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**Balancing Friends and Foes**  
**Explaining Advocacy Styles at Global Diplomatic Conferences**

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**Abstract.** The growing attempts by non-state interests to influence global policy processes has attracted much scholarly interest in recent years. One important question thereby is what characterizes and explains the interactions of non-state advocates with policymakers. In order to clarify this matter, we analyse the advocacy strategies of non-state actors, more precisely whether and why they address opponents instead of more like-minded policymakers. For this purpose, we analyse evidence collected through 228 interviews with advocates who attended the WTO Ministerial Conferences (Geneva 2012) and the United Nations Climate Conferences (Durban 2011; Doha 2012). Our results show that transnational advocates predominantly target like-minded policymakers and that their activities are much less focused on their opponents. Variation in advocacy towards opponents or like-minded policymakers is explained by the alignment of non-state actors with policymakers, the salience of topics on the political agenda, group characteristics, and whether or not advocates hail from democratic countries.

## **Introduction**

During the past decades, the growing attempts by non-state actors to influence policy processes that take place in international organizations (IOs) has attracted much scholarly interest (O'Brien et al. 2000; Tallberg et al. 2014).<sup>1</sup> Some scholars have characterized the growth of non-state actor involvement in global governance as 'one of the most distinct political developments of the past half-century' (Bexell et al. 2010, p. 81). An important debate concerns the extent to which non-state actors are valuable to the policymaking process and how to characterize the role of these actors in global governance (Betsill and Corell 2008; Bexell et al. 2010; Michaelowa and Michaelowa 2012; Tallberg et al. 2015)

For a valid evaluation of the role and the impact of non-state actors, nonetheless, we argue that a proper understanding of the *nature* of the interaction between non-state actors and policymakers is required. That is, we need to know *why* and *how* transnational advocates interact with policymakers, before we can assess their role in global governance or their policymaking impact. Currently, the literature provides a mixed view of how non-state actors interact with policymakers. For instance, several social movement as well as interest group scholars highlight the contentious nature of transnational advocacy. Non-state actors, from this perspective, primarily try to persuade and seek to influence policymakers' policy positions (Aaronson 2001; Tarrow 2001; Tarrow 2005; della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Tarrow 2011; Zajak 2014). Other scholars have highlighted the importance of establishing cooperative networks among non-state actors and/or policymakers. For instance, the literature on epistemic communities and public-private partnerships emphasizes the mutually cooperative arrangements between policymakers and non-state interests (Andonova 2014; Haas 1992; Haas

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<sup>1</sup> Non-state actors are (1) organizations that (2) seek policy influence, yet (3) have no interest in gaining executive of legislative power themselves (Beyers et al. 2008; Prakash and Gugerty 2010). This includes a wide range of organizations such as NGOs, business associations, or research organizations.

et al. 1993; Keohane and Levy 1996; Stern 2006; Young 1999).

The studies mentioned highlight different interaction forms between policymakers and transnational advocates in the context of global governance.<sup>2</sup> We argue that, at least from the perspective of non-state actors, one can identify two ideal-typical interaction styles. On the one end, several scholars emphasize, what we call, a *cooperative* style. From this perspective, transnational advocacy is largely a matter of collaborative interactions with like-minded policymakers. In this way, non-state interests seek support for their favorable policy solutions and from the policymakers that endorse their policy views. On the other end, some scholars stress what we label as a *confrontational* style. Such a style entails that transnational advocates primarily address policymakers they disagree with, i.e. transnational advocates seek to persuade their opponents and change the policymakers' policy positions.

Making a distinction between both advocacy styles, our first aim with this paper, helps us to *characterize* the nature of the interactions between non-state actors and policymakers. This is important for several reasons. First, while we can recognize both interaction styles in the current literature, it is not always clear how prevalent these styles are. Yet, having a more precise understanding of the interaction mode between policymakers and non-state actors is important to understand the role that non-state actors play in global governance (Bexell et al.

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<sup>2</sup> We use 'advocacy' as a generic concept referring to all political activities adopted by non-state actors that seek policy influence. We are aware that 'advocacy' is regularly used in relation to NGOs or civil society organization (often labeled as 'advocacy organizations'); it is less commonly employed with respect to business interests (whose activities are denoted as 'lobbying'). Nonetheless, we take the position that business and non-business interests use political strategies that can be considered as conceptually equivalent (Prakash and Gugerty 2010; Sell and Prakash 2004). In addition, we have two other reasons for not using 'lobbying' in the context of this paper. First, it might be considered as an inappropriate term for NGOs or civil society. Second, during our fieldwork we deliberately did not use the concept 'lobbying' because this is – depending on the national context and also for representatives of many business interests – a highly value-loaded concept.

2010). This leads to our second aim, namely explaining *variation* in the extent to which advocacy efforts lean more towards a cooperative instead of a confrontational style. Theoretically, we argue that the relative focus on either cooperation or confrontation can be explained by factors located at four levels: the organizational features of the represented group, the non-state actor's alignment with policymakers, the perceived issue salience, and whether a transnational advocate originates from a democratic country.

We start the paper with reviewing the existing literature on advocacy styles within a transnational context. After this, we develop specific research hypotheses. Then, we present the research design which relies on interviews with 228 lobbyists originating from 58 countries and who were active at two different global diplomatic conferences, namely the World Trade Organization's Ministerial Conferences (MC hereafter) in Geneva (2012) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP hereafter) in Durban (2011) and Doha (2012). Our analysis shows that non-state actors largely adopt a cooperative advocacy style, but that this propensity is most prevalent among NGOs and advocates who hail from non-democratic countries.

### **Cooperative and confrontational advocacy styles**

Over the past decades we have seen a plethora of studies dealing with the role non-state actors play in global governance. Some scholars have focused on the *activities* of non-state actors in relation to various aspects of the political process, such as lobbying at political venues (Tallberg et al. 2015) or protest activities (Hadden 2015). Others were more concerned about the *effects* of non-state actor participation in global governance, such as the functioning of IOs (O'Brien et al. 2001; Agné et al. 2015), the outcomes of global negotiations (Betsill and Corell 2001), or the implementation of public policy (Gulbrandsen and Andresen 2004; Andonova 2014). Still others have linked the growth of non-state actor activity to *normative*

questions, such as the legitimacy and accountability of non-state actors in global governance (Bexell et al. 2010; Scholte 2004, 2012), potential biases within global non-state actor communities (Steffek et al. 2007; Smith and Wiest 2005), the functioning of IOs in light of non-state actor involvement (Dellmuth and Tallberg 2015), and so on. While all these studies focus on a wide variety of topics, they share one common trait namely that they all focus on how non-state actors, through interacting with policymakers, try to shape global policymaking processes. We contend that these interactions can be structured according to two ideal-types of advocacy styles, namely a confrontational and a cooperative style.

