability to deliver voters for political parties through their members. However, some groups' ability to do so may have declined over time (Allern et al., 2007; Christiansen, 2012; Öberg et al., 2011) and contacts between groups and parties have generally become more ad-hoc (Rasmussen

& Lindeboom, 2013). Still, such historical ties do persist to this day (e.g. Allern et al. 2019) and while not on all points, historical allies of parties are likely to still share a similar ideological outlook. In addition, such groups may still have members that politicians will be aiming to represent and from whom they will want to secure support for the new government's coalition agreement. The longer-term cooperation between such traditional allies will also mean that they are more likely to have access to the negotiating parties: either through existing institutional integration between the groups and the party, or 'simply' because their cooperation means representatives of the groups and parties will move in similar networks. The second hypothesis is therefore:

> *.Hypothesis 2: Policy advocates that make requests that are in line with the policy positions of historically allied political parties, are more likely to attain their preferences than advocates that make requests that are in line with policy positions of political parties that are not historical allies of the advocate.*

5.4 CASE SELECTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The hypotheses are tested using a dataset covering the 2017 Dutch general elections, which was collected as part of the GovLis project[33]. The election led to a long government formation process. After the election it quickly became clear that four parties would be required to achieve a majority coalition government (the norm in Dutch politics). From the start, the liberal right-wing party Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD: 33 out of 150 seats in parliament) that would provide the new prime minister, the more centrist liberal Democraten 66 party (D66: 19 seats), the center-right Christian democrats of the Christen Democratisch Appèl (CDA: 19 seats) were very likely to be part of any majority coalition. After negotiations between these three parties and the Green-Left party failed, the smaller center-left Christian Union party (CU:5 seats) joined the negotiations and finally the government coalition following a 225-day negotiation. The number of negotiators during the formation was relatively small: only two representatives from each for the parties and the (*in)formateur* (the person chairing the negotiations) were present on most days. Negotiations about some policy areas were prepared by specialized members of parliament, and the main negotiators were in touch with other members from their parties and invited policy advocacy organizations, advisory bodies and ministerial departments on some days of the negotiations.

The parties outlined their detailed government agenda and policy plans in a post-electoral coalition agreement of over 35 000 words. The negotiation period and final

33 For more: www.govlis.eu.

agreement were lengthy compared to both previous Dutch formation processes and internationally (for a discussion, see: Timmermans, 2003). The agreement is likely relatively formalized compared to other agreements and contains a comprehensive set of detailed policy plans (see Müller & Strøm, 2008). While there is variation across coalition agreements and the selection of a single case comes with trade-offs, the majority of coalition agreements tend to contain specific policy plans, be mainly focused on policy and concluded after the election – making the 2017 Dutch coalition agreement a case that occurs often relatively across Western Europe (Müller & Strøm, 2008). Still, especially where coalition agreements contain less specific or formalized policy content, coalition agreements may be less attractive objects of lobbying.

However, the described theoretical mechanisms are likely to hold in other countries, at least for post-electoral coalition agreements. For one, both Dutch and non-Dutch negotiators alike will use coalition agreements to reduce uncertainty about the behavior of their coalition partners. The constraining effects of coalition agreements on policy have also been demonstrated in other European countries (Bäck et al., 2017; Moury, 2010; Schermann & Ennser-Jedenastik, 2014; Thomson, 2001; Zubek & Klüver, 2015). Similarly, the tendency to want to use the coalition negotiations to implement pre-election promises also applies beyond the Dutch context. In fact, Dutch politicians manage to implement their election pledges in policy at a rate that is about average in Western democracies (Thomson et al., 2017, p. 535).

It is therefore likely that lobbying to affect coalition agreements takes place after more elections than the one observed here. In the Netherlands, previous elections with generally shorter formation periods attracted similar or higher numbers of lobbying letters than the 2017 election[34]. Moreover, in the only study to describe this kind of lobbying in Europe, some Norwegian interest groups also indicated they tried to influence the coalition agreement (Allern & Saglie, 2008, p. 94). Given that Norwegian coalition negotiations last an average of just 6.5 days (Golder, 2010) it is likely that lobbying to influence coalition agreements occurs in other settings with longer formations, too. Of course, where negotiations are fast, there may be less opportunity for interest groups to exert influence. Media coverage also shows that this type of lobbying is indeed common in at least some other Western-European countries.[35] Finally, the Dutch coalition negotiations involve a rather small number of negotiators. On the one hand this may make it harder for the average interest group to influence the negotiations when compared to countries like Germany, where many more negotiators are involved in the negotiations.

34 See the official evaluation of the 2017 formation: https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-34700-64.html

35 See for example: Finland: https://www.hbl.fi/artikel/gron-lobbyist-lamnar-regeringsforhandlingarna/ and Germany: https://www.zeit.de/wirtschaft/2009-10/lobbyisten-koalitionsverhandlungen.

On the other, it may mean that in the Netherlands influence is relatively concentrated around those advocates that do have access.

Measuring the policy preferences of advocates

To observe the policy preferences of advocates lobbying during the formation period, the analysis relies on letters they sent to the *(in)formateur*[36] outlining policy requests for the following government period and the coalition agreement. 2017 is the first time these letters have been made publically available[37]. Following an observational definition of lobbyists/advocates, the study includes all actors who observably tried to exert influence by sending letters (Baroni, Carroll, Chalmers, Marquez, & Rasmussen, 2014). A total of 775 policy advocates sent letters containing specific policy requests. In itself, this is an indication that advocates do indeed actively lobby after elections. It also provides us with a snapshot of the policy requests of Dutch advocates during the formation period.

The mechanism of being able to send letters to an *informateur* is specific to the Dutch context and may make it comparatively easy to (try to) contact the negotiating parties and have increased the amount of observed lobbying. However, the expectation is not that these letters directly gave policy advocates influence over the final coalition agreement. Given their large quantity it seems unlikely that the (in)*formateur* would read all letters. Instead, they provide an excellent opportunity to directly observe the policy preferences of a large number of Dutch policy advocates and their issue priorities during the formation period. The interviews done for this chapter also confirm the image that even if these letters do not directly influence the negotiations, they do contain the preferences of the interest groups sending them – forming the basis for lobbying in other ways. These may include inside strategies, like contacting political parties and negotiators, or civil servants involved in drafting the agreement. Lobbyists also use outside strategies (e.g. Kollman, 1998) like commentary in the media or protests. For example, primary school teachers' organizations sought the media and and successfully protested for higher wages during the 2017 coalition negotiations. Unlike the instrument of sending letters to an *informateur*, these strategies are also available in other countries, so while more advocates' lobbying (preferences) may be observed than are active in other countries, they still provide the best available observation of the policy requests of a wide range of advocates that tried to influence the negotiations.

All letters sent to the *(in)formateur* were hand-coded to detect the policy requests made by advocates. Drawing on methods developed by studies on the pledge fulfill-

36 The *informateur* chairs the negotiations during most of the negotiations. It is only in the final stages that the *formateur* (typically the leader of the party providing the prime minister) chairs the meetings.

37 Through https://www.kabinetsformatie2017.nl

ment of political parties (Thomson et al., 2017), a request is coded if it meets the following criteria. Firstly, it has to be an explicit request for the future government to take action or for the coalition agreement to include something, containing a marker word such as "request", "ask", or "demand". Secondly, it has to be possible for the request to be fulfilled theoretically in the coalition agreement *and* the requirements for fulfillment have to be specified in the request itself[38] (Thomson et al., 2017). Examples of included requests would be a demand to increase subsidies for daycare services, or to close all coal-powered power plants. On the other hand, more general requests to "make policy greener", or enforce "stricter immigration laws" would be excluded, because it is impossible to determine from the request alone whether any part of the coalition agreement fulfills these requests. Requests to prioritize an issue in the coalition agreement are also included, but the results presented here are not conditional on their inclusion (see Appendix 5.6).

Measuring preference attainment

While the goal of this chapter is to ultimately study the influence of policy advocates, the approach taken here stops short of claiming to observe *influence* directly (Dür, 2008; Mahoney, 2007). Instead, the analysis relies on an approach called "preference attainment" (Dür, 2008) or "lobbying success" (Mahoney, 2007), which compares the rates at which different groups of policy advocates got what they wanted. An advocate is thus considered as having attained their preferences (but not necessarily influential) if its policy request is fulfilled in the coalition agreement. The final measure is dichotomous and outlines whether an advocate did not (0) attain their preferences, or did so somewhat through fully (1). Appendix 5.1 contains more information about the measurement of the dependent variable and inter-coder reliability.

The measure used here overcomes several drawbacks typically associated with studies of preference attainment (Klüver, 2013, chapter 3). Firstly, the policy requests of advocates are observed directly, rather than retrieved through interviews or surveys. Although letters may also have been sent to signal engagement to the members of some advocacy groups, it is likely that the policy requests outlined in the letters contain the policy priorities of the advocate. This assumption was also confirmed in two interviews with major interest groups. Secondly, the fact that the letters were sent to the *(in)formateur* with the goal of influencing the coalition agreement means that there is a good fit between the policy requests and the measure of preference attainment. Thirdly, since the requests are formulated by the advocates themselves, the advocates' own formulations are used to assess preference attainment, instead of often used pre-defined sets of issues that are on the legislative agenda, or formulated by researchers.

38 Akin to what Thomson et al (2017) call a "narrow" definition of a pledge.

Party policy positions

To identify the policy positions of political parties on the requests, the first step was to code whether a request was present in the election manifesto of a negotiating party (Krippendorff alpha: 0.95. 2 coders and 88 coded units) and then code whether the party position was in line with the request (Krippendorff alpha: 0.73). To test H1, that advocates are more likely to attain their preferences when their request is line with the policy position of a negotiating party, a binary measure is used that captures whether at least one political party supported the issue prior to the election (in its manifesto).

Parties with historical ties to interest groups

To assess hypothesis 2 about historical ties, the chapter relies on ties between business advocates (employers' organizations and firms) and two major right-wing political parties (see Christiansen (2012) for a discussion of similar ties in Denmark). The first of these parties is the liberal VVD party. The most economically right-wing of the major parties that regularly participate in Dutch government, the VVD maintains strong ties with business actors. While cooperation between the VVD and private sector advocates was never as institutionalized as between trade unions and social-democratic parties in some Nordic countries (e.g. Allern 2007), the party has maintained strong ideological and interpersonal links with large businesses and employers' organizations since its foundation in the 1940's. One of its founders was very active in a major employers' organization and ties between employers' organizations, business advocates and the party remained relatively strong throughout the decades (Lucardie, 1986). What is more, such ties persist to the present day. As an example, VVD MPs are much more likely to have previous work experience in the private sector than those of other parties[39], its party leader and prime minister during the 2017 election Mark Rutte's previous career at multinational Unilever providing an example. These strong historical and interpersonal links between the VVD and private sector actors, as well as its identity as a party for entrepreneurs (for example in its 2017 election manifesto, see also Lucardie, 1986), make it likely that the party is more receptive to policy requests by business advocates than other advocates.

Secondly, the Christian democratic center-right CDA party identified itself less clearly as pro-business – at least in its 2017 election manifesto where it, for example, advocated reducing the role of market forces in health care. At the same it arguably shares stronger historical and organizational ties with the main employers' organization VNO-NCW, than even the VVD. VNO-NCW is a merger between two employers' organizations, one of which has Christian roots. Like the Christian parties that the CDA is a merger of, NCW was part of the Christian pillar of post-war Dutch society and historical ties between

39 See: https://www.vn.nl/de-haagse-banencarrousel/

the organization and the party were close (for an example illustrating this cooperation, see: Hordijk, 1988). While it is likely these ties may have weakened somewhat over the decades (like in Scandinavia: see Öberg et al, 2011), there is also evidence that these ties continued at the time of the 2017 negotiations. For example, the chairman of VNO-NCW in 2017 was a member of the CDA and its previous chairman served as a senator for the party. In 2019, the party appointed a chairman who also serves as the secretary of VNO-NCW. Hence, the CDA shares strong links to business advocates that should make it easier for these advocates to contact the party's politicians and make them relatively receptive to their requests.

Hypothesis 2 is tested by interacting a binary variable (right-wing support) indicating whether a request was supported by either the VVD or the CDA, with a binary variable that indicates whether the request is made by a business group/firm, or a non-business actor. The analyses also look at the interaction effect of both parties separately to explore differences between them and the nature of their ties to business actors. This measure is a relatively crude way to operationalize the ties between business advocates and these two political parties, as it does not focus on specific advocacy organizations. If anything, this should make it harder to observe an effect of these ties on preference attainment, however. There were no Social Democratic or Green parties in the cabinet, which means that the influence of their ties with other group types cannot be tested. There were also not enough requests by religious interest groups to reliably model possible shared constituencies between them and the Christian Union or CDA party.

Control variables

The analyses contain three control variables. Firstly, advocates may *access* and influence the coalition negotiations directly. The interest group literature tends to assume "that groups with political access are on average more likely to be influential than groups without such access" (Binderkrantz, Pedersen, & Beyers, 2017, p. 307). The analyses control for the possibility that rather than party-group ties, it is simply advocates with access to the negotiations who attain their preferences. Access may have enabled policy advocates to influence the negotiations in two ways. Firstly, some advocates are invited to the negotiation table. To control for this, the daily calendars of the (in)*formateur* are analyzed to code who secured such a meeting. Secondly, civil servants from government departments also visit the negotiations *and* are involved and drafting some of the text of the coalition agreement. That is why – based on the coding by Berkhout and colleagues[40] - the twenty advocacy organizations with the most access (defined as having a meeting with a government minister, or invitations to round-table hearings in

40 Compiled by scholars at the University of Amsterdam and based on a report published in the magazine *Vrij Nederland: https://www.vn.nl/lobbyclubs-schaduwmacht/*

parliament) are also coded as having access. The two measures are combined in a single binary variable.

Advocates often formed coalitions when sending letters, likely in order to signal the broad support for their requests. Previous studies show mixed or conditional effects of coalitions on preference attainment (Junk, 2019; Mahoney & Baumgartner, 2004). To control for the possibility that these coalitions affect the preference attainment of advocates, the analyses include a control for *coalition size*, which is a count of the number of advocates that sent a specific letter. The third control variable captures whether an advocate's request was in favor of changing the *status quo*. Studies of the United States document a 'status quo bias' (Baumgartner, Berry, Hojnacki, Leech, & Kimball, 2009) and policy advocates who defend the status quo are more likely to attain their preferences, at least at the national level in Western Europe (Rasmussen et al., 2018). Even if 94% of the requests in the data are to change the status quo, this bias may still persist in the setting studied here. Appendix 5.2 provides more descriptive information about the data many requests to change the status quo.

Modelling strategy

The unit of analysis is a policy request (nested) in a letter by an advocate to predict whether an advocate did not (0) or somewhat to fully (1) obtain their preferences, requiring logistic regression. This means that if a letter is sent by three advocates, each request also features three times in the data. To capture variation at the level of letters and because the coalition size variable is measured at this level, random intercepts are fitted for letters (Steenbergen & Jones, 2002).

5.5 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

To test hypothesis 1 (that advocates are more likely to attain their preferences if the policy request was part of a coalition party's manifesto), a first step is to consider the descriptive statistics alone. Around a third of all requests are supported by at least one political party (34%). There are only 30 out of 1201 unique non-procedural policy requests to change the status quo (or around 2.5%), that were fulfilled when no political party actively supported the advocate's position in their election manifesto. This offers initial support for H1: in order for advocates to get their requests for policy change included in the coalition agreement, a party having a policy position in line with their policy request is close to a necessary condition.

Turning to the multilevel logistic regression models predicting preference attainment presented in table 1, the importance of political parties for advocates' preference attainment is underlined further: model 1 shows that the relationship between a request

being present as a policy position in a political party's manifesto and preference attainment is both strong and significant. The predicted probability of preference attainment when no party holds a policy position in line with the request in its manifesto is around 23% and increases to 64% when at least one political party has a position in line with the request. Appendix 5.4 demonstrates that taking into account whether another party also opposed the request does not substantively alter this finding. While measures of preference attainment are often used as an indicator for influence, this may not be the case here: advocates' may *either* simply be 'lucky' that a party had a policy position in line with their request, or they may have successfully influenced the party's manifesto before the election.

Secondly, models 2 through 4 then test hypothesis 2, that advocates that make requests that are in line with the policy positions of traditionally allied parties are more likely to attain their preferences. The empirical implication of this expectation was that a request in line with the policy preferences of the center-right parties (the liberal VVD and the Christian democratic CDA) in the coalition should be more strongly related to preference attainment for business advocates than other advocates. The interaction effect in model 2 supports this expectation: the effect of a request in line with a policy position of these right-wing parties is stronger for business advocates than for other types of actors.

However, when the analysis is split by party in models 3 and 4 it becomes clear that this correlation is driven by the VVD: the interaction effect between business advocates requests in line with the VVD's policy position in model 3 is positive and significant, whereas the interaction effect is much smaller and insignificant for the CDA in model 4. Figure 5.1 shows the *increase* in the predicted probability of preference attainment for different advocates when a party has a position in line with their request. The figure underlines that while the increase is stronger for business advocates that make a request in line with the policy positions of right-wing parties (grey triangles) than non-business advocates, this effect is driven by the VVD (blue squares). The VVD seems to distinguish between requests from business and non-business advocates. Importantly, the increase in predicted probability that comes from making a request in line with a VVD position is only 12 percentage-points for non-business advocates and just over 50 percentage-point for business advocates. On the other hand, the CDA (orange dots) does not significantly distinguish between the two sets of advocates: both business and non-business advocates see an increase in the predicted probability of attaining their preferences of around 40 percentage-points when their request is in line with a CDA policy position.

These results partially support hypothesis 2: whereas there is a clear effect for the VVD in support of the hypothesis, the absence of the expected interaction effect for the CDA goes against the expectation.

Table 5.1: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting whether a policy advocate attained their policy preferences.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party support	2.57***			
	(0.15)			
Right-wing support		1.43***		
		(0.20)		
Right-wing support * Business		1.30***		
		(0.32)		
VVD support			0.63*	
			(0.28)	
VVD support * Business			2.81***	
			(0.45)	
CDA support				2.25***
				(0.24)
CDA support * Business				0.31
				(0.36)
Business	0.19	-0.25	-0.22	0.15
	(0.21)	(0.23)	(0.21)	(0.22)
Controls				
Access	0.51	0.38	0.42	0.37
	(0.38)	(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.36)
Coalition size	0.06*	0.06+	0.05	0.05+
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Pro policy change	-3.84***	-3.62***	-3.53***	-3.41***
	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.34)
Constant	1.35***	1.90***	1.97***	1.66***
	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.36)
Letter random intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of requests	2281	2281	2281	2281
Number of letters	346	346	346	346
AIC	1954	2123	2176	2122
BIC	1994	2169	2222	2168

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

One alternative explanation for these results may be that rather than historic ties between a party and a set of advocates, it is the importance of the constituency an advocate represents to the political party's electoral strategy that matters: VVD's 2017 election campaign was relatively pro-business and suggested, for example, tax cuts for business actors, making business advocates (representatives of) an important electoral constituency to the party. On the other hand, the CDA's campaign was more critical of free-market forces and proposed, for example, to reduce the role of the market in the

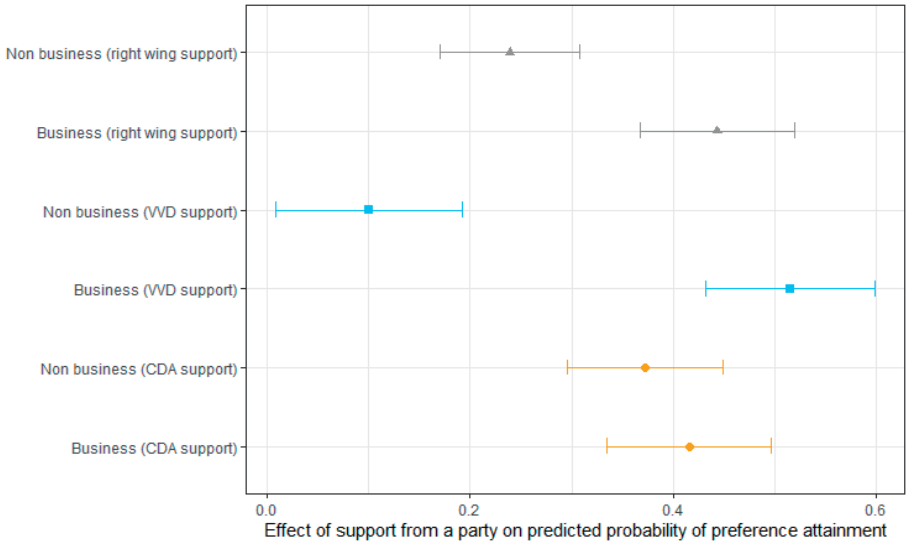


Figure 5.1: The marginal effect of gaining the support from a party on preference attainment (expressed in increases in predicted probabilities) for different sets of actors.
Figure note: based on table 1. Calculated for both right-wing parties (grey triangles, model 2), the VVD (blue squares, model 3) and the CDA (yellow dots, model 4). All other variables kept at their means. 95% confidence intervals.

health care system, which should reduce the importance the constituency represented by business advocates. These impressions are underlined by data from the Comparative Manifestos Project (Volkens et al., 2019): where 3.6% of the VVD's manifesto consisted of positive mentions of the free market economy, the comparable figure was 1.3% for the CDA. In addition, the VVD's *position* on the CMP's market economy index was for example 5.4 (more pro-market), compared to 2.6 for the CDA. Similarly, the CDA made more reference to economic planning and very positively referenced welfare state policies. These differences in campaign strategy, or at least issue emphasis and position, may help to explain why the VVD attached additional value to requests by business advocates where the CDA did not.

