Universiteit Antwerpen

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

# EXPLORING THE REVOLVING DOOR PHENOMENON AMONG EUROPEAN INTEREST GROUPS: TRIGGERS, CONDITIONS, & POTENTIAL BENEFITS

**PhD thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Science at the University of Antwerp to be defended by Belli Sharon**

*Antwerp, October 11th 2024*

**Supervisor(s):**

Prof. Jan Beyers, University of Antwerp

Prof. Peter Bursens, University of Antwerp

**Members of the Committee:**

Prof. Stefaan Walgrave, University of Antwerp

Prof. Fréderic Varone, Université de Genève

*This prject has recevied funding from Research Foundation Flanders-Flanders [FWO-V grant number G032814N], [FWO-V grant number G062517N] and H2020 European Research Council [grant number ERC-2013-CoG 616702-IBias]*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# PREFACE

This dissertation represents a significant personal and intellectual journey. The opportunity to delve into a subject I am deeply passionate about–the dynamics of power, the often-hidden political forces at play, and the profound ways in which knowledge shapes policy decisions – has been an immense privilege. This research on interest groups politics and revolving door dynamics, while challenging, it has taught me a deep appreciation for the complexities of the subject, and it has been a drive to continue pursuing knowledge and social science research.

Such an undertaking would be impossible without the solid support and guidance of exceptional people. I extend my deepest gratitude to Jan Beyers and Peter Bursens, my supervisors and mentors, for opening the doors of academia to me. Your belief in my potential, even when I doubted myself, has been a constant source of strength. Thank you for your patience, understanding, and invaluable guidance throughout this process.

I am sincerely grateful to Stefaan Walgrave and Frédérique Varone for serving on my dissertation committee and providing insightful feedback and support. Your willingness to challenge my ideas has been instrumental in shaping my research. I also thank Meta Novak and Wouter Van Dooren for generously agreeing to be members of the jury and dedicating their time to reviewing my work.

Thank you, Frederik Stevens. Working with you has been an absolute pleasure. Your enthusiasm for the revolving doors subject, particularly in developing the final empirical chapter of this dissertation, reminded me of the true beauty of collaboration and intellectual exchange. I sincerely hope this marks just the beginning of other future collaborations.

Numerous interest groups politics scholars have influenced my thinking and enriched this dissertation through their feedback and scholarship. Timothy La Pira and Herschel Thomas, your work has been foundational to my research, and this dissertation would not have been possible without the insights gleaned from your book. To Timothy, I am particularly grateful for your participation in my master class in Antwerp, where your willingness to share your expertise on adapting US-centric models to the EU context proved invaluable. But I would like to thank you for your support, feedback, and encouragement over the years that have been truly appreciated.

I am thankful to the interest groups scholar community for their invaluable comments and feedback in conferences and workshops, which have significantly improved my work. In particular I extend my gratitude to Bert Fraussen, Anne Rasmussen, Marcel Hanegraaf and Adrià Albareda. A special thanks to Michael Bauer for his insightful comments on my work regarding interest groups access to the European Commission, shared during the EUSA conference in Denver. His feedback has been crucial in shaping that part of my research.

Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to all the interest organizations that agreed to participate in interviews for this research. Their willingness to share their experiences regarding hiring decisions and lobbying strategies has greatly enriched this dissertation.

Thak you to Dirk De Bièvre for entrusting me with the IR course, for the stimulating conversations on societal issues, and for your passion for social sciences and research methodologies, which has been a constant source of motivation.

I am deeply appreciative of the support received from the entire Public Administration research team, particularly Bjorn Kleizen. Your kindness, encouragement, and willingness to answer my methodological and theoretical questions, regardless of the topic, have been invaluable.

A dissertation is a journey that inevitably involves those around us. During this time, I have been fortunate to develop skills that led me to an incredible workplace. To my amazing colleagues at IPSOS EPA, especially the Flash Eurobarometer team, thank you for fostering my growth as a researcher. Working alongside such brilliant and inspiring individuals made completing this project possible. Femke Dekeulenaer, your mentorship and friendship have been invaluable. Thank you for sharing your expertise and making even the most complex research challenges enjoyable.

This thesis would have been inconceivable without Jolijn, my colleague who became one of my dearest friends. Her steady belief in me and in the eventual completion of this dissertation never shaken. During the inevitable difficult moments of this PhD journey, Jolijn's optimism and support were essential. She even taught me how to box-and to punch harder!-when I needed it most. Thank you, DR. De Roover, for being there every single day, from my first steps into this field until today, always with your encouraging attitude and your radiant smile. This accomplishment is yours as much as mine.

Valentina, your incredible creativity and talent are evident in the beautiful cover you designed and the layout of this dissertation. Thank you for your meticulous attention to detail and for taking such care with my work-you treated it as your own. You have a gift for making important moments unforgettable, and I'm so grateful for your presence in my life, for so many reasons. Your friendship is irreplaceable. Thank you for the trips to Antwerp, for always being there, and for making everything more beautiful and stylish! Matteo and Lea deserve a special mention for their constant commitment to supervising our style choices :).

To my friends who have been a constant source of support and laughter throughout this journey, thank you for the unforgettable moments, the adventures, and for always being there, even from afar. My heartfelt thanks to Serena, Paolo, Silvia, Alessandro, Francesca, Chiara, Federica, Davide, Antonella, and Menico. A special thanks to those who know very

well where this journey truly began, back in Budapest—Katerina, Marco, Adela, Christian, Brian, Federico, Bea, and everyone else—thank you from the bottom of my heart. Last but not least, I also want to thank Evelien for always being there for me in Antwerp, for being a true friend, accompanying me to amazing concerts and trips in the hills of Belgium, and for being a constant presence.

To the pillars of my existence, my parents, thank you for instilling in me the importance of knowledge and perseverance. This thesis is a testament to your trust in me. Alessandro, Laura, and Cesare, thank you for your constant support, even if it meant being apart. This accomplishment is also for you. I also want to extend my gratitude to my acquired family - Rik, Christine, Laure, Jérémy, Bonnie and Marcel. You welcomed me with open arms and always made me feel a part of the family. Your constant support for my work and the pursuit of my objectives and my career means the world to me.

Finally, to my husband, Sander you are my rock. Thank you for supporting me through every late night, weekend spent working, and even bringing my laptop to the hospital the day our daughter, Matilda, was born. Your love and understanding have made this journey possible.

And to Matilda, you have made me a mother and deepened my commitment to a better future. I promise to fight for a world where you will have to fight a little less for equality and justice.

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following table describe the meaning of the various abbreviation used throughout the thesis. The page on which each one is defined or first used is also provided.

| ABBREVIATION | MEANING | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| **EU** | European Union | p. 9 |
| **EP** | European Parliament | p. 10 |
| **EC** | European Commission | p. 12 |
| **TI** | Transparency International, a global movement working in over 100 countries to end the injustice | p. 12 |
| **ALTER-EU** | Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation - coalition of over 200 public interest groups and trade unions concerned with the increasing influence exerted by corporate lobbyists on the political agenda in Europe, the resulting loss of democracy in EU decision-making. | p. 12 |
| **NGOs** | Non-governmental organisations | p. 13 |
| **TR** | Transparency Registry | p. 13 |
| **OECKL** | Directory of Public Affairs—Europe and International Alliances | p. 39 |
| **INTEREURO PROJECT** | INTEREURO provides a comprehensive set of datasets on lobbying in the EU. The project aimed at gaining a comprehensive theoretical and empirical understanding of the role played by interest groups in the European polity. The project focuses on gathering data from interest groups to enhance the quality and legitimacy of EU decision-making. It explores questions about the identity, organisation, and influence of these interest groups. | p. 39 |
| **CIG** | Comparative Interest Groups Survey - For details, see Beyers et al., 2020 and www.cigsurvey.eu. | p.39 |
| **MEPs** | Members of the European Parliament | p. 44 |
| **DGs** | Directorates-General are departments with specific zones of responsibility within the European Commission specifically, Directorates-General are the equivalent of national-level ministries. | p. 108 |

# THESIS ABSTRACT

The European Union (EU) integration process has focused on detailed regulations in specialised policy areas from the outset. Interest groups provide EU legislators with a wide range of specialised expertise and can access the EU policymaking process by offering 'access goods. These goods are (1) technical expertise, (2) information on European interests in issues at stake, and (3) information on the configuration of interests at the national level. Therefore, these non-state actors play a crucial role in the EU policymaking process, voicing the interests of civil society and shaping policies. Interest groups face power struggles and dynamics that affect their behaviour while interacting with policymakers to represent their interests. One contested behaviour is when interest groups attempt to influence policymakers by hiring employees from the public sector. According to this view, specific interest organisations can exploit personal connections and/or insider knowledge about public institutions to influence legislation. These dynamics are known as the result of the revolving door phenomenon, namely, personnel exchanges between private entities such as companies, interest groups, and governments.

Evidence from the American literature suggests that the systematic presence of the revolving door phenomenon in policymaking is tied to the individual lobbyists' characteristics. However, few studies have addressed the revolving door phenomenon in the EU context, leading to a lack of understanding of whether and why EU interest organisations strategically engage in revolving door practices. Thus, to shed light on the revolving door phenomenon in the EU context, this dissertation poses the following central questions: do interest groups strategically engage in revolving door practices? If so, what are the implications for interest representation in the EU? This dissertation addressed these questions by scrutinising interest groups' propensity to hire from the

public sector. By studying the propensity to hire from the public sector, this thesis explains (1) to what extent and why interest organisations engage in revolving door practices and (2) whether and how revolving door practices help interest groups gain access.

The empirical findings shed light on various dynamics observed among European interest groups regarding their engagement in revolving door practices. First, the thesis shows that interest groups strategically engage in revolving door practices by purposively recruiting lobbyists with short or long-term expertise in EU institutions, particularly from the European Parliament (EP). Second, the propensity to hire from the government is substantial across EU interest organisations. However, the propensity to hire from the public sector varies across group types and resources: wealthy citizens organisations are more likely to hire employees with a public sector background. Third, the study shows that the demand for process-oriented expertise motivates the revolving doors practices. Namely, interest groups demand skills that relate to the politics of lobbying (process expertise) rather than the specialised nature of the policy area (expert knowledge). Fourth, the thesis demonstrates that highly professionalised organisations - in which staff and organisational leadership dominate - benefit more from hiring from the public sector, as they access EU institutions more frequently. In contrast, the extent to which members are involved in political positioning and have power over advocacy strategies has no impact on how revolving door practices affect access. Finally, the thesis shows that the effect of the revolving door on access to policymaking is policy context-dependent: the positive effect of the revolving door on access weakens or disappears when the mobilisation in a policy area increases. Overall, the study sheds light on the behavioural and organisational patterns that drive revolving door practices. The findings of this dissertation show that revolving door practices are primarily connected with a logic of influence, and therefore, such practices are particularly advantageous for strongly professionalised organisations. interest groups driven by membership logic will profit much less from the revolving door when seeking access to policymakers.

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Research Problem

In contemporary democracies, revolving door arrangements are not uncommon. Despite the existence of regulations, politicians and bureaucrats often take up lucrative post-government jobs within industry and interest groups that are affected by their decisions while in office. Accordingly, revolving door lobbyists refer to individuals moving between politics, bureaucracy, and groups representing different interests.

One prominent example is the so-called 'Barroso Gate'. In June 2016, after the cooling-off period, José Manuel Barroso, former president of the European Commission (EC), announced his new role as an adviser and non-executive chairman of the leading American investment banking corporation, Goldman Sachs. His responsibilities would include advising bankers during the Brexit transition. The possible implications of this 'move' from the public sector to the banking sector are self-evident, and this case offers a significant example to explain where the European debate on revolving door practice stands.

The "Barroso Gate" became emblematic of the discussion concerning regulating revolving door practices. It received extensive media coverage and advocacy engagement from significant players in the EU transparency regime, such as Transparency International (TI) and the Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER-EU). The discussions revolved around the negative implications for the public interest resulting from the systematic presence of revolving door practices in the political system. The Barroso Gate example helps to understand these negative implications for the public interest.

First, as former president of the EC, Barroso possessed sensitive information that could be used for the benefit of Goldman Sachs, potentially distorting competition in the banking sector during the Brexit negotiations. Second, by hiring a high-profile former official, Goldman Sachs could have gained privileged, albeit informal, access to the decision-making process through Barroso's acquaintances. Third, the scandal fuelled the narrative that special interests capture EU regulations at the expense of the public interest, eroding public trust in political institutions' ability to prevent it. As a result of this controversial case and following consultation with the EP, the EC formally adopted a new Code of Conduct, extending the cooling-off period for the EC president and Commissioners.

However, the debate about the systematic presence of revolving door practices in the EU is still ongoing as the shift of public officials (at any level of governance) towards interest groups increases and becomes more and more common. The latest TI EU report, published in January 2017, shows that after 2014, 15 former Commissioners found new employment in companies, think tanks, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and universities registered as lobby organisations in the Transparency Registry (TR). Furthermore, more recent investigations by Corporate European Observatory show that the exchange of personnel between the public and private sector also occurs between the financial sector and financial regulatory authorities[1] and the tech industry and the EC.[2]

The above-mentioned descriptive accounts suggest two critical things about revolving door practices in the EU. First, they suggest that revolving door practices not only concern a small set of special interests or private companies and high-profile policymakers but involve a heterogeneous set of EU-organised interests. A similar trend is observable at the member-state level, where we see more and more politicians and bureaucrats taking up careers as lobbyists (Pollack & Allern, 2014; Tyllström, 2021). Second, these descriptive figures paint a picture of a policy environment characterised by a blurred boundary between

[1] https://corporateeurope.org/en/power-lobbies-revolving-doors/2018/04/financial-regulators-and-private-sector-permanent- revolving
[2] https://corporateeurope.org/en/2020/10/facebook-friends-lobby-consultants
[3] https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/european-parliaments-cash-for-influence-scandal-2022-12-13/

the public and private sectors, and existing ethical regulations are failing to stop the movement of personnel between the European Union's civil service and lobbying entities (i.e., companies or interest groups). Recent scandals in the EP have corroborated these concerns and brought attention to the issue of revolving door practices. These scandals involve former politicians and high-ranking officials who, after their tenure in the EP, have taken up lucrative positions in private sector companies or interest groups directly affected by public policies decided upon while in office[3].

This anecdotal and descriptive evidence highlights that the revolving door phenomenon has underscored the urgency of being studied more in-depth in the EU context and especially across interest groups. The social science literature has been actively engaged in studying the interplay between the public and private sectors (Carpenter, 2014; Dal Bó, 2006; Kwak, 2014; Makkai & Braithwaite, 1992; Veltrop & de Haan, 2014; Salisbury et al., 1989). Within this broader research landscape – more concerned with the regulatory capture in the financial sector - the revolving door phenomenon has emerged as a focal point, attracting increasing attention in the study of interest group politics (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; LaPira & Thomas, 2017; Lazarus & McKay, 2012; Lazarus et al., 2016; McCrain, 2019; McKay & Lazarus, 202). This body of literature has primarily focused on the United States, where lobbying has a long-standing tradition deeply embedded in its form of capitalism. Coen and Vannoni (2016) contend that the "revolving door phenomenon represents the legacy of the public role businessmen and entrepreneurs have played since the New Deal" (p.811). Consequently, the US interest groups literature offers a wide range of empirical works that delve into the movement of public sector employees, including bureaucrats and politicians, into the lobbying sector and interest groups.

By relying on existent knowledge provided by the US literature and accounting for the peculiarity of the European context, this dissertation aims to analyse the revolving door phenomenon within EU interest groups population, with specific objectives focused on understanding

[1] https://corporateeurope.org/en/power-lobbies-revolving-doors/2018/04/financial-regulators-and-private-sector-permanent- revolving
[2] https://corporateeurope.org/en/2020/10/facebook-friends-lobby-consultants
[3] https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/european-parliaments-cash-for-influence-scandal-2022-12-13/

its triggers, the conditions that promote its occurrence, and the potential benefits for interest groups. It does so by answering the following research questions:

A. Why do interest organisations recruit lobbyists with a public sector background?

B. Under which conditions do interest groups hire from the public sector?

C. To what extent do interest groups benefit from hiring from the public sector?

D. What are the conditions under which interest groups derive benefits from hiring individuals from the public sector in terms of gaining access to policymaking?

In the upcoming sections I will first elucidate the main concepts employed in this dissertation, followed by the presentation of the theoretical arguments developed and tested in the empirical chapters.

## 1.2 Unit of analysis

This dissertation focuses on interest groups as the primary unit of analysis. Generally, an interest group is characterised by several defining attributes and key elements. Firstly, an interest group operates as an organised entity, effectively tackling collective action problems and establishing a structured organisational framework. Secondly, the organisation fosters a specific political interest, which expresses the will of a constituency. Last, these organisations do not seek political office or participate in elections; instead, they channel their political interests through informal engagements with policymakers to access the policymaking process and influence public policies (Beyers et al., 2008).

Throughout this dissertation, the terms' interest groups', 'interest organisations', and 'organised interest' are employed interchangeably to refer to a constituency- based, non-governmental organisation that actively engages in shaping public policies, thus functioning as an intermediary between civil society and political institutions (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Lowery & Gray, 1998).

The scope of this study encompasses a diverse array of interest groups and identity-based organisations, including business organisations, professional associations, citizen groups, identity groups and leisure associations. This comprehensive inclusion is informed by analogous conceptualisation found in works such as those of Binderkrantz (2009), Halpin (2006), and Heylen et al. (2018). Such an all-encompassing approach allows for examining revolving door dynamics across a heterogeneous population of organisations. This approach enables insightful inferences that traverse various group typologies and offers the possibility to discern the implications of group types for the dynamics of revolving door practices (i.e., how the propensity to hire from the public sector varies across different organisations). This nuanced understanding is further expanded upon in Chapter 4.

## 1.3 Exploring the Rationale of Hiring from the Public Sector

*Propensity to hire from the public sector (revolving door) as dependent and independent variables.*

The revolving door phenomenon is commonly defined as the cyclical movement of individuals between the public and private sectors and vice versa (Dal Bó, 2006; Gormley, 1979). This definition has been retrieved from literature primarily focusing on personal incentives and individual motivation to enter the revolving door. Within this context, the literature distinguishes between two revolving door categorisations: ex-ante and ex-post. Ex-ante dynamics explore and analyse the movement

of people from the private to the public sector. In contrast, the ex-post dynamics pertain to the movement of people from the public to the private sector. This study, however, focuses exclusively on the ex-post revolving door dynamics, taking an organisational approach. In doing so, the study concerns ex-post revolving door dynamics from the 'vantage point' of interest groups. In a departure from the conventional individual-centred analyses, this research emphasises interest groups' organisational motivations to employ individuals with a background in the public sector.

Consequently, the revolving door phenomenon is conceptualised as the propensity of interest organisations to hire employees with previous public sector experience. It will refer interchangeably to the revolving door phenomenon, practices or dynamics throughout this dissertation. However, the study will refrain from using the term' arrangements' as it suggests evidence of informal exchange or agreement between public officials and private interests. Such implications are difficult, if not impossible, to substantiate with the available data. The dissertation limits its scope to analysing the observable movement of civil servants to organised interest and its implications for interest groups' access to policymaking.

Experience in the public sector is broadly conceptualised to encompass any experience in governmental entities such as governments, agencies, parliaments, and political parties. However, it could be argued that parties are privately financed and could be classified as representatives of private interests. The classification of experiences in party politics as public sector experience is supported by two key reasons. Firstly, this study pertains to the European context, in which parties are predominantly funded by public resources, thus rendering them similar to public institutions. Secondly, parties are intricately linked with the public sector, often holding positions within governments, or aspiring to lead the government or oversee opposition activities. Working for political parties will likely provide potential individual lobbyists with advantageous attributes for interest organisations, including personal

connections, specialised policy knowledge, and procedural knowledge. Such attributes could potentially catalyse the propensity of interest groups to hire from the public sector. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that there are major differences between working as a staffer for a political party and being an elected member of government or parliament as a party representative. While the thesis does not specifically distinguish between these types of experiences in party politics, it does touch upon these aspects in the first empirical chapter.

The revolving door concept - operationalised as the interest groups' propensity to hire from the public sector - serves a dual purpose in this dissertation. It functions as the dependent variable in the first two empirical chapters. It focuses on why interest organisations hire professionals from the public sector and discerns the organisations and contextual factors that foster the propensity to hire from the public sector. In the latter part of the dissertation, the same concept assumes the role of independent variable. In the last two empirical chapters, the propensity to hire from the public sector determines whether and under which conditions interest organisations benefit. Specifically, this part of the study delves into how these recruitment strategies enhance interest groups' s likelihood and frequency of accessing the policymaking process.

To conclude, the propensity to hire from the public sector concept is a pivotal bridge connecting the two parts of the dissertation. The methodological shift allows, on the one hand, to illustrate the motives and conditions for the hiring decisions of interest organisations. On the other hand, it allows an assessment of its effect on interest group's interaction with the policymaking process.

## 1.4 Underlining factors triggering the revolving door phenomenon

The first objective of this dissertation is to identify the underlying factors triggering the revolving door phenomenon across interest groups, exploring the rationale beyond interest groups pooling human resources from the public sector.

The interest group literature has delved into whether lobbyists with experience in the public sector are valuable to interest groups due to their knowledge or connections. Multiple theoretical perspectives have emerged from this literature.

The first perspective emphasises the importance of personal relationships and network proximity, suggesting that interest groups hire former public sector employees and politicians to leverage their relationships with colleagues who remain in the public sector (Bertrand et al., 2014; Shepherd & You, 2020). This perspective posits that lobbyists with previous public sector experience gain more access to policymaking because they exploit political connections from former colleagues with whom they are ideologically aligned (Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012; Eggers, 2010). The second perspective focuses on the substantive policy expertise of former public sector employees. These lobbyists are valued for their accumulated knowledge and ability to persuade policymakers with technical expertise (Esterling, 2004, 2007; Hammond, 1984; Malbin, 1980). These qualities make them valuable allies in the legislative process (Hall & Deardorff, 2006). European scholars studying the career transitions of EU corporate lobbyists support this perspective, highlighting the centrality of information provision in the EU lobbying system (Coen & Vannoni, 2016, 2018, 2020). The third perspective highlights the importance of political intelligence, namely all procedural knowledge and insider access to the public sector. Interest groups seek lobbyists with in-depth knowledge of public sector procedures, including key players and power dynamics (Esterling, 2004; Heinz et al., 1993;

Salisbury et al., 1989). This knowledge enables interest groups to develop effective lobbying strategies and navigate complex policy paths. (LaPira & Thomas, 2017).

These three perspectives explain the rationale behind the propensity to hire from the public sector, and they should not be considered mutually exclusive. However, exploring which perspective prevails among interest groups is crucial to comprehensively understanding the revolving door phenomenon in the EU supranational system of governance. This exploration can shed light on the diverse implications of revolving door practices for the system of interest representation.

Exploring why interest groups hire form the public sector is crucial because of the role interest groups play. As Easton puts it, politics has to do with policies for a society and is the authority's allocation of values for a society (1950). Interest groups mobilisation is central in modern democracies, as these actors represent and voice societal interests (Beyers et al., 2008; Halpin, 2006). While expressing values, ideas, and preferences, they act as a transmission belt between civil society and policymakers (Albareda, 2018; Albareda & Braun, 2019; Kohler-Koch, 2009; Kohler-Koch & Finke, 2007; Rasmussen et al., 2014).