For a *confrontational style* of advocacy, the basic logic is that non-state actors reach out to policymakers in order to persuade them to change their mind and adopt a position more in line with the position pursued by a policy advocate. Often, such interactions are conceptualized as an exchange of information between a non-state actor, who has because of some particular economic, political or professional activities easy access to issue-specific information, and a policymaker who lacks this information (Tallberg et al. 2015). In response to new information the policymaker updates her preferences and shifts her position closer to the non-state actors' position, who, in turn, gains some policy influence.

The confrontational logic to advocacy has been identified in the interest group literature. Although many of these studies look at domestic policymaking processes (Austin-Smith and Wright 1994/1996; Baldwin and Magee 2000; Hansen 1991; Kollman 1997), some interest group scholars have linked this advocacy style with transnational policymaking processes, albeit mostly in the European Union (EU). These studies show that confrontational strategies are indeed a common, and often successful, advocacy strategy for influencing EU policies (Crombez 2002; Gullberg 2008; Marshall 2010). Some social movement scholars link a confrontational logic with the emergence of global social movements who use contentious politics in challenging the dominant position of state governments in global governance (della

Porta and Tarrow 2005; Tarrow 2011; della Porta and Tarrow 2012; Zajak 2014). For instance, Betsill and Corell (2001) argue that direct persuasion by non-state actors during climate conferences is an important goal of participating at these venues. They argue that through the provision of expertise to negotiators, official policy positions can, and often do, change (see also Gulbrandsen and Andresen 2004).

While confrontational persuasion is an important advocacy style, there is an alternative style which we label as *cooperative* advocacy. This entails that non-state actors mostly target policymakers that already agree with them (Hojnacki and Kimball 1998; Holyoke 2003). Advocating like-minded policymakers can be an effective strategy, especially if we perceive advocacy as an ongoing interaction process between policymakers and non-state actors. In everyday political life, non-state actor and policymakers mostly interact informally whereby they casually exchange information, work on a particular project, and/or whereby non-state actors monitor the overall policy environment. Under these circumstances, the decision whom to target in an advocacy campaign is not only shaped by the need to persuade one particular policymaker or to realize a success on a particular issue, but also by considerations that go beyond specific issues, such as the need to foster and conserve long-term relationships (Bernhagen and Bräuninger 2005). In addition, sometimes non-state actors do not aim to change the issue-specific positions of policymakers, but instead they try to raise the awareness of like-minded policymakers about the most important issues of concern to them. By supplying like-minded policymakers with information they make sure that these policymakers will have more and better arguments at their fingertips to convince other policymakers. In all these instances, a cooperative approach to advocacy is a viable strategy to employ.

It is not hard to find examples of a cooperative advocacy style in the global governance literature. On the contrary, cooperation is the central concept in work on public private partnerships and research on epistemic communities. About the former, several scholars have

highlighted how non-state and state actors cooperate in so-called public private networks (Andonova 2014; Conca 2005; Haas et al. 1993; Keohane and Levy 1996; Lipschutz and Conca 1993; Stern 2006; Young 1999). In such arrangements, non-state and state actors cooperate on certain concrete policy proposals or the implementation of a public policy. This logic resembles to a large extent an argument provided by Hall and Deardorff (2006) for why non-state interests prefer to interact with like-minded policymakers (instead of targeting opponents). They argue that due to the complexity and diversity of the policy agenda, many policymakers are forced to be 'issue-generalists'. Policymakers thus need and seek expert information to accommodate for the lack of specialization and rely on external input, such as the expertise supplied by non-state interests. Therefore, according to Hall and Deardorff (2006), most policymakers will rely on like-minded organized interests, which are more trusted to supply reliable information (see also Betsill and Corell 2008, 16; Bauer et al. 1963, 398). Also social movement scholars have highlighted how NGOs sometimes eschew conflict with policymakers and that much advocacy work concerns reaching out to potential allies. Keck and Sikkink's (1998) boomerang model is a prominent example of this. Building on an early observation by Schattschneider (1960) that the losers in a policy conflict are inclined to shift to a more friendly venue or mobilize a like-minded audience, Keck and Sikkink argue that NGOs often bypass (national) policymakers they disagree with, and become active beyond domestic borders to galvanize support among like-minded policymakers (see also Tarrow 2005; Dalton et al. 2003). While the advocacy goal is clearly to influence policy outcomes, the mean to this end is largely of a cooperative nature in that advocacy efforts are mostly directed to like-minded policymakers.

Is this conceptualization helpful for characterizing transnational advocacy during global diplomatic conferences? On first sight, global conferences seem to be a fruitful context for cooperative advocacy. Much transnational advocacy consists of monitoring the policy environment, which involves getting informed about the policy positions and arguments of



opponents and trying to find out whether some compromises are possible. Therefore, deciding whom to address in an advocacy campaign is not only driven by the need to persuade opponents. Instead, advocates aim to nurture robust networks with like-minded policymakers and assist them with supplying policy information. This leads us to expect that advocates at transnational diplomatic conferences will primarily seek to reach out to like-minded policymakers.

Importantly, this does not imply that we expect non-state actors to refrain from a confrontational style entirely. It is eminently plausible that non-state actors attending global conferences seek to interact with a wide range of policymakers, including, albeit to a limited extent, some of their opponents. Indeed, concentrating all resources on persuading opponents or trusting only like-minded policymakers can be a rather risky, uncertain or ineffective strategy. For instance, if like-minded policymakers are already supported by a well-organized policy community, tallying extra support might be of limited added value. Also, ignoring opponents might not be smart because opponents on an issue today may become supporters on some other issue tomorrow. Therefore, it is more plausible that non-state actors will combine a cooperative and confrontational style, yet might lean towards either one depending on specific conditions.

### **Explaining varying transnational advocacy styles**

Above we outlined how non-state actors, in their quest to influence global policies, adopt more of a confrontational or lean more towards a cooperative advocacy style. To take stock of the variety of strategies that non-state actors might employ, we analyze the *relative* focus of non-state actors on cooperation or confrontation. Hereby we construct an indicator in which a cooperative and a confrontational advocacy style are at opposite sides of a continuum, i.e. as ideal-type advocacy styles (see research design). In terms of explanatory factors, we anticipate that the extent to which non-state actors focus on opponents or like-minded

policymakers may depend on the political constellation that they are confronted with, the issue salience, the organizational form of non-state interests, and the politico-institutional context in which transnational advocates operate.