To further assess this, Appendix 5.5 also repeats the analyses from table 1, looking at trade unions rather than business advocates. Although declining, trade unions still represent large numbers of members (the largest trade union Federation FNV having around 1 million members in 2017). If parties were aiming to 'please' the largest share of the public possible, rather than specific (electorally relevant) constituencies one would expect to find a significant interaction effect. The fact that no such effects appear emphasizes that the interaction between the VVD and business is about more than just pleasing the largest number of voters possible. Hence, the importance of the constituency that a group represents may in part depend on the electoral strategy of a political

party, rather than just the historical and personal links between an advocate and a party or the number of members represented by the advocate. That possible explanation would also align with findings that historical ties between groups and parties have weakened (Allern et al., 2007; Christiansen, 2012) cooperation has become more ad-hoc or pragmatic (Rasmussen & Lindeboom, 2013).

Finally, turning to the control variables, only the effect of defending the status quo is strong and significant in all models (Baumgartner et al., 2009). *Access* has a positive but insignificant relationship with the likelihood of preference attainment. The *size of a coalition* has a positive effect on preference attainment, but it is not significant across different model specifications – underlining previous findings of more conditional effects of coalitions on preference attainment (Junk, 2019; Mahoney & Baumgartner, 2004).

Robustness and alternative explanations

The appendices outline a number of checks to ensure the robustness of the findings and control for alternative explanations. Firstly, it may be the case that the issue ownership of specific political parties (Petrocik et al, 2003) makes certain requests more attractive to a party than others. Since business advocates are likely to make requests about economic issues, the importance of economic issues to the VVD may mean that the interaction effect in model 3 is an artefact of this. Appendix 5.3 therefore includes an interaction between making a request in line with the policy position of the CDA and VVD and whether the request was in the field of economics and taxation to exclude the possibility that the party's ownership of economic issues explains the results regarding hypothesis 2. The models show that VVD support is more valuable for advocates' requests about economy and taxation than requests in other policy areas. However, this effect is independent of the interaction between requests by business advocates and VVD positions. This indicates that the findings in table 5.1 are not just the result of issue ownership by the VVD party. However, even business requests about non-economic issues may be about specific policies that were more salient to the VVD than requests by other advocates: something that the analysis cannot fully preclude.

Appendix 5.6 shows that results remain unchanged when analyzing only requests for policy change. Appendix 5.7 reruns the analyses using robust standard errors instead of multilevel modeling to account for the clustering of observations in letters and individual advocates. This leaves the substantive results unchanged.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Are lobbyists able to attain their preferences in coalition agreements? In line with expectations derived from the literature on coalition agreements, this article shows that

making requests in line with the policy positions of political parties is crucial for the preference attainment of policy advocates: requests are generally not fulfilled if they are not first present in the election manifestos of political parties (H1). At least to the extent that these party manifestos make explicit the mandate of political parties (Thomson et al., 2017), most policy requests are only implemented after such a mandate is obtained through elections. To the extent that political parties are expected to implement the policy platforms on which they were elected (Mansbridge, 2003), this is good news in democratic terms. After all, policy advocates likely do not hinder the implementation of election promises that parties were elected on in coalition agreements, or introduce new policies into the coalition agreement that were not previously featured in a negotiating party's manifesto.

Secondly, the article shows that policy advocates that make policy requests that are in line with the policy positions of negotiating parties they share historical ties with are more likely to attain their preferences (H2). The analyses demonstrate that this mechanism does not necessarily apply to all sets of parties and groups that share such ties, however. Whereas there was an effect for business advocates and the VVD, business advocates did not benefit more from making requests that were in line with the policy positions of the CDA than other types of advocates – even though the CDA (traditionally) has strong organizational ties with business groups. This unexpected result might be a consequence of the different campaign strategies these parties followed, which may have meant that business advocates' represented constituencies that were more salient to the VVD than the CDA. Either way, the findings indicate that the policy-implications of ties and contacts between interest group and parties are nuanced, and that the impact of these ties on policy-making requires further theorizing. Future studies could therefore focus on other political parties and interest groups to further investigate when relations between parties and interest groups matter for policy-making. Although more difficult, they could also seek to separate ideological congruence and historical ties with a party to further study this question.

The findings demonstrate the general importance of including elections and the policy changes they help produce into the study of lobbying success outside the US context (see also: Binderkrantz, 2015; Farrell & Schmitt-Beck, 2008). While this chapter shows that there are reasons to expect some (limited) lobbying influence on coalition negotiations, future studies may also focus on whether policy advocates are more or less influential during elections and coalition formations than at other stages of the policy cycle (see also: Binderkrantz, 2015).

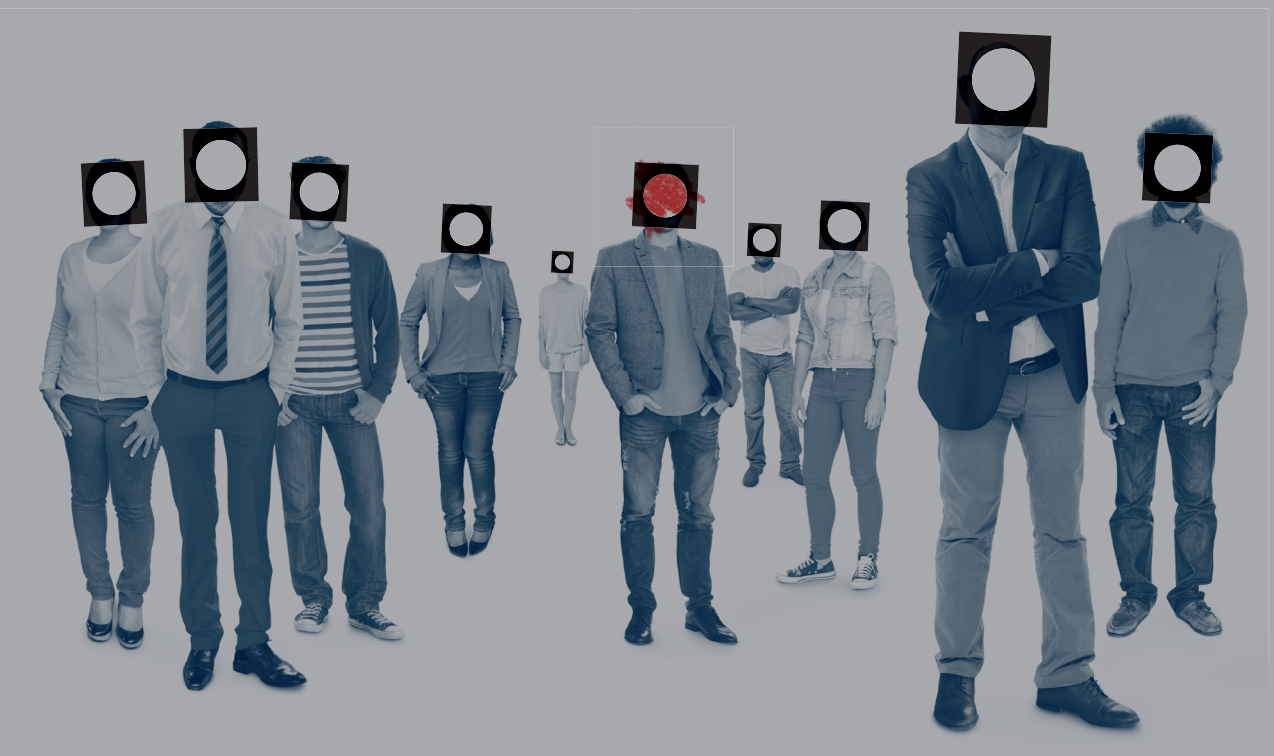
The fact that the Dutch 2017 formation lasted long may have made it relatively likely that policy advocates were able to affect the negotiations. At the same time, similar numbers of letters were sent during shorter previous negotiations in the Netherlands

and interviews with two interest groups conducted for this study also suggest that lobbying before and after the election is an important strategy to these organizations.

The coalition agreement studied here is likely relatively formalistic and high in policy content (Müller & Strøm, 2008) and this may have made it more attractive for policy advocates than other coalition agreements. Still, many coalition agreements are policy-rich (ibid) and coalition agreements have been shown to shape future policy-making across a range of countries, making them attractive to advocates beyond the Netherlands (e.g. Moury, 2010).

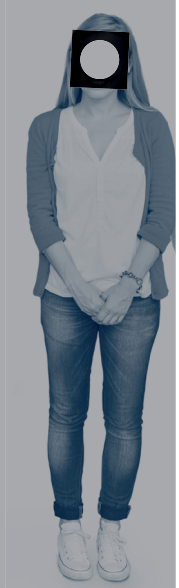
The finding that advocates are especially likely to attain their preferences when they make requests that are in line with the policy preferences of political parties can of course mean they were simply lucky to have same policy preferences as an incoming government party. On the other hand, they may have already influenced the election manifesto of the party as it was written. This would provide lobbyists with another way to introduce their requests into both coalition agreements and final policy. There is also evidence from interviews with the writers of manifestos and groups that policy advocates do indeed use this strategy in Austria, Norway and Ireland (Allern & Saglie, 2008; Däubler, 2012; Dolezal, Ennser-Jedenastik, Müller, & Winkler, 2012), requiring further research.

Finally, the result that advocates may be able to affect the calculations made by politicians negotiating the coalition agreement is important for studies of how coalition agreements are produced. It highlights the role of non-party actors in a literature that is understandably predominantly focused on the role of the negotiating parties, but which does not consider the role of lobbying or other actors like the administration (e.g. Klüver & Bäck, 2019; Strøm & Müller, 1999; Timmermans, 2003).



6

Conclusion



6.1 INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSIONS PER CHAPTER

This dissertation studied the representative role of political parties and their interactions with interest groups and other policy advocates on specific policy issues. Studying these policy issues, like abortion policy, constructing nuclear power plants, or retirement plans, was an important goal in itself for the simple reason that these policies directly influence the lives of citizens. Specifically, given the expectation that in democratic systems political parties help transmit public preferences into policy, studying their positions on these issues is important (Dahl, 1956; Mair, 2010). This chapter first outlines and recapitulates he most important findings per chapter, to then discuss the general conclusion of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 studied the positions of 5 German political parties on 102 specific policy proposals. In addition to the main finding– that the correlation between public preferences and party policy positions was only found for opposition parties – the results also demonstrated that differences between mainstream and niche parties did not play out in the ways often suggested in existing studies (Adams, Clark, Ezrow, & Glasgow, 2004). The chapter found little to no evidence for the expectation that niche parties' positions were more strongly related to those of their supporters than to those of the general public, nor for the opposite expectation for mainstream parties. The 'nicheness' of a party was measured as a concept that varies both within parties (over time) and across parties, but the generalizability of this inference is limited as it was based on only 5 political parties (not including a radical right-wing party). The focus on specific issues also highlighted a weakness in existing studies of programmatic differences between mainstream and niche political parties. Many of these studies have in the past relied on issue-ownership theory to study the emphasis these different types of parties place on different policy areas (Klüver & Spoon, 2016), but as Appendix 2.5 shows, this theory told us little about the actual positions political parties took on specific policies within these broader policy areas. Importantly, even if a political party (for example a Green party) generally owns a policy area (environment), another party may be closely associated with a specific policy within the area (a plan to construct a nuclear power plant from another party).

Finally, the chapter also introduced the use of Multilevel Regression with Post-stratification (MRP) (Park et al., 2006) to estimate the preferences of the supporters of (especially smaller) political parties. Existing studies that previously included estimates of the political preferences of the supporters of specific parties usually simply disaggregated public opinion surveys, meaning that estimates of the political preferences of these supporters would rely on as few as twenty respondents (e.g. Dalton, 2017). Aggregating multiple surveys to determine the demographic composition of the supporters of a political party in a year, and then applying MRP to estimate the preferences of these supporters helped to address this: the model used information about voters

that had comparable characteristics to those supporting the party to better estimate the policy preferences of the sub-group. The approach had the additional advantage that the smaller the number of respondents in the data that supported the party, the more the model relied on information from other comparable respondents (for a discussion, see: Lax & Phillips, 2009b).

Chapter 3 focused on four regulatory policy issues in Sweden: the phasing-out of nuclear energy, the six-hour work week, allowing the sale of alcoholic beverages in supermarkets and raising taxes on alcohol. It studied how public opinion and media advocacy related to both the attention that Swedish politicians paid to these issues, as well as actual policy-making on them. The relatively narrow focus on a limited set of policy issues meant a clear trade-off in terms of the generalizability of the findings, but also had important advantages. The first is that it allowed for observing these policies over much longer time periods than was common in previous studies. The approach also made it possible to combine a quantitative analysis with more qualitative assessments of policy-making on these issues.

The chapter showed that – at least on these four issues – increases in public support for an issue (and when the policy was not the status quo) were related to the attention of Swedish politicians in the year after. This finding suggested that Swedish politicians were rhetorically responsive (i.e. talked about issues the public finds important) to public opinion on the issues studied. At the same time, media advocacy did not seem to have the same effect on the attention of politicians to the issues. In addition, the discussion of each of the policy issues highlighted several aspects that tended to be overlooked in the literature. Firstly, it showed that both public opinion and media advocacy related to policy-making (and political attention) in a way that was far from deterministic: on specific policy issues, many other factors including party politics came into play. Secondly, even at the level of specific policy issues, lobbying and lobbying success could and often did occur on even more subtle or detailed elements of a policy, which current studies (including those in this dissertation) of specific policy issues generally overlook. The issue of phasing-out nuclear energy provides an example of this. Even with a long-term phase out policy in place, a parliamentary majority in favour of it and several actions like closing the nuclear reactors at Barsebäck, the Swedish government was not able to reduce the amount of energy produced in nuclear power plants. In part this this might be attributed to the successful lobby by several energy companies to renovate their existing nuclear power plants in a way that allowed them to increase their production capacity – effectively offsetting the effects of closing the nuclear reactors at Barsebäck.

Chapter 4 studies whether working with political parties increased the preference attainment of policy advocates on 50 policy issues in 5 countries (Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom). The analyses were based on responses to the interest group survey of the GovLis project that was sent to 1400 actors active on

the issue, and interviews with senior civil servants (one per issue) in all five countries to obtain the policy positions of political parties on our issues. In addition to investigating the direct relationship between preference attainment and working with political parties on a policy issue, the chapter also formulated and tested expectations about the type of political party. Specifically, it studied whether working with more powerful parties (larger parties or those in government), or parties that agreed with the advocate increased the likelihood that advocates got the policy output they preferred.

The results showed that working with a political party on an issue was not significantly correlated with lobbying success in itself. Moreover, when the measure was replaced with a question about contacting members of parliament or the national cabinet, no relationship was found. These findings cast some doubt about assumptions in the existing literature that study the links and contacts between policy advocates and political parties that these contacts are very important for policy-making (e.g. Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017; Thomas, 2001). In addition, working with parties that are powerful *or* have the same position as an advocate on a policy issue was not associated with higher levels of preference attainment in the data. However, when policy advocates worked with political parties that were both powerful *and* shared their positions on the issue, they were more likely to attain their preferences. The chapter did have the limitation that it included only a rather low number of business advocates and only a single question to probe collaboration between groups and parties. This meant that there was and is ample scope for a future research agenda that looks into the policy consequences of ties and contacts between interest groups in political parties.

Chapter 5 focused on the lobbying success of interest groups and other policy advocates during the 2017 coalition formation in the Netherlands. The analyses in the chapter relied on a hand coding of all letters that interest groups and other policy advocates sent to the (in)*formateur* chairing the coalition agreement negotiations. While the letters themselves may not have been read, the assumption was that they allowed for directly observing the policy preferences that advocates lobbied for. This assumption was confirmed in interviews with two major interest groups. By comparing the requests to the final coalition agreement, it became possible to analyze which requests were granted in the coalition agreement. Also coding whether the policy request already occurred as an election promise in the manifesto of the negotiating political parties, enabled an analysis of the importance of political parties for the preference attainment of policy advocates after the election.

In addition to the finding that parties remained very important for policy decisions, but that historic ties between groups and political parties *can* affect policy, the chapter made several contributions to our knowledge about lobbying. The first was simply that it helped to empirically establish that lobbying after elections also occurs in Europe (see also: Allern & Saglie, 2008, but cf. Binderkrantz, 2015). In addition, the findings were

important for observers of Dutch politics as they contradicted the public image that successful lobbying dominated the coalition negotiations. Specifically, the highly salient plan to abolish the dividend-tax was one of only 29 policy requests (out of over 1200) to change the status quo, that made it into the coalition agreement *and* was not part of a negotiating party's election manifesto before the election. This suggested that on the whole, lobbyists did not manage to introduce many *new* issues into the coalition agreement that were not previously part of the electoral platforms of the new government parties. To the extent that these platforms made explicit the electoral mandate of political parties (Mansbridge, 2003) this meant that lobbying did not induce large deviations to this mandate. At the same time, the finding that the VVD appears to have treated requests from business advocates differently to those from other advocates did suggest that policy advocates were able to play a role in which election promises a party was willing on compromise on during the negotiations.

6.2 BROADER CONCLUSIONS

In addition to the results and conclusions presented above, the findings from this dissertation also collectively provide broader theoretical reasons to study the policy positions and activities of political parties and interest groups on specific policy issues (Hacker & Pierson, 2014).

Firstly, we knew from previous studies that public preferences on specific policy issues do not correlate strongly with public preferences on ideological scales like the left-right dimension (Lesschaeve, 2017). As Lax et al. (2019) argued, this means that even when there is ideological congruence between the preferences of citizens and policy (or the positions of political parties) on dimensions like left-right scales, this does not necessarily mean that citizens actually get the policies they prefer. Chapter 2 showed that when studying the congruence between political parties and the public on specific issues, the image was indeed less positive than that often found in studies of ideological congruence between public preferences and party positions (cf. Golder & Ferland, 2017; Golder & Stramski, 2010). While German political parties' positions on policy issues correlated with the preferences of the general public, the chapter showed that this correlation was driven by opposition parties alone: political parties in government took policy positions that no longer correlated with the preferences of the general public. Although more negative than conclusions from studies of left-right congruence, these findings were more in line with studies on specific issues that also argued that correlations between public opinion and policy outputs (instead of party positions) are less strong than it may seem on the surface (Gilens, 2012; Lax & Phillips, 2012; Schakel, 2019). Combined with findings from studies on a number of policy *areas* (like migration or environmental

policy) (Dalton, 2017), the findings suggested that political parties may be less able to fulfill their representational role than previously thought, but in line with more skeptical theoretical accounts of political parties' representative capacity (Mair, 2010).

However, it should be noted that findings from chapter 2 did show that government parties' positions correlate with the preferences of their supporters. This is important, as it suggests that those voters that (strongly) support a German party that then enters government *do* see their preferences represented. Especially in a proportional multi-party system, where one may expect parties to firstly represent their voters this is good news for representation. Moreover, one may argue that the fact that public preferences on left-right scales are only weakly correlated to positions on specific issues (Leschaeve, 2017), may mean that for parties to represent popular public opinion on issues is a very high bar to clear. That may be so, but chapter 2 does show that opposition parties are able to clear it. This suggests that rather than the difficulty of aggregating relatively unstructured public preferences (for example acting responsibly) may impede congruence between majority voter preferences and the policy positions of German government parties.