Importantly, their role is not limited to representing and voicing the interests of segments of civil society or the economy. Interest groups are directly involved—and called to participate by policymakers—in the policy process in different ways by supplying technical expertise and political information needed to implement policies (Bouwen, 2002, 2004; Eising, 2004). Interest groups even act as policy implementers when there is a formal or legal delegation of implementation tasks to them, providing significant advantages for the state such as higher policy acceptability by target groups. Furthermore, interest groups often participate in policy design through expert committees and consultation procedures, and they can also influence or bias the policy preferences of elected representatives (Eichenberger et al., 2021).

Thus, revolving door dynamics can affect how, and which interests are represented. On the one hand, when interest groups hire from the public sector to exploit personal connections and networks to obtain privileged and confidential information, it can undermine the public interest and perpetuate bias in interest representation (Lowery et al., 2015). On the other hand, if interest groups hire from the public sector to exploit policy expertise or procedural knowledge, the system of representation can benefit from it as interest groups can represent their interest based on a well-informed understanding of complex procedural issues and formulate realistic policy proposals, responding effectively to the policymaking demand of information (Bouwen, 2002). These different implications for the democratic system of interest representation make it crucial to investigate which viewpoint prevails among interest organisations.

The second objective is to examine the conditions that favour the revolving door phenomenon, particularly the propensity of interest groups to hire individuals with public sector experience. Through an in-depth analysis of organisational characteristics and contextual factors, this study aims to uncover the circumstances that facilitate and encourage interest groups to engage in revolving door practices. In the EU, the extent to which revolving door practices are prevalent across different interest groups representing a variety of sectors and interests remains to be determined. Existing literature on the subject has primarily focused on interest groups associated with financial interests or firms involved in political activities (Chalmers et al., 2022; Coen & Vannoni, 2016, 2020). However, it is essential to note that revolving door practices can be observed among various types of private actors seeking to advance their interests through engagement with policymakers. Therefore, a wide range of organised interests, including citizen groups and NGOs, may recognise the advantages of hiring professionals from the public sector. This advantage is due to the potential for such hiring practices to facilitate institutionalisation and increase the survival prospects of interest groups.

The interaction and interdependence between interest groups and policymakers significantly shape the behaviour of interest groups. To effectively voice their interests, interest groups must create favourable conditions for their survival (Fisker, 2015; Halpin & Jordan, 2009; Halpin & Thomas, 2012; Heylen et al., 2018; Lowery & Grey, 1998). One key strategy interest group employ to achieve this is trying to become institutionalised, which involves embedding themselves within the institutional context, including the rules, norms, and structures of the representation system (Mazey & Richardson, 2001). In other words, interest groups seek to reduce the gap between governments and policymakers, aiming to establish themselves as stable government partners or insiders in the policy process (Fraussen et al., 2015; Fraussen & Beyers, 2016). In this context, revolving door practices are a strategic approach interest organisations adopt to foster institutionalisation and enhance their integration into the policy process. This strategic use of revolving door practices may be particularly relevant for interest groups with lower levels of institutionalisation than others, such as citizen organisations and NGOs, as opposed to business organisations. Citizens groups, which may have less institutionalisation in the EU, can view revolving door practices to strengthen their position and increase their influence within the policy process. By hiring individuals from the public sector, citizen groups can access valuable insights, connections, and knowledge that can aid in their institutional development. These practices reduce the gap between citizen groups and policymakers, potentially leading to greater engagement and a more prominent role in policy discussions.

Acknowledging the premises above is essential to recognise that interest groups encounter diverse challenges and adapt their hiring strategies based on the specific policy environment in which they operate (Baumgartner & Mahoney, 2008). Consequently, while it is plausible that all organisations may recognise the advantages of hiring individuals with a public sector background, not all organisations will be capable of implementing these hiring strategies. Various factors come into play, such as an organisation's financial capabilities, the nature

of the interests it pursues, the level of engagement with policymakers, and the challenges encountered in navigating the intricacies of the policy process. Together, these factors can significantly influence the extent to which organisations hire professionals from the public sector. Decisions regarding the recruitment of public sector personnel are made within this complex interplay of organisational and contextual dynamics.

Once it is clarified why and under which conditions interest groups hire from the public sector, the dissertation shifts to the effect of the revolving door practice—namely, whether and how the propensity to hire from the public sector affects the access of interest organisations.

## 1.5 Unveiling the Benefits: Interest Groups' Gain from Pooling Human Resources from the Public Sector

*Access to policymaking as dependent variable.*

Access to the policymaking process determines whether or not interest organisations will influence public policies, establish contact with policymakers, and transmit their policy preferences to policymakers (Hansen 1991). Therefore, it is considered essential for lobbying influence. In this context, it is important to distinguish between structural and instrumental power, as highlighted by scholars such as Culpepper (2014). Structural power refers to the ability of the strongest groups such as business groups to shape policy outcomes without needing to mobilize actively. These groups inherently possess significant influence due to their economic position and the perceived importance of their cooperation for the overall economy. This form of power implies that their influence is embedded within the structure of economic and political systems.

On the other hand, instrumental power involves direct actions taken

by interest groups to affect policy decisions, such as lobbying, campaigning, and mobilisation efforts. While both forms of power are critical, structural power often allows the most influential business groups to exert control without overt efforts. This dissertation explores how the propensity to hire from the public sector impacts the likelihood and frequency of access. By examining the hiring practices of interest organisations, particularly their tendency to recruit individuals with public sector experience, this study investigates how these practices may enhance or impede their structural and instrumental power. Understanding the nuances of access, as it relates to both structural and instrumental power, provides a comprehensive view of how interest groups can achieve and maintain influence over public policy.

Therefore, access to policymaking is defined as the point at which a group enters the political arena, such as parliaments, executive brunches, judiciary, administrations, by surpassing a threshold controlled by relevant gatekeepers, including politicians or civil servants (Binderkrantz et al. 2017; Bouwen, 2004; Eising, 2007). This conceptualisation emphasises two key components: access is the result of 1) groups that seek access and 2) some gatekeeper – for instance, politicians or bureaucrats – that provides access. Based on this conceptualisation, access to the policymaking process is defined as the ability and the extent to which interest organisations meet policymakers (Dür & Mateo 2016; Rasmussen & Gross 2015; Willems 2020; Albareda & Braun 2019).

The theory of access posits that for access to occur, there must be a fit between policymakers' demand for information (such as policy expertise, specialised knowledge, and political information) and the ability of interest groups to supply policymakers with this information (Bouwen, 2002, 2004; Eising, 2004). Following this view, from a resource exchange perspective, policymakers are not at the receiving end of resource exchanges but offer access to interest groups to gain valuable expert knowledge (Beyers & Arras, 2020) or political information about the sentiment of a specific constituency about some policy issue. Thus, the extent to which policymakers initiate contact with interest

groups depends on the degree to which they value interest groups' resources (Braun, 2012; Hanegraaff & De Bruycker, 2020).

However, this perspective can be broadened by considering additional resources beyond information, such as financial contributions and infrastructural support. In the United States, for instance, Political Action Committees (PACs) play a significant role in gaining access. Contributions from PACs can effectively buy access to policymakers, highlighting the critical role of money in the political influence process. Financial resources can ensure that interest groups have the means to sustain lobbying efforts and make substantial donations to political campaigns, thereby securing meetings and favourable consideration from policymakers.

Moreover, infrastructural support and grassroots activities are other vital resources that can influence access. Interest groups with robust organisational structures and the ability to mobilize large numbers of constituents can provide substantial political support, which is particularly valuable during election cycles. Umbrella interest groups, as noted by scholars such as Albareda and Fraussen (2023), can leverage their extensive networks and member organisations to amplify their influence and support policymakers who align with their agendas.

Taking all this into account, this dissertation argues that the exchange of information for access between policymakers and interest groups can also be affected by revolving doors practices or the fact that interest groups hire staff with a previous background in the public sector. Several arguments can be made in favour of the expectation of a positive relation between interest organisations' propensity to hire from the public sector and the likelihood of interest groups' access to policymakers.

First, the extent to which interest groups secure access to policymakers is closely intertwined with their ability to generate, refine, and convey information that can be effectively transformed into suitable

policies (La Pira & Thomas, 2014). Guided by this rationale, it is plausible to anticipate that hiring professionals with public sector backgrounds could provide valuable support to interest groups in fulfilling this pivotal objective – formulating and refining information for policymakers into comprehensible policies. This advantage that interest groups gain from hiring from the public sector could result from the procedural knowledge and policy expertise that these professionals contribute to the organisations, coupled with their connection with, knowledge of and proximity to policymakers. In either scenario, the recruitment of individuals from the public sector enables interest groups to gather all the informational requirements of policymakers, enhancing the capacity of interest groups to navigate the intricacies of the policy landscape effectively.

Second, generating and supplying such expertise to EU policymakers has become increasingly complex (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020). On the one hand, interest groups are now required to generate, produce, and process information beyond specialised niche knowledge. On the other hand, policymakers operate within a realm characterised by an overwhelming influx of information, often leading to information entropy (LaPira & Thomas, 2017). Information entropy of policymakers refers to the degree of uncertainty or unpredictability regarding their preferences, actions, or decisions in the policy-making process. Amid this informational overload, policymakers are difficult to anticipate. Interest groups may likely rely on interest groups that hire employees with experience in the public sector to overcome unpredictability and seek access when they are likely to obtain it. Therefore, incorporating public sector expertise within interest groups becomes a strategic avenue for addressing the dual challenges of generating information and alleviating interest groups from policymakers' unpredictability.

In short, as we already know, the extent to which policymakers grant access to interest groups depends also on the value they attach to the resources interest groups possess (Braun, 2012; Hanegraaff & De Bruycker, 2020). Building upon this understanding, incorporating

individuals with public sector experience within interest groups introduces an additional layer of resource value to the supplied information. Thus, interest groups which hire from the public sector are more likely to access policymaking.

In this manuscript, the direct effect of the propensity to hire from the public sector on the likelihood of attaining access and the frequency of access may be influenced by other aspects inherent to interest organisations. These aspects pertain to how interest organisation's structure themselves and the internal strategies they implement to provide information to policymakers. The existing body of literature has already demonstrated that the ability to access the policymaking process and furnish information effectively is closely linked to the internal organisational capabilities and choices of interest organisations (Albareda, 2018; Albareda & Braun, 2019).

How do the internal decision procedures of organisations affect the relation between access and propensity to hire from the public sector? Organised interests face critical decisions while strategising how to succeed in accessing policymaking and influencing policy decisions and legislations, navigating the interplay between the logic of influence and membership dynamics. (Olson, 2009; Schmitter & Streeck, 1999). This dichotomy arises from two significant dimensions: firstly, interest groups must establish and maintain connections with policymakers to assert their interests, transmit crucial information, and shape legislative outcomes. These connections rely on trust, with interest groups providing valuable information to policymakers in exchange for access or influence. Secondly, interest groups must maintain transparency with their membership base, which they often rely on financially and ideologically.

This juxtaposition prompts a tension between optimizing their efficacy in exerting influence and securing an insider status within the policymaking realm (the logic of influence) and maintaining faithfulness to their membership constituents (the logic of membership).

However, rather than viewing these logics as being in clear opposition, it is important to recognize that most interest groups must address both logics simultaneously, often resulting in self- reinforcing effects. The higher an interest group's policy influence, the more attractive it becomes to potential and new members. This increased membership, in turn, enhances the group's representativeness and credibility, thereby increasing its access to policy venues. This cycle suggests that success in one area can bolster success in the other, creating a virtuous circle of influence and membership growth.

Based on this discussion, it is expected that when interest groups align with the logic of influence, revolving door practices could potentially bolster their access and influence within the policymaking process. The revolving door, which involves hiring former policymakers, can enhance an organisation's expertise and insider connections, thereby increasing its policy influence. This, in turn, can attract more members who are drawn to the group's demonstrated ability to shape policy. Conversely, in instances where organisations prioritize the logic of membership, the revolving door's effect may be moderated by their commitment to maintaining transparency and fidelity to their membership base. This commitment can help retain and grow their membership, further enhancing their credibility and policy access. Thus, a strong membership base can also facilitate greater policy influence by demonstrating broad-based support and legitimacy.

In conclusion, it argued that the revolving door can serve as a critical mechanism that strengthens the relationship between the logic of influence and the logic of membership. By leveraging the expertise and connections of former policymakers, interest groups can enhance their policy influence, which can attract and retain members. Simultaneously, a strong and engaged membership base can provide the legitimacy and resources needed to sustain and expand policy influence. Therefore, the revolving door not only bridges these two logics but also amplifies their mutually reinforcing effects, leading to greater overall effectiveness in the policymaking process.

*Propensity to hire form the public sector and degree of interest mobilisation.*

Access to policymaking is significantly influenced by the policy context, as noted in the interest group literature (Klüver, 2012; Lowery & Gray, 2004). In this manuscript, the term "policy context" refers to the characteristics of policy domains (Baumgartner, 2009; Mahoney, 2007), including the environment in which policy decisions are made and stakeholders interface with the policy arena. This policy context encompasses various factors, such as the degree of competition among interest groups, the complexity of policy issues, and the number of actors lobbying for specific outcomes.

According to the resource exchange perspective, interest organisations and policymakers mutually depend on each other and their environment for survival (Halpin & Thomas, 2012; Heylen et al., 2018). Changes in this environment can alter the typical mutual dependencies of resource exchange models (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020). Consequently, hiring from the public sector may impact an organisation's ability to provide information to policymakers, especially in complex policy contexts.

One crucial aspect of the policy context is the number of actors involved when issues arise in a policy domain. Policy domains vary widely in the density of interest groups seeking access (Binderkrantz & Christiansen, 2015; Willems, 2020). Generally, denser policy areas present more competition for individual interest organisations, reducing their likelihood of gaining access (Hanegraaff et al., 2020). This manuscript argues that the role of revolving door practices, precisely the propensity to hire from the public sector, in gaining access is contingent on the degree of competition faced by interest organisations in particular policy areas when specific issues arise.

## 1.6 Contribution to the literature

This dissertation endeavors to contribute to the literature on interest groups and revolving door practices in several critical ways, both theoretically and empirically.

Firstly, this dissertation refines the concept of access goods by demonstrating that process knowledge and political intelligence are more critical than personal connections. These findings challenge existing theories that prioritize personal connections (e.g., McCrain, 2018, 2019; Bertrand et al., 2014; Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012) and suggests a shift towards understanding access goods in terms of expertise and strategic knowledge, corroborating existing theory about the value of process-oriented knowledge and political intelligence (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Hall and Deardorff, 2006; LaPira & Thomas, 2014, 2016, 2017). Furthermore, by showing that highly professionalized organizations benefit more from revolving door practices, this work contributes to organizational theory by highlighting how internal characteristics, such as professionalization, influence strategic behaviors and success in lobbying. This adds a new dimension to the understanding of how organizational structure and capabilities affect lobbying outcomes (Albareda, 2018; Albareda & Braun, 2019).

Secondly, the dissertation introduces a nuanced understanding of the logic of influence within interest group strategies. It differentiates between process-oriented expertise and specialized policy knowledge, providing a theoretical framework for understanding why interest groups prefer certain types of expertise over others. This distinction helps explain varying strategic approaches among different types of interest groups (Dür & Mateo, 2013; Holyoke et al., 2015; Tyllström, 2021).

By focusing on the European context, this dissertation presents one of the first comparative analyses of the effect of hiring from the public sector on access to policymakers. It emphasizes the impact of these

practices in policy domains characterized by limited interest mobilization, addressing a notable gap in the literature, which has predominantly concentrated on other regions like the US. The finding that the effect of revolving door practices on access is moderated by the density of the policy domain offers a new theoretical perspective on the context-dependent nature of lobbying success. This suggests that existing theories need to account for the policy environment's complexity and interest group competition when studying revolving doors dynamics (Binderkrantz et al., 2015, 2017; Bouwen, 2004; Dür & Mateo, 2013; Mahoney, 2007).

The dissertation contributes to the theoretical understanding of bias in interest representation by showing how revolving door practices might distort policymaking. It provides a theoretical basis for understanding the subtle mechanisms through which interest representation can become biased, impacting democratic accountability and equity in policy influence (Dür & Mateo, 2013; Flöthe & Rasmussen, 2019; Lowery & Gray, 2016; Rasmussen & Gross, 2015; Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). Examining the interdependence between political and executive institutions and interest groups, this study elucidates the potential risks to accountability and transparency posed by revolving door practices. It highlights how personnel exchanges can affect institutional integrity and public trust (Chari et al., 2020; Bunea, 2018, 2019; Chari et al., 2007).

Finally, by investigating the conditions under which interest groups hire from the public sector and the relationship between access and revolving doors, this dissertation enhances speak to the literature studying the implications of revolving door practices for the allocation of government resources. It provides insights into when there is the risk that revolving door practices can affect the efficiency of public resource utilization (Asai et al., 2021; Egerod et al., 2024; Egerod, 2019).

Overall, by addressing these theoretical and empirical gaps, this dissertation makes a substantial contribution to the literature on interest groups, lobbying practices, and the revolving door phenomenon,

particularly within the EU context. It advances our understanding of the strategic behaviors of interest groups and the complex dynamics of lobbying activities.

## 1.7 Purpose of the Study

Studying why and to what extent interest groups engage in revolving door practices is relevant to acquiring more knowledge about how organised interests manage human resources. It also has broader societal implications. The mobilisation of organised interests is central in modern democracies, as these actors represent and voice societal interests (Beyers et al., 2008; Halpin, 2006). With the decline of party membership, interest groups are considered complementary to parties, as they can represent large constituencies and influence citizens' preferences (Mair & Van Biezen, 2001). For this reason, interest groups can be seen as a transmission belt between civil society and policymakers (Albareda, 2018; Albareda & Braun, 2019; Kohler-Koch, 2009; Rasmussen et al., 2014). Therefore, they are thought of as actors that can reduce the democratic deficit, namely the gap between the authority of EU institutions and the ability of EU citizens to influence policy.

However, contrary to most European political parties, interest groups remain mostly private entities. The democratic function or contribution to the democracy of interest groups is highly controversial and contentious. Attention to how they behave to reach their objectives is paramount, as they can work to blur the line between the public and private sectors to pursue sectoral and special interests at the expense of the general interest. So, their strategies can also have detrimental consequences for democracy. First, revolving door dynamics can skew regulations in favour of a small set of specialised interests, posing the risk of regulatory capture (Hong & Kim, 2017; Kwak, 2014; Makkai et al. 1992), namely, the situation in which regulated industries hire from the public sector to increase their influence power on regulators by using

powerful informal connections.

Secondly, and of greater relevance to the interest group population, the pervasive existence of revolving doors between the public sector and organised interest groups can exacerbate bias in interest representation (Dür & Mateo, 2013; Flöthe & Rasmussen, 2019; Rasmussen & Gross, 2015; Lowery & Gray, 2016; Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). This bias implies that representation may be dominated by the perspectives of groups with personal connections to policymakers or privileged access to insider information, potentially marginalising newer groups or those lacking contacts within public institutions.

Thirdly, regarding the bias in interest representation, interest groups serve a democratic role by providing policymakers with vital information and expertise. Policymakers ideally aim to gather insights from a broad spectrum of interest groups. However, the interchange of personnel between the public sector and interest groups can hinder policymakers' access to complete information. Policymakers may prefer engaging with groups anticipating their needs, especially if informational resources are limited. Policymakers' limited capacity to collect necessary information may lead them to prefer interactions with interest groups that can anticipate their demands. Interest groups engaging in strategic hiring from the public sector might be those capable of anticipating policymakers' information needs (see LaPira & Thomas, 2017). This reliance risks policymakers consistently relying on a narrow set of actors for information – intentionally or unintendedly. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for monitoring relationships between interest groups and policymakers.

Finally, understanding the rationale beyond revolving door dynamics between interest groups and policymakers has implications for accountability and transparency, as it provides empirical evidence about the degree of interdependence between political and bureaucratic institutions and interest groups (Bunea, 2018, 2019; Chari et al., 2007). Consequently, this study helps to clarify whether and how revolving

door practices can undermine and distort interest representation without breaching existing regulations.

## 1.8 Outline of the dissertation

The dissertation includes a methodological chapter presenting the data and methodology. Additionally, it includes four empirical chapters and a concluding chapter. In the following section, an outline of the dissertation is provided.

Chapter two describes the methodological approach the dissertation has taken to unpack revolving door dynamics between interest groups and the public sector and its effect on lobbying capacity to obtain access to policymaking. As the study approaches the revolving door phenomenon using mixed methods, using both quantitative and qualitative methods in the data collection and analysis (Greene & Caracelli, 1997; Hussein, 2009; Thurmond, 2001), this chapter will also describe the different data sources employed in the study, followed by a short description of the methodology.

The first empirical study (chapter 3) examines interest groups' propensity to hire from the public sector. The article tackles motives formulated by interest groups when hiring individual lobbyists. The study presents a conceptual framework specifying three distinct "ideal" types of motives: (1) the value of relational capital (personal connections), (2) the value of process knowledge, and (3) the value of policy expertise.

The second empirical paper (chapter 4) explains under which conditions interest groups are more likely to hire from the public sector. This chapter argues that interest groups' propensity to hire from the public sector is driven by organisational characteristics (group type, resource endowment) and by the policy context in which interest groups operate

(degree of policy engagement and degree of the perceived complexity of the policy process).

In the third empirical paper (chapter 5), the dissertation scrutinises the effect of revolving doors on the success of lobbying efforts. This paper looks into the relationship between the propensity to hire from the public sector and access to policymaking (in terms of likelihood and frequency). More specifically, the study tests whether the effect of the revolving door on access to policymaking is moderated or reinforced by the extent to which interest groups follow a logic of membership (high degree of members' involvement in policymaking) or a logic of influence (high degree of professionalisation).

The fourth empirical paper (chapter 6) adds another analysis of the relationship between the propensity to hire from the public sector and access by accounting for the policy context in which they operate: the level of interest group mobilisation in a policy domain. Specifically, interest groups recruiting staff with public sector experience are expected to gain more frequent access when policy domains are subject to low interest mobilisation.

Chapter 7 draws the main conclusion of this dissertation. First, it synthesises the findings of the empirical studies. Second, it discusses the contributions to the existing literature regarding theories and empirics. Third, it highlights the study's limitations and discusses avenues for future research. Finally, the thesis concludes by discussing normative implications for EU policymakers from the perspective of the findings of this dissertation.

# 2.0 RESEARCH DESIGN, DATA AND METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the details of the study concerning the data and the methodology used in the empirical chapters. In doing so, the chapter outlines the different types of data that each empirical chapter relies. It focuses on the primary data collected to explain and uncover the rationale beyond revolving door dynamics - from the perspective of interest organisations - and its relationship and access to policymaking. In section 2.2, justifications for a mixed method are formulated and discussed. Section 2.3 outlines the different data (primary and secondary) used in each empirical chapter. Section 2.4 briefly discusses the stages of the data analysis processes.[4]

## 2.2 Rationale for Using the Mixed Method Approach

The dissertation uses mixed methods and combines different data sources to build a solid understanding of the cause and effect of revolving door practices. A mixed-method design is a rigorous research project that can be driven by an inductive or deductive theoretical approach and can include qualitative or quantitative components (Morse, 2016). Through a small-N qualitative analysis, this study investigates why interest organisations hire from the public sector. The qualitative approach is preferred to investigate patterns and regularity of hiring strategies within interest organisations, and it is the supplementary component of the thesis. The qualitative study is built to inform theoretical expectations for the large-N analysis, which constitutes the core component of this dissertation.

[4] A detailed and dedicated discussion about the methodological approach is provided in each separate empirical chapter.

The core component of the research design (large-N) provides evidence about under which conditions interest organisations hire more from the public sector and under which conditions hiring lobbyists from the public sector affects policymaking access. The large-N analysis combines different data sources, including survey data and publicly available data on access.