To start with, we expect that the overall *political constellation* surrounding specific issues affects advocacy strategies. It matters whether or not non-state actors have supporters among the delegations who sit around the global negotiation table. On the one end, when the policy views of non-state actors align with the position of the national government these non-state actors will focus mostly on their own country delegates and assist the national negotiators in realizing their goals. It would be futile to attract attention from and to convince policymakers who oppose the government as this might backfire and mobilize the attention of opposition parties back home, expand the scope of conflict in an undesired direction, and inspire opposition parties to adopt positions that challenge executive policies. In case of an alignment with the government position, the activities of advocacy groups are, thus, mostly aimed at supporting the negotiators from their own country. Alternatively, policy advocates might be confronted with a situation where they do *not* agree with the national government's position. In this instance, transnational advocates can opt to persuade the government and/or to focus on other policymakers (for example negotiators from other countries or opposition parties) and provide them the necessary support (see Keck and Sikkink 1998 for a similar logic). In short, we hypothesize that non-state actors with friends in the government will focus primarily on these friends and, as a result, reach out to like-minded policymakers:

*H1: Non-state actors who face like-minded policymakers in the national government are more likely to focus on like-minded policymakers.*

Second we expect that transnational advocates adapt their strategy to the extent to which they conceive issues as highly salient. We define salience as the degree of public attention or

political scrutiny an issue is subject to. The higher the public salience of an issue, the more attention policymakers will pay to it and the more they are potentially pressured by other interests, public opinion and electoral consequences. This implies that non-state actors will face more barriers in influencing policymakers as the latter are more pressured to listen to a larger set of stakeholders (Beyers and Kerremans 2007; Burstein and Linton 2002; Burstein and Sausner 2005). Yet, if the stakes are high, we expect non-state actors to be prepared to take more risks and to spend more resources, including trying to influence their opponents, even if this might be an uncertain strategy (Caldeira et al. 2000; Hojnacki and Kimball 1998, 779). In contrast, when the overall stakes are perceived to be rather low, non-state actors will put less effort on addressing opponents and interact primarily with like-minded policymakers.

Public salience is also relevant for transnational advocacy (Scholte 2004; Zürn 2014). Often, global negotiations take years, sometimes decades, of low-profile bargaining out of the spotlights. But if issues are perceived as salient, for instance because of an expected breakthrough, non-state actors are inclined to take more risks to make sure the window of opportunity that so sparsely opens up will not be wasted. For instance, at the Copenhagen UN Climate Conference (2009) there was an opportunity in the eyes of many NGOs to make progress on climate change issues, an opportunity that had not been as immanent during the ten year period prior to the conference (Fisher 2010, 12). Put differently, because global negotiations do not become salient that regularly, it is plausible to expect when they do become salient that non-state actors will do everything in their power to influence the policy issues they are concerned about. Moreover, this is possibly one of the reasons why much of the literature has focused on explaining persuasion tactics (instead of friendly advocacy). As Risse (2007, 274) argues, scholars are inclined to focus on prominent events, often associated with high levels of public visibility and media prominence. It is particularly under such circumstances that attempts to persuade opponents will be more prominent. Nonetheless, much transnational

advocacy and global policymakers concerns issues with limited public salience, but which are highly salient in the eyes of organized interests. To sum up, we hypothesize:

*H2: Advocates working on issues that are perceived as more salient, are more likely to lobby their opponents.*

Next, we expect that the *type of organized interest* determines whether a transnational activist specializes in particular strategies (for instance addressing like-minded policymakers) or casts the net widely and operates as interlocutors for both their like-minded and opposing policymakers. For the purpose of this paper we make an analytical distinction between four organizational types, namely encompassing business interests, specialized business interests, NGOs and research organizations.

To begin with, we expect that not all business groups approach like-minded and opposing policymakers to the same extent. First, encompassing business interests, such as sector-wide or cross-sectoral associations, typically monitor multiple parts of a policy process and present aggregate policy positions to policymakers. One defining feature of negotiation processes in IOs is that policymakers seek to make compromises through forging issue linkages (Martin 1994; Putnam 1988); as a result, there is among policymakers a considerable demand for information that aggregates a diverse set of views. Therefore, negotiation processes in IOs allows sector-wide and cross-sectoral business associations to gain great leverage as their aggregate policy positions are in high demand among policymakers (Davis 2004; Hanegraaf et al. 2016a). For this reason we expect such organizations to be inclined to talk to everyone, including their opponents.

Second, specialized business interests typically possess technical expertise confined to one particular product or field (Bouwen 2004; Chalmers 2013). Organizations of this type usually mobilize a considerable set of professionals dealing with specific issues and their niche

orientation makes them less well-suited to supply information that helps to build compromises, forge links across issues and fields, or bridge conflicting interests. This means that they might refrain from interacting with opponents (or delegate compromise building to umbrella associations). However, it is not entirely clear whether policymakers are primarily interested in general or encompassing policy expertise. Given the generalist orientation of many policymakers, they are several policymakers in need of specialized information as well, especially in areas such as climate change or trade which sometimes can be highly complex and technical. Due to these informational needs, specialized business groups will face informational demands from their opponents as well. Hence, although specialized businesses are expected to lobby like-minded policymakers more intensively than business associations, they will probably also connect with opponents because their expertise could be in high demand among many different types of policymakers.

Third, typical for NGOs, in contrast with business groups, is that they lack a direct overlap between the constituency that may benefit from their advocacy efforts, those who actively support the NGO (e.g. membership, sponsors, supporters) and those who represent the NGOs (e.g. professional staff). For most of these organizations the beneficiaries are not able to speak on their own behalf; typical examples are future generations or non-human interests (Halpin 2006). This limited potential to represent ‘membership driven interest’ means that NGOs need to spend much energy on defending the legitimacy of their claims. Therefore, such groups tend to develop considerable political expertise, for instance about the number of people that support their cause and on how to build political campaigns (Chalmers 2013). We expect that due to the large distance between policymakers and voters at the international level, this type of information is of less immediate relevance. Additionally, policymakers who disagree with NGOs will likely eschew NGOs as the propensity of the latter to seek public exposure may lead to conflict expansion. Therefore, we expect that NGOs will tend to interact more closely

with like-minded policymakers and refrain from persuading their opponents.