Studying political parties using a 'policy centered' approach (Hacker & Pierson, 2014) also enabled the second major contribution of this dissertation: analyzing the policy implications of the ties and contacts between interest groups and political parties. The importance of the interactions between these two sets of possible aggregators of public preferences had often been taken for granted or assumed in the literature, but not studied empirically (e.g. Rasmussen & Lindeboom, 2013; Thomas, 2001). This dissertation made at least two contributions to our knowledge about these consequences for policy. Firstly, the chapters contained multiple indications that political parties remained very important for policy change. The Dutch coalition negotiations studied in chapter 5 were a setting where we might have expected political parties to be relatively strong compared to other stages of policy-making. Still, the fact that interest groups and other policy advocates seldom managed to get policy requests into the coalition agreement that were not previously held positions of political parties indicates that the latter did dominate at least this stage of the policy-making process. The control variable measuring the share of political parties on the same side as an advocate in chapter 4, which encompassed policy issues at different stages of the policy cycle, also provided support for this conjecture. When the political parties had the same position as an advocate and controlling for a range of other factors, the predicted probability that an advocate attained their preferences increased by 19 percent points. Although this was not the main focus of chapter 3, some of the cases of regulatory policy-making in Sweden also highlighted this continued importance of political parties for policy-making. As a clear example, the Center-Party's position on nuclear energy was pivotal in shaping nuclear energy policy in Sweden. All in the chapters of this dissertation therefore suggested

that while interest groups may help to transmit public preferences to political parties and policy-makers (see also: Flöthe & Rasmussen, 2019; Rasmussen & Reher, 2019), the continued strength of political parties indicated that organized interests are not likely to fully offset representational gaps left by political parties due to their comparatively limited influence on policy.

A second finding regarding the policy implications of ties between groups and parties was that even if parties still appear as more dominant forces in policy-making, the contacts or ties between interest groups and political parties *can* matter for policy-making. However, these effects were less straightforward or strong than expected. Firstly, chapter 4 showed that policy advocates that worked with political parties that were both powerful *and* on their side were more likely to attain their preferences on an issue than other advocates. While these results were suggestive of the potential policy implications of contacts between groups and parties, there was no significant difference in preference attainment between advocates that did and did not work with a political party on an issue, nor between advocates that worked with members of parliament or the national cabinet and those that did not. The finding in chapter 5 that the VVD party was less likely to compromise on election promises that were supported by business actors than other types of advocates (even when controlling for the policy area) suggested that the VVD did differentiate between requests from advocates that it had traditional ties with and those it did not. However, there was no such effect for the CDA party, which had – if anything- stronger traditional ties with employers' organizations. Where the results from chapter 4 suggested that the policy implications of working with political parties on a policy issue are not directly related to preference attainment, the results from chapter 5 contained similar results for the policy implications of more traditional linkages between business groups and center-right parties. The discussion in the result section of the fifth chapter suggested that one mediating factor may be the electoral strategy of the political party itself.

Taken together, the evidence presented in this dissertation does not paint a purely positive vision of representation in what are affluent Northwestern European countries with strong democratic credentials. Political parties remain very powerful actors when it comes to decision-making on specific policy issues, which is not in itself problematic. However, the concerns voiced by Mair (2008, 2010) that parties, especially when in government, are not able to fully live up to their representative role are supported by the data presented in chapter 2. What is more, the results suggested that even though interest groups and other policy advocates were sometimes able to represent and translate public preferences to political elites and parties, they were unlikely to act as credible replacements of political parties, at least as long as the latter remain influential in policy-making (cf. Mair, 2010, p. 6).

Of course, not all the findings amounted to an equally negative image. For one, there were several indications that the links between the public and party politicians were not fully severed. Firstly, chapter 2 showed that while parties in government took policy positions that were unrelated to general public opinion, their policy positions *did* correlate with the preferences of voters who supported the party. Admittedly these were smaller parts of the public, but German voters supporting a government party were likely to see the party they voted for taking the policy positions they preferred. Secondly, the fact that parties in opposition generally took positions that correlated strongly with the preferences of the general public suggested that politicians were likely to be aware of public opinion, even if they did not or could not act on it once they entered government. Similarly, the evidence from chapter 3 also indicated that even though – on the four issues studied in the chapter – public opinion did not necessarily influence policy directly, it did affect the attention that Swedish politicians paid to an issue: the larger the share of the public that wanted to see a change to the status quo, the larger the share of the Swedish' parliament's attention in the following year - again suggesting that politicians were aware of public policy preferences. Using a similar research design to that used in chapter 2, Toshkov, Mäder, and Rasmussen (2019) also found that public opinion did have a small effect on the likelihood and speed of policy change, suggesting some connection between public preferences and policy decisions. Finally, to the extent that the reduced correlation between public preferences and the positions of government parties in chapter 2 was due to a choice for responsible over responsive policy making, something this dissertation did not directly measure, this is not necessarily negative. While Mair (2010) was very skeptical of what he saw as the increasing tendency of political parties to prioritize responsible policy-making over representative policy-making, responsible policy-making is in itself important: it often implies actions that can be considered positive or even democratic like safeguarding the environment or pension plans for future generations, creating economic stability or protecting human rights as defined in international treaties.

In addition, some observers of politics may also welcome that the findings in chapters 4 and 5 did not provide an image of interest groups dominating democratically elected political parties. Even if studies have shown that interest groups may often have measures in place to make sure they accurately represent their members (Albareda, 2018), and that their preferences are more likely to align with those of the public than often thought (Flöthe & Rasmussen, 2019), they remain unelected organizations, and there remains considerable concern about the possible bias that groups may introduce to policy-making. Especially in chapter 5, it seems that policy advocates, under certain conditions, predominantly affect the choices made by negotiating politicians regarding which election pledges to fulfill. This can even be seen as (very) positive, as too strong

advocacy influence that would make a coalition agreement deviate from election promises is hardly good news for democracy.

Finally, each of the dissertation's chapters also contributed to the literature beyond the general points outlined in the introduction and the discussion above. The following section therefore highlights important additional findings from each chapter.

6.3 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While the above clearly demonstrated the advantages of studying political parties and their activities on specific policy issues, there are of course also limitations to the approach in general and this dissertation in particular. This section therefore outlines a number of these limitations. Each of the chapters also included some discussion of the limitations of the respective chapter, which is why this part focuses predominantly on limitations that cut across multiple chapters. Of course, some of these could be addressed in future research, which is why this part of the chapter also provides several suggestions for future studies.

A first limitation of this dissertation is that it focused on a relatively small number of countries that, with the partial exception of the inclusion of the United Kingdom in chapter 4, shared many institutional and cultural features. This means that the findings from the chapters, even those including single countries, were likely to generalize to exactly this set of wealthy, (neo) corporatist countries with proportional electoral systems and traditions of (multiparty) cabinet governments. It also means that while some of the findings may apply to democracies outside of North-Western Europe, such generalizations would be more speculative.

The conclusions above did not paint a very positive image of the ability of political parties to represent public opinion, nor of the ability of interest groups to help address this. More research is necessary before firm conclusions can be drawn, however. Future studies could, for example, expand the number of political parties and countries studied in a similar research design as the one used in chapter 2. This would also allow for investigating the possible causes of the differences in congruence between opposition and government parties. For example, are the policy positions of certain types of government coalitions (for example those with relatively high levels of ideological conflict) less congruent with public opinion than others (for example minority governments that can cooperate with different parties depending on the issue)? Or are the lower levels of congruence related not to coalition politics, but to the restrictions placed on governing parties by international treaties, the obligation to pay for policy plans and other features of responsible government?

Another important avenue of future research that is needed before we can draw firmer conclusions about the representative roles of political parties and interest groups, is to examine the representative consequences of the ties and interactions between them. Chapters 4 and 5 showed that these ties mattered for the lobbying success of policy advocates under certain conditions, but it is less clear how they affected the representative capacity of either interest groups or political parties. The consequences of these ties and contacts may also be different for each of these two sets of interest aggregators. As an example, lobbying political parties may help interest groups to better represent their members' preferences and get them translated into policy. At the same time, too much interest group influence might move the policy positions of political parties away from their voters' or members' preferences. These are important questions for future studies. One concrete way future studies could study this would be by studying how parties' election manifestos are written. There is evidence from qualitative studies that interest groups are often involved in the writing of these manifestos in Austria, Ireland and Norway (Allern & Saglie, 2008; Däubler, 2012; Dolezal et al., 2012). Dutch political parties are also approached by organized interests when writing their manifestos, evidenced both by the interviews done for chapter 5 and the Dutch Social Democratic party (PvdA) which discloses that it consults with several dozen interest groups and experts when drafting its election manifestos. Finally, there is evidence that in corporate countries with high levels of trade union membership, social democratic parties are more likely to pay attention to issues pertaining to the welfare state in their election manifestos (Otjes & Green-Pedersen, 2019). While this is not necessarily problematic, future studies could investigate whether these ties help political parties make policy plans that also represent their members' or voters' wishes, or work in the opposite direction.

There are also limitations that are inherent to the policy-centered approach used in this dissertation. An important limitation is that while each of the chapters in this dissertation had a clear definition of what constituted a specific policy issue for inclusion in the analysis (or a request in the case of chapter 5), a general definition of what constitutes a specific policy issue is less readily available (Burstein, 2014, p. 20). This especially has implications for studies of the preference attainment of interest groups. While a specific organization may be rated as having attained its preference to 'raise the retirement age to 67 years', the organization may have actually lobbied for much more than just this: perhaps the organization also wanted an exception for workers doing manual labor, or wanted the pace at which the retirement age was raised to be more incremental. Chapter 5, which studies lobbying success based on requests made by policy advocates rather than predefined issues, therefore comes closer to measuring whether advocates were successful in achieving their self-defined goals (see also: (Baumgartner et al., 2009). Variation in the definition of an 'issue' also permeates to existing studies have chosen different definitions of issues, ranging from those available in opinion polls (Gilens &

Page, 2014; Rasmussen, Mäder, et al., 2018) to those on legislative agendas (Beyers, Dür, Marshall, & Wonka, 2014; Burstein, 2014). Yet others, especially those studying policy agendas, use the term 'policy issue' to mean what this dissertation has called an issue area or dimension like environmental policy or immigration policy (e.g. Bevan & Jennings, 2017; Klüver, 2016; Volkens et al., 2019). As also argued by Burstein (2014), future research could more critically reflect on the effects of defining a policy issue for studying lobbying success and political representation, because even a focus on 'specific' legislative proposals or policy issues may still hide a lot of lobbying influence.

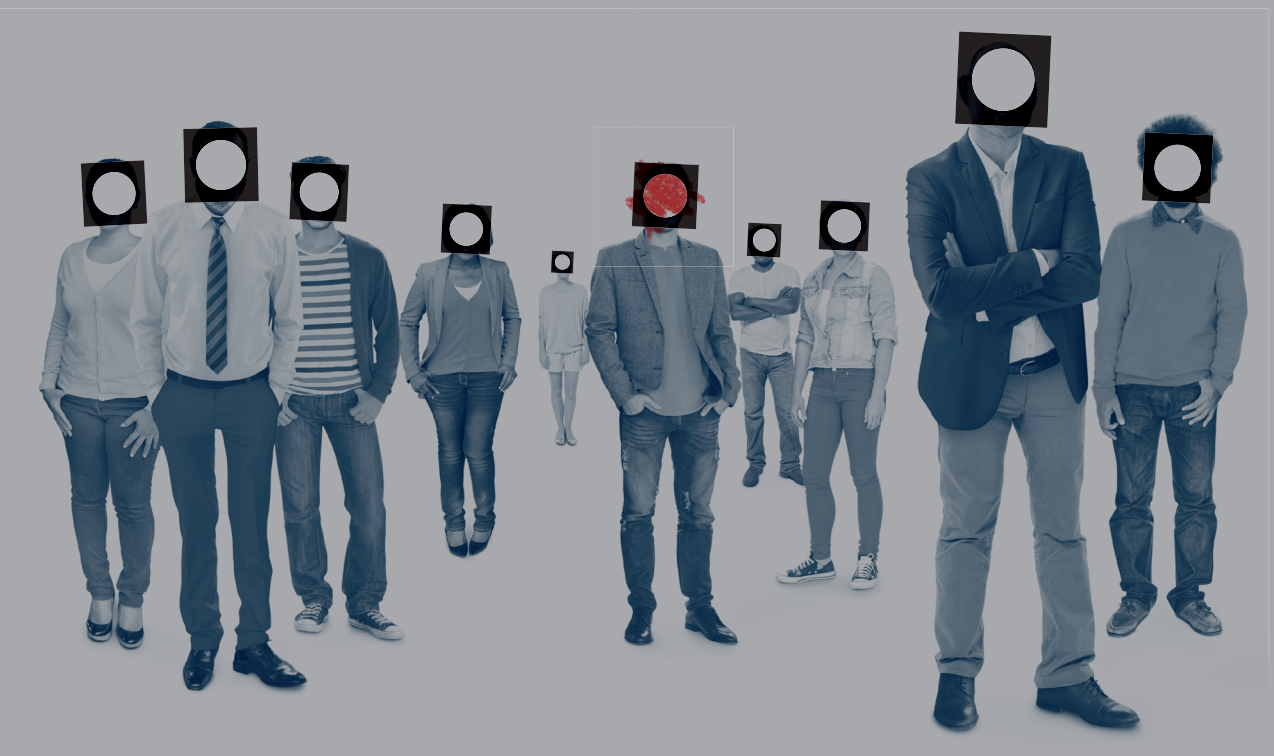
Thirdly, while even the specific issues that were studied here can be argued to not be specific enough, it is important to stress that broader ideological conflicts and congruence *do* also matter. Political actors care about the broad direction of policy or policy areas and act accordingly. An example from this dissertation comes from chapter 5, appendix 5.3, which showed that policy requests that were about economic issues *and* supported by the VVD were more likely to end up in the coalition agreement than requests in other policy areas. These results suggest that beyond the specific issues, the VVD party also aimed to generally grant lobbying requests (or at least was less likely to compromise) on economic issues that it also owned (Petrocik, 1996). Future studies could help improve our understanding of politics by theoretically linking the different *levels* at which policy can be both measured and conceptualized. An example is the increasing evidence in the literature on congruence that an exclusive focus on ideological scales may conceal considerable gaps in representation (Broockman, 2016; Lesschaeve, 2017), a finding also highlighted in chapter 2 of this dissertation.

On the other hand, studies of interest groups and advocacy generally focus on specific policy issues. Given that lobbying tends to work at this level and since most advocacy organizations do not aim to push policy in a more general left-right direction, this is a sensible choice. Many advocacy organizations do, however, have aims that are broader than the specific issue that is studied. Examples are environmental organizations that aim to raise environmental standards across the board, or business organizations that seek to generally create favorable economic conditions for their members or economic sector. Like chapter 2 of this dissertation moved the study of political parties to the level of specific policy issues, future studies that estimate interest group ideal points on such 'intermediate' issues like Europeanization or immigration (see McKay (2008) and Vannoni (2017) for efforts in this direction) *and* connect these to more specific policy issues, could further our understanding of interest group influence. They may also provide another avenue for studying organizational ties and cooperation between political parties and interest group.

6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

All in all, this dissertation demonstrated that a policy-centered approach (Hacker & Pierson, 2014) could be applied effectively to studying the representative capacity and policy positions of political parties. It showed that taking such an approach challenges the relatively positive findings about the congruence between public opinion and party positions in previous studies. These findings are important, not in the least because we know that levels of ideological congruence between the public and parties are related to citizens' satisfaction with democracy (Reher, 2015). Overestimating the extent to which such congruence occurs on the policy issues that matter for the daily lives of citizens may therefore lead to overlooking possible causes of citizens' dissatisfaction with democracy. Similarly, the policy centered approach made it easier to analyze the positions of government parties: again, the finding that these tend to take positions that were unrelated to public preferences in Germany, opens up important future questions about the implications this has for democratic representation and legitimacy.

Moreover, the approach made it possible to study the policy implications of the contacts and ties between interest groups and political parties. Placing the policy preferences of these two sets of interest aggregators on a common metric helped move the literature studying these ties forward. Understanding the policy implications of these ties is important. One area where such an understanding may help is in formulating lobbying regulation that helps improve or safeguard representation. An example from chapter 5 is the finding that although lobbying seems to have had some effects on the coalition agreement, these effects were relatively modest and generally did not make political parties deviate from their election pledges. In spite of the large amounts of media attention for one granted lobbying request that did not previously feature in an election manifesto (scrapping the dividend tax), the data clearly showed that this policy was the exception, not the rule. The fact that this specific request was picked up by the media and opposition parties and the government abandoned the plan, suggests that stricter regulation of lobbying contacts during the government formation would possibly not have changed the final outcome of the negotiations. Instead, existing laws and practices regarding the public availability of government information seem to have worked as a better safeguard than the publication of all letters sent to the government (which did of course facilitate chapter 5 of this dissertation). This example serves to illustrate the importance of studying the activities of political parties from a policy-centered perspective, as it can help us better understand their representative capacity *and* the impact of lobbying and interest groups on democratic representation through political parties.



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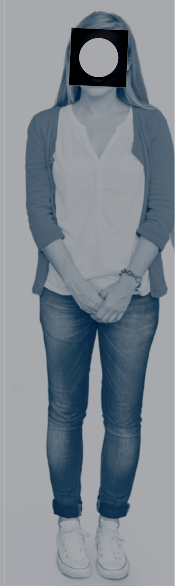

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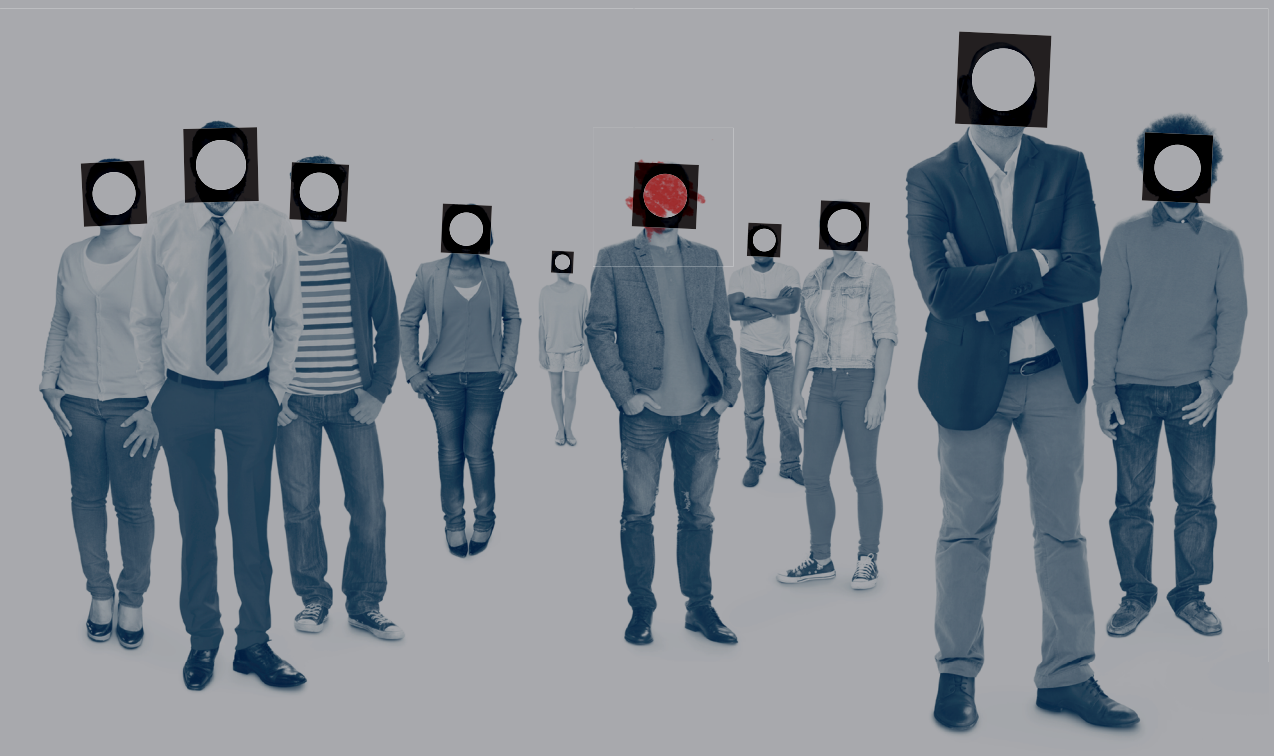
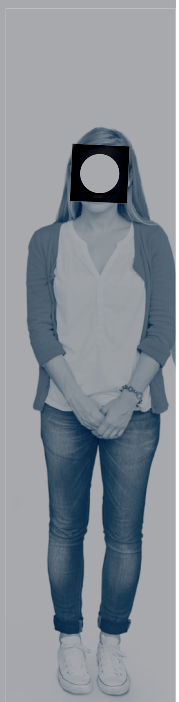


Appendix



APPENDIX 1.1: DIVISION OF LABOUR

This dissertation benefitted from being written as part of the GovLis project led by Anne Rasmussen. The embedding in this larger project, which among other things studied the extent to and conditions under which interest groups mediate the relationship between public opinion and policy outputs, enabled analyses on a much larger scale than would otherwise have been possible, especially for chapter 4. This appendix briefly outlines the contributions of the author to the data collection for the different empirical chapters in the dissertation.