The mixed method design allows using both quantitative and qualitative methods in data collection and analysis (Greene et al., 1989; Hussein, 2009; Thurmond, 2001). One advantage of using a mixed method is that it allows for a comprehensive and deep understanding of the revolving door phenomenon. More precisely, combining different data sources increases the study's internal validity.

## 2.3 Qualitative Data: Open-Ended Semi-Structured Interviews and Vignettes

The first research question asks whether and why interest organisations recruit lobbyists with a public sector background. To look into how interest organisations go about hiring revolving door lobbyists andwhythey do so, the dissertation relies on qualitative data collected by performing 17 open-ended semi structured interviews with interest groups operating in Brussels (interviews are conducted with people who have the final say on hiring decision within the organisations, e.g., CEO, managing directors, human resources managers, etc.). The interviews focused on factors shaping hiring arrangements and reflections on the decision-making processes on which interest organisations formulate revolving door arrangements. Qualitative interviews are suited to study the revolving door phenomenon for several reasons. Firstly, as social science literature reiterates, qualitative designs are suitable to delve into understudied phenomena (Hennink et al., 2020). As discussed in the previous chapter, the revolving door phenomenon is a well-studied social phenomenon in the United States but has not

been studied in the EU context, and – at the time of writing – this is one of the first attempts to understand the rationale beyond it, from the perspective of interest organisations.

Moreover, qualitative interview data are considered the most suited method to study why social phenomena are taking place the way they do (propensity to hire from the public sector) in a social context (the EU). They allow one to outline and advance hypotheses on the more sophisticated relationships that can be analysed using large-N data. The qualitative study gathered data through open-ended semi-structured interviews, and data were analysed through template analysis (details about this data analysis approach are provided in section 2.3).

## 2.4 Survey Data

Once clarified why interest organisations hire lobbyists with public sector background, the study asks (i) under which conditions interest organisations are more likely to hire lobbyists from the public sector; (ii) to what extent does hiring from the public sector benefit interest organisations in terms of access to policymaking? (iii) Under which conditions are policymakers more likely to contact interest organisations that hire more from the public sector? To answer these questions, the study expands and builds on the small-N qualitative analysis by formulating a set of theoretical expectations (see chapters 3, 4 and 5), which are tested on a large representative sample (large- N) of interest organisations, using survey data.

The study uses data from the Comparative Interest Groups survey (CIG-survey henceforward) collected in a sample of EU-level interest organisations, defined as organisations that aim to influence public policy, do not seek elections and are formally or informally member- based. The survey was designed to explore the organisational design, demographics, resources, strategies, levels of institutionalisation, and political

activities of member-based interest organisations. Data collection took place between March and July 2015. More than 2,000 organisations were selected from the EU TR, the OECKL Directory of Public Affairs—Europe and International Alliances and the INTEREURO project. The survey resulted in a dataset of 896 interest organisations, with a response rate of 36% (Beyers et al., 2020). The sample includes organisations declared to have full-time paid employees and external professionals and organisations that rely on interns and volunteers but still show some degree of formalisation. This data also allows to test how organisational characteristics and policy context affect the extent to which interest organisations can access lobbyists with a public sector background. These data were used in the second (Chapter 4), third (Chapter 5) and fourth (Chapter 6) empirical studies.

## 2.5 Publicly Available Data

To measure observable access (dependent variable chapters 4 & 5) to policymaking, the CIG survey data were linked with publicly available data on access to policymaking, and this triangulation provides the study with the opportunity to link propensity to hire from the public sector, organisational characteristics with an unobtrusive measure of access to policymakers.

In order to analyse how revolving door practices affect the degree of access to policymaking, the study focuses on access to the EC. Evidence collected via the CIG survey among EU-level interest associations is linked with evidence from public records on the direct meetings between interest groups and the EC. The former dataset contains measures of self-reported access, while the latter source is used to develop an unobtrusive measure of access. It is essential to add that when combining both data sources, the timing of the survey is considered. More precisely, meeting data were recorded between November 2014 and December 2015, while the survey among EU-level interest organisations

was carried out between March and July 2015. This provides enough stability in the resulting cross-sectional dataset.

At the beginning of its mandate, the Juncker Commission passed two decisions to increase the transparency of its interaction with interest organisations (EC 2014b,2014a). Since November 2014, the Commissioners, their cabinet members, and Directors-General have had to report publicly during their meetings with interest organisations. The disclosed information includes the name of the policymaker, organisations that policymakers have met, the date of the meeting, and the subject of their discussions. There were 11 261 registered meetings (November 2014 to December 2015).

These meetings involve a vast range of actors, including companies at the national, the EU, and the global level, experts from different levels of government, and officials representing local or regional authorities. This data on official meetings captures the EC's policymaking intentions as a legislative agenda-setter. Access to those meetings provides an ideal moment for interest groups to promote their goals, discuss their views with EC officials and draw attention to their concerns, thus offering an overview of the policy areas in which the EC might act following direct interactions with interest organisations.

The EC decision does not specify sanctions against officials in case of non-compliance. Thus, we must include the possibility that some meetings are not included. However, even if that might occur, there are no reasons to believe that this would be systematic or that the observations are biased. First, many EU-specialized media outlets, such as Politico, and some NGOs, such as TI, exercise vigorous oversight of these meetings. Second, it is observable that many meetings with actors that could be considered "sensitive", such as representatives of business interests, are the most frequently reported (e.g., BUSINESSEUROPE, DIGITALEUROPE, The European Steel Association). The resulting cross-sectional dataset included 896 observations and was employed to conduct the third empirical study of the dissertation (Chapter 3).

## 2.6 Overview of the Empirical Studies' Methodologies

This section provides a brief description of the methodology used in each empirical study. In chapter three, the qualitative data collected via open-ended semi-structured interviews with interest organisations were analysed using a specific type of thematic analysis, namely template analysis (Brooks et al., 2015; King, 2012). In chapter four, data from the CIG survey are analysed using logistic regression to estimate the likelihood that - under certain conditions - interest organisations hire from the public sector. Chapter five estimates the likelihood and the magnitude of accessing policymaking when interest organisations hire from the public sector. To do so, CIG survey and public records of meetings between the EC and interest organisations are analysed employing zero-inflated logistic regression. Last, ordinal multilevel regression is used to estimate the likelihood of being contacted by policymakers by organisations hiring from the public sector. An overview of the studies is provided in Table 1, while extensive details and rationales about the methodologies used are provided in each empirical chapter.

## Table 1. Overview of the Empirical Chapters[5]

| CHAPTER | TITLE | AUTHOR(S) | DATA | METHODS | JOURNAL | STATUS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3** | **Revolving Doors in Brussels: Seeking Lobbyists from the Public Sector to Build Advocacy Capacities** | Sharon Belli | Open-ended semi-structured interviews with leaders of Interest Groups (N=17) | Qualitative Template analysis | Interest groups and Advocacy | Under review |
| **4** | **The Revolving Door in Brussels A Process-Oriented Approach to Employee Recruitment by Interest Organisations** | Sharon Belli & Peter Bursens | Comparative Interest Groups Survey (CIG) (N= 516) | Logistic regression | Journal of European Public Policy (JEPP) | Published |
| **5** | **The revolving door and access to the EC. Does the logic of influence prevail?** | Sharon Belli & Jan Beyers | Comparative Interest Groups Survey (CIG) & Meetings EC (N = 715) | Zero inflated logistic regression | Journal of European Market Studies (JCMS) | Published |
| **6** | **Revolving doors and access in context: the conditional effect of interest mobilisation** | Sharon Belli & Frederik Stevens | Comparative Interest Groups Survey (CIG) (N = 11.288) | Multilevel logistic regression | Journal of Public Policy (JPP) | Published |

[5] Appendix D provides an overview of how tasks were distributed among authors.

# 3.0 EMPIRICAL ARTICLE 1

## *Revolving Doors in Brussels: Seeking Lobbyists from the Public Sector to Build Advocacy Capacities.*

Why do European interest organisations recruit staff with a public sector background? The debate on the effect of revolving door practices on the influence production process is a crucial question. So, the article addresses it empirically by looking at motives driving the hiring decisions of interest organisations. Building on the literature, the study presents a conceptual framework specifying three distinct "ideal" types of motives: (1) the value *personal connections*, (2) the value of *procedural knowledge* and (3) *substantive policy expertise*. As the study aims to shed light on the triggers of the revolving door phenomenon, in-depth semi-structured interviews with leaders of 17 interest organisations were conducted. The results show that there is an interplay between the three theoretical perspectives embraced by the existing literature. Yet, the human capital perspective is dominant across European interest organisations. The evidence suggests that what individual lobbyists know about the public machinery (*procedural knowledge*) for European interest groups is more important than who they know within the public sector (*personal connections*).

Keywords: revolving door, interest organisations, lobbying, process-oriented expertise, relational capital.

## 3.1 Introduction

Across the interest group population in Brussels, hiring staff with previous experience in the public sector is not uncommon. Data provided

by the CIG survey reveal that 40% of the 746 EU member-based interest organisations hire staff with previous experience in the public sector. This phenomenon is referred to as the 'revolving door', and it carries an unwelcome reputation not appreciated by advocates of transparency.[6]

A growing body of literature is concerned with the movement of public officials into the private sector and political advocacy. The risks associated with hiring former public officials range from regulatory capture to conflicts of interest. One major concern is that policymakers may engage in anticipatory behaviour, putting forward regulations that favour sectors they plan to join after their term in office. Thus, the movement of personnel between the public sector and regulated industries is often conceived as the result of a quid pro quo arrangement or informal contract. Highly paid jobs in the private sector are seen as favours granted by organized interests in return for favourable regulations (Bernstein, 2015; Cerrillo-i-Martínez, 2017; Gormley, 1979).

However, revolving door arrangements can be more nuanced than a strict quid pro quo contract. They can also be conceived as a form of gift exchange, resting on the sense of 'trust' between public and private actors. More specifically, rituals may become systemic, with a gift today being returned in the future as a matter of social courtesy (Cheal, 2015; Marcoux, 2009). Another argument, consistent with the regulatory-schooling view of the revolving door, claims that officials obtain valuable skills while in government and later transition to firms that demand these skills (Che, 1995; Dal Bó, 2006). This perspective is concerned with agency collusion and market distortions.

At the heart of the perspectives on the consequences of revolving door practices is the general concern that the line between the public and organised interests becomes thinner, undermining the decisions of policymakers who legislate driven by market forces at the expense of the public interest. However, the dominant focus of this literature has been on the corporate appointments of former high-ranking public officials and the related consequences on policymaking processes and

[6] Transparency International (TI) has published a report in which the movement of members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and Commissioners are monitored. ALTER-EU and Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) are engaged in the Revolving Door Watch project. Both actors demand new rules and strict regulations to block the revolving door.
Further information is available at: https://corporateeurope.org/en/revolvingdoorwatch.

stock market returns (e.g. Luechinger & Moser, 2014, 2020; Pattitoni et al., 2015; Viñas et al., 2016).

Given the major normative implications for policymaking and democracy, it is worth asking: **why do interest organisations recruit lobbyists with a public sector background?** This paper aims to investigate the underlying motivations behind organised interest recruitment practice and its broader impacts on lobbying activities.

The interest groups' scholarship provides several theoretical explanations as to why interest organisations value revolving door lobbyists. One line of research emphasises the *value of relational capital*. These scholars argue that organised interests are willing to pay higher salaries to lobbyists with experience in the public sector because they carry with them personal connections and ties with the legislator and executive administrations (Bertrand et al., 2014; Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012; McCrain, 2018, 2019). Others stress the *value of human capital*, arguing that revolving door lobbyists are valuable assets for their *substantive policy expertise*, namely their knowledge about substantive policies areas that make them credible experts and allies of policymakers and politicians (Esterling, 2004; Wright, 1996; Hammond, 1984; Malbin, 1980). This perspective has been embraced also by scholars studying revolving door arrangements between firms politically active at the EU level and EU institutions (Coen & Vannoni, 2016, 2018, 2020). A third line of research posits that lobbyists with public sector experience are valuable due to another type of human capital, distinct from substantive policy expertise. This human capital is their process knowledge (or procedural knowledge) of the public sector. This expertise is not tied to any specific policy area but includes a strong understanding of the internal and external procedures of the policy process (LaPira & Thomas, 2017; Salisbury et al., 1989; Salisbury & Shepsle, 1981; Shepherd & You, 2020). Additionally, public sector experience provides lobbyists with political intelligence—the ability to understand and interpret the informal and often nuanced dynamics of power, influence, and relationships within the political sphere. As Hall and Deardorff (2006) argue,

while process knowledge provides the "what" and "how" of policymaking, political intelligence offers the "who" and "why"—both essential for comprehensive lobbying strategies.

The above-mentioned theoretical viewpoints highlight that revolving door lobbyists can be valuable resources for interest organisations and that the propensity to hire from the public sector can be triggered by different rationales. Yet, in practice, personal contacts with policymakers, substantive policy expertise and process knowledge are assets closely linked, and not necessarily mutually exclusive. The reasons are that all can contribute to effective lobbying or more access when it comes to perform activities which are intrinsic to the profession of the lobbyist: gather political intelligence (Hansen, 1991), supply policy expertise knowing the pressure points of particular public official (Hall & Deardorff, 2006), actively monitoring the policymaking (Heinz et al., 1993; Schlozman & Tierney, 1986).

Considering the theoretical viewpoints discussed above and their non-mutually exclusive nature, this study's primary purpose is to develop a perspective on the revolving door phenomenon in the EU context. It aims to explore the motives that interest organisations have when hiring from the public sector and to clarify the mechanisms at play in the recruitment process.

Baumgartner et al. (2009) showed in their seminal study that most of the work done by organized interests involves monitoring policy processes and agendas. Consequently, process knowledge emerges as the most important resource for this monitoring task. This leads to the basic hypothesis that interest groups value process knowledge more highly than relational networks and policy expertise.

The relevance of the study lies on the need to provide insights in whether interest organisations try to influence the policy process through personal connections or whether the increasing interest organisations' propensity to hire from the public sector is the consequence

of the cross-fertilization of knowledge, namely the combination of private and public sector policy expertise. The latter's implications are far less worrisome as they might lead to more effective policy outcomes. Contrary, the exploitations of personal connections would paint a picture of a system of representation that requires more or different transparency rules to regulate institutionalised relationships between interest organisations and policymakers (Chari et al., 2007, 2020).

Starting from the rationales provided by the existent literature, this article identifies the motives to recruit revolving door lobbyists through semi-structured interviews with 17 Brussels- based interest organisations, which are analysed using template analysis.

As expected, experience in the public sector matters a great deal for interest organisations, which actively seek to hire lobbyists who have worked – also briefly or in low level positions in one or more EU institutions. The propensity to hire from the public sector is predominantly explained by interest organisations' demand for process knowledge. A key finding is that contrary to substantive policy expertise and personal connections, having process knowledge is a sufficient and necessary condition to be hired as a lobbyist. The reason is linked with the complex nature of power of the EU institutions. Namely, it relates to the ability of former public sector employees to "lobby effectively" thanks to their understanding of internal procedures and power relationships between different institutions and different powerholders involved in the development of a policy. Based on these findings, de facto for interest organisations hiring from the public sector is about selecting individuals able to handle the politics of lobbying within the hall of power and owning its complexity to push public policy. This suggest that interest organisations have well understood that the provision of expertise to policymakers is not happening in a purely technocratic setting, but in an increasing politicized environment (Radaelli, 1999).

## 3.2 The Value of Public Sector Experience

Studies of organised interests about revolving door have emphasised the centrality of individual lobbyists' career trajectories, and the individual incentives which often drive career transitions from the public sector to organised interests. The focus on the characteristics of individual lobbyists and individual incentives has contributed to developing proper empirical descriptions of the characteristics of 'revolving' lobbyists. In systems where individual lobbyists' data on career trajectories and salaries are available to public scrutiny (i.e., Washington D.C.), scholars have shown that revolving door lobbyists exhibit some specific characteristics. For instance, we know they can monetise their experience in the public sector, as they earn a bigger salary than regular lobbyists (Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012). Additionally, we see that revolving door lobbyists tend to work on less peripheral policy domains, gain more access to policymakers, and obtain more prestigious positions in the private sector (LaPira et al., 2012). In sum, we know that public sector experience pays off in terms of career perspectives in the private sector.

In the EU context, individual lobbyists are not yet central to the research on the revolving door phenomenon. Part of the problem is that in the absence of a registry of individual lobbyists, access to data about career transitions and salaries is not easy. In fact, the emerging European interest group literature's goals is to shed light on the phenomenon by understanding whether organised interests 'propensity to hire from the public sector translate into privileges such as more access to policymakers and/or access to public funds (Egerod et al., 2024).

This study argues that understanding the benefits interest groups derive from the public sector requires examining the value they place on lobbyists with public sector experience. This involves analysing the intentional actions of organisational leadership and their subjective perceptions and preferences regarding hiring from the public sector.

Examining interest groups' recruitment of lobbyists, particularly those from the public sector ("revolvers"), is crucial. By analysing hiring criteria and labour market trends, we can reveal the perceived value of public sector experience and its contribution to lobbying capacity through relationships, policy expertise, and procedural knowledge.

As anticipated in the introduction of this study, scholars engaged with the revolving door phenomenon have provided different explanations as to why organisations - politically engaged with public institutions - consider revolving door lobbyists valuable assets for the success of lobbying activities. Three theoretical explanations can be conceptualised as follows: 1) the relational capital explanation, 2) procedural knowledge explanation and 3) substantive policy expertise explanation. In the following, I will review these theoretical lenses and use them as an analytical framework to guide the analysis of the motives when hiring from the public sector. The three theoretical explanations build on the resource-exchange perspective, implying that experience in the public sector is traded by individual lobbyists and consumed by private organisations.

The first explanation concerns the value of relational capital. That is, the contacts and personal relationships that former civil servants that became lobbyists have with their former colleagues who remained in government (Cain & Drutman, 2014a). This perspective starts from the premise that individual lobbyists with previous experience in the public sector can trade privileged political access to policymakers with high salaries or prestigious positions in firms or associations. Revolving door lobbyists carry a network of political and staff-to-staff connections (McCrain, 2019). Therefore, they generate higher salaries in the lobbying industry than other lobbyists without experience in the public sector (Bertrand et al., 2014; Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012). Also, lobbyists who worked for members of a majority party are more likely to find clients (Eggers, 2010).

The second theoretical viewpoint explaining why interest organisations

hire lobbyists from the public sector concerns the value of human capital. This perspective challenges the relational capital explanation by toning down the assumptions that there is an informal exchange of personal political connections between policymakers and interest organisations. This perspective posits that the good exchanged by interest organisations and future employees is knowledge. Specifically, two different types of knowledge can be traded by individual lobbyists with experience in the public sector: *procedural (or process) knowledge and policy expertise*.

*Procedural knowledge* (or process knowledge) of former public sector employees defines individual lobbyists familiarity with internal procedures of political and aadministrative institutions and their insider knowledge about power relations (Cain & Drutman, 2014; LaPira & Thomas, 2017). By hiring lobbyists with procedural knowledge, interest organisations gain the advantage of developing tailored lobbying strategies. The advantage is in knowing through which channels to push an issue or a proposal, anticipating when to activate lobby capacity, and knowing who is or will be involved in the policy process. Another crucial aspect of these tailored strategies is the concept of venue shopping, where interest groups identify and target the decision-making venues most receptive to their claims (Varone et al., 2018). Determining the most receptive venue involves assessing the political landscape, understanding the priorities and inclinations of different policymakers, and leveraging relationships within various decision- making bodies to maximize the impact of their advocacy efforts.

Staffing interest organisations with lobbyists mastering procedural knowledge it activates insider information that help grasping how policymakers prioritise policy alternatives (LaPira & Thomas, 2017; Shepherd & You, 2020). In short, as lobbying implies working closely with allied policymakers, procedural knowledge makes interest organisations better placed to archive common objectives with policymakers and to convey policy information more effectively (Eising, 2004, 2008).

A third explanation to hire from the public sector is given by the value interest organisations attach to *policy expertise*. The latter is defined as substantive expert knowledge about specific policy areas that former public employees accumulate while working directly on complex policy developments. According to this perspective, interest organisations seek lobbyists with experience in the public sector because they are seen as more capable to access and persuade decision-makers with their complex policy analysis and expert information. This understanding of revolving door echoes EU interest groups scholars who generally understand lobbying as an information exchange of technical expertise with policymakers to gain access and influence (Bouwen, 2004; Eising, 2004, 2007).

These three theoretical explanations are not treated as mutually exclusive, as in practice all lobbyists would need personal connections, procedural knowledge, and substantive policy expertise to perform their duty. Bearing this in mind, these theoretical approaches provide the analytical basis to begin to understand which quality, among relational, procedural and technical skills makes a lobbyist with experience in the public sector more suitable, if at all, for an interest organisation.

## 3.3 Data Collection and Methodology

In this article, the case under investigation are *interest organisations* operating in the Brussels EU context. Interest organisations are here defined as collective actors who exhibit the following features: organised political behaviour, aim to influence policy outcomes, and do not seek public office and are membership based (Beyers et al., 2008). The study seeks to understand *why* interest organisations hire from the public sector and it is interested in gathering and systematising information about *motives* determining hiring choices. To gather this information *semi-structured interviews* are performed. In semi-structured interviews, meetings with respondents are carried by asking open-ended

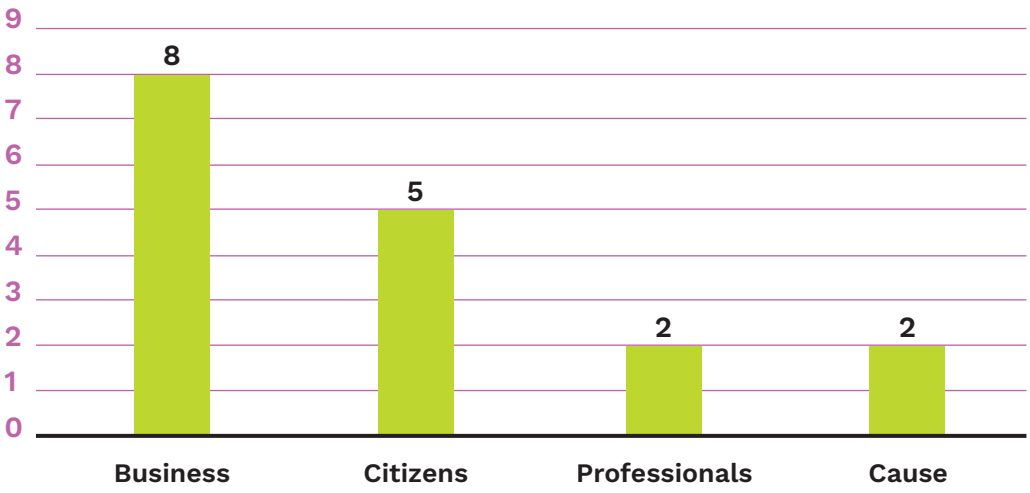
questions, allowing for two-way communication so that the perceived motives for hiring lobbyists from the public sector will emerge naturally from the discussions with interest groups representatives (Wengraf, 2001). The interviews were conducted with interest organisations representatives, directly involved in the hiring processes, holding one of the following positions: founder, managing director, secretary-general, CEO or human resource manager (see Appendix A, Table A1 for details about recruitment of participants strategy).[7]

Interest organisations were selected based on several criteria that helped develop categories that qualify why hiring lobbyists with public sector experience matters for interest organisations (*theoretical sampling*). To construct the theoretical sample, the study relied on the TR, from which a set of interest organisations were selected. These organisations were selected based on the following criteria: (1) to have a permanent office in Brussels and be engaged in lobbying activities to monitor the policy process, access, and influence EU institutions; (2) to have paid staff. Additionally, organisations were selected to maximise the variation across type of interest organisations (e.g., business/non-profit, etc.). Of the 51 contacted organisations, 17 interest organisations agreed to participate in the study.[8] Interviews were conducted between December 2020 and March 2021, lasting between 40 and 60 minutes. Table 2 illustrates how interest groups under investigation are distributed across groups type. While the 17 interviews conducted with various organisations provide valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge that this sample size may not fully represent the diversity and complexity of the entire population of EU interest groups.