Fourth, international arenas attract many *research organizations* that aim to develop and disseminate policy expertise and technical knowledge (Stone 2000). Identifying oneself as a research organization implies some sort of neutral political image and this allows such groups to lobby a broad set of actors, including opponents and like-minded policymakers. Nonetheless, we expect that these actors are not very actively targeting opponents. Given their identity as impartial providers of expertise, the concepts *supporter* and *opponent* are somewhat problematic in their case, which makes that experts representing these organizations will be reluctant to conceive of the policy environment in terms of clearly delineated camps. Quite a number of research organizations have a political affiliation and/or function as government or political party sponsored think-tanks, which means that they will first and foremost supply information to their sponsors. Consequently, we hypothesize that such research organizations will primarily assist like-minded policymakers. In short:

*H3: Business associations are more likely to target opponents than specialized businesses, who in turn are more likely to address opponents compared to NGOs. And NGOs are more likely to approach opponents than research organizations.*

Finally, we expect that the political-institutional context influences the propensity to interact with like-minded or opposing policymakers. While there might be many potential institutional factors that could shape advocacy strategies, we focus on one factor that has been identified as a relevant explanatory factor in the global governance literature: the level of democracy in a country (Beckfield 2003; Bernauer et al. 2013; Dalton et al. 2003; Hanegraaff et al. 2015; Lee 2010; Smith and Wiest 2005; Tallberg et al. 2013; Tallberg et al. 2014). Since democracy allows or even stimulates ideational diversity, addressing both like-minded *and* opposing policymakers is more of an option in democratic states. Overall, there are higher levels

of advocacy in more democratic countries and democratic political institutions ease the establishment and maintenance of advocacy groups. The crowdedness of interest group communities that is typical for more democratic systems also forces non-state actors to target policymakers that are not necessarily their best friends and to outreach to opponents. To put it differently, because there is an abundance of information *supply* by policy advocates to policymakers in democratic systems, non-state actors cannot be picky in who to target. As a result, advocates are forced to target a wide range of policymakers, including opponents they would not target if there was less competition among organized interests. Another feature of open and democratic systems is that one can expect that political elites, even when they disagree with non-state actors, are prepared to listen to the input of a wider variety of interests. This also means that a confrontational advocacy style should be more prevalent in democratic compared to less democratic or autocratic countries. In short, we hypothesize:

*H4: Non-state actors originating from more democratic states are more likely to target opponents.*

### **Research design**

One way to identify transnational advocates is to map all those non-state actors that have a global outreach and have a constituency located in multiple countries on different continents (Beckfield 2003; Smith and Wiest 2006; Poloni-Staudinger and Ortvals 2014). Such an approach takes the organizational form as a starting point by looking primarily at organizational entities that are global in scope. In contrast, one could also take as a starting point all advocates that are active at the global level. In this way, the advocate might not necessarily have global roots in terms of the represented constituency, but the adopted political activities are of a transnational nature (Dalton et al. 2003; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 2005). In the paper we take actual non-state actor activity at a global level as our starting point.

The most important reasons for doing so has to do with the fact that our theoretical expectations take into account the constraining and enabling impact of domestic politics on transnational advocacy. That is, we expect domestic political conditions – e.g. the alignment with the national government – and political institutions – e.g. democratic openness – to affect how non-state actors behave globally.

To test our hypotheses, we rely on interview data collected at the Ministerial Conference (41 interviews), the highest decision-making body of the World Trade Organization (MCs), held in Geneva in 2012, and two Conferences of the Parties, the principal negotiation forum of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COPs), held in Durban in 2011 (32 interviews) and Doha in 2012 (155 interviews). These occasions provide some useful advantages when studying transnational advocacy. First, given the broad scope and potential implications associated with these negotiations, these global diplomatic conferences are among the most attended international negotiations by non-state actors. To illustrate, almost 2000 groups have attended at least one of the eight MCs since 1995 (Hanegraaff et al. 2011; Hanegraaff et al. 2015) and the COPs have attracted more than 6500 groups since 1997 (Hanegraaff 2015). A second reason why these venues were selected relates to the fact that both the MCs and the COPs attract a highly diverse set of interests; including business groups, social movement organizations, labor unions, and research organizations. In this way we could interview a large number of advocates in a relative short time span. Obviously, a down-side of this approach is its limitation to one specific type of venue, namely global diplomatic conferences organized by two IOs. Nonetheless, although, we cannot simply generalize our findings to other global venues, this approach allows us to provide a systematic test of our theoretical claims.

During these conferences three researchers randomly asked attendees to participate in an interview of 30 minutes regarding their advocacy strategies during the conference and at the



domestic level, the policy topics or issues they are interested in, their expectations regarding the global conference, the resources spend on advocacy, and so on. In total we interviewed 348 non-state actors. In this paper, we focus on the responses of the 228 non-state actors who indicated that they worked (predominantly) in one country, but developed a transnational advocacy strategy.<sup>3</sup> As a consequence we excluded, for the sake of this paper, those who represent global organizations (n=71); we couldn't link these organizations to domestic political processes and structures, such as support for the position of national governments during the negotiations. Yet, as said the national rootedness of our respondents does not imply that they are working for purely domestic organizations.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, many of them are global players and much of their political activities as well as policy interests are genuinely transnational. For example, we include organizations such as Greenpeace-USA or Oxfam-France, and only exclude organizations such as Greenpeace International and Oxfam International (as they cannot interact in a meaningful way with 'their' national government).

The key *dependent variable* in our analysis is how advocates divide their advocacy efforts in terms of targeting like-minded, opposing and uncommitted policymakers. The variable was constructed from answers to the following interview question:

*On this issue [respondents were asked to indicate one issue that they were primarily interested*

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<sup>3</sup> Respondents come from Africa (34), Asia (59), Europe (69), Northern America (44), Oceania (9), and South America (15). Frequent countries are: US (34), GB (16), India (12), Germany (11), Japan (10), Netherlands (10). See [Online Appendix](#) for more details on the sample, the questionnaire used and the response rates.

<sup>4</sup> Note that the population of transnational advocates consists primarily of actors who have their roots in nation-states and are, as Tarrow put it, 'rooted cosmopolitans' (2005; Hanegraaff et al. 2015). One other reason for not including some interviews is because the respondents (n=55) indicated that they did not lobby in favor or against a specific issue; rather, they attended the conference to learn or network with other non-state actors. For the analysis in this paper we also exclude labor unions from the analysis due to the very low number of interviews with representatives from these organizations (n=8).

*in], could you indicate which percentage of your advocacy efforts were dedicated to like-minded policymakers, policymakers who did not decide yet, and policymakers who oppose your views?*

For instance, an interviewee could indicate to focus 75 percent of the advocacy efforts on like-minded policymakers, 15 percent to uncommitted policymakers, and 10 percent to policymakers with opposing views (see next section for a detailed description of the dependent variable).

Our analysis involves four independent variables (see Table 1). First, the overall alignment with domestic policymakers was measured by asking respondents to indicate on a 5-point scale how much her policy position corresponds with, on the one end, the government's policy position, and, on the other end, the opposition parties' position (with respect to the issue of concern). The lower on the scale, the larger the alignment between the advocate and policymakers.

Second, we measured the perceived salience of the topic on which the respondent was active by asking her to indicate on a three-point scale the level of domestic media attention: 1 refers to 'high salience' (much media attention); 2 to 'moderate salience' (moderate media attention); 3 to 'limited salience' (limited media attention). Note that our results are primarily based on self-reported information about advocacy strategies and the perceived salience of the topic. Admittedly, actual salience — for instance as measured in terms of media coverage — does not necessarily correspond with how actors subjectively appreciate the salience of a particular issue. Yet, subjective measures are justified because advocates do not just respond to some objective reality (they might not be well aware of), but their activities are mediated by their subjective appreciation of the context in which they operate.