The 102 German policy issues studied in *chapter 2* were selected and coded by the principal investigator and other project members. The author of the dissertation did, however, develop the coding scheme for the media coding of party positions, as well as conducted and oversaw the coding done by student assistants. The application of MRP was developed in close cooperation with Lars Mäder and all analyses were conducted by the author of the dissertation.

The four regulatory issues in *chapter 3* were selected jointly by the co-authors of the chapter, with the author of the dissertation conducting large parts of the data collection himself. While based on code-books used in other parts of the project (to which the candidate also contributed) all coding of media articles by student assistants for this study was coordinated and checked by the author of the dissertation. The quantitative analyses were primarily conducted by Dimiter Toshkov in close cooperation with the author of the dissertation, with the latter being primarily responsible for the qualitative analysis (in close cooperation with both co-authors).

Out of all the chapters, *chapter 4* benefitted most from being embedded in the GovLis project. Here, the author was an active part of the team that conducted the media coding and administered and developed the survey of policy advocates (taking several months' fulltime work), but many of the choices (for example the selection of countries, policy issues, design of the media coding as well as the survey's focus) were the result of the choices made by Anne Rasmussen in cooperation with the entire team. The interviews for determining the positions of political parties in five countries would also have been impossible without the GovLis project, even if the author did conduct some of these interviews. All analyses in the paper, as well as the collection of data about political parties and data cleaning were conducted by the author of the dissertation.

Finally, for *chapter 5*, all data collection, cleaning, codebook development, supervision of a student assistant as well as analyses were conducted by the author of this dissertation.

APPENDIX 2.1: THE POLITBAROMETER QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY PARTY SUPPORTERS

The original formulation of the survey questions in German:

1. In Deutschland neigen viele Leute längere Zeit einer bestimmten politischen Partei zu, obwohl sie auch ab und zu eine andere Partei wählen. Wie ist das bei Ihnen: Neigen Sie - ganz allgemein gesprochen - einer bestimmten Partei zu?

2. Falls die/der Befragte einer Partei zuneigt

Wie stark oder wie schwach neigen Sie - alles zusammengenommen - dieser Partei zu? ...
0 TNZ
1 Sehr stark,
2 ziemlich stark,
3 mäßig,
4 ziemlich schwach,
5 sehr schwach?
9 KA

Translation by the author:

1. In Germany many people tend to support a specific political party over a longer period of time, even if they sometimes also vote for another party. How is that for you? Do you – speaking generally – tend towards a specific political party?

2. In case the respondent does tend to favour a political party:

All things considered, how strongly or weakly do you tend to favour this party?...
0 – TNZ
1 – Very strongly
2 – Rather strongly
3 – Moderately
4 – Rather weakly
5 – Very weakly
9 – Don't know

APPENDIX 2.2: STRUCTURE OF THE STACKED DATASET ILLUSTRATING TWO HYPOTHETICAL POLICY ISSUES

Case	Policy Issue	General public support	Political party	Party position	Government party
1	1	.6	SDP	Favour	1
2	1	.6	CDU/CSU	Against	0
3	1	.6	FPD	Against	0
4	1	.6	Greens	Favour	1
5	1	.6	Linke	Neutral	0
6	2	.2	SDP	Against	0
7	2	.2	CDU/CSU	Favour	1
8	2	.2	FPD	Favour	1
9	2	.2	Greens	Against	0
10	2	.2	Linke	Against	0

APPENDIX 2.3: MULTILEVEL LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODELS PREDICTING WHETHER A PARTY WAS IN FAVOUR OF A POLICY ISSUE

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Supporter preferences	4.55***	4.54***	0.28	7.76***	6.90*
	(0.88)	(0.89)	(1.92)	(1.45)	(3.09)
Nicheness		3.23*	-0.72	3.83*	3.15
		(1.50)	(2.23)	(1.60)	(2.72)
Supporter preferences* Nicheness			7.60*		1.23
			(3.23)		(3.96)
Government party		0.58	0.48	3.38***	3.22**
		(0.54)	(0.54)	(0.92)	(1.04)
Supporter preferences* Government Party				-5.57***	-5.31**
				(1.46)	(1.68)
Controls					
Party (ref: SPD)					
CDU/CSU	-0.07	-1.21+	-1.17	-1.27+	-1.27+
	(0.48)	(0.73)	(0.73)	(0.74)	(0.74)
FDP	-0.44	-0.38	-0.33	0.33	0.31
	(1.15)	(1.17)	(1.16)	(1.33)	(1.32)
Grüne	0.43	-0.42	-0.41	0.22	0.19
	(1.24)	(1.28)	(1.28)	(1.47)	(1.47)
Linke	0.15	-0.58	-0.66	-0.11	-0.15
	(1.21)	(1.25)	(1.25)	(1.43)	(1.42)
Party size	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.05
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Media Salience	-0.09	-0.08	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05
	(0.39)	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.41)	(0.41)
Constant	-2.87+	-4.66*	-2.46	-7.71**	-7.18*
	(1.57)	(1.88)	(2.07)	(2.36)	(2.87)
Coalition fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Policy-level random intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of cases	334	334	334	334	334
AIC	416	414	411	399	401
BIC	465	472	472	460	466

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

APPENDIX 2.4

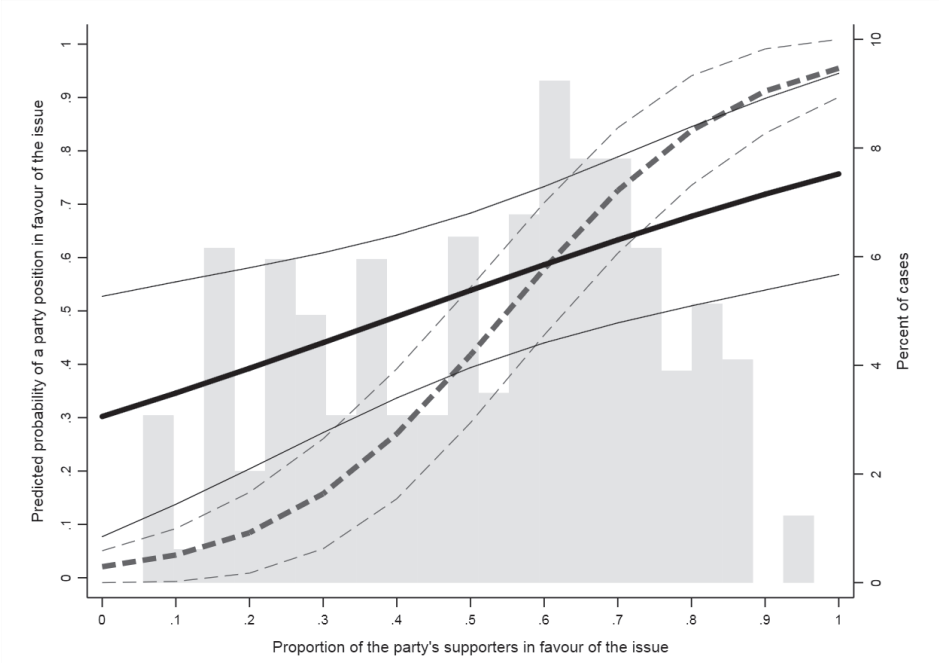


Figure A2.4.1: Predicted probability of a position in favour of a policy issue for government parties and opposition parties (left axis) and the distribution of cases (right axis), based on the proportion of party supporters in favour of the issue

Figure note: The black solid line indicates the predictions for government parties and the red dashed line for opposition parties (left axis) with 95% confidence intervals, based on Model 5 in Appendix 2.3. The shaded grey area indicates the distribution of the cases (as a percentage of the total N) across public support (right axis).

APPENDIX 2.5: EXPLORING ISSUE-CHARACTERISTICS

This appendix explores the conjecture that niche parties may not generally side more with their supporters than more mainstream parties, but only do so on the policy issues they own (Giger & Lefkofridi, 2014; Klüver & Spoon, 2016). The argument has so far been tested in terms of the attention that niche parties paid to issue dimensions like the environment or immigration (Giger & Lefkofridi, 2014; Klüver & Spoon, 2016). Applying issue-ownership to specific policy issues is not straightforward. In order to establish issue ownership, the section below relied on data from the Comparative Manifestos Project (Volkens et al., 2017). Firstly each specific policy issue was tied to a policy dimension (see Appendix 2.7). Secondly the topics of quasi sentences in the manifestos of the political parties that were dedicated to the same policy dimension were calculated (see table A2.5.2). A party's ownership of an issue is then defined as the share of sentences in the manifesto that were dedicated to the general dimension at the time of the statement by the political party (Klüver & Spoon, 2016). Since manifestos are only written before elections, the 'ownership' score of a single manifesto was applied from one year before the election for which the manifesto was written to one year before the next election. The one-year period is chosen because it is the period during which the manifesto was written.

Table A2.5.1 reports on models that investigate whether niche parties' positions are more related to those of their supporters on issues they own. Model 1 demonstrates that the three way interaction (testing whether the effect of being a more niche party on the effect of public opinion depends on the extent to which the party owns an issue) is not strong nor significant. Importantly and against the expectations, Model 2 shows the same for the effect on the relation between (niche) party positions and the preferences of supporters. Moreover, Models 3 and 4 show the same results but with congruence (whether a majority of the public (Model 3) or a party's supporters (Model 4) are on the same side of a policy issue). Here the effect of owning an issue does not affect (neither strongly nor significantly) the likelihood that a niche party's position is congruent with those of its supporters – again disconfirming the expectation. Of course, this is a very tentative test and future studies could more systematically assess the ownership op specific policy issues by political parties and the consequences it has for the public - party position linkage.

Table A2.5.1: Multilevel logistic models exploring issue-ownership. Models 1 and 2 predict a party's position and models 3 and 4 whether a party's position was congruent with public (3) or supporters' (4) preferences. Tests of issue ownership theory marked in bold.

Model:	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**
Dependent Variable:	Party position	Party position	Congruence public	Congruence supporters
Public support	0.76 (3.41)			
Nicheness	-0.88 (3.36)	0.19 (3.91)	0.54 (1.67)	0.94 (1.85)
Ownership	0.17 (0.32)	0.17 (0.37)	-0.14 (0.10)	-0.14 (0.11)
Public support*Nicheness	4.42 (5.77)			
Public support*Ownership	-0.49 (0.55)			
Nicheness*Ownership	0.01 (0.54)	-0.18 (0.62)	**0.20 (0.18)**	**0.19 (0.19)**
Public support*Nicheness* Ownership	**0.38 (0.91)**			
Supporter preferences		3.92 (3.94)		
Supporter preferences*Nicheness		2.14 (6.48)		
Supporter preferences*Ownership		-0.61 (0.63)		
Supporter preferences* Nicheness*Ownership		**0.91 (1.04)**		
Controls				
Party (ref: SPD)				
CDU/CSU	-0.91 (0.66)	-1.08 (0.73)	-1.15+ (0.66)	-0.68 (0.69)
FDP	-0.58 (1.04)	-0.49 (1.19)	-1.80+ (1.09)	-2.57* (1.24)
Grüne	-0.59 (1.14)	-0.58 (1.32)	-0.97 (1.20)	-1.28 (1.40)
Linke	-0.65 (1.10)	-0.87 (1.28)	-0.72 (1.19)	-2.15 (1.34)
Party size	0.01 (0.04)	0.02 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.06 (0.05)
Media salience	0.19 (0.34)	-0.03 (0.39)	-0.44 (0.35)	-0.59 (0.38)
Constant	-1.35 (2.39)	-3.02 (2.73)	1.96 (1.76)	3.20+ (1.93)
Coalition fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Issue random-intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of cases	334	334	334	334
AIC	456	413	454	416
BIC	529	486	511	474

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

Table A.5.2: Additive policy scale dimensions from the CMP categories.

Names	CMP Left	CMP Right
Education spending	506 Educational Provision Expansion: Positive	507 Education Expenditure Limitation: Positive
Environmental Protection	501 Environmental Protection: Positive + 416 Anti-Growth Economy: Positive	410 Productivity: Positive
Foreign Alliances	101 Foreign Special Relationships: Positive	102: Foreign Special Relationships: Negative
Free Market Economy	403 Market Regulation: Positive + 412 Controlled Economy: Positive + 413 Nationalisation: Positive + 415 Marxist Analysis: Positive	401 Free Enterprise: Positive + 402 Incentives: Positive
Internationalism	107 Internationalism: Positive	109 Internationalism: Negative
Justice and Freedom	201 Freedom and human rights: positive + 202 Democracy: positive	605 Law and order: positive
Macroeconomic	409 Keynesian Demand Management: Positive	414 Economic Orthodoxy: Positive
Militarism	105 Military: Negative	104 Military: Positive
Multiculturalism	607 Multiculturalism: Positive	608 Multiculturalism: Negative
Target groups	705 Underprivileged minority groups/ positive	704 Middle-class and professional groups/positive
Traditional Morality	604 Traditional Morality: Negative	603 Traditional Morality:
Welfare State	504 Welfare State Expansion: Positive	505 Welfare State Limitation: Positive
Labour groups	701 Labour groups: Positive	702 Labour groups: Negative
Political system	301 Decentralisation	302 Centralisation
European Union	108 European Community/Union: Positive	110 European Community/Union: Negative
Constitutionalism	204 Constitutionalism: Negative	203 Constitutionalism: Positive
National way of life	602 National Way of Life: Negative	601 National Way of Life: Positive
General left right scale	103 Anti-Imperialism: Anti-Colonialism + 105 Military: Negative + 106 Peace: Positive + 107 Internationalism: Positive + 202 Democracy: Positive + 403 Market Regulation: Positive + 404 Economic Planning: Positive + 406 Protectionism: Positive + 412 Controlled Economy: Positive + 413 Nationalisation: Positive + 504 Welfare State Expansion: Positive + 506 Education Expansion: Positive + 701 Labour Groups: Positive	104 Military: Positive + 201 Freedom and Human Rights: Positive + 203 Constitutionalism: Positive + 305 Political Authority: Positive + 401 Free Enterprise: Positive + 402 Incentives: Positive + 407 Protectionism: Negative + 414 Economic Orthodoxy: Positive + 505 Welfare State Limitation: Positive + 601 National Way of Life: Positive + 603 Traditional Morality: Positive + 05 Law and Order: Positive + 606 Social Harmony: Positive

The second part of this Appendix explores whether the link between political parties and the positions of the general public and their supporters is affected by the media salience of a policy issue. There is some evidence that policy outputs are more aligned with public preferences on issues that attract media attention (e.g. Lax & Phillips, 2012). The argument is usually that the actions of politicians are more scrutinized on such issues which should increase the electoral costs of ignoring public opinion (Erikson et al., 1995). Moreover, politicians may be more aware of public preferences as a result of media attention.

On the other hand and applied to political parties, media salience should make it harder for parties to hide or blur unpopular positions (Rovny, 2012). Similarly to how government parties may be more pressured into voicing unpopular policy decisions (Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2010), media attention for an issue may reduce the opportunities for hiding an unpopular position.

Table 2.5.3 shows that the latter of these two arguments bears out in the data. Both the effects of public opinion (Model 1) and of supporter preferences (Model 2) on party positions are weakened on salient issues. However, the interaction effect between media salience and supporter preferences is only significant at the 10% level in Model 2 and not at all for models predicting congruence in Models 3 and 4, even if they are in the same general direction. Taken together, the models provide some (but not strong) evidence for the conclusion that political parties – at least when it comes to the positions they take in the media – take less popular positions on salient issues. The fact that party positions are also measured through the media *and* the fact that missing party positions mainly occurred on non-salient issues means that these results may be dependent on the method used here – even if the support for blurring behaviour (Rovny, 2012) is interesting in its own right.

Table A2.5.3: Multilevel logistic models exploring media salience. Models 1 and 2 predict a party's position and models 3 and 4 whether a party's position was congruent with public (3) or supporters' (4) preferences. Effects of media salience highlighted in **bold**.

Model:	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**
Dependent variable:	Party position	Party position	Congruence Public	Congruence Supporters
Public support	2.71***			
	(0.64)			
Media salience	3.71**	2.49+	**-0.43**	**-0.58**
	(1.40)	(1.39)	**(0.34)**	**(0.36)**
Public support* Media salience	**-4.75****			
	(1.78)			
Supporter preferences		4.99***		
		(0.93)		
Supporter preferences*Media salience		**-3.47+**		
		(1.80)		
Nicheness	2.74*	3.07*	1.34	1.38
	(1.36)	(1.48)	(1.36)	(1.49)
Party in government	0.50	0.60	-1.28*	-1.66**
	(0.50)	(0.53)	(0.54)	(0.64)
Controls Party (Ref: SPD)				
CDU/CSU	-1.09+	-1.20+	-1.13+	-0.56
	(0.66)	(0.72)	(0.66)	(0.70)
FDP	-0.58	-0.54	-1.43	-2.09+
	(1.02)	(1.17)	(1.11)	(1.27)
Grüne	-0.45	-0.48	-0.66	-0.83
	(1.11)	(1.27)	(1.21)	(1.42)
Linke	-0.58	-0.69	-0.31	-1.58
	(1.08)	(1.25)	(1.20)	(1.36)
	(0.68)	(0.76)	(0.69)	(0.76)
Party size	0.01	0.02	-0.00	-0.04
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Constant	-3.28*	-4.76*	0.83	2.11
	(1.57)	(1.87)	(1.64)	(1.81)
Coalition fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Issue- level random intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of cases	334	334	334	334
AIC	451	413	448	408
BIC	508	474	501	462

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

APPENDIX 2.6: ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

Table A2.6.1: Multilevel Logistic models predicting congruence between a party's position and the preferences of the general public (models 1 and 2) and between a party's position and the preferences of its supporters (models 3 and 4).