[7] This was ascertained during the recruitment phase with potential participants. When the first contact declared not to be involved in. the decision-making process regarding hiring and staffing the organisation, when possible, I was put in contact with the person in charge of human resource management.

[8] Detailed information about the recruitment strategy of participants can be found in Appendix, A1.

## Figure 1. The distribution of interest organisations across group type (N=17)[9]




Interviews were conducted with the support of an *interview guide*, in which open questions were formulated, and probes were listed.[10] The first two interviews were carried out as pilots and later also included in the data analysis. The piloting process was expected to deliver two different findings. First, the first attempt was to test the validity of the interview guide and determine whether the questions could produce responses pertinent to the issue under investigation. I found that the idea of "lobbyists" was used differently across interest organisations, and some refer to them as "public affairs managers" and others as "policy officers". Based on existing literature on policy advocacy, this is not uncommon for managers in non-profit organisations to employ different terminology for lobbying activities. This practice aims to manage external resources obtained through political action while preserving favourable relationships with members who might view lobbying behaviour negatively (Ruggiano & Taliaferro, 2012). In this vein, I subsequently reformulated the questionnaire introduction by giving more straightforward instructions to the respondents about the type of staff the study was interested in. In doing so, I made sure that the respondents discussed expectations when hiring individual lobbyists to monitor, communicate and interact with policymakers.

[9] Distinguishing between cause and citizens groups: both types of groups aim to advocate for change, cause groups are distinguished by their focus on specific causes or issues, often with a broader scope and membership motivated by a commitment to the cause. Citizen groups, on the other hand, are more community-oriented, focusing on local issues with membership based on geographic or community affiliation.

[10] The pilot guide for with the full questionnaire and probes is presented in Appendix A1.

Second, the interviews were conducted using three vignettes. Vignettes are hypothetical scenarios that take the form of a 'snapshot' scenario (Jenkins et al., 2010). In this case, three snapshots of potential job applicants were shown to the respondents. Vignettes were built to reproduce three typical lobbyist profiles (see Appendix A, Table A2 for the full questionnaire, including the text of the vignettes). Respondents were asked to reflect on the three profiles and discuss why they would hire or not a specific profile. The pilot tested whether the profiles were perceived by respondents as realistic and could stimulate reflections and discussion about why specific profiles were more suitable than others. After the pilot, one vignette was adjusted because respondents perceived senior officials from the EC as extremely unlikely to apply for a job in an interest organisation. To solve this issue, one vignette was reformulated by proposing a less senior official as a profile. Last, given the time limits of interviews (45-60 minutes), the pilots tested the duration of interviews when all items on the topic guide were covered.

Adjustments were made based on the first interviews, including changing the order of the questions in the third and fourth interviews. Following the approach of qualitative theories, minor amendments were made during the interview process to adjust to the different types of respondents. So, occasionally, specific questions were simplified and adapted to the type of respondent, for clarity, without changing the meaning of the concepts used (Mason, 2002; Seale, 2003; Seale & Silverman, 1997).

The interview begins with general questions about the hiring process, the type of tasks assigned to lobbyists, and skills and experiences sought by organisations in the labour market. These questions allowed an open – yet still structured – discussion about the real-life hiring process. Moreover, this set of questions aimed to indirectly probe into whether and how organisations link tasks that lobbyists must perform in interest organisations with experience in the public sector.

Three snapshots of potential job applicants were shown to the

[11] In this study, the interviews took place via computers and the vignettes were presented to the respondents, one by one, using the chat tool of Microsoft Teams (Stolte, 1994; Taylor, 2006).

respondents. Vignettes were built to reproduce three typical lobbyist profiles: (1) a specialist lobbyist who exhibits a high degree of sector-based policy competencies with no experience in the public sector; (2) a generalist lobbyist who has senior experience in the public sector and senior experiences in a different type of organisations; (3) an inexperienced lobbyist with extensive public sector experience. Then, participants were invited to reflect on the three candidates, explaining the advantages and disadvantages of each profile.[11] This allowed not only to generate discussions about the value of public sector experience but also to disentangle how leaders evaluate different experiences in the public sector. The use of vignettes as interviewing strategy is preferred because the metaphor "revolving doors" carries a negative connotation and is often associated with conflict of interests and corruption. Thus, asking direct questions about the phenomenon could produce answers triggered by social desirability and undermine the research objectivity.

In Appendix A, Table A3, information about data management and ethical consideration is provided.

## 3.4 Data Analysis and Findings

This study used template analysis to generate and systematise dimensions, themes, and codes retrieved from the transcript of the interviews. Template analysis is a style of thematic analysis that balances a high degree of structure in the process of analysing textual data with the flexibility of adapting themes and codes to the research project (Brooks et al., 2015; King, 2012). Central to this technique is the development of different coding templates through an iterative process[12]. This final template (Table 2) outlines the coding structure for analysing qualitative data related to interest groups' recruitment strategies and the value placed on public sector experience in lobbying. This section focuses on questions 3-6, which explore interest groups' recruitment strategies. The codes (A, B, C) categorize responses based

[11] In this study, the interviews took place via computers and the vignettes were presented to the respondents, one by one, using the chat tool of Microsoft Teams (Stolte, 1994; Taylor, 2006).

[12] In the iterative process, a preliminary coding template is produced based on a subset of 7 interviews. The preliminary identification of dimensions and a priori themes provided a logical and structured starting point for the analysis from which codes were generated. In Appendix A, Tables A4 and A5 a detailed description of the iterative process and the preliminary study template is provided.

on priorities, tasks, and required skills for lobbyists. Question 7 involve vignettes, recruitment scenarios, that explore the perceived value of public sector experience in lobbying. The codes delve into three main motives for valuing this experience: personal connections, process (or procedural) knowledge and substantive policy expertise. To reach the final study template, the qualitative data analysis of the interview's texts identified the reoccurrences of codes and new codes until the saturation point was reached (after seven interviews).[13] While additional interviews added depth and details to the analysis, no new themes or codes emerged[14].

In the following sections, results are presented and discussed. While discussing the results, quotes and phrases from the interview data are offered to exemplify each finding. Long and complete quotes are reported in Appendix A, Table A7.

## Table 2 Final study templatem(themes and codes)

| QUESTIONNAIRE | THEME | CODES |
|---|---|---|
| **Questions n. 3, 4, 5, 6** | **Interest groups recruitment strategies** | A. PRIORITY<br>B. TASKS<br>C. SKILLS |
| **Vignettes**<br>**Question n.7** | **The value of public sector experience in the lobbying profession** | **2.1 PERSONAL CONNECTIONS (Motive 1)** |
| | | A. ABILITYTOMAINTAINEXISTINGRELATIONS WITH POLICY MAKERS<br>B. ABILITY TO BUILD NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH POLICY MAKERS |
| | | **2.2 PROCESS (OR PROCEDURAL) KNOWLEDGE (Motive 2)** |
| | | A. KNOWLEDGEINSTITUTIONALSTRUCTURE<br>B. OPERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE<br>C. INSIDER KNOWLEDGE OF THE POLICY PROCESS |
| | | **2.3 SUBSTANTIVE POLICY EXPERTISE (Motive 3)** |
| | | A. 1.3.2 KNOWELDGE OF POLICY NETWORK AND POLICY COMMUNITIES<br>B. 1.3.3 POLICY CREDIBILITY |

*Note: in pink codes that were generated inductively.*

[13] Saturation is a core methodological principle used in qualitative research. It is used to indicate that, based on the data collected or analysed hitherto, further data collection and/or analysis are unnecessary, as codes and themes repeat themselves. Saturation is applied to the purposive sample and is used to indicate the data validity (Hennink & Kaiser, 2020).

[14] The definitive codebook structure is provided in Appendix A6.

## *The value of public sector experience in the lobbying profession*

One of the first things that emerges from the data is that most respondents observe that the greatest challenge of a lobbyist is to manage and please the demands of members while being able to respond to the functional and internal needs of interest organisations. This observation is in line with Streeck & Schmttter (1991)' s notorious argument about the tension interest organisations faces in balancing the logic of influence and the logic of access. And this tension is reflected also in how individual lobbyists organise and perform their activities. In practice, lobbyists' activities can be divided into two macro-categories: (1) information seeking, monitoring, and influencing policymakers (*lobbying activities*) and (2) the management and development of the membership base (*membership management*).

Lobbyists are expected to manage the membership base by gathering information inside institutions. The management of the membership base defines activities related to involving and informing members about advocacy strategies and expected outputs. As strategic decisions are taken by the middle-management staff operating in Brussels, the role of lobbyists in managing the membership base exhibits a high degree of complexity. Members are often located in different European countries. Thus, lobbyists are faced with different tasks: 1) identifying the members' position and building consensus, 2) explaining and reporting the advocacy strategies to members, and 3) recommending advocacy strategies to be regional and local branches. For instance, explain how to access funds available at the European level.

> *...(lobbyists) need to work first with members to come to an agreement. For example, what is the position (of members) on carbon pricing or on energy efficiency and that is the official consumer position. And for that there is a lot of ping pong, members do not necessarily agree, most of the time they do, but that means that among the tasks of the policy officers (lobbyists) is also the fact that they need to mediate between members, so finding consensus.* **(Citizens Organisation - Interview 4).**

Additionally, respondents expressed that the task of individual lobbyists requires them to balance two different identities, as they "have to work for what your members express and deliver" and at the same time, they "have to be able to deliver and you have to be able to convince policymakers". The balance of these two types of identities seems to be less challenging for business organisations, which address the issue less frequently.

*...(lobbyists) need to work first with members to come to an agreement. For example, what is the position (of members) on carbon pricing or on energy efficiency and that is the official consumer position. And for that there is a lot of ping pong, members do not necessarily agree, most of the time they do, but that means that among the tasks of the policy officers (lobbyists) is also the fact that they need to mediate between members, so finding consensus.*
**(Citizens Organisation - Interview 3).**

While balancing the logic of influence and the logic of membership, lobbyists need to become insiders of the policymaking: activities imply close interactions with public institutions and close contact with political and administrative public officials. Related to this, lobbyists are expected to know how to gather insider information to influence policymakers at different stages of the policy process. Because the agenda of the EC shapes the agenda of individual lobbyists, the effectiveness of their advocacy strategies depends on the capacity to anticipate which legislations will or will not be on the table.

*...the workplan of a policy officer is influenced by what's going on in the EC (...), in 2020 we knew was going on in terms of envision legislation, for instance, and we need to be able to respond and to be able to propose, to be able to support, to be able to have our say on these processes.*
**(Business Organisations Interview 8).**

*They (lobbyists) have to follow what is going on at European level and they have to explore, dive into the different debates, and bring in our perspectives.*
**(Cause Group - Interview 3).**

As argued elsewhere, for interest organisations, it is paramount that lobbyists anticipate governmental actions, as anticipations reduce the risk of investing in unnecessary lobbying strategies or facing passed legislation detrimental to the represented interests (LaPira & Thomas, 2017).This theoretical perspective does not apply just to the Washington context, but it also concerns the Brussels context, where interest organisations build advocacy strategies on political intelligence gathered by individual lobbyists to anticipate the EC agenda– before it becomes public knowledge:

> *...(lobbyists) need to figure how you can influence the different stages way before the EC actually comes out with a white paper or a draft or something, you know who you need to be connected to, you know what's going on and how you can influence the process at the earliest possible stage, because if you wait until they say "oh this is open for public consultation" it's too late, it's not going to change very much. After that, you need to influence it way before that, so that the first draft they come out with already has what you want to see in it, or close to it.*
> **(Citizens Organisation, Interview 2).**

> *...we need to be able to understand at what point in time we have to intervene. If I intervene prior to legislation being proposed, that's much more efficient than once you're in second reading for instance, in the second reading you come to you can't do much you can just barely oppose the adoption of a piece of legislation. So, I think it is, it is very important for us to know when we will be able to intervene and to be able to explain to our members what's going on, not to be I don't know!*
> **(Business Organisation, Interview 3).**

These preliminary considerations exhibit that the hiring process of lobbyists reflects the challenge inherent in the organisational behaviour typical of EU-level interest groups: the necessity to find lobbyists able to answer to both the logic of influence and the logic of membership (Streeck & Schmttter, 1991). Consequently, and not surprisingly, the recruitment process of individual lobbyists reflects these needs.

When recruiting individual lobbyists, interest organisations are

confronted with candidates with different kind of past experiences (i.e., in the policy field in other associations, in the EU institutions). Interestingly, it is worth to notice that during the recruitment process, interest organisations actively seek at the least "some experience at the EU level." This trend reoccurs across most of the organisations involved in the study. Regardless of the interest pursued, experience in the public sector makes candidates appealing to interest organisations. Respondents reported that in the recruitment phase, they use "mailing lists of trainees (EC) and for Parliamentary Assistants" as "they must do an EU traineeship in the EC or the EP".

> *When people come to us, they've already had a job as either an intern or a position with a member of the EP or they might have done it internship at the EC or at a law firm or something that's worked in this environment, so they bring something when they join us.*
> **(Citizens Organisation, Interview 2).**

The evidence also shows that hiring lobbyists with experience in the public sector is for interest organisations a matter of resources. Respondents report that they do not have the resources to hire an unlimited number of lobbyists. Furthermore, organisations "do not have the time" to train the lobbyists "about how the institutions work." To overcome this challenge, they request experience from the public sector, as they are sure such lobbyists come with process expertise about EU institutions:

> *...so if you are an NGO you have limited resources, you cannot put like Google 20 lobbyists on a case, you need to be very effective , that means that we cannot really take the time to train the people on that, because that you train it on the spot you cannot really even if you read a lot of books about how the institutions work, you need to train it on the spot. So that's why we always request for experience towards that because we don't really have the means for doing it.*
> **(Citizens Organisation - Interview 6).**

Experience in the public sector is paramount to getting a job as an

individual lobbyist as it gives them the advantage of valuable skills which contribute to the interest organisations 'advocacy capacities. All this necessitates to understand what exactly qualifies as experience in the public sector and how theoretical perspectives explaining the revolving door practices match the reality of the interest organisations landscape in Brussels.

## *The value of public sector experience in the lobbying profession*

Interest organisations value relationships, but lobbyists are not expected to knock at the door of interest organisations with a formal or informal portfolio of contacts. Multiple respondents have highlighted that it was a common practice in the past. Nowadays, established personal connections do not make the difference for the success of advocacy strategies. This is because European institutions are perceived by organised interests as very open:

> *We used to ask for big range portfolio, business cards of people. Nowadays, however, to have established personal connections with other organisations and with policy-makers is not a prerequisite as the world is very connected and it's also a very small world, so to really get access to somebody it's not so difficult.*
> (Citizens Organisation - Interview 5).

At the same time, what also emerges is that it is hard for organised interests to create closed networks or solid personal connections with policymakers that can last over time as staff with EU institutions tend to rotate:

> *Knowing a bit the people in the EP it's not everything because they change very-very rapidly, and the same thing goes for the EC.*
> (Business Organisation - Interview 9).

This narrative implies that due to the volatility of personal connections,

interest organisations are well aware that recruiting lobbyists based on "who they know" does not pay off in the long run and can have little returns in lobbying capacities. Interest organisations do not place high value on personal professional contacts.

As influencing a policy is a long process, for interest organisations, it is essential to have the necessary social and networking skills. *Social* and *networking skills* are considered essential to connect and reach policymakers informally and gather political intelligence from different actors involved in the decision-making process and try to access political intelligence and influence them outside the formal environment. As a respondent clarifies, "being very good in connecting with civil servants in the EC, assistants (in the EP), or members of cabinets of Commissioners or MEPs" is a matter of "social skills" and is not about who you know (Business Organisation, Interview 1). In sum, interest organisations place a higher value on the ability of individual lobbyists to gather insider knowledge and have access to privileged information through personal innate characteristic and not through personal professional connections:

> *However, what you need to know is that among the tasks of a lobbyist, in pre-covid times, is having a coffee, you know having coffee with the assistance of MEPs, with desk officers at the EC, with other stakeholders to see whether we can build alliances. So, a huge part of the lobbyist work is social skills, meaning reaching out to other people in an informal way - and it's a very important... especially when it comes to policymakers - it's a very powerful way of getting knowledge, and having intelligence, access to intelligence but also to influence.*
> **(Citizens Organisation -Interview 6).**

In the EU context, the relational capital theoretical viewpoint does not explain the propensity of interest organisations to hire from the public sector. While interest organisations tend to seek lobbyists with public sector experience, the rationale beyond this behaviour does not relate to personal connections as a means to access privileged information. This finding challenges the consensus in the literature that revolving

door is a matter of personal, professional relationships (Bertrand et al., 2014; Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012; McCrain, 2019), while it seems to corroborate the thesis that experience in the public sector has more to do with skills and competences accounted in the human capital perspective (process knowledge and substative policy expertise).

## *The Value of Human Capital: process (or procedural) knowledge*

Interest organisations seem to rely on experience from the public sector as they can assume process knowledge about public institutions. The data revealed three substantial elements qualifying and, therefore, explaining why process *knowledge* is the most valuable asset an individual lobbyist can acquire in the public sector.

First, interest groups' organisational leadership understands process knowledge as familiarity with the *institutional structure*. For instance, respondents report that having lobbyists with working experience in the EC supplies the interest organisation with technocratic knowledge about the EU institutions and with the ability to understand the timing of the policy process:

> *...somebody worked with the EC (...) means that there is also some practical knowledge on how the institutions function.*
> (Citizens Organisation Interview 4).

> *...there are a lot of very complicated procedures at the Parliament (respondents refer to EP) , assistants know all about that, so they know when it is timely to send an amendment, a proposal for the amendment or a voting recommendation.*
> (Citizens Organisation Interview 6).

The finding that familiarity of the *institutional structure* - acquired in the public sector - helps organisations determine the precise lobbying time is in line with existing literature concerned with the centrality of

timing of the policy process in the development of lobbying strategies (Crepaz et al., 2022; Egerod & Junk, 2022; You, 2017).

Second, organisational leadership expects candidates to know which role EU institutions play in the policymaking and how they interact with each other. This is referred to as deep *operational knowledge of the EU institutions*. Lobbyists with experience in the public sector are perceived as capable of understanding the differences and nuances between working with the EC, the EP, and the Council. They easily disentangle and anticipate policymakers 'actions because they know how the institutions interact with each other. This is crucial for lobbying success. It allows organisations to ensure that strategies translate into outputs, such as having technical elements related to the field into a directive or regulation:

> *...working in the EP means that this person has been in touch with the EC and with the Council, so this person has been at the centre of the triangular negotiations so and the EP has much more leverage than the EC or the Council. they are really at the centre of the triangle. I would hardly hire a policy officer or somebody working for the EC, except those working for the Cabinets but assistants of MEPs, absolutely.*
> **(Citizens Organisation -Interview 11).**

Third, public sector experience provides *insider knowledge*, encompassing a deep understanding of informal power structures and internal processes. This expertise, also termed as political intelligence, equips interest groups with information about lobbying targets, enabling them to anticipate policymakers' needs and tailor their requests for information and expertise accordingly.

Respondents report that lobbyists with experience in the EU institutions are more likely to be exposed to information about informal internal dynamics and, thanks to that, they can gather, process, interpret and communicate technical and political information to interest organisations. In this regard, respondents have highlighted that:

*knowing how policymakers think, how they reason, what is important for them" is essential to influence policymaking. Having experience in the public sector gives you access to "all the inside stuff of the EP" and not just about how different committees work, but about "who decides who becomes what'*

(Citizens Organisation -Interview 6).

*experience in the public sector is important because, let's say 80% of the work is or 70% of the work is working with civil servants (...) working with people that have that background here in Brussels or Strasbourg, so it is important to understand how people function, how people work in in public in a public environment, in the public sector and that is it is helping if you have a bit of that background. (...). Public organisations have very specific way of looking at things, way of approaching things and understanding that helps you to bring important messages to them. And it's about understanding who's on the other side of the table and that is a key success factor for policy work, I think. If you don't understand the drive, if you don't understand the needs, the objectives of the people on the other side of the table you will never achieve your own policy objectives, you will not never be able to discuss different options, to work towards compromise and so on.*

(Citizens Organisation -Interview 4).

## *Substantive policy expertise*

Substantive policy expertise is described by interest organisations' representatives as a necessary tool a lobbyist should possess to perform its tasks and influence policymakers. Yet, one of the most interesting findings is that interest organisations representatives report consistently to not consider policy expertise as a sufficient element to be selected for a job interview. For instance, an organisation that represents the interests of the energy sector mentions that when they engage in the recruitment process of a lobbyist, they are looking for experience in the energy field, but this is not sufficient. This expertise must be complemented by experience in the public sector:

*We are looking for experience as the EU public affairs and policy officer, we are looking for experience in the energy field. We are looking for the experience inside the*

*institutions. It is often important that they have done an EU traineeship in the EC or a traineeship in the EP. We are often looking for somebody who has already worked also just 6 months in an association. If those three aspects come together the candidate is likely to be called for an interview. So, previous experience in our field, work, or traineeship in one of the EU institutions and even a short placement in an association.*
**(Business Organisation, Interview 12).**

*3 years in the EC and 0 in the Ep she will have an in-depth knowledge of the institutions. For us, the fact that she has worked for a prominent MEP, MEP that you probably had a rapport with, and he/she knows the committees' proceedings, is probably going to be a big advantage. And the fact that a person like that does not have technical expertise, would not be a big break. Someone with that profile would be selected for an interview and not on an entry-level.*
**(Business Organisation, Interview 12).**

The reasons why substantive policy expertise does not stand on its own and does not qualify the ideal lobbyists is explained by interest organisations as follows: expertise on a technical matter can be built, while it can take long time before accumulating knowledge about how EU institutions works:

*We want very often some experience at the European level, meaning they need to understand how the institutions function because you can sometimes build up your expertise on a technical matter, it can last a long time before you get knowledge about how the EU works and that is always very important that you don't lose the time and that you are not writing to the wrong person if that person has nothing to say at the end of the day.*
**(Citizens Organisation - Interview 6).**

Substantive policy expertise is not unimportant, as interest organisations rely on policy expertise to access policymakers, and their credibility depends – among other things – on the quality of information they produce (Beyers & Arras, 2020; Chalmers, 2013; Crombez, 2002; Klüver, 2012). Yet, the findings of this study suggest that the self-perceived credibility of interest organisations as policy actors depends less

on insight into policy networks, knowing the history of files, possessing the specialized vocabulary. It is important to note that while these qualities are valuable, they are not perceived as sufficient if acquired outside of the public sector. The unique context and experiences within the public sector are seen as essential for developing the specific type of expertise and knowledge that interest groups seek in lobbyists."

In sum, substantive policy expertise needs to be proved by experience in the public sector and complemented by procedural knowledge about the EU institutions. There is a general understanding about having an expert in the sector who lacks process knowledge increases the risk of missing lobbying and advocacy opportunities or invest lobbying capacities and resources where they are not needed (i.e., writing to the wrong person or wasting time feeding expert information to actors that do not have substantive power on the dossier of interest).

## 3.5 Discussion and Conclusions

Scholars generally identify revolving door practices as the result of a *quid pro quo* arrangement between the regulated industry and former public employees, where highly paid jobs in the private sector are considered a favour granted by industries in return for favourable regulations (Bernstein, 2015; Cerrillo-i-Martínez, 2017; Gormley, 1979), a gift exchange (Cheal, 2015; Marcoux, 2009) or the results of agency collusion and market distortions (Che, 1995; Dal Bó, 2006).