To test hypothesis 3 on *group type*, we distinguish between specialized business groups, encompassing business associations, NGOs and research organizations. Specialized business groups defend the interest of product-level economic sectors while encompassing

business groups focus on a broader set of products, sectors or multiple sectors. To differentiate between these two types we coded organizations according to the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC). Organizations representing issue areas that correspond with ISIC level 3 or 4, for instance the ‘sugar’ industry, were coded as specialized business organizations. Organizations coded at the ISIC level 1 or 2, such as ‘agriculture’, were categorized as encompassing business associations. The latter category also includes cross-sectoral business associations. Next, NGOs were coded by considering the areas (e.g. human rights) they are active in and/or the specific goals they pursued (e.g. poverty reduction). Finally, research organizations are primarily funded by governments and portray themselves predominantly as creators or disseminators of expert knowledge. In total we interviewed 34 specialized business organizations, 23 encompassing business organizations, 125 NGOs, and 46 research organizations.

**Table 1. Overview of dependent, independent, and control variables**

Variable	Characterization variable	Source	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Dependent</b>						
Lobby direction	Variable between 0 (mostly like-minded) and 1 (mostly opponents)	Survey data	.36	.21	0	1
<b>Independent</b>						
Alignment gov.	Agreement with government position (5-point scale; whereby a low score refers to agreement)	Survey data	2.95	1.29	1	5
Alignment opp.	Agreement with opposition position (5-point scale; whereby a low score refers to agreement)	Survey data	3.03	1.20	1	5
Salience	Media attention: 1=much, 2=moderate, 3=limited	Survey data	2.32	.78	1	3
Group type	Four categories: business encompassing, specialized business, NGO, and research organization	Survey data	N.A.	N.A.	1	4
Democracy	Level of democracy: -10 to 10	POLITY IV	6.91	5.05	-7	10
<b>Controls</b>						
Resources	Number of staff members dedicated to advocacy (logged)	Survey data	2.34	1.41	0	6.90
Issue density	Number of lobbyists working on similar issue at the conference in question	Survey data	14.07	11.83	1	37
MC_COP	WTO-MC or UNFCCC-COP	Survey data	N.A.	N.A.	0	1
Leadership selection	1=proportional, 2=mixed or 3=majoritarian system	Democratic Electoral Systems (DES) database	N.A.	N.A.	1	3

For testing the hypothesis on democratic openness we use the Polity IV index.<sup>5</sup> This indicator ranges from -10 to +10 where a high positive score refers to a full-democracy and a low negative score to an authoritarian regime.

We add four *control variables*. First, we use staff size as a proxy for the amount of organizational resources. We asked respondents about the number of staff working on advocacy; our expectation is that those with more staff resources might be able to spend more time and energy on their opponents. Due to the skewed distribution of this variable, we log transformed it. Second, we include a measure tapping the number of non-state actors that lobbied on similar issues at the global conferences. Issue density may reflect patterns of counter-active advocacy as advocates often react to increased attention for an issue from other advocates. Third, while we do not have an a-priori expectation for why there might be some difference between the MCs and COPs, we do add a dummy variable related to the venue in which the advocate was active. This way we, at least, control for potential varying opportunities that are related to the specific venues which our interviewees attended.<sup>6</sup> Fourth, one could expect that the domestic system of selecting political leaders and government formation, more precisely proportional versus majoritarian systems, affects the propensity to address opponents. Typical for proportional systems is that governments are based on, sometimes oversized, coalitions and a consensual mode of policymaking (Lijphart 1999/2009). Non-state actors may find it easier to spot some like-minded policymakers within such governments; this may make the need to persuade opponents less pronounced in proportional systems. In contrast,

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> We also contemplated to conduct a separate analysis for organizations that were present at both venues as this would enable us to test whether similar organizations act differently in varying contexts. However, somewhat to our surprise the overlap of groups that were active at both venues is extremely small (n=4), which rules out this option.

majoritarian systems are usually more bipartisan and, in such systems, it might be more natural to think and act in terms of opponents and like-minded policymakers. Therefore, we include a measure indicating whether countries have a proportional, a mixed-proportional or a majoritarian electoral system. This data was retrieved from the Democratic Electoral Systems (DES) database (Bormann and Golder 2013).<sup>7</sup>

### **Data analysis**

Before testing our hypotheses we present a closer explorative analysis of the dependent variable and the overall issue-constellation in which transnational advocates operate. Overall, the distribution of our *dependent variable* is consistent with what we expected. On average, transnational advocates spend half of their efforts (49 percent) on targeting like-minded policymakers, 28 percent of their efforts towards uncommitted policymakers and 23 percent of their efforts vis-a-vis their opponents. This confirms that, relatively speaking, transnational advocacy – at the UNFCCC and WTO – is mostly about interacting with like-minded policymakers and less about persuading opponents.

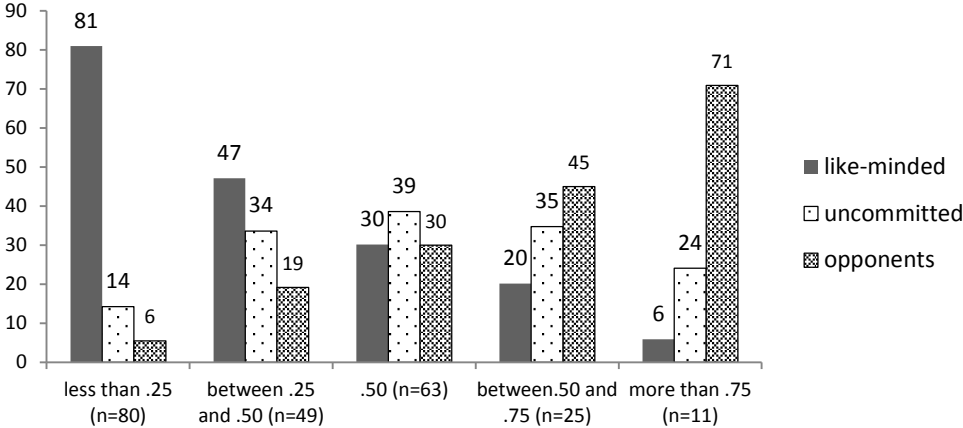
Yet, despite the propensity to prioritize like-minded policymakers, most transnational advocates address a diverse set of policymakers. Only 24 of the interviewees (12 percent) lobbied just one type of policymaker and of this set 21 solely addressed like-minded policymakers. Two respondents responded that they only targeted opponents and two others claimed to have approached only uncommitted policymakers. Again, when it comes to specializing we learn that if one specializes, one specializes in advocacy towards like-minded policymakers, not opponents or uncommitted policymakers. Of the 28 respondents that specialized in targeting two types of policymakers, 18 combined addressing like-minded with uncommitted policymakers, 6 combined advocacy towards uncommitted policymakers with

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<sup>7</sup> See ; see <http://www.worldpolicy.org/democracy-and-electoral-systems>.

opponents, and 4 targeted both uncommitted *and* opponent policymakers. In short, the interviewed advocates generally target like-minded policymakers the most, yet uncommitted and opponent policymakers are also targeted frequently.