Model	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dependent variable	Congruence party public	Congruence party public	Congruence party supporter	Congruence party supporter
Nicheness	1.70	1.34	2.07	1.38
	(1.34)	(1.36)	(1.48)	(1.49)
Party in government		-1.28*		-1.66**
		(0.54)		(0.64)
Controls Party (ref: SPD)				
CDU/CSU	-1.20+ (0.65)	-1.13+ (0.66)	-0.72 (0.69)	-0.56 (0.70)
FDP	-1.78 (1.08)	-1.43 (1.11)	-2.60* (1.24)	-2.09+ (1.27)
Grüne	-0.96 (1.19)	-0.66 (1.21)	-1.33 (1.39)	-0.83 (1.42)
Linke	-0.67 (1.17)	-0.31 (1.20)	-2.14 (1.34)	-1.58 (1.36)
Party size	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.04)	-0.06 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.05)
Media salience	-0.45 (0.34)	-0.43 (0.34)	-0.60 (0.37)	-0.58 (0.36)
Constant	1.06 (1.61)	0.83 (1.64)	2.38 (1.79)	2.11 (1.81)
Coalition fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Issue level random intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Cases	334	334	334	334
AIC	452	448	414	408
BIC	501	501	464	462

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

Table A2.6.2: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting whether a party is in favour of a policy issue, excluding one political party at a time. Based on Model 5 from Table 2.2.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Excluding SPD	Excluding CDUCSU	Excluding FDP	Excluding Grüne	Excluding Linke
Public support	-2.35 (3.66)	2.88 (3.02)	4.11 (2.87)	3.06 (2.74)	2.66 (2.52)
Nicheness	-0.29 (3.51)	-0.04 (3.75)	1.83 (2.51)	3.12 (2.94)	3.54 (2.50)
Public support* Nicheness	8.67 (5.29)	3.65 (4.41)	0.51 (3.83)	1.68 (4.04)	1.47 (3.62)
Government party	1.98* (0.88)	3.49** (1.24)	2.57** (0.95)	2.67* (1.06)	2.28** (0.87)
Public support* Government party	-2.64+ (1.41)	-5.27** (1.95)	-4.52** (1.58)	-4.12** (1.51)	-3.74** (1.43)
Controls Party (ref: SPD[1])					
CDU/CSU			-0.66 (0.72)	-0.89 (0.70)	-1.68* (0.73)
FDP	1.66 (1.85)	-1.57 (1.48)		-0.72 (1.18)	0.65 (1.18)
Grüne	1.47 (1.88)	-0.71 (1.53)	-0.72 (1.33)		0.40 (1.26)
Linke	1.25 (1.95)	-0.93 (1.51)	-0.72 (1.28)	-1.03 (1.39)	
Party size	0.03 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.06)	-0.00 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)	0.07 (0.05)
Media salience	-0.23 (0.38)	0.58 (0.55)	0.35 (0.42)	-0.09 (0.37)	0.04 (0.39)
Constant	-3.49 (3.17)	-2.07 (3.24)	-3.14 (2.50)	-3.51 (2.29)	-5.59* (2.45)
Coalition fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Issue level random-intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Cases	253	256	268	264	295
AIC	337	331	366	358	400
BIC	390	388	424	412	459

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

[1]In Model 1 (which excludes SPD), the reference category is CDU/CSU

APPENDIX 2.7: LIST OF POLICY ISSUES

Policy Issue	Policy Scale	Public support (%)	Don't knows (%)	Majority of party's supporters on other side than the public
Making Hartz IV receivers do "generally useful work" more strongly than before[1]	WelfareState	81%	4%	
Cutting government expenditure on welfare	WelfareState	31%	4%	FDP
Cutting government expenditure on healthcare	WelfareState	15%	2%	SPD
Cutting government expenditure on traffic and street construction	Free Market Economy	35%	2%	
Cutting government expenditure on defence	Militarism	85%	3%	CDU/CSU
Cutting government expenditure on childcare	WelfareState	6%	2%	
Cutting government expenditure on pensions	WelfareState	8%	1%	
Cutting government expenditure on family promotion/support	WelfareState	14%	2%	SPD
Introducing a tax on buying and selling securities ("Wertpapieren")	Free Market Economy	82%	7%	
Reversing the raise of the VAT level	Free Market Economy	78%	6%	SPD
Abolishing the rule that allows people who self-report their tax evasion to only pay back the evaded taxes without additional penalties	Free Market Economy	60%	3%	
Only returning soldiers from Afghanistan later than 2011[2]	Militarism	79%	5%	
Government intervention in levels of wages of managers[3]	Free Market Economy	69%	3%	CDU/CSU
Providing a government loan of 50 million Euros to Quelle (a company)[4]	Free Market Economy	19%	5%	
Extending the duration of the military deployment in Afghanistan[2]	Militarism	40%	3%	CDU/CSU, Grüne
Increasing the number of German soldiers in Afghanistan	Militarism	38%	57%	
There are different rules for cancelling long term rental contracts for those to rent a property and those who own it. The term for cancellation is three months for renters, but depends on the duration of the contract for owners. The proposal is to equalise these terms.	Free Market Economy	50%	9%	CDU/CSU, Linke

APPENDIX 2.7: LIST OF POLICY ISSUES (*CONTINUED*)

Policy Issue	Policy Scale	Public support (%)	Don't knows (%)	Majority of party's supporters on other side than the public
Selling a part of fully state owned Deutsche Bahn (the national railway company)	Free Market Economy	36%	10%	
Ensuring that pensioners who have paid into the pension system for an extensive period of time receive a pension that is above the poverty line	WelfareState	86%	3%	SPD
Give financial support (from the state) to Opel (car manufacturer)	Free Market Economy	43%	6%	
Giving out consumer coupons ("Konsumgutscheine") to all citizens[5].	Macroeconomy	17%	3%	
Lowering taxes for private persons	Macroeconomy	83%	4%	
Giving financial support to individual companies that get into trouble	Free Market Economy	59%	7%	
Providing stronger tax reliefs for companies	Free Market Economy	67%	7%	
Introducing a wealth tax for the wealthy	Targetgroups	68%	5%	
Reintroducing the tax return for commuters from the first-kilometer[6]	Free Market Economy	88%	3%	
Also employing German soldiers in parts of Afghanistan with more conflict	Militarism	17%	4%	
Changing the constitution to allow the military to assist the police in cases where the threats are of such a nature that the policy alone cannot deal with them	Militarism	71%	4%	CDU/CSU, Grüne
Raising the unemployment benefits II ("Arbeitslosengeldes II") in the Hartz-IV regulation	WelfareState	81%	8%	
Introduction of a minimum wage for people delivering mail	Free Market Economy	87%	5%	
Introducing state-controlled electricity prizes	Free Market Economy	66%	5%	
Stopping all nuclear power plants by 2021	Environmental Protection	47%	7%	CDU/CSU, FDP
Storing fingerprints of all German citizens and making them available to the police	Justice and Freedom	62%	2%	Grüne
Increasing taxation on flying	Environmental Protection	60%	4%	

APPENDIX 2.7: LIST OF POLICY ISSUES (*CONTINUED*)

Policy Issue	Policy Scale	Public support (%)	Don't knows (%)	Majority of party's supporters on other side than the public
Raising the level of obligatory contributions to health insurance to match health care expenditure	WelfareState	17%	2%	
Banning computer games that celebrate violence ("gewaltverherrlichenden") in response to the school shooting in Emsdetten	Justice and Freedom	72%	2%	
During times of peace the army is only allowed to operate on German territory in case of disasters: allowing the army to assist the police also when there are no disasters	Militarism	71%	3%	Grüne
In the construction sector the minimum wage is set as the lowest wage level of the collective labour agreement to protect workers from cheaper foreign labour. Expanding this provision to all sectors of the economy	Free Market Economy	67%	6%	
Raising income taxes on very high incomes	Targetgroups	72%	3%	
Abolishing a number of tax returns to introduce a flat-rate income tax	Targetgroups	45%	37%	FDP
Unemployed spouses receive health insurance through their partner. Introducing a contribution to health insure for the unemployed spouses of high income employees	WelfareState	76%	4%	
Additional compensation payments for working nights, Sundays and holidays are not taxed. Limiting the extent to which this is the case.	Free Market Economy	34%	3%	
Reducing the subsidies on coal	Free Market Economy	76%	14%	
Raising the VAT-level	Free Market Economy	23%	2%	
Allowing the taking of DNA not just in case of severe crimes and sexual assaults, but also for less severe offences	Justice and Freedom	73%	4%	Grüne
Making it obligatory for parliamentarians (in the Bundestag) to report income from external sources to the chair of the parliament	Justice and Freedom	81%	3%	

APPENDIX 2.7: LIST OF POLICY ISSUES (*CONTINUED*)

Policy Issue	Policy Scale	Public support (%)	Don't knows (%)	Majority of party's supporters on other side than the public
Banning paternity tests without permission from the mother	Justice and Freedom	24%	6%	
After a road-toll for trucks, introducing a road-toll for cars	Environmental Protection	57%	5%	
Introducing a limited ban of Diesel-cars and trucks without air filters from inner-cities with air pollution	Environmental Protection	64%	3%	
Creating a new health insurance where all people, including the self-employed and civil servants, pay a certain percentage of their income (including interest and income from renting) as health insurance	WelfareState	62%	27%	CDU/CSU, FDP
Lowering the contributions to health insure and letting people pay a part of treatment costs directly	WelfareState	29%	4%	
Prosecuting illegal work ("Schwarzarbeit") in private homes including babysitting and cleaning	Justice and Freedom	30%	2%	
Founding elite-universities	Education spending	38%	8%	
Abolishing one holiday	Macroeconomy	38%	3%	
Raising the contribution of those without children to the care-insurance (Pflegeversicherung) by up to 9 euros a month to compensate those with children (in line with a judgement of the constitutional court)[7]	WelfareState	57%	3%	
Abolishing the subsidies for buying a house (Eigenheimzulage)	Macroeconomy	26%	6%	
Reducing the tax return for commuters by car, so that they are only compensated from travel above 21 kilometres	Macroeconomy	28%	3%	
Cutting government expenditure on policies to (re)educate employees ('Umschulungsmassahmen')	Free Market Economy	49%	4%	CDU/CSU
Reducing subsidies on coal	Free Market Economy	73%	17%	
Letting only employees pay for the cost of health insurance instead of splitting the cost between employers and employees	WelfareState	17%	3%	

APPENDIX 2.7: LIST OF POLICY ISSUES (*CONTINUED*)

Policy Issue	Policy Scale	Public support (%)	Don't knows (%)	Majority of party's supporters on other side than the public
Removing dental care from the obligatory health insurance and instead making employees take out an obligatory private insure for dental care	WelfareState	23%	2%	
Making people pay a 15 euro contribution when visiting a doctor	WelfareState	21%	3%	
Making patients pay 10% of all health care costs themselves to a maximum of 2% of their total annual income	WelfareState	29%	4%	
Replacing the income-adjusted contribution for obligatory health insurance to a flat rate with tax measures to compensate low-income groups	WelfareState	66%	31%	
Abolishing a number of tax returns (for home owners, commuters and others) to lower taxation rates	Free Market Economy	60%	11%	
Loosening regulations against the dismissal of employees for small companies	Free Market Economy	50%	10%	
Forcing companies that fail to provide education placements to pay an education-tax if there is a shortage of such placements[8]	Free Market Economy	58%	4%	CDU/CSU
Treating people with children more favourably than people without children for the pension-insurance	Free Market Economy	58%	3%	
Raising the tobacco tax to increase the price of a pack of cigarettes by 1 euro	Free Market Economy	63%	3%	
Lowering unemployment benefits to motivate receivers of the benefits to take lower paying jobs	WelfareState	64%	5%	SPD
Not raising pensions for one year to solve financial problems in the pension system	Macroeconomy	53%	5%	
Not raising pensions for one year to solve financial problems in the pension system (next year)	Macroeconomy	41%	4%	Grüne
Increasing the contribution to pensions for employers and employees	Free Market Economy	24%	6%	
State involvement to address rising price levels as a result of the introduction of the Euro[9]	Free Market Economy	57%	2%	

APPENDIX 2.7: LIST OF POLICY ISSUES (*CONTINUED*)

Policy Issue	Policy Scale	Public support (%)	Don't knows (%)	Majority of party's supporters on other side than the public
Temporarily increasing taxes to compensate flood-damages[10]	Macroeconomy	26%	4%	
Should the tax reform for 2003 be postponed by one year to pay for the flood damages?[10]	Macroeconomy	73%	12%	
Raising the retirement age to 67	Macroeconomy	7%	1%	
Paying a .5 Mark deposit ("Pfand") on all drink packaging	Environmental Protection	67%	3%	
Changing agricultural policy to put more emphasis on natural agricultural constructions and specie-specific animal keeping	Environmental Protection	95%	3%	
Stronger state involvement against the abuse of social benefits	Justice and Freedom	97%	4%	
Abolishing military conscription and introducing a professional army instead	Militarism	51%	4%	
The introduction of a limited work permit ("Green Card") for foreign workers in the IT sector	Multiculturalism	43%	4%	Grüne
Banning the extreme-right NPD party	Justice and Freedom	76%	6%	
Introducing stricter legislation to fight right-wing radicalism	Justice and Freedom	67%	4%	Grüne
Spending additional income from selling mobile phone frequencies (100 billion D-Mark) on reducing public debt	Macroeconomy	59%	6%	
Making registered partnerships between same-sex partners legally equivalent to marriage	Traditional Morality	54%	5%	
Treating same-sex couples with a registered partnership like married couples regarding income taxes	Traditional Morality	62%	6%	CDU/CSU
Making it easier for foreign workers that are in demand to enter Germany	Multiculturalism	69%	4%	
Abolishing the environmental tax (Ökosteuer) to reduce gasoline prices	Environmental Protection	69%	9%	Grüne
The introduction of an energy tax on all energy types finance a decrease in the cost of wages	Environmental Protection	30%	5%	Grüne
Raising the inheritance tax	Targetgroups	30%	9%	

APPENDIX 2.7: LIST OF POLICY ISSUES (*CONTINUED*)

Policy Issue	Policy Scale	Public support (%)	Don't knows (%)	Majority of party's supporters on other side than the public
Re-introduction of the wealth-tax	Targetgroups	51%	7%	CDU/CSU, FDP
Only increasing pensions to correct for inflation	Macroeconomy	39%	8%	FDP, Grüne
Obliging all employees to pay into a private pension fund in addition to the existing pension insurance ("Rentenversicherung")	Macroeconomy	0,53	5%	
Allowing children of foreigners who have lived in Germany for an extended period of time to get the German nationality upon birth and choosing which nationality they want to keep at age 23	Multiculturalism	62%	3%	
Allowing women to serve in the army ("Bundeswehr")	Militarism	68%	3%	
Financially contributing to post-war reconstruction in Kosovo	Internationalism	69%	3%	
Abolishing the law that regulates shop opening times	Free Market Economy	60%	2%	
Allowing shops to open on Sundays	Free Market Economy	48%	2%	Grüne
To increase the price of gasoline to 5 D-mark per litre over the next 10 years	Environmental Protection	12%	2%	Grüne
Banning double citizenship (of two countries)	Multiculturalism	38%	9%	FDP, Grüne
Building a holocaust memorial in Berlin	Internationalism	51%	7%	

1. Hartz IV is a program offering unemployment benefits. The issue concerns the extent to which receivers of the benefits are required to do 'voluntary' work for society in return for receiving the benefits.
2. In 2010 the Bundestag had given a mandate for the deployment of German troops in Afghanistan until the end of February 2011. The issue is about whether the mandate should be extended until after 2011.
3. In response to the economic crisis the issue is about whether the government should limit the wages and the development of wages earned by managers.
4. Quelle, the mail order branch of Arcandor (a German company) found itself on the brink of bankruptcy in during the financial crisis. The issue is about whether the German government should provide Quelle with loans to make it solvent again and avoid bankruptcy.

5. Konsumgutscheine are coupons provided by the state that citizens can spend on consumer goods, with the idea of increasing consumer spending to boost the economy. The issue is whether the German government should provide such coupons.
6. German commuters could deduct the costs of commuting to work, but only for part of the total distance. The issue is about reintroducing the tax-deduction of commuting costs from the first kilometre.
7. The Constitutional Court ruled that the fact that people without children were treated more favourably than people with children by the existing regulations about the obligatory care-insurance. The issue is about raising contributions by those without children by 9 euros a month to offset this.
8. The issue is about ensuring that there are enough places that enable students pursuing practical education programs to gain work experience.
9. The issue is about hikes in the prices of goods that (allegedly) resulted from the introduction of the Euro – and whether the government should intervene of offset the increased prices.
10. Parts of Southern Germany (especially Bavaria) suffered severe damages due to a large flood. The issue is about a temporary tax increase to pay for a compensation scheme.

APPENDIX 4.1: LIST OF POLICY ISSUES

Table A4.1: Overview of policy-issues.

	Policy issue	Policy type	Salience	Public support in %
Denmark	Building of a bridge for vehicles and trains across the Kattegat	distributive	low	54
	Reducing mortgage interest deduction from 33% to 25%	redistributive	high	31
	Granting asylum to families with children among rejected Iraqi asylum seekers	regulatory	high	46
	Reducing the unemployment benefit period by half from four to two years	redistributive	high	53
	Strengthening the control of the Danish agriculture in order to take action against the misuse of antibiotics	regulatory	low	90
	Controlled delivery of heroin for particularly vulnerable drug addicts at special clinics as a pilot scheme	regulatory	high	85
	Introducing differentiated VAT	redistributive	low	8
	Making schools' average test results public	regulatory	low	45
	Cutting the allowances paid to young people between 25 and 29 years by half	redistributive	low	27
	Creation of an equal pay commission	regulatory	high	82
	Financial support of Arcandor through public money	redistributive	high	19
	Guaranteeing a pension above the poverty line for pensioners who have paid contributions for many years	redistributive	high	86
	Supplying citizens with consumption vouchers to boost the economy	redistributive	high	17
Germany	Establishing a wealth tax	redistributive	low	68
	State control of electricity prices	regulatory	low	66
	Banning of computer games that glorify violence	regulatory	high	72
	Cutting the tax exemption for night, Sunday, and holiday supplements	redistributive	low	34
	Cutting coal subsidies	distributive	low	76
	Making it illegal to carry out a paternity test without the consent of the mother	regulatory	high	24
	Cutting social benefits	redistributive	low	31

Table A4.1: Overview of policy-issues. (*continued*)

	Policy issue	Policy type	Salience	Public support in %
Netherlands	Allowing all illegal immigrants who have lived in the Netherlands for a long time to stay	regulatory	high	52
	Raising the retirement age to 67	redistributive	high	33
	Abolishing the mortgage interest	redistributive	high	18
	Spending more money on development aid	redistributive	high	48
	Obligating stores to be closed on Sunday	regulatory	high	34
	Ban of smoking in restaurants	regulatory	low	65
	Banning embryonic stem cell research	regulatory	low	35
	Allowing more asylum seekers	regulatory	high	25
	Banning euthanasia	regulatory	low	8
	Building new nuclear power plants	distributive	low	34
	Permanent introduction of a congestion charge in Stockholm	redistributive	high	37
	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	redistributive	low	45
	Rescuing Saab through government funds	redistributive	high	40
Sweden	Banning the construction of minarets in Sweden	regulatory	high	63
	Reducing third-world aid	distributive	low	19
	Introducing a language test for Swedish citizenship	regulatory	high	67
	Restricting the right to free abortion	regulatory	low	14
	Making household and domestic services tax deductible	redistributive	low	64
	Allowing free download of all films and music from the Internet	regulatory	low	62
	Increasing the old age retirement age	regulatory	high	14

Table A4.1: Overview of policy-issues. (*continued*)

	Policy issue	Policy type	Salience	Public support in %
UK	Giving amnesty to illegal immigrants who have spent ten years in Britain without getting into trouble with the police	regulatory	high	32
	Scrapping ID cards	regulatory	high	69
	Requiring food manufacturers to reduce the fat/salt content in their products	regulatory	low	73
	Introducing a graduate tax, where graduates would pay an extra income tax on their income after graduating	redistributive	high	55
	Allowing a third runway to be built at Heathrow Airport	distributive	high	45
	Reducing corporation tax	redistributive	low	41
	Increasing Air Passenger Duty, to be paid by people taking both short-haul and long-haul flights	redistributive	high	35
	Subsidising the building of new nuclear power stations	distributive	low	57
	Increasing the tax on large executive-style, estate, and 4x4 vehicles	redistributive	low	77
	Downgrading 'ecstasy' from a class-A drug to a class-B drug	regulatory	low	23

Selection of policy issues

Collected as part of the GovLis project, policy issues were sampled from a set of issues that were included in public opinion polls and formulated as proposals to change the status quo. We started with an extensive mapping of all issues on which public opinion was polled in our five countries both by (academic) surveys like election studies and the German Politbarometer, and by companies providing high-quality opinion polls like Gallup. We then checked whether the response was measured on an agreement scale and checked whether each issue indeed fell under the competence of the national government (as opposed to the EU or regional governments). From this total population of issues we then drew a stratified sample ensuring that there was variation on a number of independent variables that previous studies have shown affect advocacy and/or preference attainment: media saliency, policy type and public opinion.

APPENDIX 4.2: ANALYSIS OF SURVEY (NON) RESPONSE

Table A4.2.1: Response rates per country.

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

Table A4.2.2: Logistic regression including all invited advocates, with whether they responded to the survey as the dependent variable.