Hiring staff with experience in the public sector is common among advocacy groups representing various interests from corporate to citizens' interests. In light of this, interest groups' scholarship has advanced several less pessimistic exhalations for the revolving door. Some argue that the phenomenon is driven by a demand for personal connections and ties with the legislator and executive administrations (Bertrand et al., 2014; Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012; McCrain, 2019). Others

have argued that interest organisations aim to recruit former public officials because of their *process knowledge* (or procedural knowledge) and *political intelligence* about the public machinery (LaPira & Thomas, 2017; Salisbury et al., 1989; Salisbury & Shepsle, 1981; Shepherd & You, 2020) or *substantive policy expertise* (Esterling, 2004; Hammond, 1984; Malbin, 1980; Wright, 1996). The conceptual frameworks developed in the existent American literature are employed in this study to identify why interest organisations operating at the EU level hire from the public sector.

The evidence demonstrates that interest organisations' recruitment process of individual lobbyists reflects the necessity to balance the logic of influence and the logic of membership (Streeck & Schmttter, 1991).Yet, the logic of influence seems to prevail as interest organisations try recruiting lobbyists with experience within the EU institutions to achieve their objectives, namely effective inside lobbying.

When looking closely at what qualifies experience in the public sector and what makes former public employees appealing to interest organisations, it emerges that "*what lobbyists know*" about the public sector is much more critical than "*whom they know*" for interest organisations. The propensity to hire individual lobbyists with experience in the public sector is triggered by process knowledge, namely the combination of 1) their familiarity with the institutional structure of the EU, 2) operational knowledge of the EU institutions, and 3) insider knowledge or political intelligence about the internal dynamics of public institutions.

The central finding of this study is that contrary to personal connections and substantive policy expertise, process knowledge about the public sector is considered a specific human asset that can be acquired only by working within public institutions and pays off in terms of lobbying success. Still, substantive policy expertise should not be considered irrelevant as it proves valuable enough to supply credible expertise to policymakers. Yet, the value of substantive expertise increases if complemented by process knowledge acquired in the

public sector. Interestingly, our research indicates that citizens' groups and cause groups seem more interested in hiring from the public sector compared to business organisations. Nonetheless, both types of organisations exhibit a marked preference for former employees of the European Parliament, underscoring the high value placed on the specific procedural knowledge and political intelligence these individuals bring to their lobbying efforts.

This study contributes in various ways to the interest groups' literature on revolving door by entering the debate concerned with whether and why companies and interest groups benefit from hiring lobbyists with a background in the public sector (Coen & Vannoni, 2016, 2020; Elnayal, 2019; LaPira & Thomas, 2014; McKay, 2012). At the same time, this study can be helpful to scholars engaged in shedding light on the consequences of the revolving doors practice on the individual lobbyists' labour market (Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012; Holyoke et al., 2015; Tyllström, 2021), governments allocation of resources (Asai et al., 2021; Egerod et al., 2024; Egerod, 2019), and deliberative democracy, more in general (LaPira & Thomas, 2017; Lazarus & McKay, 2012).

The study presents some limitations. In common with all interview-based studies, I have relied on the honesty of self-reported answers of respondents in describing their motivation for hiring from the public sector (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). I have addressed this limitation by integrating vignettes limiting occasions for answers driven by social desirability bias. Furthermore, the study's findings may not be generalizable to all interest groups due to the specific sample and context of the research. The limited sample size and the particular characteristics of the chosen interest groups may not fully represent the diversity of the broader population. Furthermore, analysing and interpreting qualitative data is challenging due to its intricate nature, requiring careful consideration of context and underlying meanings. One aspect not extensively addressed in this study is the strategic decision-making process of hiring in-house lobbyists versus outsourcing to external lobbying firms for specific policy processes. The choice

between these strategies can depend on various factors, including the specific policy issue, available resources, and the need for specialized knowledge or broader network access. It's important to note that all the interviewed interest groups managed public affairs and lobbying in-house. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into the factors influencing interest groups' hiring strategies.

To conclude, the results have reached the aim to provide some new EU context-driven insights, which partially support the existing theory on revolving door, advanced in the American literature – namely the human capital approach (LaPira & Thomas, 2017). More importantly, the central empirical findings indicate that interest organisations highly value experience in the public sector and purposively hire individual lobbyists with this type of background. This opens new research questions relevant to the European interest groups' literature concerned with revolving doors dynamics and its effect on the influence production process. For instance, if interest groups benefit from public sector expertise and knowledge, it is crucial to understand under which conditions interest organisations have access to lobbyists with experience in the public sector. How does the demand for "revolvers" vary across interest groups with different resource degree availability? This dissertation addresses these questions in the next chapter.

# 4.0 EMPIRICAL ARTICLE 2

## *The Revolving Door in Brussels: a Process-Oriented Approach to Employee Recruitment by Interest Organisations*

The staff flow between the public sector and organised interests is metaphorically defined as 'revolving door'. This paper examines which EU interest organisations hire from the public sector and seeks to explain variation in hiring behaviour across these organisations. Using data from the CIG-survey, the study shows that revolving door practices do not occur systematically across interest organisations but that, under specific conditions, some interest organisations are more likely to attract employees from the public sector than others. Our main findings demonstrate that citizen organisations are generally more likely to hire employees with public sector background, compared with professional and business organisations. We also show that the effect of group type is resource-sensitive, as wealthy citizen groups are more likely to hire from the public sector than wealthy business organisations. Additionally, we demonstrate that contextual factors such as the degree of political involvement and the perceived complexity of the policy environment predict hiring from the public sector.

Keywords: interest organisations, revolving door, hiring behaviour.

*Article co-authored with Prof. Peter Bursens and published in Journal of European Public Policy (JEPP).*

## 4.1 Introduction

In June 2016, when reaching the end of the two-year cooling-off period, former president of the EC Jose Manuel Barroso announced that he would become advisor for the American investment bank Goldman Sachs. His move became emblematic of the revolving door phenomenon in the EU, defined as the switch of professionals from public office to the private sector (Gormley, 1979). The so-called 'Barroso Gate' is just one example of the staff flow between the public sector and organised interests that has attracted the attention of advocacy groups, such as TI, Corporate Europe Observatory, and ALTER-EU. These NGOs and global movements have reported substantial movements of former Members of the MEPs and outgoing EC towards interest organisations, (TI 2017). Such movements are often perceived as driving forces for regulatory capture as public officials with ambitions to work for private interests are thought to regulate in favour of those interests (Cohen, 1986; Gormley, 1979; Makkai & Braithwaite, 1992).

Reports produced by EU transparency advocates emphasise the individual incentives of high-ranking officials to leave public office but say little about who is hiring from the public sector and under which conditions this hiring is more likely to occur. Recent work by Coen and Vannoni (2016) treats revolving door practices as a corporate political strategy to build political connections (see also Bertrand et al., 2014; Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012). They conclude that, in the EU, personal contacts do not represent a crucial resource to be hired as a lobbyist. Coen and Vannoni instead argue that relations between firms and EU policymakers are based on the exchange of technical and political information for access to the decision-making process (Bouwen, 2004). Since personal connections with policymakers are valued less than technical expertise, EU firms are, compared with the prevailing empirical evidence from the United States (US), not that much inclined to invest in public sector experience. Consequently, revolving door dynamics are thought to be less common in the EU. Coen and Vannoni's findings

highlight a remarkable contrast with empirical work in the US demonstrating that revolving door practices are quite common in Washington (LaPira, 2014; Lazarus et al., 2016). However, while American studies have examined interest organisations, EU studies have not yet looked beyond the hiring behaviour of firms (see Coen & Vannoni, 2016, 2018, 2020). We know little about the extent to which revolving door practices occur amongst EU interest organisations. This is a crucial missing piece of the EU revolving door story considering the substantial role of interest organisations in the EU political system.

To advance our understanding of the revolving door phenomenon in the Brussels 'bubble', this contribution examines the hiring preferences of EU level interest organisations. First, we discuss the types of expertise that interest organisations need to access decision- makers. Second, we test the conditions under which interest organisations show an increased propensity to hire from the public sector.

In this study, we build upon the theory of the market for lobbying services (LaPira & Thomas, 2017). This theoretical framework conceives hiring staff with public sector backgrounds as a form of political insurance for interest groups to overcome fundamental risks associated with the policy process. More specifically, revolving door dynamics are associated with interest organisations' need for process-oriented expertise, defined as a general understanding of the political process, and an ability to establish and maintain network relations with insiders in decision-making institutions. For example, employees with experience in the public sector understand how public institutions function, and thus know how to develop expertise that resonates in a public policy setting. Based on these premises, we argue that this unique resource of public sector experience may help advocacy activities of certain types of interest organisations.

We also argue that the usefulness of process-oriented expertise varies across interest organisations. This is because organisations face different types of challenges and they adapt hiring strategies to the

policy environment in which they operate (Mahoney & Baumgartner, 2008). Thus, we posit that the propensity to hire staff with a public sector background is associated with organisational (group type and resource endowment) and contextual factors (degree of political involvement in insider strategies and perceived complexity of the policy process). We apply this theoretical insight to the EU context using data from the CIG-survey; (Beyers et al., 2020). Our results demonstrate that, citizen groups show a high propensity to hire employees with a public sector background. We show that the effect of group type is resource- sensitive for citizen groups, when compared with business and professional organisations. Finally, the context in which interest organisations operate matters: high degree of political involvement in insider strategies and the perception of the policy environment as highly complex both increase the propensity to hire staff with a public sector background.

## 4.2 A Process-Oriented Perspective on Revolving Doors

Interest group scholars have analysed revolving door practices in Washington DC and provided empirical evidence regarding staff exchanges between the public and private sectors (Gormley, 1979; Salisbury et al., 1989). Recent research has revealed that half of Washington-based lobbyists have experience in the federal government (LaPira &Thomas, 2017) and that one-fifth of elected representatives and public servants leave Congress to engage in lobbying. Furthermore, these practices have increased over time: between 1976 and 2012, one-fourth of the members of the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senators became lobbyists after ending their political mandate (Lazarus et al. 2016). Revolving door practices are commonplace in US politics, which has spurred research into interest groups' hiring practices and into how interest groups benefit from staff with public sector experience.

US literature uses two analytical perspectives to explain why expe-

riencein the public sector is valuable to interest organisations. The first perspective considers the interaction between interest organisations and policymakers as driven by an informal exchange of political connections for career advancement in the lobbying business. Through this analytical lens, scholars have shown that lucrative positions in the lobbying industry are often assigned to former public officials with networks in the public sector, as long as their political connections remain intact (Bertrand et al. 2014; McCrain, 2018; Vidal et al. 2012).

The second perspective departs from another type of resource. It posits that employees who worked in the public sector provide interest groups with substantive not issue-specific knowledge of processes and policy-making contexts (Salisbury et al., 1989). In other words, employing staff with experience in the public sector gives interest organisations a better understanding of how the policy process functions from within and among policy-making institutions (Esterling, 2004).

We study the revolving door phenomenon in the EU through the lens of the theory of the market for lobbying services (LaPira & Thomas, 2017), from which we take the concept of 'process-oriented expertise', defined as an understanding of the political process, and an ability to maintain ties with insiders in decision-making. We depart from the perspective that former public employees do not sell access to former colleagues to interest organisations, but process - oriented expertise. We don't disentangle whether the revolving door is primarily used by new employers to obtain political process expertise rather than to benefit from the networks with insiders of the new employees. Although we cannot identify which mechanism is at play, we argue that the concept of process-oriented expertise has the advantage to capture both potential benefits enjoyed by interest organisations.

Following LaPira and Thomas (2017), we conceptualise hiring strategies as a form of political insurance that interest groups implement to overcome the fundamental risks associated with the course of the policy process. The argument is that interest groups face two risks:

complexity of public policy and uncertainty of the policy-making process.

First, the complexity of public policy refers to the challenges policymakers face when evaluating different policy options. Interest groups intervene by strategically providing policy expertise, defined as specialised knowledge tied to one specific policy domain. Policy expertise is not transferable across policy domains, nor is it specific to experience in the public sector since it can also be acquired via training or research experience in specific policy areas. However, professionals with public sector experience often possess skills that enable interest organisations to collect, organise and translate expertise about alternative policy solutions.

Second, the uncertainty of the policy process refers to the risks organised interests face when policy conflicts arise. Changes in policies or regulations can have positive or negative effects on interest organisations, who must stand ready to minimise the risks of policy changes by anticipating government actions. Doing so requires process-oriented expertise that delivers insider information. Process-oriented expertise reduces uncertainty by helping interest groups to claim a seat at the negotiation table. Professionals without prior experience in the public sector lack this unique knowledge.

Resource-exchange theory is a prominent framework for studying the relation between interest organisations and policymakers in the EU (Bouwen, 2004). Due to the consultative nature of EU policymaking, interest organisations value technical expertise and political information for access. We argue that beyond the exchange of technical expertise and political information for access, organisations also need process-oriented expertise to secure access to the decision- making process. Process-oriented expertise is overlooked in conventional applications of the resource-exchange perspective in the European interest group literature. It is often neglected that the exchange of information between interest groups and policymakers is preceded by

interest groups monitoring and anticipating the policy process. Next to policy experts, having staff who understand the policy process enables interest organisations to implement effective advocacy strategies and provide decision-makers with the information they need. It is staff with previous experience in the public sector that has accumulated such process-oriented expertise.

In sum, while policy expertise is important for managing complex technical aspects of a specific policy issue, process-oriented expertise is an additional asset that reduces the uncertainty of the policy process and can translate into tangible political opportunities for certain types of interest organisations. Below, we argue that, specifically in the EU, uncertainty has risen over time, intensifying the need for process-oriented expertise, and creating conditions under which certain types of interest groups have an increased propensity to employ staff with public sector experience.

## 4.3 The Relevance Of Process-Oriented Expertise in the EU

The EU and the US political systems are considered to be similar because they both strongly depend on the input of societal organisations (Mahoney, 2007; Mahoney & Baumgartner, 2008). Yet, the systems also differ. In the US, the increase of revolving door cases has been associated with a decline in access points to the government (LaPira & Thomas, 2017). The increased impenetrability of the government and the increased unpredictability of the policy process have spurred interest organisations to value *process-oriented expertise* as equally crucial as, or even more important than, *policy expertise* and hence to adapt their hiring strategies accordingly (Lazarus & McKay, 2012).

At first glance, the EU renders process-based expertise less necessary as its profound multilevel character implies a profound fragmentation of access points for interest organisations (Eising, 2007). Moreover,

initiatives such as the *White Paper on European Governance* have stimulated policymakers to consult with organised interests (Kohler-Koch & Finke, 2007), while the limited number of EC staff triggers frequent consultations with interest groups (Crombez, 2002). Finally, the EU partially relies on interest groups to increase its input and output legitimacy (Coen & Katsaitis, 2013; Scharpf, 2009). All this seems to make European Interest organisations less prone to seek process-oriented knowledge through revolving door practices. However, other conditions of the opportunity structure increased uncertainty and complexity and therefore direct interest groups to highly value process-oriented expertise.

First, the 2004/7 enlargement substantially increased the scope of EU regulations and opened policy networks to more actors (Mahoney, 2007). Second, the Lisbon Treaty has created more complexity by allocating power across more policy venues, making it more difficult for interest organisations to identify the locus of power and to anticipate policy initiatives (Eising, 2007; Grande, 1996). As a result, interest groups increasingly need to invest substantial resources in monitoring decision-making processes. Process-oriented expertise is more crucial under circumstances of such an unpredictable policy agenda: organisations with insider knowledge and procedural expertise are more likely to be informed about the policy options at stake. More importantly, such organisations can act faster, which increases their chance to swiftly translate investment in monitoring into political opportunities. In doing so, those organisations may have more access as they become more effective in providing valuable information to policymakers.

In short, we argue that more complexity leads to higher uncertainty of the policy agenda, which triggers the need for process-oriented expertise that can be acquired by hiring staff from the public sector. However, policy complexity and uncertainty do not affect interest groups in a uniform way as organisations have divergent needs and capacity to employ personnel with public sector experience.

In the following, we start from the assumption that former public sector officials have strong credentials when it comes to process-oriented expertise. We are aware that the reasons for hiring former politicians and former civil servants may differ. Yet, we argue that both types of background, compared with other experiences, provide more process-oriented expertise. In the next section, we examine the conditions that shape the variation in hiring such public officials by interest organisations.

## 4.4 Factors Determining Revolving Door Practices

Our theoretical framework connects interest groups' varying needs to hire from the public sector with organisational and contextual factors. We argue that (1) resource endowment, (2) group type, (3) degree of political engagement, and (4) degree of perceived complexity of the policy process affects the need for process-oriented expertise and are key factors to explain the propensity to hire from the public sector.

To begin, there are several reasons to expect that a high degree of resource endowment is associated with hiring professionals with public sector backgrounds. First, organisational studies have shown that human resource diversification maximises organisational effectiveness (Mueller, 1996). Thus, when an organisation increases its budget, one of the first steps is to enlarge and diversify its staff resources. This also applies to interest organisations in the process of building political capabilities. Organisations with higher budgets have fewer constraints in hiring and selecting experts, including former public officials. Second, monitoring the political process requires substantial resources, which might not immediately translate into lobbying success. Continuous monitoring is essential to reduce the uncertainty of the environment in which organisations operate and is more likely to be adopted by resourceful organisations (Klüver, 2012). We argue that organisations that have financial means and allocate their budget to enlarge their

paid staff, will be more likely to target employees with experience in the public sector who can provide them with additional process-oriented expertise.

In addition, interest organisations with large financial capacities are attractive employers for public sector officials, since they will offer better job conditions. In this respect, the US literature has shown that former public officials generate rent from their public sector experience (Bertrand et al., 2014; Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012; McCrain, 2018). Salaries for EU public servants are competitive and often supplemented with additional allowances, benefits, and fiscal deductions (Brans & Peters, 2012). In other words, the financial incentives of private actors must be substantial to compete with the lucrative perspective of a career in the European civil service. We therefore hypothesise:

*H1: Organisations with more financial capacities are more likely to hire staff with public sector backgrounds.*

Second, we argue that the propensity to access process-oriented expertise by hiring employees with public sector experience depends on group type. In line with current literature, we differentiate between business, professional and citizen groups (Eising, 2004; Klüver, 2013; Weiler et al., 2019). Among these actors we identify citizen groups as the actors which could benefit more from process-oriented expertise as they might face more challenges in reducing risks associated with the EU policy process (LaPira & Thomas, 2017).

Business and professional organisations have been crucial in establishing the internal market. EU institutions have since long involved business groups and professional organisations more frequently than organisations such as citizen groups (Bouwen, 2004; Coen & Katsaitis, 2013; Rasmussen & Carroll, 2014; Sandholtz & Zysman, 1989). As business and professional organisations are so well connected, they have been able to accumulate substantial process- oriented expertise over a long period of time. Furthermore, compared to citizen groups, they

tend to hire more often consultancies – who might also have acquired process-oriented expertise - to manage their lobbying activities (Huwyler, 2020). Because of all this, business organisations may be less inclined to hire staff from the public sector.

Things play differently for citizen organisations which – for a long time – have been weakly represented in EU decision-making (Rasmussen & Carroll, 2014). In fact, to balance their strong reliance on business groups, European institutions have fostered citizen groups' engagement and participation by financing them (Mahoney & Beckstrand, 2011). Many citizen organisations are relative newcomers to the EU system and face challenges in building networks, which is essential for accessing policymakers (Coen, 2007; Coen & Richardson, 2009). Additionally, citizen groups must learn to work with public officials who expect interest organisations to possess 'policy credibility', which is assessed by the efficiency and quality in the provision of information (Coen & Vannoni, 2018). To build such effective political capabilities, citizen groups may rely on attracting process-oriented expertise. We therefore expect that citizen groups are more prone to recruit staff with public sector experience. We also suppose that financial capabilities affect the hiring behaviour of citizen and business organisations differently. As citizen organisations face maintenance pressure (Berkhout et al., 2021), when they have substantial financial resources, they can decrease the gap with business and professional groups and reduce risks associated with the EU policy process, by acquiring process-oriented expertise. Hence:

*H2: Compared to professional and business groups, citizen groups are more likely to hire from the public sector.*

*H3: Compared to business and professional groups, citizen groups are more likely to hire from the public sector when their level of financial resources increases.*

Third, we argue that the degree of an organisation's involvement with EU institutions affects their propensity to hire from the public sector.

We define involvement as the extent to which organisations engage in 'inside' lobbying with EU institutions, such as participating in open consultations, attending expert committees, and providing written evidence to policymakers (Halpin & Fraussen, 2017). Organisations vary regarding the extent to which they establish such regular and formalised relations with policymakers (Beyers, 2004; Binderkrantz, 2005; Fraussen et al., 2015). We argue that the degree of involvement in inside strategies shapes the inclination to hire from the public sector as organisations that engage in inside strategies have a greater need to understand the ins and outs of the policy process. Such understanding is provided by staff who worked for the European institutions. This type of employee plans for and works towards long-term outcomes, such as building trustworthy relationships with policymakers (Broscheid & Coen, 2003). Second, organisations that engage in inside strategies benefit from aiding like-minded legislators in doing their work. In the EU context, this means being able to subsidise policymakers promptly and effectively with information (Chalmers, 2013). Hiring staff with a public sector background helps organisations since experience of such staff of being lobbied helps them gain a better sense of when to lobby whom and what information to deliver. Based on these arguments, we formulate the following hypothesis:

*H4: The more frequently organisations engage with European institutions, the more likely they are to hire staff with public sector backgrounds.*

Finally, we expect that the extent to which interest organisations hire from the public sector depends on the degree of perceived complexity of the political environment. All organisations adapt their strategies to the political environment in which they operate (Mahoney & Baumgartner, 2008). The EU's multilevel nature (Eising, 2004; Nugent & Saurugger, 2002; Pollack, 1997) and the extensive issue overlap between policy venues (Ackrill et al., 2013) make the political environment very complex, generating high levels of uncertainty for interest organisations. In this context, interest organisations struggle to select lobby venues (Grande,

1996) and to assess the timing of lobbying (Chalmers, 2013). We argue that organisations vary in the way they perceive the complexity of the policy environment, and that this variation can affect their inclination to seek process-oriented expertise. Organisations which perceive the policy environment as complex are more likely to rely on employees who can understand how the timing and provision of information functions across policy venues. Hence, our final hypothesis:

*H5: Organisations that perceive a high degree of complexity of the EU decision-making process hire more frequently from the public sector.*

## 4.5 Data and Methods

To study the propensity to hire from the public sector, we use data from the CIG-survey that was implemented in a sample of EU-level interest organisations which are defined as organisations that aim to influence public policy, do not seek elections, and are formally or informally member based. The survey was designed to explore the organisational design, demographics, resources, strategies, levels of institutionalisation, and political activities of member-based interest organisations. Data collection occurred between March and July 2015. More than 2,000 organisations were selected from the EU TR, the OECKL Directory and the INTEREURO project. The survey resulted in a dataset of 896 interest organisations, a response rate of 36% (Beyers et al., 2020).[15] The sample includes organisations that declared to have full-time paid employees and external professionals, as well as organisations which rely on interns and volunteers. The category of organisations without paid staff represents only 13% (N=123) of the original dataset (N=896) and is fairly distributed across group type (see Appendix figure B1). In addition, we do not include groups representing institutions (N=90), as we are interested in the hiring behaviour of private organisations. After removing all missing values, we obtained a sample of 516 observations.