**Figure 1. Balancing of lobby-efforts targeted at different types of policymakers (n=228)**



For our *multivariate analysis* we developed a scale for which the percentage of efforts devoted to like-minded policymakers was subtracted from the efforts spent on opponents. We rescaled this index to a proportion by adding 1 and dividing the result by 2, which gives a measure of the proportion of opponents targeted relative to allies. A transnational advocate scoring higher than .50 spends more than half of its resources on opponents, while scoring lower than .50 means that more resources are spent on like-minded policymakers. Figure 2 presents the distribution of this scale into five categories and for each category we show the efforts in terms of approaching like-minded, opposing and uncommitted policymakers. As seen, most transnational advocates are situated below .50 ( $n = 129$ ), a considerable group ( $n=63$ ) balances advocacy towards like-minded policymakers and opponents evenly, and a small group ( $n=36$ ) targets more opponents than like-minded policymakers ( $>.50$ ). Also note that a growing propensity to prioritize like-minded policymakers or opponents corresponds with a decreasing inclination to address uncommitted policymakers. Yet, despite the overall propensity to prioritize like-minded policymakers, we see a considerable attention for opponents when we move from the lowest end of the scale (lower than .50) to the second category (between .25 and .50) (from 6 to 19 percent) and a substantial decrease of interactions with like-minded policymakers (from 81 percent to 47 percent). In sum, although the dominance of ‘friendly’ advocacy might lead to the conclusion that transnational advocates do not experience a trade-off between advocating like-minded policymakers and opponents, the evidence shows that many non-state actors often do face this trade-off.

To handle the bounded nature of this scale we use a fractional logit model with the proportion in the (0,1) interval as a dependent variable (Papke and Wooldridge 1996).<sup>8</sup> One

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<sup>8</sup> One could rightly question this approach as we do not explicitly model the propensity to address uncommitted policymakers. In order to check whether our usage of a proportional scale affects the conclusions, we tested various

complication is that we have repeated measures for several (but not all) countries and/or policy issues in the sense that we sometimes have multiple respondents from one country or we have multiple respondents working on similar policy issues. This implies that we cannot assume entirely independent residuals and need to anticipate some clustering in the data. Yet, we believe that this problem should not be exaggerated. In 21 of the 58 countries we have only one observation per country, while we only have 12 countries with more than 5 organized interests (see Appendix 2). Issue clustering is even less common. We have identified 54 policy issues or topics (out of 79 policy issues) with one respondent and only 12 issues with more than 5 respondents (see Appendix 3). The intra-class correlation for both issues and country is rather low ( $\rho=.19$ ) and when we combine issues with country we mostly have only one or two observations per country-issue dyad. Nonetheless, in order to avoid too optimistic estimates, we produce clustered standard errors (at the level of  $n=58$  countries) with a correction term based on the observed raw residuals.

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models for which we re-coded the dependent variable into categorical variables placing respondents that focus on uncommitted policymakers in distinct categories. The major conclusion from these tests is that interactions with uncommitted policymakers is not driven by a distinct logic and appears to resemble the interactions with like-minded policymakers (see [Online Appendix](#) for more details).



**Table 2. Predicting lobbying opponents relative to like-minded policymakers (fractional logit regression)**

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Model 4a</b>	<b>Model 4b</b>
Intercept	-0.542 (0.438)	-0.286 (0.221)	-0.183 (0.371)	-0.463 (0.310)	-0.644 (0.431)
<b>Independent variables</b>					
Alignment with government parties	0.080 (0.062)		0.106 (0.064) †	0.102 (0.071) †	0.081 (0.057)
Alignment with opposition parties	0.013 (0.050)		0.011 (0.047)	0.009 (0.049)	0.008 (0.056)
<b>Saliience</b>					
<i>Saliience high (ref.)</i>	Ref.		Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<i>Saliience moderate</i>	-0.468 (0.173) **		-0.481 (0.179) **	-0.599 (0.166) ***	-0.694 (0.180) ***
<i>Saliience limited</i>	-0.560 (0.169) ***		-0.522 (0.177) **	-0.631 (0.179) ***	-0.723 (0.209) ***
<b>Group type</b>					
<i>Business encom. (ref.)</i>		Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<i>Business specialized</i>		0.023 (0.146)	-0.121 (0.138)	-0.129 (0.141)	-0.193 (0.115) †
<i>NGOs</i>		-0.328 (0.141) **	-0.492 (0.184) **	-0.450 (0.179) **	-0.389 (0.173)*
<i>Research</i>		-0.666 (0.167) ***	-0.741 (0.175) ***	-0.551 (0.166) ***	-0.587 (0.170) ***
<b>Democracy (POLITY IV)</b>				0.046 (0.012) ***	0.075 (0.031) **
<b>Controls</b>					
Staff for advocacy (logged)	-0.043 (0.034)	0.004 (0.034)	-0.015 (0.031)	-0.001 (0.030)	-0.003 (0.028)
Issue density	-0.008 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.006)	-0.007 (.006)	-0.009 (0.006)
MC_COP	0.174 (0.161)	0.209 (0.191)	0.259 (0.181)	0.253 (0.178)	0.308 (0.180) †
<b>Leadership selection</b>					
<i>Proportional (ref.)</i>					Ref.
<i>Mixed Proportional</i>					0.113 (0.186)
<i>Majoritarian</i>					0.775 (0.214)
<b>Diagnostics</b>					
Likelihood ratio	-107.090	-107.369	-105.793	-104.622	-92.045
df	8	8	12	13	17
AIC	1.009	1.003	1.024	1.023	1.065
BIC	-1143.60	-1148.47	-1129.90	-1126.82	-942.93
N	228	228	228	228	199

*Index:* Robust standard errors (in parentheses) are adjusted for in country clustering (58 countries);

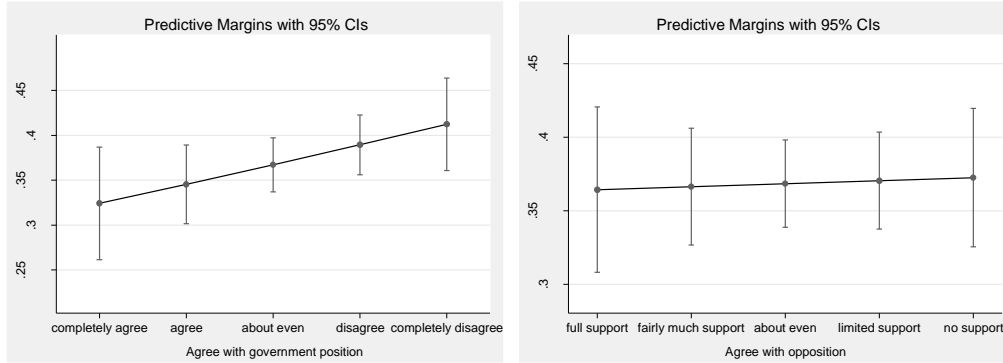
Significance levels: †=<.1, \* < .05, \*\* < .01, \*\*\* < .001.