	(1)
Actor type (ref: Business)	
Hobby & identity groups	0.64*
	(0.32)
Public interest groups	0.88***
	(0.25)
Trade unions & occupational groups	0.78***
	(0.23)
Firms	-0.41+
	(0.25)
Experts, think tanks & institutional associations	0.51*
	(0.21)
Articles per day	0.04
	(0.31)
Policy type (ref: Distributive)	
Regulatory	0.10
	(0.21)
Redistributive	0.03
	(0.23)
Policy change on issue	-0.15
	(0.17)
Country (ref: Germany)	
UK	-0.16
	(0.24)
Denmark	1.47***
	(0.23)
Sweden	0.88***
	(0.22)
Netherlands	1.32***
	(0.22)
Constant	-1.76***
	(0.30)
Number of advocates	1394
McFadden R-square	0.11

Standard errors in parentheses. + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Changing the baseline categories in the regression shows that firms are the least likely advocate type to respond, followed by business groups. All other advocates were more likely to respond, but response rates were not significant across these other advocate types. Similarly, advocates from Germany and the UK were significantly less likely to respond than those from other countries. Swedish respondents were in the middle and Dutch and Danish advocates were most likely to respond to the survey invitation. There are no significant differences between different types of policy issues, nor is the response rate related to the media salience of the issue.

APPENDIX 4.3: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 4.3.1: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Minimum	Mean	Maximum	St. dev.
Dep var: Preference attainment (binary)	0	.55	1	.50
Worked with any party (binary)	0	.72	1	.45
Power index	0	0.25	0.78	0.23
Worked with parties on same side	0	.45	1	.41
Share of parties on same side	0	.41	0	.34
Articles per day	0	.17	1.65	.30
Economic resources (binary)	0	.42	1	.49
Media attention (binary)	0	.88	1	.33
Public support	.10	.51	.92	.23
Other actors' support	0	.51	1	.19
Pro policy change (binary)	0	.55	1	.50

APPENDIX 4.4: OVERVIEW OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF ORGANIZED INTERESTS

Public interest groups
Environment and animal welfare
Humanitarian – international
Humanitarian – national
Consumer Group
Government reform
Civil liberties
Citizen Empowerment
Other public interest
Business groups occupational 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
Religious, identity and hobby 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
Experts, think thank organizations and institutional associations

Expert organizations
Individual experts
Think tanks
Associations of local authorities
Associations of other public institutions
Associations of managers of public institutions
Other Institutional associations

APPENDIX 4.5: ADDITION OF CONTROL VARIABLES

Table 4.5: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting preference attainment of an actor on an issue. Models 1-3 from table 1 including control variables.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
H1: Worked with any party	0.30 (0.40)		
H2: Party power		1.31+ (0.76)	
H3: Worked with parties on same side			1.82** (0.66)
Controls			
Parties on same side	1.40** (0.49)	1.46** (0.49)	1.07* (0.51)
Articles per day	1.56 (0.96)	1.56 (0.97)	1.52 (0.96)
Economic resources	-0.45 (0.33)	-0.44 (0.33)	-0.54 (0.34)
Perceived media attention	-0.62 (0.51)	-0.68 (0.52)	-0.77 (0.52)
Other actors' support	2.76** (0.89)	2.84** (0.91)	3.05*** (0.92)
Public support	1.93** (0.73)	1.99** (0.74)	2.01** (0.75)
Pro policy change	-0.69* (0.32)	-0.71* (0.32)	-0.83* (0.33)
Actor type (ref: Business)			
Religious & identity groups	-0.25 (1.06)	-0.25 (1.08)	-0.33 (1.10)
Public interest groups	0.89 (0.73)	0.99 (0.74)	0.82 (0.73)
Trade unions & occupational groups	-0.55 (0.66)	-0.53 (0.66)	-0.60 (0.67)
Firms	-0.12 (0.75)	-0.17 (0.75)	-0.18 (0.76)
Experts, think tanks & institutional associations	-0.01 (0.63)	0.06 (0.63)	0.03 (0.63)
Country (ref: Germany)			
UK	0.16 (0.67)	0.16 (0.68)	0.40 (0.71)
Denmark	0.58 (0.67)	0.82 (0.70)	0.77 (0.69)
Sweden	0.10 (0.77)	0.23 (0.79)	0.36 (0.81)

Table 4.5: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting preference attainment of an actor on an issue. Models 1-3 from table 1 including control variables. (*continued*)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Netherlands	0.19 (0.65)	0.38 (0.67)	0.32 (0.68)
Constant	-2.30* (1.07)	-2.61* (1.10)	-2.52* (1.08)
Variation issue level	0.31 (0.28)	0.35 (0.31)	0.38 (0.31)
Number of advocates	264	264	264
Number of issues	34	34	34
AIC	330	327	322
BIC	398	395	390

Standard errors in parentheses. + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

APPENDIX 4.6: ROBUSTNESS

Table 4.6.1: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting preference attainment of an advocate on an issue. Replacing measures for working with any party with activity measures.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Direct contact with parliament	-0.57+ (0.31)	-0.53 (0.37)		
Direct contact with cabinet			-0.17 (0.29)	0.21 (0.35)
Controls				
Parties on same side	1.48*** (0.44)	1.43** (0.49)	1.52*** (0.43)	1.51** (0.49)
Articles per day		1.34 (0.91)		1.48 (0.93)
Economic resources		-0.31 (0.34)		-0.43 (0.33)
Perceived media attention		-0.46 (0.51)		-0.64 (0.52)
Other actors' support		3.02*** (0.92)		2.92** (0.91)
Public support		1.81* (0.73)		1.91* (0.74)
Pro policy change		-0.58+ (0.32)		-0.64* (0.32)
Actor type (ref: business)				
Religious & identity groups		-0.30 (1.05)		-0.28 (1.06)
Public interest groups		0.73 (0.73)		0.84 (0.72)
Trade unions & occupational groups		-0.49 (0.67)		-0.55 (0.66)
Firms		-0.36 (0.76)		-0.17 (0.75)
Experts, think tanks & institutional associations		-0.36 (0.64)		-0.10 (0.62)
Country (ref: Germany)				
UK	0.18 (0.71)	-0.14 (0.66)	0.30 (0.69)	-0.10 (0.67)
Denmark	0.10 (0.67)	0.23 (0.65)	0.19 (0.66)	0.34 (0.65)
Sweden	-0.14 (0.76)	-0.25 (0.76)	0.03 (0.75)	-0.15 (0.76)
Netherlands	0.04 (0.66)	0.04 (0.64)	0.11 (0.65)	0.04 (0.65)

Table 4.6.1: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting preference attainment of an advocate on an issue. Replacing measures for working with any party with activity measures. (*continued*)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Constant	-0.05 (0.60)	-1.63 (1.05)	-0.40 (0.57)	-2.09* (1.04)
Variation issue level	0.55 (0.40)	0.24 (0.25)	0.52 (0.38)	0.27 (0.26)
Number of actors	259	259	261	261
Number of issues	34	34	34	34
AIC	348	323	352	325
BIC	377	390	381	393

Standard errors in parentheses. + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

The models in table 4.6.1 are based on the following survey question:

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

With advocates answering whether "*Direct contact with national cabinet members and their staff*", or "*Direct contact with national members of Parliament or their offices*", respectively, were "*Not at all important*" to "*Very important*".

The original survey question used in the main analyses in the chapter then read:

"For each of these political parties, please indicate how important they were for your work(experts)/the work of your organisation(associations)/the work of your company(firms) concerning the issue of xxx."

With respondents indicating for each party in parliament during the observation period whether it was "*not at all important"* to "*very important"*.

APPENDIX 4.7: ALTERNATIVE SPECIFICATIONS

Table 4.7.1: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting preference attainment of an advocate on an issue. Alternative operationalizations for model 4.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Worked with parties on same side	-0.51 (1.29)	-1.08 (1.46)	-1.23 (1.44)	
Government status	-0.40 (0.69)			
Worked with parties on same side*Government status	4.86+ (2.57)			
Party size		-2.95 (2.07)		
Worked with parties on same side*Party size		17.89* (8.02)		
Party power (in government 20% of observation period)			-0.95 (1.07)	
Worked with parties on same side * Party power (20% of days)			9.37* (4.22)	
Number of parties worked with on same size				-0.29 (0.26)
Party power				-1.42
Number of parties worked with on same side*Party power				2.73** (0.95)
Controls				
Parties on same side	1.06* (0.53)	1.01+ (0.52)	1.03+ (0.53)	1.08* (0.51)
Articles per day	1.32 (0.99)	1.21 (0.92)	1.24 (0.98)	1.34 (0.94)
Economic resources	-0.44 (0.35)	-0.42 (0.35)	-0.42 (0.35)	-0.44 (0.34)
Perceived media attention	-0.77 (0.55)	-0.67 (0.55)	-0.73 (0.55)	-0.81 (0.53)
Other actors' support	3.24*** (0.96)	3.14*** (0.95)	3.27*** (0.97)	3.23*** (0.94)
Public support	2.22** (0.78)	2.18** (0.76)	2.24** (0.78)	2.24** (0.75)
Pro policy change	-0.79* (0.34)	-0.72* (0.34)	-0.76* (0.34)	-1.01** (0.34)
Actor type (ref: Business)				
Religious & identity groups	-0.40 (1.11)	-0.35 (1.07)	-0.37 (1.10)	-0.36 (1.10)
Public interest groups	0.93 (0.76)	0.69 (0.74)	0.90 (0.76)	0.83 (0.72)

Table 4.7.1: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting preference attainment of an advocate on an issue. Alternative operationalizations for model 4. (*continued*)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Trade unions & occupational groups	-0.61 (0.68)	-0.66 (0.68)	-0.60 (0.69)	-0.31 (0.67)
Firms	-0.53 (0.79)	-0.55 (0.78)	-0.59 (0.79)	-0.37 (0.78)
Experts, think tanks & institutional associations	0.03 (0.64)	-0.12 (0.64)	0.00 (0.65)	0.21 (0.63)
Country (ref: Germany)				
UK	0.57 (0.77)	0.47 (0.75)	0.58 (0.77)	0.79 (0.67)
Denmark	1.19 (0.77)	1.06 (0.74)	1.29 (0.78)	0.97 (0.67)
Sweden	0.52 (0.87)	0.57 (0.84)	0.61 (0.87)	0.37 (0.74)
Netherlands	0.63 (0.74)	0.77 (0.74)	0.79 (0.75)	0.53 (0.64)
Constant	-2.87* (1.15)	-2.62* (1.13)	-2.94* (1.16)	-2.77* (1.09)
Variation issue level	0.53 (0.41)	0.42 (0.34)	0.52 (0.41)	0.14 (0.23)
Number of advocates	264	264	264	264
Number of issues	34	34	34	34
AIC	321	320	320	316
BIC	396	395	395	391

Standard errors in parentheses. + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

APPENDIX 4.8

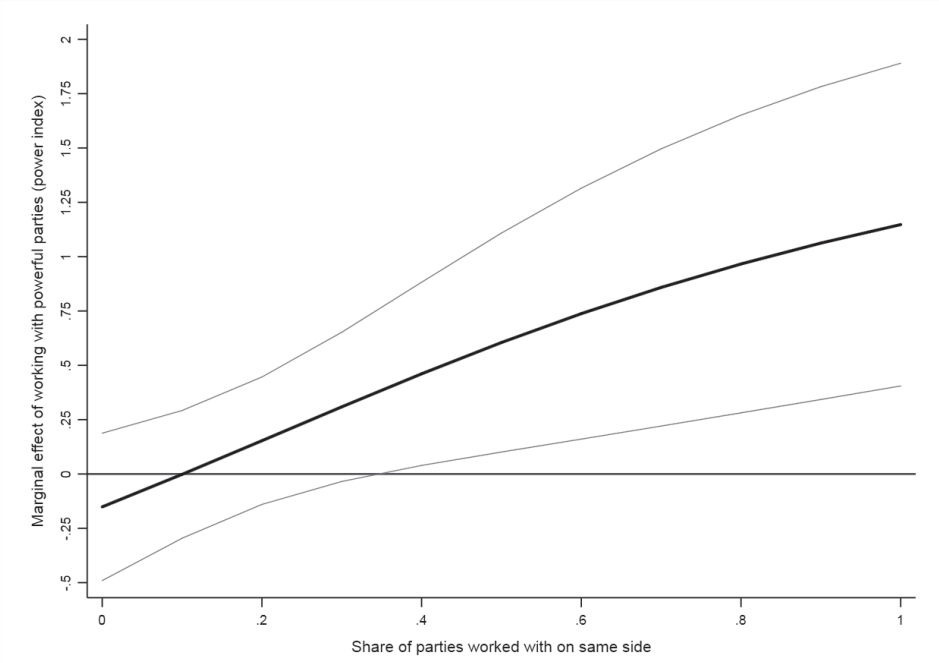


Figure 4.8.1: Inverse marginal effects plot, showing the effect of working with powerful parties at different levels of lobbying parties on the same side. Based on Model 5 in table 1.

APPENDIX 5. 1. CODING AND MEASUREMENT OF PREFERENCE ATTAINMENT

Coding process

Following extensive training a student assistant was first instructed to identify and code the requests in each of the letters. They then searched through the coalition agreement to determine whether the content of the request was mentioned in the coalition agreement. Initially, preference attainment was coded on a five-point scale running from "not at all fulfilled" to "completely fulfilled", with a Krippendorff's alpha of .70 (two coders and 50 coded units). However, an ordinal dependent variable requires ordinal logistic regression modelling. Even though results from such a model were similar to those presented in the chapter, a Brant test showed that the relationship between each of the outcome pairs is not the same. Despite the relatively high number of observations there is not enough data to reliably estimate generalized ordinal logistic regression models instead. Preference attainment was therefore dichotomized to compare advocates who attained their preferences at least somewhat (categories 2 through 5) to those who did not attain them at all (category 1). Moving the point of dichotomization does not substantively change the results.

Description of the original coding categories:

1- Not at all fulfilled: This code is applied when the request is not fulfilled at all. It is applied when the request seeks to change the status quo and is not at all mentioned in the coalition agreement. The category also applies if the coalition agreement does mention the requested policy, but does not deliver the policy, or proposes policy in the opposite direction (for example if the request was to lower the retirement age and it is not lowered, or kept at the same level).

2- Fulfilled to a very limited degree: This code is applied to cases where the request is mentioned, but only a small part of it is fulfilled. An example is a request to raise spending on welfare benefits by 20 million euros and the coalition agreement raising the benefits by 1 million only. Another example would be a request to implement a full policy program, and the coalition agreement only promising a small part of that program.

3- Partial fulfilment: This code is applied to requests that are fulfilled to a substantial extent, but not hardly nor (almost) fully. It is therefore applied to instances where a substantial part of the request is fulfilled, but another substantial part is not. An example is a request to ban the sale of cigarettes in supermarkets and gas stations, and the coalition agreement promising to ban the sale of cigarettes in supermarkets.

4- Almost completely fulfilled: This code is applied when the request is almost completely fulfilled, but some small part of the request is not. Examples are requests to spend a

given amount on a certain policy, and the coalition agreement promising almost that amount. Another example would be a request to spend 20 million on building houses that rent for 700 – 1000 euros a month, and the coalition agreement promising to spend 20 million on building houses that rent for 700 to 1100 euros a month instead.

5- Complete fulfilment: this category is applied to requests that are fulfilled completely. Apart from the obvious case where the coalition agreement mentions the exact policy and promises what was requested, this category also applies to those instances where the actor requests that the status quo is kept, and the coalition agreement does not mention the policy.

APPENDIX 5.2. DATASET DESCRIPTION

Since lobbying during coalition negotiations is hardly studied in the literature this appendix provides additional information about the descriptive statistics of the variables used in the chapter (table A5.2.1) and also discusses some descriptive findings in more detail.

Table A5.2.1: Descriptive statistics.

Variable	Range	Values	Mean	St. Dev
Preference attainment	0 – 1	0,1	.35	.48
Party support	0 – 1	0,1	.34	.47
VVD support	0 – 1	0, 1	.11	.31
CDA support	0 – 1	0, 1	.13	.34
Business actor	0 – 1	0,1	.32	.47
Coalition size	0 – 1	1 – 29	6.01	6.83
Access	0 – 1	0, 1	.08	.27
Pro policy change	0 – 1	0, 1	.94	.25

Description of lobbying coalition negotiations

Over a third of all requests (35%) are in the end somewhat to fully implemented in the coalition agreement suggesting that advocates often make relevant requests that are discussed at the formation table. A request by the council for the judiciary ("Raad voor de Rechtspraak") requesting room to experiment with new ways of punishment was even copied verbatim from the letter to the coalition agreement. Although almost all letters received a standardized response, a letter by VNO-NCW (the main employers' organization) received a response asking for further elaboration. These two examples show at the very least some of the letters are read by the negotiators.

Turning to the nature of the requests, these underline the image that lobbying around elections focuses on policy change. 94% of all requests are requests to change the status quo, which is much higher than comparable figures in studies of general lobbying (Baumgartner et al, 2009), but comparable to the distribution of pledges in election manifestos (Thomson et al., 2017). Moreover, the vast majority of requests are indeed policy-centred with 82% covering substantive policies. 8% of all requests ask the new government to explicitly prioritize a certain issue and another 10% are procedural requests. Examples are requests to appoint a minister for Agriculture, or to let go of party discipline when voting on medical-ethical issues. The main farmer's organization (LTO), asked farmers to send letters asking for the appointment of a separate minister for agriculture. This means that there are 70 identical letters asking for this request (which was supported by the CDA). The models in the chapter exclude these 70 letters, but

results do not change substantially when they are included. The results presented in the chapter do include the other requests about procedures and prioritization, but Appendix 4 shows that they do not affect the findings.

Table A5.2.2: Share of requests made by respective advocate types.

Advocate type	Share of requests
Trade unions and professional groups	15%
Public interest groups	16%
Hobby, religious and identity groups	13%
Firms and business groups	33%
Experts and think tanks	7%
Sub national governments and institutions	16%

As shown in table A5.2.2, the requests are made by a wide range of policy advocates. At the same time, individual firms and business groups are by far the most prevalent type of advocate as they account for 33% all requests.

REFERENCES

Baumgartner, Frank R., Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, Beth L. Leech, and David C. Kimball. (2009) *Lobbying and policy change: Who wins, who loses, and why*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Thomson, R., Royed, T., Naurin, E., Artés, J., Costello, R., Ennser-Jedenastik, L., Ferguson, M., Kostadinova, P., Moury, C., Pétry, F. & Praprotnik, K. (2017) The Fulfillment of Parties' Election Pledges: A Comparative Study on the Impact of Power Sharing. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61, 527-542.

APPENDIX 5.3. POLICY AREA AND ISSUE OWNERSHIP

This appendix explores an alternative explanation for the results in table 5.1 in the chapter that issue-ownership instead of requests by firms, business groups and employers' organizations is driving the results. The argument is in line with issue-ownership theory (Petrocik et al., 2003, Klüver and Spoon, 2016) suggesting that political parties will want to 'stand out' on issues they own or are perceived as competent on. This may translate into political parties being less willing to compromise on such issues during coalition negotiations. If a certain category of policy advocate is predominantly making requests in a policy area and a party 'owns' the issue, a party's issue-competition driven desire not to compromise on these promises may drive the higher rates of preference attainment for some policy advocates. For this chapter, it seems likely that firms and business groups would make relatively many requests on issues concerning the economy, regulations and taxation. At the same time, the VVD and the CDA are likely 'issue owners' of this policy field.

To ensure this alternative explanation does not drive the reported results, all requests were coded into the 21 major categories outlined by the Dutch version of the Comparative Agendas Project (Breeman & Timmermans, 2017). 20 of these categories also overlap with the general codebook of the Comparative Agendas Project, but the Dutch version of the codebook adds a category about the management of spatial ordering and water. Figure A5.3.1 shows the distribution of all requests across policy areas.

The figure shows that most requests are made in the areas of healthcare and education and culture, with defence and foreign trade attracting the lowest number of requests. To create a binary variable identifying economic requests, requests in the categories "macro economy and taxes" and "companies, trade and commerce" were coded as a 1 and all requests in other policy areas as a 0.