[15] Information about the survey is available at https://www.cigsurvey.eu/data/.

Our dependent variable is the work experience of staff, measured by the following survey questions: '*What are the typical backgrounds of your paid staff members? Please tick all boxes that apply*'. The items capture the variation of employees' backgrounds across interest organisations. The quality and strength of this measurement are indicated by the fact that the selected items cover the relevant staff profiles, while the response categories 'Other' (12%) and 'I do not know' (3%) are relatively small. To provide a general description of hiring patterns, items were grouped into five categories. We collapsed highly correlated items.[16]

Table 1 shows staff backgrounds for responding organisations. Although the observed variation shows that EU-level interest organisations hire from various backgrounds, professionals with backgrounds in the private sector are the most prevalent. Yet, the descriptive analysis also shows that professionals with backgrounds in the public sector are more prevalent than those with backgrounds in the non-profit sector. Our aim is to explain the varying hiring strategies of interest organisations and identify which factors increase the propensity to hire staff with public sector backgrounds.

We constructed the dependent variable by treating the item 'public sector background' as a dichotomous categorical variable: possessing staff with public sector backgrounds (N=189) and not possessing staff with public sector backgrounds (N=327).17

Although we are aware of the cognitive bias which self-reported measures can generate, survey data on staff backgrounds allow to capture hiring preferences of a wide range of EU interest organisations as it captures all types of previous public sector experiences for a large sample. Contrary to career background data, this measurement does not provide information about the type and the duration of public sector experience. Additionally, there is a tension between explaining the composition of staff and whether groups have any staff members with a past in the public sector. Our measure does not provide information

[16] Steps were taken by analysing the polychronic correlation matrix (see Appendix Table B2).

[17] We ran two models without the categories 'Background in Party Politics', which constitute just the 7% of our sample. Results were consistent with the chosen models (see Appendix B table B6).

about the share of staff with a public sector background within organisations. While the latter is not necessary for our aim to determine the extent to which organisations hire from the public sector, the scope of our data needs to be considered when interpreting the results.

## Table 4. Classification and Distribution of Typical Staff Background (N= 516)

| STAFF BACKGROUND | DESCRIPTION | FREQUENCIES | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Private Sector Background** | Private sector and business organisations | 279 | 54% |
| **Public Sector Background** | Governmental agency or party politics | 189 | 36% |
| **Non-Profit Background** | Voluntary organisation and/ or charity | 172 | 33% |
| **Research Background** | Research institute, think tank or higher education | 166 | 32% |
| **First Job** | No previous background | 120 | 23% |

We expect that financial capacity, group type, degree of involvement, and perceived complexity of decision-making process affect the propensity to hire from the public sector. Financial capacity is measured using annual operating budgets, based on the question, 'What was the annual operating budget of your organisation in 2013 in Euros?'. We coded this variable into three categories indicating whether the annual operating budget is below (N=149), equal to (N=191), or above (N=176) the median category. We categorised organisations with more financial capabilities versus organisations with less, as the latter face more challenges to invest in hiring professionals and engaging in lobbying activities.

To measure group type, we classified organisations into four main categories: business organisations (N=251), professionals (N=74),

citizen organisations (N=159) and other (N =32). This classification distinguishes between organisations that represent business or professions from those that represent citizens (see Appendix Table B2; see Grömping & Halpin, 2019; Heylen et al., 2018, 2020; Fraussen & Halpin, 2016 for similar classifications of group type).

The degree of political involvement concerns the extent to which interest organisations actively engage in insider strategies with EU public policymaking. This is measured with the question, 'During the last 12 months, how often has your organisation been involved in any of the following activities?' Respondents were presented a list of seven activities. Based on their responses, we constructed an index measuring the frequency with which organisations selected the following options: (1) 'responded to open consultations organised by the EC', (2) 'served on advisory committees at the EU level', and (3) 'presented research results or technical information to EU-level policymakers' (Cronbach's alpha=0.73).

To measure the perceived complexity of the decision-making process, the following question was used: 'How important are the following challenges for your organisation?'. Respondents were presented with a list of nine potential challenges. We selected the item 'The complexity of the decision-making procedures in the EU' (Likert scale). The variable was coded in three categories, measuring organisations' perception of the policy environment as equal ('important', N=341), below ('neutral', 'not important', and 'not important at all', N=214), or above ('very important', N=161) the median category.

In addition to the four hypotheses, we introduced several control variables: the age of the organisation and its breadth of policy engagement as these characteristics contribute to lobbying success (Beyers & Braun, 2014; Braun, 2012) and can affect propensity to hire from the public sector. Age captures variation between organisations which are more established and have accumulated reputation, credibility, and network position overtime. To control for age, we used the question, 'In what year

was your organisation founded?'. The distribution of this variable is left skewed, so we logarithmically transformed the measurement.

We further control for breadth of policy engagement, measured by the number of policy areas in which organisations are involved It is plausible that organisations involved in multiple policy domains face higher levels of uncertainty and struggle more to anticipate government actions than organisations working in only one or two policy domains. We constructed a single additive scale variable from a list of 21 policy areas. Appendix A11 outlines the summary statistics of the variables included in the models.

Due to the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable, our hypotheses were tested via a logistic regression model. In a robustness check for the measurement of resources we replaced annual operating budget with number of employees. Additionally, we conducted a parallel analysis using different staff background categories as dependent variable. We compared the different factors affecting the propensity to hire from private, non-profit and research sectors. In Appendix B table B3 we present the summary statistics for the variables not introduced in the main models.

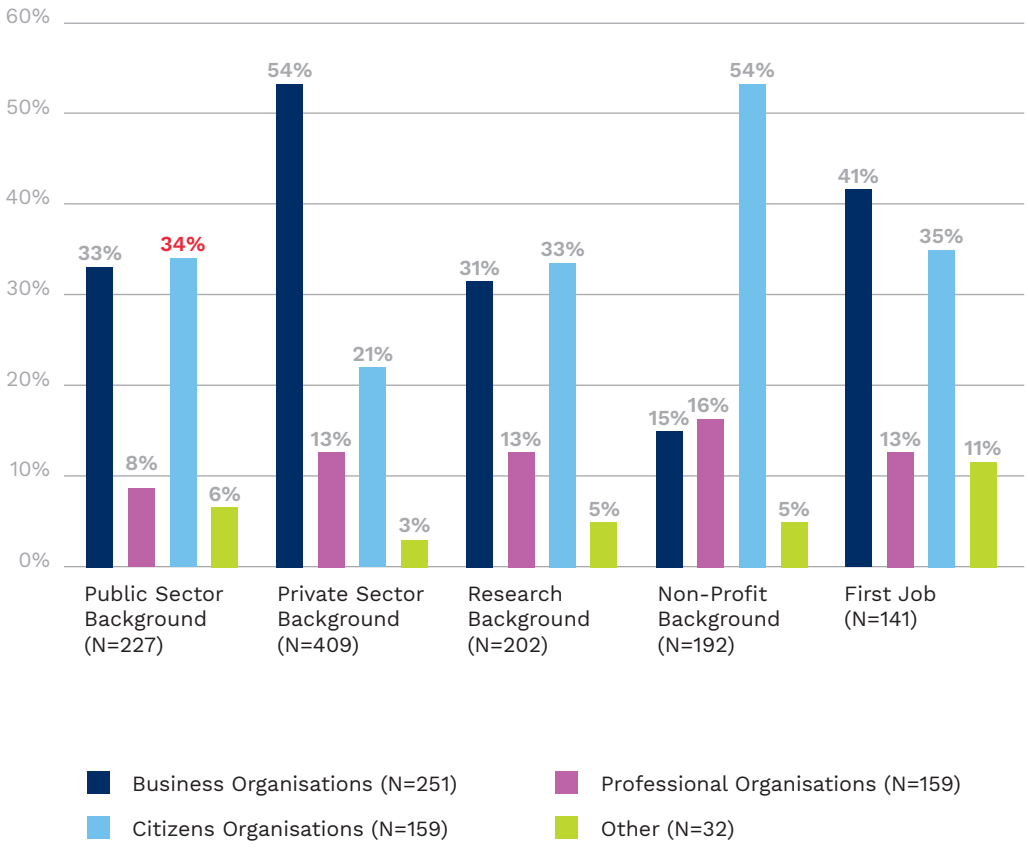
## 4.6 Results

The sample contains more business organisations than citizen groups, which reflects the existing strong presence of business organisations in the EU system of interest representation (Coen & Richardson, 2009; Greenwood, 2017; Rasmussen & Carroll, 2014). Figure 1 shows substantial variation in the hiring behaviour by business and citizen organisations. Of the 227 organisations declaring to hire employees with public sector background, 33% are business organisations, while 34% are citizen groups. In relative terms, this result shows that over 159 citizens groups almost 50% declares to hire from the public sector. The significant

difference between the hiring behaviour of different types of interest organisations ($X^2$=140.274, p<.05, df=5) invites an exploration of the conditions under which interest organisations decide to hire from the public sector.

Table 2 presents the results of the logistic regression. To facilitate the interpretation of the interaction term, continuous variables were standardised by subtracting the mean and dividing it by two times the standard deviation (Gelman, 2008). Moving one unit of analysis of the continuous variable corresponds to one standard deviation below the mean to one standard deviation above the mean.

## Figure 2. Distribution of Type of Organisations across Typical Employees Career Backgrounds (N = 516)



Model 1 suggests a strong and significant positive relationship between resource endowment and the propensity to hire from the public sector. Organisations with annual budgets above the average are almost three times more likely to have staff with public sector backgrounds, compared to organisations with annual budgets at the average (Model 1: b=0.95, SE=0.28, odds ratio=2.59, p<.0). Financial resources enable interest organisations to access process-oriented expertise from the public sector, confirming our first hypothesis. Yet, we acknowledge that the effect of resources might reflect that less resourceful groups have fewer employees of any kind. In this regard our findings might suggest that organisations which cannot or do not want to allocate budget to paid employees have less access to process-oriented expertise and, more broadly, to expert knowledge. Replacing 'annual operating budget' with 'staff size' gives us the same results (see Appendix A15).

Moving on to the second hypothesis, Model 1 demonstrates a significant positive relationship between group type and hiring strategies: citizen groups are more likely to hire employees with public sector backgrounds. The odds ratio provides an indication of the size of the effect: citizen organisations are over two times more likely to have staff with public sector backgrounds, compared to business and professional organisations (Model 1: b=0.82, SE=0.23, odds ratio=2.28, p<.0). This finding challenges the general belief that revolving door practices are not a strategy of non-profit organisations and confirms the second hypothesis. We also observe a significant positive relation between the category "Other" and propensity to hire from the public sector. This less strong effect might be driven by the presence of lobbying firms in the latter category (see Appendix A10).

Model 2 adds the interaction term between resources and group type. The relationships between citizen groups and propensity to hire from the public sector it is moderated by resource endowment. The factor 'being a citizen group' has a significant association with 'median level of resources' (b= .87, SE=0.59, odds ratio=6.55 p<.05), (Figure 2). The curvilinear interaction effect shows that the effect of group type

on the propensity to hire from the public sector holds for the median category, while it does not hold for the higher category.

Citizen groups appear more resources-sensitive when hiring professionals from the public sector: their propensity to do so decreases substantially when their annual budget drops below the average. We can thus confirm our third hypothesis, which states that citizen groups are more prone to hire from the public sector at higher level of resources. One interpretation of this finding is that the demand for public sector expertise is high for citizen groups, but it can be satisfied just at a certain level of financial capacity. A second interpretation of the curvilinear interaction effect relates to our theoretical understanding of revolving door as a form of political insurance. At the median level of resources citizen groups engage in strategic hiring preferences in the attempt to reduce risks associated with the policy process (LaPira & Thomas, 2017).

Another thing to consider is that the citizen groups in the sample are particularly resourceful (see Appendix B figure B2). Thus, this effect could be the product of the fact that EU citizen groups receive substantial financial support from the EU. Hence, financial support from the EU could affect the revolving door practices of citizen groups, thereby explaining this important – and still specific to the EU context – finding.

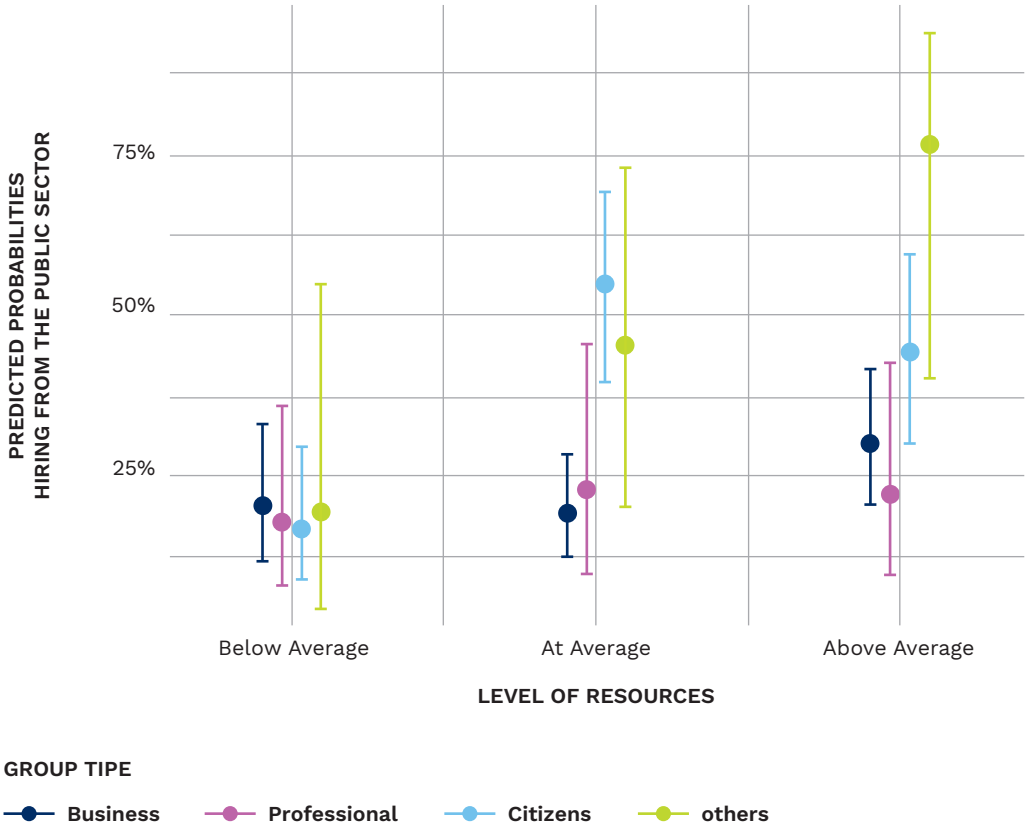
# Table 5. Logistic Regression Model estimating Propensity to Hire from the Public Sector (N = 516)

| | DIRECT EFFECT MODEL 1 | ODDS RATIO | INTERACTIONS EFFECT MODEL 2 | ODDS RATIO |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INDEPENDENT VARIABLES** | | | | |
| **Resources** (1= below the average, ref.) | | | | |
| 2 = at the average | 0.72 (0.26) ** | **2.07** | -0.07(0.33) | **0.98** |
| 3 = above the average | 0.96 (0.28) *** | **2.61** | 0.51 (0.40) | **1.67** |
| **Group Type** (1 = Business org., ref.) | | | | |
| 2 = Professionals | - 0.03 (0.28) | **0.96** | - 0.16 (0.56) | **0.85** |
| 3 = Citizens | 0.02 (0.23) *** | **2.27** | - 0.25 (0.47) - | **0.77** |
| 4 = Other | 0.67 (0.38) ** | **3.25** | 0.05 (0.87) | **0.94** |
| **Index Degree of Involvement** | | | | |
| **Perceived Complexity** (1 = average, Ref.) | 0.09 (0.04) * | **1.10** | 0.10 (0.04) * | **1.10** |
| 2 = below the average | 0.54 (0.23) * | **1.72** | 0.58 (0.23) * | **1.80** |
| 3 = above the average | 0.68 (0.24) ** | **1.98** | 0.66 (0.25) ** | **1.95** |
| **CONTROL** | | | | |
| **Index Breadth of Policy Engagement Age** | 0.07 (0.03) * | **1.07** | 0.09 (0.03) * | **1.08** |
| **Organisations** (log) | - 0.05 (0.10) | **0.94** | - 0.09 (0.11) | **0.90** |
| Interaction Group Type X Level of Resources | | | | |
| Professionals x Av. Level of Resources | | | 0.38 (0.78) | **1.46** |
| Professionals x High Level of Resources | | | -0.25 (0.77) | **0.77** |
| Citizens x Av. Level of Resources | | | 1.87 (0.059) | **6.55** |
| Citizens x High Level of Resources | | | ** 0.86 (0.59) | **2.37** |
| Other x Av. Level of Resources | | | 1.29 (1.08) 2.08 | **3.66** |
| Other x High Level of Resources | | | (1.20) † | **8.04** |
| **Constant** | -1.86 (0.27) *** | | -1.35 (0.33) *** | |
| Observations | 516 | | 516 | |
| Log Likelihood | -304.2523 | | -268.6749 | |
| AIC | 570.77 | | 571.33 | |
| BIC | 677.2119 | | 639.2046 | |
| McFadden | 0.10 | | 0.12 | |

Notes: (1) standard errors between brackets; cp<1*, p<0.05 **, p<0.01 ***, p<0.0001; (2) VIF-scores are below 4, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a problem; (3) Correlation matrix of the explanatory and control variables is provided in the Appendix B table B4.

Our models point to other contextual factors affecting this hiring behaviour. An increase in the degree of political involvement in inside lobbying of two standard deviations is associated with an increase of odds of hiring from the public sector (Model 2: b=0.09, SE=0.04, odds ratio=1.10, p<.05). Moving from two standard deviations below the mean to one standard deviation above the mean increases the odds of hiring from the public sector by 11%. As expected, propensity to hire employees with a public sector background increases when organisations need to effectively subsidise policymakers with policy expertise. Our evidence suggests that organisations consistently investing in inside lobbying with EU institutions are those that highly value process-based expertise. This confirms our fourth hypothesis.

## Figure 3. Predicted Probabilities by Level of Resources and Group Type (95% CI)



Finally, we observe a significant relation between perceiving the EU decision-making process as complex and hiring from the public sector. Interest organisations which perceive the EU decision-making as highly complex are more likely to have staff with public sector backgrounds, compared to the median interest group, for which complexity is important (Model 2: b=-0.68 SE=0.24, odds ratio= 1.98, p<.01). This finding corroborates existing knowledge demonstrating that organisations adapt to the environment in which they operate (Mahoney & Baumgartner, 2008). When organisations perceive the complexity of public policymaking as challenging, they rely more on employees with a public sector background. This points at the theoretical understanding that the revolving door is driven by challenges organisations face. In other words when organisations see more risks, they take insurance measures, through hiring strategies (LaPira & Thomas, 2017).

The findings of both models are robust to a series of changes in operationalisation. First, they are not driven by staff size, which are conditioned by resources. Replacing 'annual operating budget' with 'staff size' (logged) gives us the same results as the coefficient for number of employees is positive and statistically significant in both models (see Appendix B table B5). In addition, we conducted parallel analyses of the different staff categories and compared the factors affecting propensity to hire from private, non-profit and research sectors (see Appendix B table B7), only to show that group type and resources do drive propensity to hire from other sectors: while citizen groups' propensity to hire from the public sector is driven by the availability of financial resources, we do not see resources being a driving factor for other group type, selecting alternative backgrounds.

## 4.7 Conclusions

This study develops a theoretical approach to shed light on the conditions under which interest organisations are more likely to hire employees with a public sector background. Specifically, we studied which organisational and contextual factors affect the propensity to hire from the public sector. Our findings inform us about the extent to which interest organisations are involved in revolving door practices.

Our analysis showed variation regarding the extent to which organisations select employees with a public sector background. We identified several variables that affect the propensity to hire from the public sector. First, we observed the explanatory power of resources, confirming that money is a driving factor for revolving door practices, as it is for hiring in general. Second, employees of citizen groups are more likely to possess previous experience in the public sector than employees of professional and business organisations. Yet, financial capacities interact with interest organisations' behaviour differently. Citizen groups are more likely to hire from the public sector when they have substantial financial capacities.

We also showed that when organisations are more involved in insider lobbying activities, they are more likely to hire from the public sector. While we cannot rule out reverse causation, this finding suggests that repeated and formal interaction between policymakers and interest group representatives might favour revolving door practices. Finally, we demonstrated that when organisations perceive EU decision-making as complex, they tend to have more staff with public sector backgrounds. This finding suggests that interest organisations may select human resources from the public sector based on challenges they believe to face in the policy environment. One possible explanation is that hiring human resources from the public sector is more common for organisations which face more uncertainty. This might be the case of citizen organisations which struggle more in accessing the policymaking.

It is plausible that these types of organisations have a good understanding of the value of process-oriented expertise.

Our findings need to be confronted with some limitations related to the research design. First, the study looked at the conditions under which organisations pull human resources from the public sector, not at their ability to hire (e.g., the availability of expertise in the public sector). Further studies could examine to what extent the supply of public sector experience in the labour market meets the demand of organised interests and how this may shape hiring processes. Second, our data do not allow to tap into the question which type of experience in the public sector may be relevant for organised interests (e.g., the position covered in the public sector, the weight of non-EU related experiences in the public sector). Further research should develop a better understanding about the different types of public sector experience and disentangle the extent to which the revolving door is about political connections and process-oriented expertise. This may be done by integrating organisational data with career backgrounds data. Finally, we are aware that possible omitted variables related to group characteristics could influence the outcome variable 'propensity to hire from the public sector". For instance, hiring behaviour can be triggered by how organisations are internally structured (i.e., degree of professionalization, membership influence).

Despite some limitations related to the research design, the empirical findings have implications for our understanding of revolving door dynamics in the EU system of representation. We added a perspective from the broader population of interest organisations and provided a better understanding of the conditions spurring them to prefer to hire from the public sector. We showed that revolving dynamics are not so limited across interest organisations. This complements recent studies which have found that politically active firms in Brussels exhibit limited exchange of personnel with the public sector (Coen & Vannoni, 2016).

Additionally, while our findings suggest that under specific circu-

mstancesinterest organisations value employees with experience in the public sector, they only constitute a first step towards a deeper understanding of whether hiring from the public sector provides interest organisations additional access goods to satisfy the demand of information of policymakers. Indirectly, we speak to recent scholarship studying how organisational attributes facilitate access to policy venues (Albareda & Braun, 2019; Binderkrantz, 2005). We therefore suggest future research to probe into how the selection of staff by organised interests can facilitate the effective transmission of information to policymakers and policy success.

# 5.0 EMPIRICAL CHAPTER 3

## *The Revolving Door and Access to the European Commission: Does the Logic of Influence Prevail?*

This paper analyses to what extent and under which conditions revolving door practices relate to access to the EC. The revolving door hypothesis is analyzed by combining two data sources: a dataset with publicly available records about the meetings between interest organisations and senior EC officials and evidence collected through the CIG-survey. It is especially in professionalized organisations, where staff and organisational leadership dominate, that we observe a significant positive relationship between revolving door practices and access. In contrast, the extent to which the membership decides on political positioning and advocacy strategies has no impact on the relation between revolving door and access. These results show that the revolving door is primarily connected with a logic of influence, implying that revolvers are especially advantageous for professionalized organisations.