First, we discuss whether it matters if a non-state actor faces like-minded policymakers at the national level. While the overall trend confirms our hypothesis, the effect is rather weak. That is, the advocates' alignment with the government (and opposition parties) is not significant in Model 1 (the sign goes in the right direction), and, while the alignment and the propensity to target opponents is significant in Model 3 and 4a, it is only at a rather low threshold ( $p < .10$ ). This means that agreeing with the government makes the transnational advocate somewhat more likely to lobby like-minded policymakers and that disagreement with the government increases the propensity to approach opponents. While the trend in Figure 2 show a similar result, namely having like-minded policymakers in the government increases advocacy efforts with like-minded policymakers, the rather low statistical significance indicates that we need to be careful in drawing strong inferences on the basis of these results.

To clarify the impact of the political constellation and see whether targeting of opponents or like-minded policymakers is affected by how transnational advocates are aligned with national policymakers, we cross-tabulated the alignment with the government and the opposition parties. Maybe advocates predominantly face like-minded (or opposing) policymakers, which may limit their options in terms of targeting opposing (or like-minded) policymakers. The results (Table 3, Cramer's  $V = .297$ ,  $p < .000$ ,  $df = 4$ ) suggest that most respondents face a situation where domestic policymakers (the government and opposition parties) have a consensual view with respect to many specific policy issues. Only in 23 percent of the cases an advocate faces a competitive situation or a government-opposition cleavage (above right or below left in table); in all other instances they are confronted with policymakers that are in agreement or we have either the government and/or opposition parties that take an intermediate position towards the advocate. Given the rather small number of instances where non-state actors primarily face strong opposition (from both the executive and opposition parties), namely 16 percent of the cases, it is not surprising that 'friendly advocacy' prevails

and that this variable does generate a profound effect in our multivariate tests.

**Figure 2. Predicted values agree with government (left) and opposition (right)**



**Table 3. The political constellation lobbyists face (N, general percentages)**

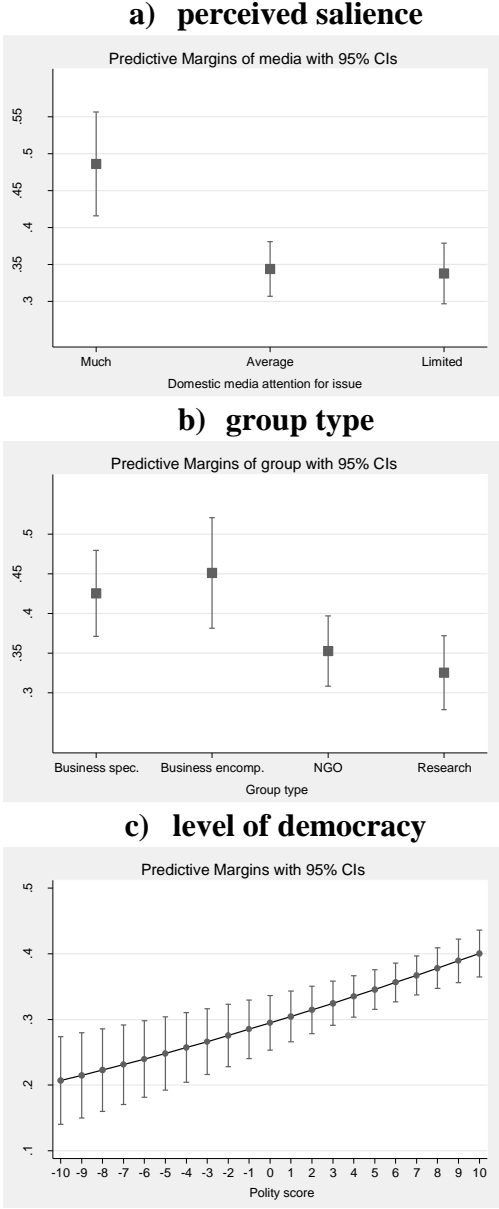
	Opposition policymakers			Total
	Mostly agree with lobbyist (1-2)	Moderate Position (3)	Mostly disagree with lobbyist (4-5)	
<b>Government policymakers</b>				
Mostly agree with lobbyist (1-2)	43 (19%)	13 (6%)	25 (11%)	81
Moderate Position (3)	20 (9%)	22 (10%)	19 (8%)	61
Mostly disagree with lobbyist (4-5)	27 (12%)	22 (9%)	37 (16%)	86
	90	57	81	228

Index: Cramer's V=.297, p<.000, df=4

Second, regarding *salience* we observe that if the perceived issue salience increases, advocates are more likely to target opponents. This finding is highly significant in all models and when comparing with the effect of alignment, we need to conclude that salience generates a much more profound effect. To illustrate the magnitude of this effect we calculated the predicted probabilities for interacting with like-minded and opposing policymakers across the three salience levels (Figure 3a). The results show that on highly salient issues transnational advocates almost equally target allies and opponents ( $\hat{y}=.49$ ; based on Model 3). In contrast, when the salience of issues is perceived as being 'somewhat' or 'limited', non-state actors target like-minded policymakers two-thirds of the time, while opponents are targeted much less intensively ( $\hat{y}=.34$  and  $.33$ ). In short, we can accept our second hypothesis that salience is an important predictor for whom transnational advocates target. When issues are perceived as being less salient, our respondents show a much stronger propensity to interact with like-minded

policy makers (and a lower interest in their opponents). However, if policy issues become salient in the eyes of an advocate, for instance as a result of growing media attention, she broadens her focus to a wider set of policy makers and becomes more likely to target opponents.