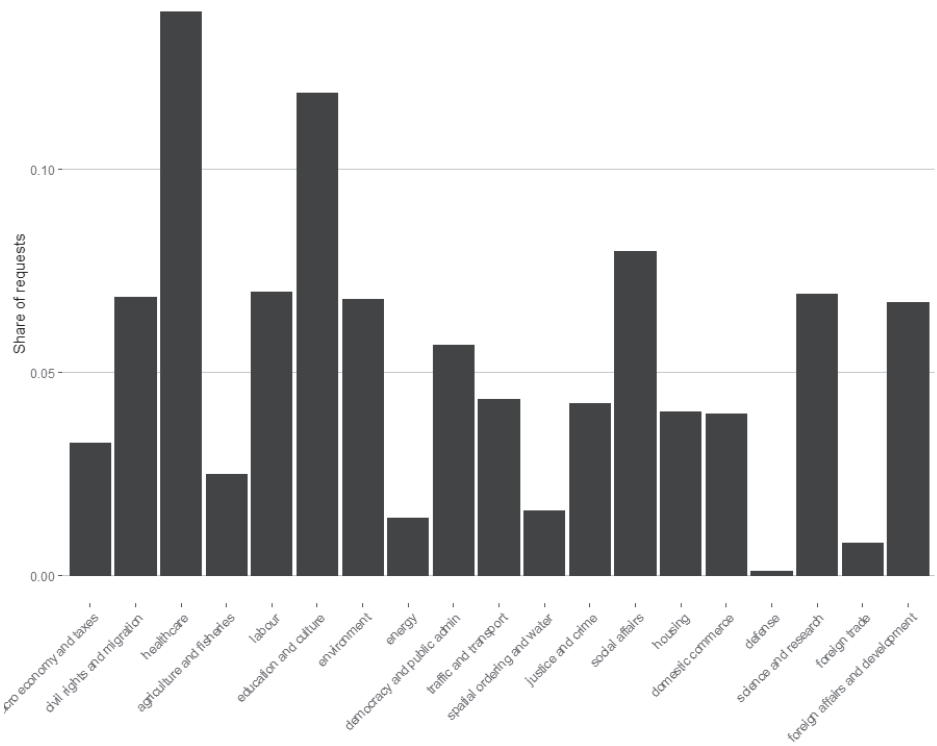


Figure A5.3.1: Requests by policy area.

Model 1 in table A5.3.1 then interacts whether any request was shared by either of the right-wing parties in its election manifesto with whether the request was made in an economic policy area. The positive significant interaction shows that requests about economic issues benefit more from being present in the right-wing parties' manifestos than requests in other policy areas. When adding the interaction between right-wing support and business advocates in model 2, the interaction reported in table 5.1 of the chapter remains significant, suggesting that this issue-ownership effect comes in addition to, rather than instead of, the expectation in Hypothesis 2.

Table A5.3.1: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting whether a policy advocate attained their policy preferences, controlling for policy area.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Right-wing support	1.82*** (0.16)	1.41*** (0.20)				
Right-wing support*Economic policy	1.88** (0.58)	1.49* (0.59)				
Right-wing support * Business		1.12*** (0.33)				
VVD support			1.54*** (0.22)	0.53+ (0.28)		
VVD support * Economic policy			3.13*** (0.72)	2.38** (0.76)		
VVD support * Business				2.52*** (0.45)		
CDA support					2.40*** (0.20)	2.27*** (0.24)
CDA support * Economic policy					-0.49 (0.71)	-0.60 (0.73)
CDA support * Business						0.32 (0.36)
Economic policy	-1.23*** (0.35)	-1.09** (0.36)	-1.41*** (0.34)	-1.30*** (0.35)	-0.28 (0.29)	-0.25 (0.29)
Business	0.28 (0.20)	-0.10 (0.23)	0.27 (0.20)	-0.07 (0.21)	0.27 (0.20)	0.19 (0.22)
Controls						
Access	0.36 (0.36)	0.36 (0.37)	0.41 (0.37)	0.40 (0.37)	0.37 (0.36)	0.37 (0.36)
Coalition size	0.05+ (0.03)	0.05+ (0.03)	0.05+ (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)
Pro policy change	-3.69*** (0.36)	-3.77*** (0.36)	-3.62*** (0.36)	-3.74*** (0.37)	-3.41*** (0.34)	-3.42*** (0.34)
Constant	1.91*** (0.37)	2.09*** (0.38)	2.03*** (0.37)	2.24*** (0.38)	1.66*** (0.36)	1.70*** (0.36)
Letter random intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of requests	2281	2281	2281	2281	2281	2281
Number of letters	346	346	346	346	346	346
AIC	2126	2116	2194	2162	2122	2124
BIC	2178	2174	2246	2219	2174	2181

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

Models 3 and 4 then repeat the same process, but only for the VVD, with models 5 and 6 doing the same for the CDA. In these models the main conclusions from the chapter remain unchanged. Similar to the results reported in the chapter, it is mainly the VVD

that seems to distinguish between requests in different policy areas: the interaction effect for the CDA is negative and not significant. Again this suggests that where the VVD was aiming to fulfil its promises on economic and business issues, the CDA was not. It should be noted that the variables 'business' and 'economic policy' are as expected correlated, but only moderately so. All VIF-values are <2.6, indicating that there is no problematic multicollinearity in the model.

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APPENDIX 5.4: PARTY POSITIONS AND DISAGREEMENT

We know from existing studies that political parties are especially likely to pay attention to policy issue areas (like the environment) in coalition agreements when their positions in these areas diverge (Klüver & Bäck, 2019). One may therefore expect that advocates are most likely to attain their preferences on issues where (at least) two coalition parties disagree. To explore whether this is the case, model 1 in table A5.4.1 replicates model 1 from table 1 in the main text, but replaces the variable 'party support' with a 'party position index' which ranges from -3 (three parties disagree with the advocate's request) to +4 (all parties agree with the advocate), with the middle point meaning that either no party had a position, or the known party positions were balanced. The strong positive effect clearly suggests that the more (unanimously) the negotiating parties share positions outlined in the policy request, the more likely the request is fulfilled in the coalition agreement.

Table A5.4.1: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting whether a policy advocate attained their policy preferences, using the party position index

	(1)	(2)
Party position index	0.95***	0.30***
	(0.07)	(0.08)
Controls		
Access	0.41	0.92+
	(0.37)	(0.54)
Coalition size	0.06*	0.13**
	(0.03)	(0.04)
Pro policy change	-3.65***	-2.84***
	(0.35)	(0.66)
Business	0.18	0.25
	(0.20)	(0.28)
Constant	1.67***	2.21**
	(0.36)	(0.67)
Letter random intercepts	Yes	Yes
Number of requests	2281	924
Number of letters	346	202
AIC	2057	959
BIC	2097	993

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

Model 2 in table A5.4.1 then shows the same model, but only including those 924 cases where at least one party has a known policy position on the request. This means that the '0' value only includes cases where at least 2 parties disagreed with each other on

the request. Even if the effect size is smaller the effect remains positive and significant, suggesting that rather than disagreement among coalition partners, it is the number of negotiating parties that have a position in line with a request that matters. Finally, to preclude the possibility that this is an artifact of the modeling strategy chosen, figure A5.4.1 shows the share of policy advocates that attain their preferences at different levels of the party position index (descriptive data, not model based). Like in model 2 of table A5.4.1 this figure includes only those cases where at least one party position is known: meaning that the value 0 indicates issues over which the coalition partners disagreed.

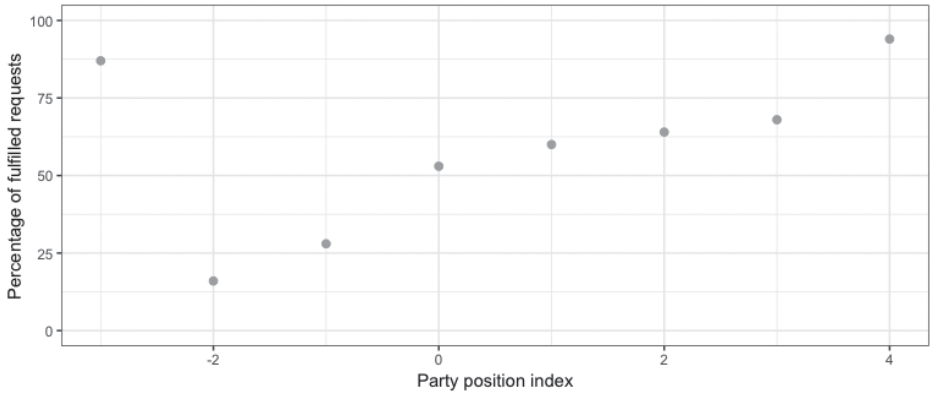

Figure A5.4.1: Unmodeled share of fulfilled requests at different levels of the party position index, only including the 924 instances where at least 1 party position was known.

The figure shows that levels of preferene attainment increase with each step on the party position index. The only exception is when 3 parties disagree with the advocate (-3). At this data point, there are only 15 requests, of which 13 are the same request by a large coalition of 13 local media organizations for more funding, with which 3 of the negotiating parties disagreed in their eelction manifestos. Against these odds the advocates did see their request partially fulfilled, which accounts for the very high level of preference attainment at -3 in the party position index. At every other step of the index, the number of requests is much higher.

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 5.5: TRADE UNIONS

It may be the case that the interaction between VVD positions and business groups on preference attainment is simply about the fact that these business groups credibly signal support from a large party of society, regardless of the shared ideological and interpersonal links between the party and business groups. This appendix therefore replaces the business advocates in table 1 in the main text with trade unions. While these groups were ideologically clearly not aligned with the major negotiating parties (especially the VVD), Dutch trade unions did still have more members than most interest groups in 2017 (with the largest trade union Federation FNV representing around 1 million members, more than the negotiating parties' membership combined). Representatives from the FNV also joined the coalition negotiations on some days.

In other words, if the mechanism is only about the size of membership, rather than either the ties between the party and a type of policy advocate (or the electoral importance of the group membership), we would expect requests by trade unions to also be fulfilled more readily when shared with one of the negotiation parties than requests by other advocates: a request by a trade union is likely shared by a substantial share of the public. Table A5.5.1 therefore replicates models 2 through 4, interacting right-wing support, CDA support and VVD support respectively with whether a request was by a labour group. The insignificant interaction effects show that there is no such interaction effect in the data: groups need to do more than 'just' represent a large constituency to increase their levels of preference attainment in coalition agreements.

Table A5.5.1: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting whether a policy advocate attained their policy preferences interactions with trade unions

	(2)	(3)	(4)
Right-wing support	1.97*** (0.16)		
Right-wing support * Labour	-0.26 (0.72)		
VVD support		1.87*** (0.21)	
VVD support * Labour		0.53 (1.07)	
CDA support			2.40*** (0.19)
CDA support * Labour			-0.05 (0.83)
Labour	0.54 (0.47)	0.33 (0.45)	0.44 (0.48)
Controls			
Access	0.30 (0.37)	0.39 (0.37)	0.31 (0.37)
Coalition Size	0.06* (0.03)	0.06+ (0.03)	0.06+ (0.03)
Pro policy change	-3.54*** (0.34)	-3.39*** (0.34)	-3.46*** (0.34)
Constant	1.68*** (0.34)	1.73*** (0.35)	1.69*** (0.35)
Letter random intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of requests	2281	2281	2281
Number of letters	346	346	346
AIC	2169	2249	2151
BIC	2215	2295	2197

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

APPENDIX 5.6. POLICY REQUEST TYPES

The models presented in table 5.1 in the chapter also include both policy-related requests, as well as more procedural requests. These are for example requests that the government explicitly has to mention an issue as a priority in the government agreement. Given that mentioning something as a priority is arguably less costly than promising to implement a policy (change), table A5.6.1 replicates models 1 and 2 in Table 5.1, but only includes requests that imply a legislative change or a policy change that costs money to implement. The results remain substantively unchanged, included when they are split by party (not shown).

Table A5.6.1: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting whether a policy advocate attained their policy preferences, including only requests for actual policy change.

	(1)	(2)
Party support	2.58*** (0.16)	
Right-wing support		1.45*** (0.21)
Right-wing support * Business		1.37*** (0.34)
Business group	0.29 (0.21)	-0.19 (0.23)
Public group		
Controls		
Access	0.68+ (0.40)	0.55 (0.39)
Coalition size	0.06* (0.03)	0.06+ (0.03)
Pro policy change	-3.76*** (0.37)	-3.55*** (0.37)
Constant	1.29*** (0.38)	1.86*** (0.39)
Letter random intercepts	Yes	Yes
Number of requests	1981	1981
Number of letters	329	329
AIC	1724	1866
BIC	1763	1910

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

APPENDIX 5.7. CLUSTERING

To demonstrate that most results remain the same when robust standard errors are used at the letter level (rather than random intercepts) table A5.5.1 replicates models 1 – 4 from table 5.1 in the main text. The models fit robust standard errors for letters instead of the multilevel modelling in table 5.1 in the chapter. The results remain unchanged.

Table A5.7.1: Replication of models 1 – 5 in tables 5.1 and 5.2. predicting whether a policy advocate attained their policy preferences, replacing random intercepts with robust standard errors.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party support	2.15***			
	(0.28)			
Right-wing support		1.43***		
		(0.38)		
Right-wing support * Business		0.60		
		(0.46)		
VVD support			1.07*	
			(0.49)	
VVD support * Business			1.33*	
			(0.57)	
CDA support				1.77***
				(0.43)
CDA support * Business				0.09
				(0.54)
Business	0.27	0.20	0.19	0.44
	(0.20)	(0.34)	(0.28)	(0.32)
Public group				
Controls				
Access	0.52*	0.33	0.41	0.34
	(0.23)	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.22)
Coalition size	0.04*	0.03	0.03	0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Pro policy change	-3.49***	-3.12***	-2.99***	-3.00***
	(0.37)	(0.35)	(0.34)	(0.35)
Constant	1.38***	1.65***	1.66***	1.57***
	(0.35)	(0.36)	(0.35)	(0.36)
Number of letters	2281	2281	2281	2281
McFadden Pseudo R square	.25	.17	.15	.16

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

In addition, advocates often made more than one request in a letter. To account for this possible clustering of the data at the level individual advocates, table A5.7.2 replicates models 1, 3 and 4 – 4 from table 1 in the main text. Models 1ri, 3ri and 4ri in table A5.7.2

fit random intercepts (ri) and models 1rse, 3rse and 4rse fit logistic models with robust standard errors (rse) at the level of the individual advocate (as opposed random errors for letters in table 1 in the main text). Results remain substantively unchanged.

Table A5.7.2: Replication of models 1, 3 and 4 in table 5.1, predicting whether a policy advocate attained their policy preferences, fitting random intercepts (ri) and robust standard errors (rse) at the level of individual advocates.

	(1ri)	(3ri)	(4ri)	(1rse)	(3rse)	(4rse)
Party support	2.28*** (0.12)			2.15*** (0.12)		
VVD support		1.04*** (0.23)			1.07*** (0.24)	
VVD support * Business		1.75*** (0.37)			1.33*** (0.34)	
CDA support			1.99*** (0.20)			1.77*** (0.22)
CDA support * Business			0.23 (0.31)			0.09 (0.30)
Business	0.26+ (0.14)	0.12 (0.15)	0.40** (0.16)	0.27* (0.13)	0.19 (0.13)	0.44*** (0.13)
Controls						
Access	0.48+ (0.26)	0.47+ (0.27)	0.34 (0.28)	0.52** (0.17)	0.41* (0.18)	0.34* (0.17)
Coalition size	0.04*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)
Pro policy change	-3.64*** (0.29)	-3.24*** (0.29)	-3.25*** (0.29)	-3.49*** (0.31)	-2.99*** (0.28)	-3.00*** (0.29)
Constant	1.43*** (0.28)	1.82*** (0.29)	1.70*** (0.29)	1.38*** (0.29)	1.66*** (0.28)	1.57*** (0.29)
Advocate random intercepts	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Advocate robust SE	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of requests	2281	2281	2281	2281	2281	2281

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

DUTCH SUMMARY

Wat is de kwestie? Het lobbyen en de vertegenwoordiging van politieke partijen op specifieke beleidskwesties.

Inleiding

In de meeste Westerse democratieën hebben politieke partijen de belangrijke taak om publieke voorkeuren te vertegenwoordigen en te implementeren in beleid. Er zijn daarom veel studies gedaan naar de mate waarin politieke partijen in staat zijn ook daadwerkelijk *responsief* beleid te maken dat in lijn is met publieke opinie. Dergelijke studies onderzoeken in de regel ideologische dimensies, zoals rechts-links, en laten zien dat de beleidsposities van kiezers en politieke partijen in veel landen in grote mate overeenkomen. De empirische conclusies over de mate waarin partijen in staat zijn hun vertegenwoordigende rol op zich te nemen zijn dus door de band genomen zeer positief.

Daar staat tegenover dat er maatschappelijk, maar ook in de wetenschappelijke literatuur (bijvoorbeeld door Peter Mair, 2010) steeds vaker gesteld wordt dat er problemen zijn als het gaat om de mate waarin politieke partijen in staat zijn de beleidsvoorkeuren van kiezers te vertalen naar beleid. Eén belangrijke reden daarvoor zou zijn dat politieke partijen er steeds vaker voor kiezen zich 'verantwoordelijk' in plaats van 'vertegenwoordigend' op te stellen, ook wanneer dit tegen publieke opinie ingaat (Mair, 2010). Denk hierbij bijvoorbeeld aan de beperkingen die de EU oplegt aan nationale beleidsmakers, het idee dat je niet alle veranderingen van een vorige regering ongedaan moet maken, de noodzaak om ook de overheidsfinanciën op orde te houden, of de belangen van toekomstige generaties of andere publieke belangen mee te wegen (bijvoorbeeld bij klimaatbeleid). Het is belangrijk om te benadrukken dat 'verantwoordelijk' beleid geen slechte zaak is, en verantwoordelijke beleidskeuzes (bijvoorbeeld waar het gaat om het beschermen van de rechten van minderheden) soms zelfs democratischer zijn dan keuzes die goed liggen bij grote delen van de bevolking.

Het eerste doel van dit proefschrift is om te onderzoeken of dit tegenstrijdige beeld (ten dele) te verklaren is door te kijken naar specifieke beleidskwesties in plaats van de ideologische dimensies die tot nu toe bestudeerd zijn in de wetenschappelijke literatuur. Denk daarbij aan het beleidskwesties die daadwerkelijk de levens van burgers beinvloeden, zoals de hoogte van de pensioenleeftijd. Naast de theoretische puzzel is dit ook een normatief belangrijk vraagstuk: als kiezers meer 'links' beleid willen, omdat ze meer economische gelijkheid wensen, maar het geleverde meer 'linkse' beleid bestaat uit een meer actief klimaatbeleid, is het natuurlijk de vraag of dat wel telt als goede vertegenwoordiging.

Nadat twee hoofdstukken deze vraag bestudeerd hebben, is het tweede doel van dit proefschrift om kijken naar een ander groot voordeel van het bestuderen van activiteiten van politieke partijen rond specifieke beleidskwesties: het maakt het makkelijker om ze te vergelijken met belangengroepen en andere organisaties al lobbyend proberen beleid te beïnvloeden. Alhoewel minder formeel vastgelegd, hebben ook belangengroepen de rol om publieke voorkeuren te helpen vertalen naar beleid. Daarom wordt in de laatste twee empirische hoofdstukken de mate waarin het dergelijke organisaties lukt om beleid te beïnvloeden *via* politieke partijen onderzocht. Alhoewel er genoeg zorgen zijn over de eventueel onevenredige invloed van bepaalde typen belangenorganisaties, is enige invloed wel een voorwaarde voor de mogelijkheid dat belangengroepen helpen om tekortkomingen in vertegenwoordiging door politieke partijen te helpen corrigeren. Natuurlijk zijn er ook andere kanalen die daaraan zouden kunnen bijdragen en die buiten de focus van dit onderzoek vallen, zoals (sociale) media en ook de ambtenarij.

Methode

Dit proefschrift is geschreven als deel van het GovLis-project. Het richt zich op een vijftal welvarende Noord-West Europese landen (specifiek Nederland, Zweden, Denemarken, Duitsland en het VK), stuk voor stuk goed functionerende democratieën. Daarnaast lijken de politieke systemen van deze landen, met uitzondering van het VK, behoorlijk op elkaar: ze hebben proportionele kiesstelsels (wat tot gevolg heeft dat er meerdere partijen in het parlement zitten) en zogenaamde corporatistische relaties tussen de overheid en de samenleving. Dat laatste betekent dat de overheid er in ieder geval traditioneel gezien voorkeur aan gaf om een beperkt aantal maatschappelijke organisaties sterk te betrekken bij politieke besluitvorming ("de polder"). Het gevolg van deze methodologische keuzes is dat de uitkomsten van het onderzoek vooral toepasbaar zijn op vergelijkbare Europese democratieën (waar bijvoorbeeld ook Noorwegen en Oostenrijk toe behoren). Sommige vondsten zullen ook in minder vergelijkbare landen opgaan, maar dat is minder vanzelfsprekend.