*Article co-authored with Prof. Jan Beyers and published in Journal of Common Market Studies (JCMS).*

## 5.1 Introduction

Access is generally considered one of the most crucial currencies in interest group politics. From an interest group perspective, obtaining access to the decision-making process is often seen as a precondition of political influence (Binderkrantz et al., 2017; Bouwen, 2002; Eising, 2007). From a policymaker's perspective, organized interests provide helpful information in exchange for access to the decision-making process. Hence, interest representation depends crucially on the ability and the opportunity to access policymakers. These capabilities, and the propensity to gain access, are not only relevant at the micro-level, but they also affect the general structure of systems of interest representation. The overall access pattern produces a bifurcation between insiders and outsiders, whereby political institutions and government agencies recognize insiders as relevant players (Halpin and Fraussen, 2017; Maloney et al., 1994).

This paper aims to shed light on how the revolving door, the hiring of former public officials by organized interests (La Pira and Thomas, 2014), shapes the "insiderness" (Maloney et al., 1994; Fraussen et al., 2015), measured as the extent to which groups obtain access. Most scholarship on the revolving door presumes that hiring staff from the public sector impacts access positively. Various explanations have been put forward. One explanation emphasizes the *value of relational capital* and argues that organized interests which hire from the public sector enjoy more access as their staff can exploit previous political connections and ties with policymakers (Blanes I Vidal et al., 2012; Bertrand et al., 2014; McCrain, 2018). This perspective views the revolving door as an instrument through which wealthy interests gain access. Another explanatory perspective emphasizes the *value of human capital* (Coen and Vannoni, 2016; La Pira and Thomas, 2017; Shepherd and Young, 2020). While the relational perspective has a strong *quid pro quo nature* and stresses the immediate value of revolvers, the human capital perspective is more nuanced. It argues that organized interests which hire from

the public sector do not buy networks in exchange for access but seek staff to strengthen their political capabilities. Namely, by hiring former public officials, organisations acquire skills, resources, and competencies, which are valuable assets to influence public policy. These skills include political intelligence and knowledge about the internal dynamics of public institutions, which makes groups more capable to strategize on the best way to reach common objectives with policymakers and performing a role as legislative allies (Hall and Deardorff, 2006).

Although both approaches are not mutually exclusive, our account fits more into the human capital perspective. We argue that the nexus between access and the revolving door should be analysed within a broader perspective that accounts for how organized interests professionalize, structure their advocacy efforts, and manage their connections with the constituency they aim to represent. By delving into these connections, we demonstrate that hiring revolvers correlates with an increased political capacity and, consequently, affects the propensity to gain access. More specifically, we ask the following question: to *what extent and under which conditions do revolving door practices facilitate access to the EC*? Theoretically, we draw from organisational studies and, more specifically, use the concept of *organisational social capital*, defined as a resource reflecting the type of social relations an organisation seeks to build and maintain (Leana III and Van Buren, 1999). Based on this perspective, hiring from the public sector and professionalization are mechanisms through which organisations seek to improve their social capital. One typical challenge for the social capital view is that organized interests play in multiple arenas. On the one hand, they seek to build and maintain relations with their constituency, members, and supporters (*the logic of membership*). On the other hand, they seek to interact with policymakers and influence public policy (*the logic of influence*) (Schmitter and Streeck, 1999[1982]). There might be tension between both objectives. For instance, groups with access are tempted to seek political compromises to maintain their insider status. The resulting moderation may conflict with some outspoken or radical views that might prevail among key parts of the group membership.

Given that we analyze organized interests, we need to consider how hiring from the public sector varies across organisations and how this fits with the logic of membership (membership involvement) or the logic of influence (seeking and gaining access to policymakers). To put it differently, we expect that the revolving door affects access but that this relationship is conditional on which logic prevails in interest organisations.

Our overarching hypothesis is that revolving door practices affect the propensity to gain access to the EC. This hypothesis is analyzed by combining two data sources: (1) a dataset with publicly available records about the meetings between interest organisations and senior EC.

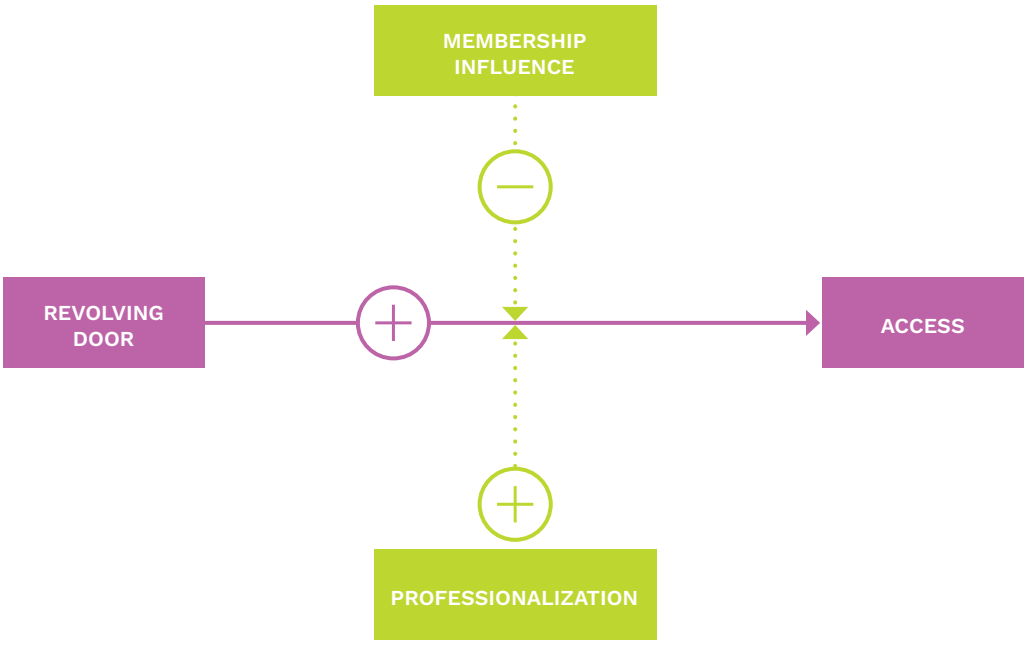
## 5.2 The Revolving Door, Membership Influence, and Professionalization

Access is usually defined as an instance when a group has entered a political arena (parliament, administration, or media), passing a threshold controlled by relevant gatekeepers (politicians, civil servants, or journalists) (Binderkrantz et al., 2017). This interaction is typically conceptualized as an exchange relation whereby interest organisations supply political information and technical expertise to policymakers, and, in return, they gain access to the policymaking process. Access is generally understood as key resource interest organisations strive for; many scholars see it as a precondition for influence and a vital instrument to monitor the policymaking process (Austen-Smith, 1992; De Bruycker, 2016). In the context of the EU, access is predominantly motivated by a policy capacity. Namely, it is usually related to the fact that EU institutions are weakly staffed and lack expertise and information on most policy issues they seek to address (Greenwood et al., 1992; Bouwen, 2002; Klüver, 2013). Thus, interest organisations need to provide policymakers with sector-based policy expertise and political information (Bouwen, 2002; Braun, 2012; Eising, 2007; Klüver, 2013).

However, generating such expertise and supplying it to EU policymakers is complex. For instance, EU-level interest organisations are confronted with numerous access points. At the same time, the multiple opportunities provided by European institutions stimulate strong competition among interest groups. Therefore, the ability to access the policymaking process and gain an insider status is related to how groups organize themselves and provide information to policymakers.

Key access goods for the EC are technical and policy-relevant information (Bouwen, 2002; De Bruycker and Beyers, 2019; Albareda, 2020). The ability to supply these goods increases if organisations possess expertise such as process knowledge or political intelligence about the EU institutions and how these institutions produce public policy. Such expertise equips interest organisations with skills that make the transmission of information more efficient; it also helps to generate expert knowledge within the organisation. Because hiring from the public sector may improve these capabilities, such hiring is hypothesized to strengthen the likelihood that groups will gain access to policymakers. Nonetheless, the extent to which and how groups gain access can be explained in multiple ways. In this paper, we propose that the revolving door interacts, on the one hand, positively with professionalization and, on the other hand, negatively with the extent to which members shape the lobbying strategies. Figure 1 summarizes the two interaction effects which we discuss below.

## Figure 4. The expected interaction effects for the revolving door predicting access




Much of the recent interest group literature resonates with a general insight from organisation studies, arguing that professionalization should lead to more effectiveness in providing information to policymakers. Highly professionalized organisations seem to be more valuable information providers to policymakers than less professionalized organisations, making the former more successful access-seekers (Berkhout et al., 2018; Klüver, 2012; 2013). In this vein, scholars have shown that organisational capacity is an important predictor of the degree of access organized interests enjoy in administrative and political policy venues (Albareda and Braun, 2019; Albareda, 2018; Halpin, 2014). More specifically, these studies have found that the more organisations control their operational activities (*autonomy*), concentrate power in a limited number of leaders and managers (*centralized structure*), and exhibit an elaborate division of labour (*functional differentiation*), the more effective they are in conveying messages to policymakers. In short, this

shred of the literature shows that organisational capacities increase the likelihood of gaining an insider status.

In essence, professionalization concerns the extent to which interest organisations increasingly delegate decisions to leaders and paid staff (Bolleyer and Correa, 2020). Central to the concept of professionalization is the power of leaders and middle management to decide on policy positions and lobbying strategies (Maloney, 2015). Organisations vary in the extent to which they delegate authority to professionals. For instance, some organisations have staffers who make key decisions, such as hiring staff, designing the political strategy, establishing policy positions, and lobbying policymakers. Other groups might exhibit a substantial organisational capacity (autonomy, centralization, and functional differentiation), but their internal decision- making procedures are less structured (Klüver, 2012). Organisations that delegate more extensively to professionals are expected to have greater control over internal decision-making processes. Also, according to Bolleyer and Correa (2020), organisational leaders and paid staff are more concerned with the effective running of the organisation instead with extensive membership participation. Professionalized organisations are more likely to exploit the opportunities to access policymaking arenas as they have the capability to do so. At the same time, close contact with government agencies, or access, may improve the organisation's capacity. For instance, it may facilitate hiring professionals with a public sector background. The revolving door makes that professionalization and access are two factors that can potentially reinforce each other. Thus, if professionals have a high degree of influence on policy positions and lobbying strategies, they will also be able to exploit the benefits of revolving door practices to gain access.

This paper argues that revolving door practices are not just a matter of exploiting political connections (Bertrand et al., 2014; Blanes i Vidal et al., 2019), but rather that by hiring employees with a public sector background, interest groups are better at accumulating access goods. More precisely, hiring public sector officials strengthens the available

process-oriented expertise (LaPira and Thomas, 2017). Highly professionalized organisations are identified as the type of interlocutor that the EC might find useful and from which they demand technical and policy-related expert information. As organisations are highly professionalized, policymakers are likelier to see them as effective information suppliers. Although we presume a relationship between the revolving door with access, we hypothesize that the revolving door and professionalization interact, with professionalization reinforcing the connection between revolving door and access. While non-professionalized groups gain (on average) less access within the set of professionalized groups, those professionalized groups with revolvers will be more successful than those without "revolvers". Professionalized organisations that hire revolved staffers will be more successful in building policy capacity, which helps them to gain access due to insider knowledge and experience brought in by former public sector officials. Hence, professionalization moderates the relationship between the revolving door and access positively. To summarize:

*H1: Highly professionalized groups hiring from the public sector gain more access than similar organisations not hiring former public sector employees.*

According to the traditional pluralist view, interest groups act as transmission belts between society and policymakers. This transmission gives them a certain degree of legitimacy (e.g., Truman, 1951; for the EU, see also Greenwood, 2007; Kohler-Koch, 2010; Albareda and Braun, 2019). The extent to which groups succeed in fulfilling this intermediary function relates to their ability to involve members. Involving members means that membership preferences and concerns are central to the organisation. If this is the case, the organisation exercises its representative role in a meaningful way, which is something the EU institutions expect from civil society (see also EC, 2001).

However, interest organisations relate to their constituency in various ways, and much of the literature on interest groups portray

membership influence as something that conflicts with professionalization (Albareda, 2018; Albareda, 2020; Berkhout et al., 2021; Klüver and Saurugger, 2013). One of the hypotheses is that interest organisations controlled by their members may lack political sophistication and face more constraints in acting as credible interlocutors in the eyes of policymakers (Greenwood, 2002). In other words, interest organisations might face a trade-off between trying to coordinate efforts and resources to influence the policy process (*the logic of influence*) while at the same time representing their members by transmitting unmediated and authentic member policy positions to policymakers (*the logic of membership*) (Schmitter & Streeck, 1999[1982]). While some recent research has demonstrated that groups might be able to balance a high level of professionalization with strong membership influence, more research is needed to validate this claim (Albareda and Braun, 2019; Binderkrantz, 2009; Gromping and Halpin, 2019).

As discussed before, we associate revolving door practices with a high degree of professionalization. The hiring of professionals, the training, and the management of a team are usually organisational leadership tasks. Members are rarely directly involved in these organisational matters, especially in professionalized organisations. To a varying degree, interest organisations may face a tension between what is required of them in terms of effectiveness (resources and strategies) and what the membership expects in terms of involvement and participation. Hiring professionals from the public sector might be attractive for an organisational leadership that understands the merit of working with policy professionals regarding access and influence. At the same time, a professionalized internal decision-making process might be constrained and slowed down by the demands from an influential membership base, resulting in less access.

Moreover, recent research has demonstrated that stimulating an active membership involvement does not improve access or may even negatively impact access (Albareda, 2020).

Alternatively, when groups substantially involve their members, their ability to supply policymakers with relevant policy information, and hence their access, does not significantly improve. This outcome contradicts the notion that policymakers are mainly interested in the representative role of organized interests, and it does not fit with Schmitter and Streecks's logic of membership (1991).

Consequently, a strong membership influence might burden the interactions of groups with policymakers and constrain their propensity to gain access. Tight connections with government agencies and public officials, for instance, through a revolving door, may trigger scandals and criticism tied to transparency. Based on this reasoning, we expect that a strong membership influence will constrain the propensity to gain access. Organisations with an influential membership base invest less effectively in policy advocacy, which makes hiring former public officials less impactful as the staff of such organisations is expected to invest more resources and time in interactions with the organisational constituency. Note that this proposition presumes a trade-off between membership involvement, on the one hand, and seeking policy influence, on the other hand. Disconfirming this expectation would imply that the trade-off between a logic of influence and a logic of membership might not be that pronounced in the day-to-day operation of EU interest organisations. More specifically, in the case of high membership involvement, organisations may still profit significantly from the revolving door and improve their access. However, if high membership influence decreases the potential benefit of the revolving door, and if our first hypothesis (see above) is confirmed, this would support the importance of the logic of influence. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H2: At a high level of membership influence, hiring from the public sector decreases access, while at a low level of membership influence, hiring from the public sector increases access.*

## 5.3 Research Design

To analyse these hypotheses, we combine data from two sources. First, we rely on data from the CIG-survey, more precisely, evidence collected through a survey (from March 2014 to July 2015) among a wide range of EU-level interest organisations (for details, see Beyers et al., 2021; www.cigsurvey.eu). Second, this data is combined with evidence about direct consultative meetings between interest organisations and the EC (November 2014 to December 2015).[18] For all organisations in the CIG-survey, we checked to what extent they took part in such meetings. Both the survey and the meetings took place in the same time frame, ensuring enough stability in the combined dataset.

The dependent variable, *access*, is a count variable and is operationalized by considering the number of meetings with EC officials in which an interest organisation was involved. The variable ranges from 0 (not involved in any formal meeting) to 46 meetings. Successful groups are those that obtained some access to the EC (access≥1), while excluded groups are those who did not have formal meetings with EC officials (access=0). Of the 896 organisations in the CIG survey dataset, only 31% (n=280) were involved in one of the 1359 meetings organized by the EC officials with one of the organisations in the CIG-survey dataset. This highly concentrated nature of access is also exemplified when looking closer to the distribution within the set of groups that gained some access. In total, we identified 444 instances where a group was involved in at least one or more meetings. On one side of the distribution, we observed that 24 groups (or 3% of the sample) were involved in 353 (or 80%) of all identified meetings. On the other side of the distribution 151 of the 282 (54%) that were involved in meetings took part in just one (n=96) or two meetings (n=55). This skewed distribution lends credit to the notion that access is a scarce good and makes it worth analysing to what extent hiring staff with public sector experience increases the likelihood of accessing the EC.

[18] At the beginning of its mandate, the Juncker Commission passed two decisions aimed at increasing the transparency of its interaction with interest organizations. Since November 2014, these decisions require Commissioners, their cabinet members and Directors-General to publish the meetings they have with interest organisations. The disclosed information includes the name of the policymaker, organisations that policymakers have met, the date of the meeting, and the subject of their discussion.

The revolving door - *hiring from the public sector* - is our key explanatory variable. It was measured by the following survey question: 'What are the typical backgrounds of your paid staff members? Please tick all boxes that apply'. The responses capture the variation of employees' backgrounds across organized interests. In the European context, we define the public sector as including all officials who work for one of the EU institutions or member state government agencies and ministries. This involves civil servants of the DGs of the EC, cabinet officials of Commissioners, civil servants in the EP, staff employed by MEPs or EU-level political parties, officials working for various EU agencies, or civil servants aligned with the Council secretariat. We distinguish between organisations (1) not recruiting from political parties and/or government agencies and (2) those recruiting revolving door professionals. Of the 896 cases in the dataset, we have valid data on staff resources for 746 cases, and of these, 40% (n=302) hired staff with a public sector background (for a similar operationalization, see Belli and Bursens 2021). We acknowledge that this is a rough operationalization. It does not account for how many former public sector employees are hired or for their seniority, nor does it cover the extent to which staff moves in and out of public and private sector jobs repeatedly (Chalmers et al., 2021). However, the fact that many groups hire staff with a public sector background suggests that experiences obtained in the public sector seem to be an asset for interest organisations.

The other two key independent variables, *professionalization*, and membership influence are measured as follows. To begin with, we operationalize professionalization by considering the degree to which professionals exert influence on the group's advocacy strategies and policy positions. We used the following questions: (1) '*Thinking about your organisation's position on EU policies, how would you rate the influence of the following actors*?' and (2) '*Thinking about your organisation's decisions on advocacy and lobbying tactics, how would you rate the relative influence of the following actors?*'. Respondents were presented with five categories (1='very influential', 2='somewhat influential', 3='not very influential', 4='not at all influential', 5='not applicable'). We re-arranged

these categories so that a high score, instead of a low score, refers to more influence, and the category 'not applicable' was coded as a missing value. More specifically, we used the influence assessment of the 'executive director' and the 'professional staff' to create an index for professional influence, which ranges from 1 to 16 ($\bar{x} = 11.12$, $\sigma = 3.88$). Next, we used the same survey questions for measuring membership influence. More specifically, we combined the extent to which members or donors influence 'advocacy strategies' and 'policy positions'. As influencing positions and strategies are highly correlated ($r = .78$), we combined both indicators in one index. This index ranges from 1 to 8, whereby a high score refers to a higher level of membership influence ($\bar{x}$=4.50,$\sigma$=2.13). Finally, to ease the comparability and interpretation of the parameter estimates, we normalized our variables through a min-max scaling, using the formula $x! = (x - x_{min})/(x_{max} - x_{min})$, whereby x' is the scaled value in an [0-1]-interval. This scaling changes the range of the measurements, but not the shape of the distribution so that substantive results of the analyses remain unchanged.

## Table 6. Descriptive statistics: overview of dependent, independent, and control variables

| | $\bar{x}$ | σ | RANGE | CATEGORIES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **DEPENDENT** | | | | |
| **Access** | 1.53 | 4,32 | 0-46 | 0-46 |
| **INDEPENDENT** | | | | |
| **Revolving door** | - | - | 0 - 1 | 1 (hiring revolvers) = 302 (40%) |
| | | | | 0 (not hiring revolvers) = 444 (60%) |
| **Professional influence** | 0.67 | 0,23 | 0 - 1 | |
| **Membership influence** | 0,56 | 0,27 | 0 - 1 | |
| **CONTROL** | | | | |
| **Staff size (logged)** | 1,60 | 1,23 | 0 - 9,68 | |
| **Group type** | - | - | 1 - 4 | 1 (business interests) = 402 (45%) |
| | | | | 2 (professional groups) = 99 (11%) |
| | | | | 3 (civil society/NGOs) = 240 (27%) |
| | | | | 4 (other) = 155 (17%) |
| **Insider strategies** | 5.13 | 1,83 | 2 - 10 | |
| **Policy engagement** | 4.21 | 2,86 | 0 - 19 | |
| **Age (logged)** | 2,93 | 0,95 | 0 - 5,21 | |

To ensure our analyses' robustness, we included a set of control variables that might be essential for information transmission to policymakers and gaining access. First, the organisational staff size might affect access positively. Therefore, we control the reliance on *paid staff*, more precisely the total employed staff (in full-time equivalents, FTE). Note that 123 organisations declared to have zero employees. A substantial number of respondents did not answer this question (n=170); for 102 of these, we could identify the staff size based on the organisation's website after the survey was completed. As this variable

has a skewed distribution, it was logarithmically transformed (skewness=28.34). Second, our models control for *group type*. For this purpose, we classified the dataset into four categories: 'business groups', 'professional groups', 'civil society groups/NGO's', and 'others' (see Grömping & Halpin, 2019; Heylen et al., 2018; Fraussen & Halpin, 2016 for similar classifications). This control is crucial because a substantial part of the literature shows that business organisations and professional groups gain more access to European institutions (Dür and Mateo, 2016; Eising, 2007; Klüver, 2012). Third, in analysing obtained access, we need to control to what extent groups effectively engage in insider strategies with the aim to gain access. Respondents could indicate on a 5-point Likert scale the intensity of seeking access (ranging from 1 'we did not seek access' to 5 'access was sought at least once a week') to (1) officials from the EC's Directorates-General (DGs) and (2) to Commissioners or their cabinets. We combined both indicators on a scale ranging from 2 to 10. A small number of respondents (n=28) indicated during the survey that their organisation did not invest substantial resources in monitoring EU policy or that their efforts to influence the EU institutions were very limited or non-existent. These groups were assigned the lowest code (2) for the insider strategy index (as not monitoring the EU policy process implies the absence of insider access for these groups). Fourth, we control for the breadth of policy engagement, namely, the number of domains in which the organisation is involved. There are two reasons for adding this variable. Involvement in multiple domains can affect access positively as the breath of engagement refers to the encompassing nature of the group interests and because working in multiple areas increases the complexity of transmitting information to policymakers. The breath of policy engagement is measured by an additive index (ranging from 0 to 19) combining 21 items accounting for 21 areas in which a group is involved or not involved. Finally, we control for the age of the organisation. Age may capture variation between more established groups which have accumulated reputation, credibility, and network positions over time, factors that might contribute to access. Although most respondents indicated the foundation date during the survey, 28 respondents did not answer this

question. We identified founding dates for 25 other cases based on an extensive web search. As this variable has a skewed distribution (skewness=2.11), we have logarithmically transformed it.

## 5.4 Analysis

The dependent variable in our models concerns a count measure characterized by many zeros and a substantially larger variance than the mean. For instance, 69% of the cases have zero's, resulting in a mean of 1.53 and a variance of 18.67. To model this over-dispersion, we estimate the regression parameters with a Poisson regression model. Moreover, given the excessive amount of zero's, we conducted a Vuong-test examining whether a zero-inflated Poisson (ZIP) approach with separate logit-parameters modelling the zeroes entails a better model fit. As the Vuong-test is significant ($z=5.13$, $p<.0001$), we reject the null hypothesis that a logit- and count-model in a ZIP-model are similar to the outcome of the Poisson model. This justifies a procedure that controls for both over-dispersion and the excessive amount of zero's by introducing a splitting process, which models both zero outcomes (in this study 'no access') and the counts (here 'the amount of access'). In other words, it estimates the probability that an organisation gains no access at all (i.e., a logit model) versus variation in the extent to which organisations gain access (i.e., a zero-truncated Poisson model). As we have no separate hypotheses regarding either non-access or the degree of access, we analyse the same explanatory variables in both the zero-inflated and the count-part of the ZIP-model. For instance, we expect membership influence, professional influence, and the revolving door to influence both non-access as well as increasing degrees of access.