**Figure 3. Predicted values of a) perceived salience, b) group type and c) level of democracy**



Model 2 presents the results for *group type* (Hypothesis 3) and as expected we find significant differences between NGOs, research organizations and business groups, where the first two categories are much more inclined to focus on like-minded policy makers. Yet, in contrast to what was hypothesized we find no statistical difference between business

associations and specialized business groups. While encompassing business groups do lobby opponents a bit more often than specialized business, the difference is not significant. Yet, the difference between business groups, on the one hand, and NGOs and research organizations, on the other hand, is substantial and statistically significant. In other words, both specialized and encompassing business interests largely operate in similar ways, namely that they pay considerable attention to their opponents, yet both differ substantially from NGOs and research organizations. To illustrate differences we plotted the predicted probabilities (Figure 3b) and the outcome shows that business groups almost equally engage in approaching like-minded and opposing policymakers ( $\hat{y}=.48$ , associations, respectively  $.47$  for specialized business groups), while NGOs and research organizations address like-minded policymakers much more often than their opponents ( $\hat{y}=.35$  and  $.32$ ). This leads us to convincingly accept Hypothesis 3, namely different types of interests show a significant different propensity to target like-minded and opposing policymakers.

Finally, regarding democracy, the positive effect of the POLITY IV index indicates that in more democratic states, as hypothesized, advocates target opponents more (Model 4a). The coefficient is in the expected direction and significant, and the results are clearly observable in a plot with the predicted values (Figure 3c). If a system is fully democratic, the predicted value for targeting opponents (relative to like-minded policymakers) is  $.40$ , which is twice the predicted value in autocratic countries ( $\hat{y}=.20$ ). Note that the effect of democracy is robust for leadership selection (see Model 4b).<sup>9</sup> This means that, as expected, political and institutional openness increases the inclination of non-state actors to interact with opposing policymakers during global diplomatic conferences.

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<sup>9</sup> As we lack data on political leadership selection for 24 countries in which no free elections are organized (i.e. countries that score lower than 0 on the POLITY IV index), we control for leadership selection in a separate model (4b) with fewer countries (199).

## Conclusion

Non-state actors rely on different advocacy styles to influence global trade and climate change negotiations. This conceptualization is important for at least two reasons. First, it allows us to characterize the *role* of non-state actors in global governance better. For instance, we show that, with respect to the two venues studied, transnational advocacy is predominantly marked by ‘friendly lobbying’ and mainly geared towards like-minded policymakers. One reason for this is the fact that transnational advocates at the WTO and the UNFCCC mostly encounter policymakers who strongly or moderately agree with their policy views. As Hall and Deardorff argued for American lobbyists, transnational advocacy is also largely a ‘form of legislative subsidy and the proximate objective is not to change policymakers’ minds, but rather to assist natural allies in achieving their own, coincident objectives’ (2006, 69).

Second, differentiating between two distinct advocacy styles might be relevant for a better understanding of the potential influence of non-state actors in global governance. For example, Bernhagen et al. (2015) demonstrated, in a study on the influence of non-state actors in the EU, that the ability of a group to supply relevant information is ineffective if a group mostly faces policymakers with different views. Instead, information provision only matters for influence when groups are able to interact with like-minded policymakers. This implies that the nature of the interaction of non-state actors with policymakers will affect the openness policymakers show vis-à-vis information provided by transnational advocates and the chance to influence policy outcomes.

Despite the dominant propensity to target like-minded policymakers, nonetheless, few transnational advocates focus *only* on their ‘friends’ and most interact with some opponents, although usually at a low level of intensity. Many advocates face a trade-off in which some are more eager to approach their opponents. Therefore, we also sought to explain variation in advocacy styles. One of the most robust conclusions is that the *public salience* a transnational

advocate attributes to an issue strongly affects the extent to which opponents are targeted. This is a crucial finding as many empirical studies on transnational advocacy tend to focus on campaigns with high visibility in which civil society seeks to persuade opponents via public campaigns (Bloodgood 2011; Risse 2007). Cases that receive only limited public attention receive far less scholarly attention, despite the high prevalence of such cases. That is, we know from the agenda-setting literature (Jones and Baumgartner 2005) that only a rather small set of topics gains considerable public attention; most advocacy takes place outside the public's eye. This is precisely what our results suggest, namely much transnational advocacy takes place out of the public eye and consists of interactions among actors with similar policy views. Our results suggest that not paying sufficient attention towards such cases could severely affect and possibly bias our understanding of transnational advocacy, as we would mistakenly conclude that transnational advocacy is largely a matter of how activists seek to persuade their political opponents.

Another notable finding is that *organizational form* matters. Interestingly, the cooperative mode is most widespread among NGOs, while, in contrast, business interests are, in relative terms, more inclined to approach their opponents. This result shows that different group types play different roles in global governance. Business interests approach transnational advocacy in a somewhat more confrontational manner, while NGOs are more inclined to cooperate with like-minded policymakers. This finding warrants a broader inclusion of group types when studying transnational advocacy (see also Sell and Prakash 2004; Betsill and Corell 2008; Bexell et al. 2010). Many scholars of transnational advocacy tend to restrict their analysis to one particular type of interest – usually social movements or civil society, rarely business interests –, situated in one area, or limited to a small set of countries. The fact that we analyzed two global venues where both business and non-business interests mobilize, allows us to accommodate some calls for more systematic and cumulative research in the field of

transnational advocacy (Bloodgood 2011; Risse 2007; Tallberg et al. 2014).

True, our findings are limited to transnational advocacy in two global policy venues. Nonetheless, we think that our conceptualization, and the explanatory factors we identified, might work for other venues as well. As we could not observe substantial differences between the WTO and UNFCCC, it is not unlikely to observe similar mechanisms at other comparable negotiation forums and future research should address whether these results travel to other global political venues. Importantly, our results show that the *domestic institutional context* may affect whether or not transnational advocates are inclined to approach policy opponents. These results point at the need for more integrated studies on domestic and transnational advocacy. Scholarship on advocacy is a somewhat bifurcated field with, on the one hand, a considerable literature on transnational advocacy and, on the other hand, a substantial body of research on interest groups and lobbying. This somewhat artificial analytical separation of domestic and global arenas masks the fact that many debates among scholars analysing transnational advocacy resemble topics interest group scholars deal with. As such transnational advocacy does not differ that much from advocacy in some domestic settings, where friendly advocacy is also found to be a dominant advocacy strategy (Hall and Deardorff 2006; Hanegraaff et al. 2016b; Hojnacki and Kimball 1998/1999; Kollman 1997). In this regard, our approach serves as a bridge-building as we tried to decrease the gap between the literatures on transnational advocacy and the comparative politics literature on lobbying (Bloodgood 2011; Tallberg et al. 2015). The major benefit of such a *bridge-building* effort is that it enables exploring the extent to which knowledge generated in one field can be validated elsewhere. Interestingly, our approach demonstrates that many insights in the general literature on lobbying travel well across borders and levels of government. Although advocacy itself is, as our results show, heavily context-sensitive, many mechanisms show a remarkable consistency across divergent settings. Hopefully, this general observation will stimulate more systematic



comparative and global studies on this matter.

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