Alle empirische hoofdstukken richten zich daarbij zoals gezegd op specifieke beleidskwesties als de hoogte van de pensioenleeftijd, of er troepen moeten worden ingezet in Afghanistan en of de (Zweedse) staat noodleningen aan Saab moe(s)t verstrekken. Een groot voordeel van deze beleidsgerichte benadering is dat het helpt om te onderzoeken of en hoe politieke partijen en belangengroepen publieke voorkeuren vertegenwoordigen. In hoofdstukken 2 en 4 is daarbij een gestratificeerde steekproef van beleidsonderwerpen getrokken. Alhoewel het onduidelijk blijft hoe een populatie van alle mogelijke beleidskwesties er uit zou zien, is geprobeerd om een aantal kenmerken van de verschillende *issues* te variëren. Zo zitten er zowel onderwerpen bij die zeer veel media-aandacht trokken, als kwesties die juist weinig aandacht kregen. Er zitten

onderwerpen bij waarin beleid veranderde, en onderwerpen waar er qua wetgeving niks gebeurde. Ook is er een grote variatie in de beleidsterreinen waarop de onderwerpen liggen, variërend van milieubeleid tot migratie, van ethische kwesties tot de welvaartsstaat. De onderzochte onderwerpen, bestudeerde landen en gebruikte methoden verschillen verder enigszins tussen de verschillende artikelen die samen de empirische hoofdstukken van dit onderzoek vormen: deze keuzes worden hieronder daarom (kort) besproken in de samenvatting van de verschillende hoofdstukken, die op hun beurt gevolgd worden door een samenvatting van de bredere conclusies van het proefschrift.

Hoofdstuk 2

Dit hoofdstuk onderzoekt de relatie tussen publieke opinie en de beleidsposities van politieke partijen. Het maakt daarbij gebruik van surveyonderzoeken die in de periode tussen 1998 en 2010 een steekproef van de Duitse bevolking hebben bevraagd over precies het soort specifieke beleidsonderwerpen als hierboven beschreven. Deze kiezers is ook gevraagd naar hun partijvoorkeuren, waardoor we in kaart kunnen brengen wat zowel de gemiddelde kiezer als aanhangers van de 5 grote Duitse partijen in deze periode van de 102 onderzochte beleidsvoorstellen vonden. Van sommige partijen zaten maar weinig aanhangers in de steekproef. Bestaande onderzoeken lossen dit meestal op door een vrij arbitraire grens aan te houden, en sluiten partijen uit waarvan bijvoorbeeld minder dan 20 kiezers in de steekproef zitten (een erg klein aantal).

In dit hoofdstuk is daarom gebruik gemaakt van Multipele Regressie met Poststratificatie (MRP). MRP draait een multilevel-model om voor elke demografische categorie (bijvoorbeeld een vrouw tussen en 50-60 jaar, die hoogopgeleid is en FDP stemt) te voorspellen in welke mate ze voor of tegen een voorstel is. Vervolgens is andere data gebruikt om in kaart te brengen wat de demografische compositie van de FDP-aanhangers is, om te schatten hoe groot de steun voor een voorstel onder deze groep is. Het voordeel van deze methode is dat die ook informatie over gerelateerde kiezersgroepen meeneemt (bijvoorbeeld hoogopgeleide vrouwen tussen de 50-60 jaar die CDUCSU stemmen) om de steun voor een voorstel binnen een groep kiezers te schatten.

Vervolgens is aan de hand van uitlatingen in de media in kaart gebracht wat de posities van de politieke partijen op deze 102 beleidskwesties zijn. Uit het onderzoek blijkt dat de beleidsposities van zogenaamde niche-partijen (die zich op een beperkt aantal onderwerpen richten) en mainstream-partijen (partijen die aan een breder aantal onderwerpen aandacht besteden) ongeveer even sterk samenhangen met publieke opinie.

Er is echter wel een groot verschil tussen partijen in de regering en de oppositie. De beleidsposities van oppositiepartijen hangen sterk samen met de voorkeuren van kiezers én die van de aanhangers van de eigen partij. Daarentegen hangen de beleidsposities van regeringspartijen in het onderzoek niet samen met de beleidsvoorkeuren

van de gemiddelde kiezer. Wel is er nog enige, maar afgezwakte, samenhang met de beleidsvoorkeuren van de aanhangers van de partij. Het lijkt er dus op dat als partijen in de regering komen, en rekening moeten gaan houden met o.a. coalitiepartners, internationale wetgeving en de overheidsuitgaven, ervoor kiezen om vooral beleidsposities te vertegenwoordigen van de eigen kiezers. Dit is begrijpelijk, maar kan ook problematisch zijn als kiezers veel populaire beleidsposities horen van oppositiepartijen, die vervolgens niet leverbaar blijken als partijen in de regering zitten.

Hoofdstuk 3

Hoofdstuk 3, geschreven met Anne Rasmussen en Dimiter Toshkov, onderzoekt hoe publieke opinie en belangenbehartigers (experts, belangengroepen en denktanks) beleid beïnvloeden. Het hoofdstuk zoomt daarbij in op 4 beleidskwesties in Zweden waarvoor over langere periodes data beschikbaar is over publieke opinie. Vervolgens zijn ook alle uitspraken van niet statelijke actoren over deze onderwerpen in 2 grote Zweedse kranten in kaart gebracht, zodat we per jaar een beeld hebben van de toon van de media-activiteiten van belangenorganisaties en van publieke opinie.

Het hoofdstuk onderzoekt daarbij twee afhankelijke variabelen. Allereerst biedt het een kwantitatieve analyse van de mate van politieke aandacht (gemeten als het percentage van de politieke debatten en documenten in het Zweedse parlement dat over elk van de vier onderwerpen gaat) voor een onderwerp. Het idee hierbij is dat als een groot of toenemend deel van de Zweedse bevolking wil dat er beleidsverandering plaatsvindt, we ook verwachten dat er meer politieke aandacht voor het onderwerp komt. De tweede, kwalitatieve, analyse ging daarbij een stap verder en onderzocht ook de mate waarin beleid dan ook daadwerkelijk veranderde.

De analyses laten zien dat noch de media-activiteiten van belangenbehartigers, noch publieke opinie alleen een sterk effect hebben op politieke aandacht of beleidsveranderingen. Er is wel enig bewijs voor een positief effect van publieke opinie: als meer burgers de status quo willen veranderen, besteden Zweedse politici meer aandacht aan een onderwerp in het jaar erna. Tevens zien we dat een sterk negatieve houding van belangenbehartigers over een onderwerp de kans verlaagt dat politici over een onderwerp praten in het volgende jaar: ze lijken dus in staat onderwerpen *van* de politieke agenda te houden. Wel vinden we, zeker als het gaat om het onderwerp van het sluiten van kerncentrales, dat er achter de schermen veel meer subtiele lobbyactiviteiten plaatsvinden. Zo werd ondanks officieel beleid om kerncentrales uit te faseren en de sluiting van 2 grote kerncentrales, toch een vergunning verleend om twee andere centrales zo uit te breiden dat van uitfasering absoluut geen sprake was.

Al met al is de conclusie dus dat (media-)lobbyactiviteiten en publieke opinie een verre van deterministische relatie hebben met beleid, zeker ook als we over lange tijdsperiodes naar specifieke beleidsonderwerpen kijken. Daarbij is er veel lobbyacti-

viteit die gericht is op een detailniveau dat in de meeste studies (inclusief de andere hoofdstukken van dit proefschrift) over het hoofd gezien wordt – in ieder geval op het beperkte aantal Zweedse beleidskwesties dat hier bestudeerd is.

Hoodstuk 4

Hoofstuk 4, geschreven met Anne Rasmussen, richt zich vervolgens op de vraag of belangengroepen en andere belangenbehartigers vaker hun zich krijgen als ze samenwerken met politieke partijen op specifieke beleidskwesties. Er zijn steeds meer bestaande studies die onderzoeken in welke mate er allianties en samenwerking is tussen belangengroepen en politieke partijen. Vaak doen dit soort onderzoeken de aanname dat dit soort samenwerking belangrijk is voor democratische vertegenwoordiging en beleid, maar daar is tegelijk nog geen bewijs voor in de literatuur.

Het hoofdstuk onderzoekt daarbij allereerst of belangenorganisaties die samenwerken met politieke partijen vaker hun zin krijgen dan andere belangengroepen. Vervolgens zoekt het uit of het uitmaakt met welke politieke partijen met samenwerkt: bijvoorbeeld met partijen die dezelfde mening hebben over een beleidsonderwerp, of partijen met veel macht (grote partijen en partijen die in de regering zitten).

Hiertoe onderzoeken we 50 beleidsvoorstellen in alle vijf de landen beschreven in de introductie. Voor elk van deze voorstellen bracht het GovLis project in kaart welke belangenbehartigers er allemaal actief op waren. Deze 1400 organisaties en experts is vervolgens een survey gestuurd (met een respons van ongeveer 30%), dat vroeg naar het belang van samenwerking met verschillende politieke partijen voor het (lobby) werk van de respondent. We kijken vervolgens over een periode van vier jaar of het beleid op deze voorstellen gewijzigd is. Door de mate waarin verschillende groepen belangenbehartigers hun zin kregen te vergelijken, kunnen we conclusies trekken over de effectiviteit van de strategie van het lobbyen van (machtige en) bevriende partijen – zelfs al kunnen we er geen daadwerkelijke invloed mee aantonen.

De analyses laten zien dat het werken met politieke partijen alleen effectief is wanneer deze partijen machtig zijn én dezelfde beleidsopvatting hebben als de belangenorganisatie. Dit is een belangrijke uitkomst, omdat dit het beeld nuanceert dat dit soort samenwerking tussen belangenorganisaties en politieke partijen al te veel invloed heeft op beleid.

Hoofdstuk 5

Naast het werken met een partij zouden ook de meer langdurige banden tussen politieke partijen en (groepen) belangenbehartigers gevolgen kunnen hebben voor beleid. Hoofdstuk vijf onderzoekt dit in een meer bijzondere setting: de onderhandelingen over het coalitieakkoord na de Nederlandse Tweede Kamerverkiezingen in 2017. Met de dividendbelasting in het achterhoofd is het belangrijk om dit soort lobby-invloed beter

te begrijpen: het zou er namelijk toe kunnen leiden dat politieke partijen afwijken van de verkiezingsbeloftes waarop ze net verkozen zijn.

Politieke partijen hebben tijdens de onderhandelingen echter weinig reden om al te erg in te gaan op verzoeken van lobbyorganisaties: ze staan onder grote tijdsdruk, hebben de zeer uitdagende taak om hun eigen verkiezingsbeloften het coalitieakkoord in te krijgen en compromissen te sluiten, en zijn er daarbij vooral ook op gericht om te voorkomen dat de nieuwe coalitiepartners later in de regeringsperiode ongewenste plannen lanceren. Daarom is de eerste verwachting van hoofdstuk 5 dat lobbygroepen die verzoeken doen, die ook al in de verkiezingsprogramma's van de onderhandelende partijen staan, hun ook vaker verzoeken vervuld zullen zien in het regeerakkoord.

Onderhandelende partijen streven naast alle bovenstaande zaken echter nog een tweede doel na: ze moeten een inschatting maken hoe goed de compromissen die ze sluiten vallen bij hun achterban. Daarvoor kunnen ze natuurlijk deels directe contacten onderhouden met de achterban, maar een andere manier is om te kijken welke verkiezingsbeloftes gesteund worden door belangengroepen waar de partij al lang goede relaties mee onderhoudt, en die bovendien vaak ook groepen vertegenwoordigen die de partij van belang vindt. Daarom is de tweede verwachting in het onderzoek dat belangengroepen die traditioneel goede banden hebben met de onderhandelende politieke partijen, vaker hun verzoeken vervuld zien in het regeerakkoord dan belangengroepen die dergelijke banden niet hebben.

Om dit te onderzoeken zijn alle lobbybrieven die tijdens de Nederlandse kabinetsformatie van 2017 verzonden zijn aan de informateur onderzocht: uit elk van deze brief zijn de specifieke beleidsverzoeken gedestilleerd. Vervolgens is voor elk van deze ruim 2000 verzoeken nagegaan of ze ook in het partprogramma van de nieuwe regeringspartijen voorkwamen.

Uit de analyse blijkt allereerst dat in het regeerakkoord bijna geen lobbyverzoeken vervuld worden, die niet eerst voorkwamen in de partijprogramma's van de nieuwe coalitiepartijen. Van 1200 unieke verzoeken werden er slechts 30 vervuld die niet eerst in de partijprogramma's stonden van de formerende partijen: rond de 2,5%. Verder blijkt dat verzoeken van bedrijven en werkgeversorganisaties die gesteund werden door de VVD eerder vervuld werden van die van andere belangenbehartigers die verzoeken deden die ook gesteund werden door de VVD. Met andere woorden: de VVD lijkt verzoeken van bedrijven en werkgeversorganisaties serieuzer te nemen dan de verzoeken van andere organisaties, zelfs als die iets vragen waar de VVD wel positief tegenover staat. In tegenstelling tot de verwachtingen ging dit niet op voor het CDA, dat historisch ook veel contacten en banden onderhoudt met werkgeversorganisaties. Een extra analyse van de verkiezingsprogramma's van deze partijen suggereert een iets andere verklaring dan hierboven beschreven: het zou er vooral om kunnen gaan welke (maatschappelijke) groepen belangrijk zijn voor de campagne van een politieke partij. Als een lobbyorgani-

satie een dergelijke groep vertegenwoordigt, heeft deze wellicht ook meer invloed op een politieke partij.

Samengevat maakt het hoofdstuk dus duidelijk dat partijen tijdens de formatie veel sterker zijn dan lobbyorganisaties. Hier moeten wel twee kanttekeningen bij geplaatst worden. De eerste is dat het natuurlijk mogelijk is dat de partijprogramma's van de politieke partijen ook al beïnvloed zijn door lobbyisten. De tweede is dat partijen (zoals de VVD in deze analyse) soms dus wel de opvattingen en voorkeuren van bepaalde lobbygroepen meewegen. Beide onderwerpen vragen om extra onderzoek om de oorzaken achter de gevonden patronen te onderzoeken.

Conclusie

Behalve de resultaten per hoofdstuk, zijn er natuurlijk ook bredere conclusies aan het onderzoek in deze dissertatie te ontlenen. De eerste en belangrijkste is dat de dissertatie duidelijk maakt dat het bestuderen van de activiteiten aan de hand van specifieke beleidskwesties een waardevolle toevoeging is aan de bestaande politicologische literatuur. Dit proefschrift presenteert twee belangrijke voorbeelden van dergelijke voordelen. Allereerst helpt het ons beter te begrijpen waarom veel onderzoeken een zeer hoge ideologische congruentie tussen publieke opinie en politieke partijen vinden, terwijl er tegelijk veel zorgen bestaan over de mate waarin partijen nog geworteld zijn in de samenleving. De analyse van specifieke beleidskwesties maakt duidelijk dat de beleidsposities van Duitse regeringspartijen niet correleren met publieke opinie, al blijft er wel een correlatie met de voorkeuren van de aanhangers van deze partijen.

Het tweede grote voordeel is dat het bestuderen van specifieke beleidskwesties het mogelijk maakt de activiteiten van lobbyorganisaties en politieke partijen tegelijk te onderzoeken. De conclusies van hoofdstuk 4 en 5 maken laten daarbij zien dat de gevolgen van de samenwerking en allianties tussen deze twee belangrijke organisatietypes minder vanzelfsprekend zijn dan soms aangenomen. In hoofdstuk vier zagen we dat alleen samenwerking met machtige *en* partijen die het eens zijn met de belangenbehartiger ervoor zorgt dat deze ook vaker haar/zijn zin krijgt. Hoofdstuk 5 liet bovendien ook zien dat zelfs de traditionele banden tussen een politieke partij en een bepaalde groep maatschappelijke organisaties er niet per definitie toe leidt dat deze laatste vaker een verzoek vervuld ziet in het regeerakkoord: andere factoren lijken deze beleidsinvloed te mediëren.

Al met al is het beeld dat deze dissertatie schept van representatieve democratie in West-Europa niet louter positief. De correlatie tussen de beleidsvoorkeuren van de gemiddelde kiezer en regeringspartijen is beperkt, en hetzelfde lijkt – in ieder geval op de onderwerpen die hier onderzocht zijn op te gaan voor Zweeds beleid. Daarnaast is er weinig direct bewijs dat belangenorganisaties deze tekortkomingen compenseren. Alhoewel de studies niet direct de effecten van lobbyen op beleidsresponsiviteit toetsen,

suggereert de beperkte invloed van deze organisaties op beleid wel dat ze niet zomaar de vertegenwoordigende functie van partijen zullen/kunnen overnemen.

Daar staat echter tegenover dat het niet enkel slecht nieuws is. Zo blijven de beleidsposities van Duitse regeringspartijen samenhangen met de voorkeuren van aanhangers van de partij, en reageren Zweedse politici op veranderingen in publieke opinie door de aandacht die ze aan onderwerpen besteden. Bovendien zullen veel mensen de beperkte invloed van lobbyorganisaties niet alleen negatief vinden: zeker in hoofdstuk 5, zou veel lobby-invloed kunnen betekenen dat politieke partijen afwijken van de plannen waarmee ze net verkozen zijn.

Samenvattend biedt deze dissertatie dus een gemengd beeld van de mate waarin politieke partijen en belangengroepen helpen om publieke voorkeuren te vertalen naar beleid. Het blijft belangrijk om ook in de toekomst meer van dergelijke analyses uit te voeren, om bijvoorbeeld meer oorzaken van de in dit proefschrift onderzochte patronen te achterhalen.

C.V. JEROEN ROMEIJN

romeijn.jeroen@gmail.com
Date of Birth: 02.03.1990, Quito

Work Experience

Policy Advisor — 2019 - present
Europe Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

PhD-candidate — 2015 – 2020
Institute of Public Administration, Leiden University

Intern — 2014
Economic Department, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Oslo

Education

Msc European Studies — 2013 - 2015
University of Gothenburg

Msc Political Science, cum laude — 2012 - 2014
Radboud University Nijmegen

Bachelor Political Science — 2008 - 2012
Radboud University Nijmegen

Gymnasium — 2002 – 2008
Stedelijk Gymnasium Arnhem

Languages

Dutch, English, French, Swedish. Basic knowledge of German, Spanish, Danish and Norwegian.

Other:

Competitive ballroom dancer and dance teacher — 2010 – 2018

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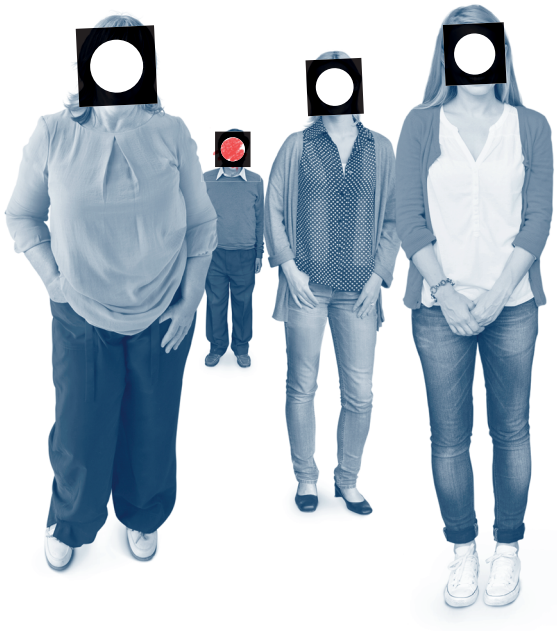

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Political parties take positions and make decisions on many policies that directly influence important parts of the lives of their voters. These policies include issues like raising the retirement age, lending money to large companies that face bankruptcy, or deploying soldiers to Afghanistan.

But do political parties take into account the policy preferences of the general public and their own voters when making such decisions? And to what extent do interest groups influence political parties' positions and decisions on these policy issues?

This dissertation studies these important questions across a range of wealthy, Northwestern European democracies with strong democratic credentials, covering dozens of political parties, policy issues and even more interest groups and other policy advocates.