Missing values, a typical feature of survey data, may substantially reduce the sample and affect parameter estimates. Therefore, we imputed missing values using maximum likelihood (ML) parameter estimations,

specifically the expectation-maximization algorithm (King et al., 2001). In short, this algorithm starts with a first estimate of the missing values based on all the observed values. The new dataset (with these estimates) is then processed using ML-estimation, establishing new mean and covariance estimates; based on these estimates, the missing values are again estimated. This process involves various iterations (in our dataset 11) until a saturation point is achieved, whereby new estimates do not differ substantially from previous estimates. This imputation technique only addressed the missing values for non-categorical data and increased our sample size from n=603 to n=746. We implemented these models for the imputed and non-imputed datasets, but in the paper we only report results from the imputed dataset. Hence, our model shows robustness to a series of checks; results remain consistent also when access to the EC is estimated without missing values imputation or transformation of explanatory variables (see Appendix C Table C1, C2, and C3).

Table 2 presents the results. The first part of Table 2 shows the logit coefficients for the model estimating the likelihood of whether organized interests are not gaining access (hence access=0). Interestingly, only two variables are statistically significant: staff size and the extent to which groups use insider strategies. This finding implies that the EC's propensity to grant access is not significantly affected by group type (i.e., the likelihood of business granted access is not significantly different from other group types), the age of the organisation, or the breadth of policy engagement. Also, none of our hypotheses regarding revolving door, staff influence, and member influence seem relevant for whether groups gain access. Two variables are relevant. The negative logit-coefficient for staff size (logit=-0.226) and insider strategies (logit=-0.428) means that the odds for not gaining access decreases with a one-unit increase in staff size and insider strategies (or vice versa, the odds for gaining access increases with more investment in insider strategies and more staff). More specifically, for a one-unit increase in access strategies (at a scale ranging from 2 to 10), the odds increase by a factor $e^{-0.428}$=0.65, which means that the chance of not

gaining access increases by 0.35%. For staff size, a one-unit change in the logged variable implies an increase in not gaining access with a factor of $e^{-0.226}$=0.80; or the probability of not gaining access increases by 20%. Note that, although staff size is statistically significant, efforts to obtain access depend more on whether an organisation invests in insider strategies, which relates to the extent to which the organisation hires staff. Yet, the effect of the logged staff variable means that the relationship is particularly strong at lower levels of staff increase (for instance, a change from 0 staff to 1 or 2 staff members corresponds with a logged shift from 0 to 0.69 and 1.10), while the increasing benefits of additional staff decrease at higher staff sizes (for instance, moving from 18 to 20 staff members equals a logged difference of 2.6 to 3.0). The findings from the zero-inflated part are interesting as they demonstrate that an insider lobbying strategy can be effective. Namely, the more efforts groups make to gain access, the more they are granted access by the EC. Also, the fact that our access measure is independent, i.e., is not derived from the survey-data but relies on an unobtrusive external source, adds to the validity of these results.

# Table 7. Predicting access to the EC (zero-inflated Poisson-model)

| | LOGIT MODEL | | | POISSON MODEL | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Estimate** | **SE** | **p** | **Estimate** | **SE** | **p** |
| **CONSTANT** | **2.748** | **(0.605)** | **<.001** | **-0.808** | **(0.237)** | **0.0007** |
| **Independent variables** | | | | | | |
| Revolving door | | | | | | |
| 0=not hiring from public sector (ref) | - | - | . | - | - | - |
| 1=hiring from the public sector | 0.337 | (0.793) | .6710 | -0.821 | (0.295) | .0055 |
| Staff influence | 0.464 | (0.564) | .4113 | -0.486 | (0.221) | .0283 |
| Member influence | 0.128 | (0.497) | .7966 | -0.201 | (0.205) | .3272 |
| **Interactions** | | | | | | |
| Staff influence*not hiring (ref) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Staff influence*hiring | -0.297 | (0.946) | .7538 | 1.274 | (0.336) | .0002 |
| Member influence*not hiring (ref) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Member influence*hiring | -0.501 | (0.720) | .4863 | -0.025 | (0.254) | .9205 |
| **Control variables** | | | | | | |
| Staff size | -0.226 | (0.091) | .0124 | 0.303 | (0.027) | <.0001 |
| Group type | | | | | | |
| 1=business groups (ref) | - | - | - | - | - | . |
| 2=professional groups | 0.640 | (0.332) | .0539 | 0.281 | (0.120) | .0194 |
| 3=NGOs/civil society | 0.394 | (0.257) | .1257 | -0.072 | (0.076) | .3433 |
| 4=other | 0.221 | (0.391) | .5716 | -1.181 | (0.193) | <.0001 |
| Access strategies | -0.428 | (0.065) | <.0001 | 0.336 | (0.022) | <.0001 |
| Breath of policy involvement | -0.008 | (0.034) | .8056 | 0.003 | (0.010) | .7637 |
| Age (logged) | 0.017 | (0.115) | .8846 | -0.089 | (0.040) | .0258 |
| **Diagnostics** | 2046.95 | | | | | |
| Deviance | - | | | | | |
| Log Likelihood | 1023.47 | | | | | |
| Pearson $Chi^2$ (df=720) | 1369.59 | | | | | |
| p $Chi^2$ | <.0001 | | | | | |
| AIC | 2098.95 | | | | | |
| BIC | 2218.93 | | | | | |
| N | 746 | | | | | |

The results are somewhat different for the count model. We start the discussion with the control variables and then move on to the key explanatory variables. We observe similar results for staff size and insider strategies. For staff, a one-unit change in the logged variable increases the number of meetings with a factor $e^{0.303}$=1.35, or a one-unit change in the predictor leads to 35% more meetings. Again, note that the log transformation implies a decreasing effect of staff at higher levels of staff size. To illustrate this, a change from 0 to 2 staff members involves 1.10 units on the logged predictor, which increases the number of meetings by 38% (or 35% of 1.10), while changing the staff size from 18 to 20 persons increase the number of meetings with 14% (or 35% of 0.40). The results for access strategies are in line with this: a one-unit change in strategy investment increases the number of meetings with a factor $e^{0.303}$=1.40 (or 40% more meetings). We have two other results for the control variables, but these are, compared to the staff size and strategies, less substantial and significant. To begin with, older organisations are less likely to have more meetings, namely a decrease with 9% ($e^{-0.089}$=0.91) for each unit increase on the logged age variable. We have some effect of the group type variable; if a group represents 'other groups', then, compared with business groups, the number of meetings increases by 69% ($e^{-1.1814}$=0.31) and professional groups have 32% ($e^{2.806}$=1.32) more meetings. Importantly, we do not find significant differences between business and civil society groups regarding the number of meetings.

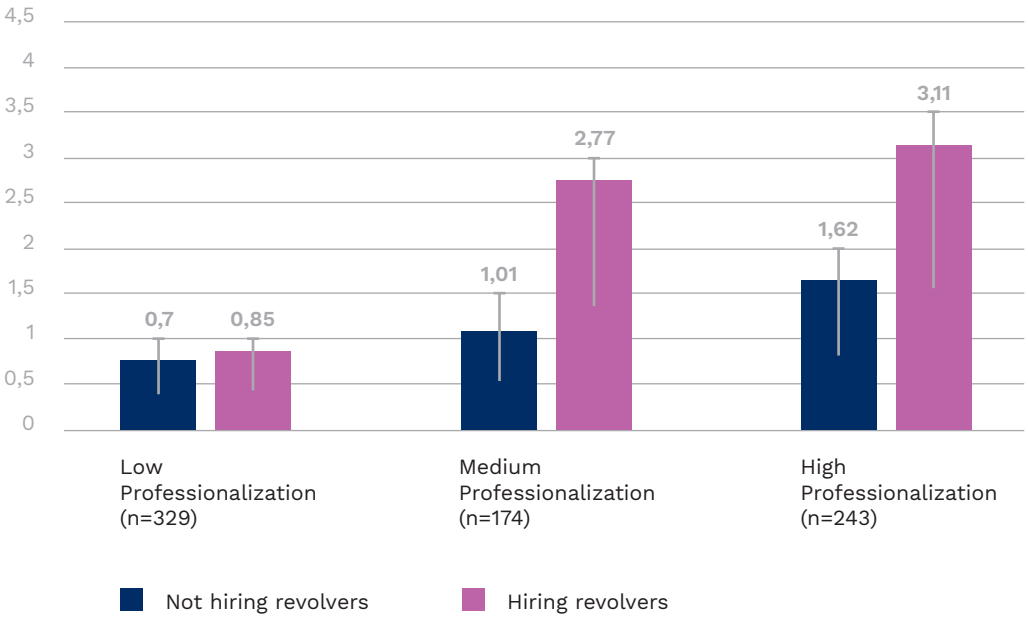
The first part of the count model leads to the conclusion that the revolving door predicts access positively among organisations that are highly professionalized, while at lower levels of professionalization, the revolving door has not a substantial relationship with access. More specifically, the evidence speaks in favor of Hypothesis 1. At the same time, it rejects Hypothesis 2, namely, the revolving door affects access, but this relation significantly depends on the extent to which a logic of influence prevails within an interest organisation. The insignificant coefficients for member influence and its interaction with the revolving door show that high membership influence does not decrease

(or increase) access significantly and that membership influence does not moderate the relation between revolving door and access.

At first sight, the results for staff influence and revolving door are somewhat intriguing. Let us first consider the combination of two conditions, namely when staff influence is not zero while there are no revolving door staff members (hiring equals 0). When organisations do not hire from the public sector, the effect of staff influence is $e.^{-0.486}$=0.62; with each unit increase of staff influence, the number of meetings decreases by 8%. This is a result that seems to contradict our expectations. Moreover, when staff influence is at its lowest level, namely 0, the result of the revolving door is negative, meaning organisations with revolvers, but no staff influence, have 56% (i.e., $e.^{-0.821}$=0.44) less meetings. Nonetheless, given the significant positive coefficient of staff size, it should not surprise us to see that the lowest levels of professionalization show decreasing levels of access, even if organisations might have hired someone from the public sector. As the significant and positive interaction shows, it is only when staff influence increases that hiring from the public sector starts to increase access. Hence, while staff influence or revolving door does not affect or affects access negatively, it is primarily their interaction that significantly benefits interest groups.[19] More precisely, groups with revolving door staff members see an increase in the number of meetings with a factor $e.^{-1.274}$=3.58 for each standard deviation increase in the level of professionalization. This means that among the groups that hire from the public sector, such increases in staff influence more than triples the number of meetings with EC officials (number of meetings*3.58), which is a substantial increase.

[19] We also tested a model without moderators, but this model has a lower fit (Deviance=2063.57). The regression coefficients for revolving door are positive (namely revolvers gain more access), while staff influence has no significant impact. Yet, given the fact that our core theoretical model is interactive, we do not report these findings.

## Figure 5. Predicted number of meetings for three levels of professionalization and revolving door (mean, C.I. 95%, N=746)



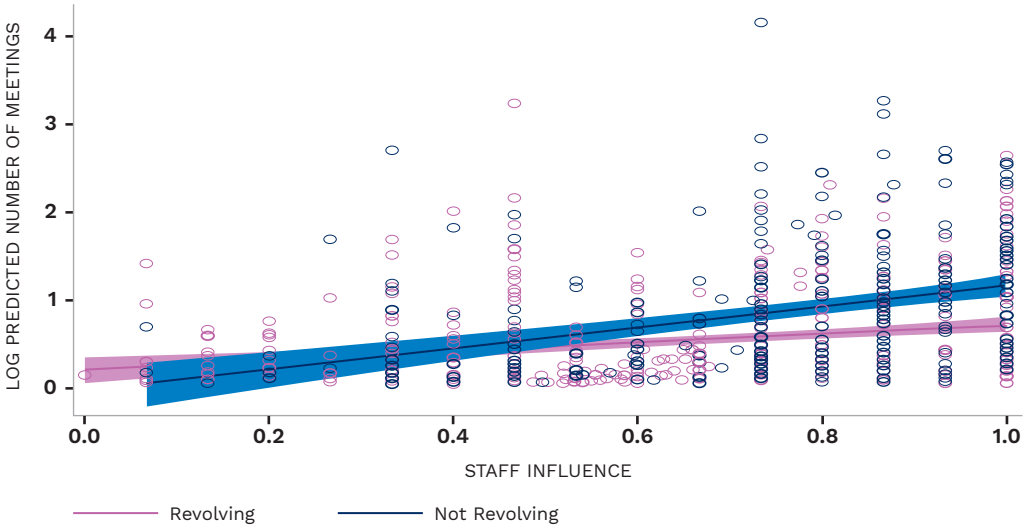

We can also illustrate this result by comparing the predicted number of meetings for three levels of professionalization (Low, Medium, High) and the hiring from the public sector, and second, by inspecting a plot of predicted meetings with revolving door and varying degrees of professionalization. Figure 2 shows that as professionalization increases, we observe an increased predicted number of meetings, but this increase is more pronounced for groups with staff having a public sector background. For these groups, we find a moderate increase at low and medium levels but a much more substantial increase at high levels of professionalization.[20] At the highest levels of professionalization, access increases somewhat also for interest groups without revolvers, but the expected number of meetings increases more forcefully for groups that hire staff with a public sector background.

The interaction plot in Figure 3 further clarifies the interaction between professionalization and the revolving door variable.

[20] In the Online Appendix C Figure C1 and Figure C2 we show the same results only for those organisation that enjoy access (N=280). Again, revolving door has less impact on access at lower level of professionalization, but more at higher levels. Yet the results at the low levels of professionalization should be interpreted with caution as at this level, the difference between the predicted number of meetings is small and not statistical significant.

Compared to groups without a public sector background, groups hiring from the public sector and being professionalized show substantial growth in their connections with the EC. The plot also shows that access is limited at lower degrees of staff influence, which is not entirely surprising. Importantly, access is even lower for weakly professionalized organisations that hire from the public sector. At low degrees of staff influence, we also observe an overlap of the confidence intervals, implying that the degree of access does not differ significantly for these two group types. In addition to this, the set with weakly professionalized groups is smaller than the number of more professionalized groups, which implies that the variance in terms of access is higher at high degrees of staff influence. Alternatively, the number of groups not hiring from the public sector and showing low levels of professionalization is relatively small. This result, i.e., the negative one-way regression coefficient for staff's influence and revolving door, is not entirely surprising as no or very little professionalization is a typical feature of groups without staff or with only a very small staff size, and logically such groups show a lower propensity to hire revolvers.

## Figure 7. Predicted probabilities of number EC-meetings (logged) by professionalization (staff influence) and hiring from the public sector (N= 746, C.I. 95%)



## 5.5 Conclusion

Recruiting former public officials by organized interest is often associated with successful access strategies, social networking, and better chances to influence public policymaking. This paper indeed shows a significant relationship between the propensity to hire revolvers, on the one hand, and policy access, on the other hand. This observation suggests that gaining access is not primarily a matter of sincerely exchanging key informational resources with policymakers, a perspective strongly emphasized by European scholarship (Bouwen, 2002; Coen and Vannoni, 2016). It also concerns skills, knowledge, and political process experience in terms of establishing personal contacts, building social networks and sustaining ties with legislative allies, factors that are explicitly emphasized in the American academic literature (Salisbury et al., 1989; Hall and Deardorff, 2006; LaPira and Thomas, 2017; see also Grose et al., 2022). In this paper, we have argued that by hiring employees with a public sector background, interest groups might be able to accumulate access goods and strengthens the available process-oriented expertise. Our results reveal that for a substantial subset of EU interest groups the hiring of revolvers is an important part of their business model and it show a significant positive relationship between these hiring practices and the access groups gain to the EC.

One of our first descriptive observations is that hiring from the public sector is rather common among a wide range of EU interest groups. This observation fits into a general insight that, although revolving doors are prevalent in the US, this phenomenon seems to be on the rise in the European context (see Dörrenbächer, 2016). The zero-inflated poison regression demonstrates two things. First, revolving door practices positively affect the *degree of access*, but not on *whether groups gain access*. The latter is crucial as it shows that EC-officials do not select their interlocutors based on group type (business versus non-business), age, revolving door, breath of policy engagement, degree of professionalization, or membership influence. Only staff size and the

extensiveness of insider strategies seem to matter whether groups will meet EC officials. This means that the EC's propensity to grant access is mainly affected by the political signals its officials notice in their environment and that, from the interest group side, investing in inside lobbying significantly relates to access.

Second, the revolving door is positively related to the degree of access, and this relation is conditional on whether a logic of influence or a logic of membership prevails within an interest organisation. We operationalized both logics as the extent to which a group is professionalized versus the membership influence within a group. In short, highly professionalized organisations benefit more from revolving door practices than less professionalized groups. In contrast, membership influence has no impact on the *degree of access*, an observation that corroborates earlier research conducted by Albareda and Braun (2019) and Albareda (2020). While our results on *whether groups gain access* do not show profound cleavages between insiders and outsiders, except for the difference between politically active and less active groups, the degree of access is susceptible to the hiring of revolving door staff which increases political capacity and, in combination with professionalization, it is associated significantly with the degree of access. In short, we show that the revolving door reflects an insider-outsider cleavage – separating highly from less professionalized groups – that characterizes EU interest representation. Interestingly, this outcome somewhat contrasts with goals put forward by the European institutions, namely accountable structures and internal representativity within civil society organisations as well as their autonomy vis-à-vis public institutions are considered as pivotal for legitimate interest representation (Divjak and Forbici, 2017; EC, 2001).

Up to now, despite the media coverage of revolving doors in the EU, the public attention for prominent public officials becoming senior consultants for significant companies after their term in office, and the increased attention of transparency watchdogs such as TI or Corporate European Observatory, not much systematic political science research

has been conducted on this phenomenon in the EU. Most research has focused on one type of interest or organisation – usually companies, consultancy firms, or business associations while the consequences of revolving door practices – in terms of access and influence – are rarely scrutinized (Belli and Bursens, 2021; Coen and Vannoni, 2016; 2020; 2019; Chalmers et al., 2021). Typical for much of the research on revolving door lobbying is that scholars analyse a particular type of, mostly highly professionalized organisations, and possibly this overarching organisational feature of the sampled groups might explain much of the findings in the extant literature. Most accounts implicitly assume that the revolving door is primarily a business-related practice and largely a matter of high-level and prominent policymakers continuing their career in the interest group sector. This paper presented one of the first analyses of a cross-section of European interest groups – including a wide range of business and non-business groups – and analysed one crucial hypothesis: to what extent does the revolving door relate positively to access. As data show cross-case variation, our analysis contrasts groups that hire from the public sector with groups that do not hire from the public sector regarding the extent to which they gain access. Nonetheless, the nature of the data does not allow us to demonstrate longitudinal within-case variation and therefore no causal claims can be made concerning individual groups. Despite these limitations, our evidence shows that, especially in combination with high levels of professionalization, revolving doors practices can have significant consequences for interest group access and the overall influence production process.

# 6.0 EMPIRICAL PAPER 4

## *Revolving Doors and Access In Context: the Conditional Effect of Interest Mobilisation*

The movement of staff from the public sector to interest groups has garnered significant attention in the media across Europe in recent years and in the interest group literature. Thus, the connection between revolving doors and interest representation is now well- established. To contribute to this new shred of literature, this paper seeks to explain under which conditions hiring revolving door lobbyists facilitates access to policymaking and how interest mobilisation affects this relationship. We argue that the advantage of employing former public officials in gaining access is contingent upon the level of interest mobilisation in policy domains. Specifically, we expect that groups recruiting individuals with public sector experience will have more frequent access when policy domains are characterised by low levels of mobilisation, but this positive effect diminishes as more interest groups become involved in a particular policy area. To test our hypotheses, we analyse survey data collected from nine European political systems. Our findings support the expectation that hiring from the public sector is important for gaining higher levels of access, but this effect varies across differential levels of interest mobilisation in policy areas.

*Article co-authored with Frederik Stevens (Ph.D. candidate University of Antwerp) and published at Journal of Public Policy (JPP).*

## 6.1 Introduction

In recent times, Europe has witnessed increased scrutiny regarding the movement of individuals from the public sector to interest groups. Notable examples include the move of Dutch Minister Cora van Nieuwenhuizen to an energy company associationi and a senior French official, previously involved in international ocean governance, joining a fishing-industry lobby group.ii These prominent instances of 'revolving doors' have attracted widespread societal scrutiny, leading to inquiries about whether former public officials transitioning into lobbying roles gain privileged access to decision-making processes that significantly influence the industries they now advocate for. However, empirical studies exploring the recruitment of public sector personnel and its influence on interest group access are limited in Europe. While the existing scholarly literature extensively covers the revolving door phenomenon in the United States (US) (J. McCrain, 2018a; A. M. McKay & Lazarus, 2023b; Strickland, 2020), there are only few studies in Europe focused on identifying groups actively hiring former public officials (Belli & Bursens, 2021; Coen & Vannoni, 2018, 2020). Still, they have largely neglected the potential effects on access opportunities. Against this backdrop, our study aims to unravel how the propensity to recruit revolving door lobbyists influences the level of access obtained by interest groups.

Generally, US scholars studying revolving doors presume that recruiting personnel from the public sector positively impacts access. Two analytical perspectives have been put forward in the existing literature. One explanation highlights the significance of *relational capital*, positing that interest groups employing individuals from the public sector tend to gain enhanced access due to their staff's ability to leverage prior political connections and relationships with policymakers (Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012b; J. McCrain, 2018a). The second perspective emphasizes the value of *human capital*, which suggests that interest groups seek personnel to reinforce their organisational capacities (Bertrand et

al., 2014b; LaPira & Thomas, 2017a; Salisbury et al., 1989b). Specifically, by recruiting former public officials, organisations acquire *process-oriented knowledge*, referring to political intelligence and a deep understanding of the inner workings of public institutions (Ban et al., 2019).

Although both approaches are not mutually exclusive, our account fits more into the human capital perspective. Current studies indicate that personal connections and networks are relatively less important for interest representation in Europe (Belli & Bursens, 2021; Coen & Vannoni, 2018, 2020). Instead, the relationship between interest groups and European policymakers is often characterized as a resource exchange process, wherein valuable policy assets – such as policy expertise – are traded for access to the decision-making process (Beyers & Braun, 2014; Bouwen, 2002; Braun, 2012). Connecting resource exchange approaches with the human capital perspective, we argue that process-oriented knowledge, acquired through the recruitment of revolving door lobbyists, is a critical organisational capacity that helps interest groups to elevate the value of their exchange commodities, particularly their *policy expertise*. Specifically, it enables groups to transform complex and technical know-how into tangible policy alternatives that hold significant political relevance. Therefore, we anticipate that organisations employing professionals with prior experience in the public sector will attain more frequent access in contrast to those that do not.

In addition, this paper seeks to further advance the literature revolving doors by exploring the role of the policy environment. Indeed, access opportunities not only rely on hiring practices by individual organisations and the relative value of their exchange goods but are also significantly influenced by specific characteristics of policy areas (Klüver et al., 2015a). Therefore, we posit that the advantages derived from recruiting revolving door lobbyists are contingent upon the degree of interest mobilisation within policy areas (Hanegraaff et al., 2020; Willems, 2020). More precisely, we posit that within policy domains characterized by limited interest mobilisation, employing individuals with a public sector background results in more frequent access. In such

settings, policymakers are inclined to be more open to external organisations that can offer them feasible legislative opportunities grounded in evidence-based information (Culpepper, 2011; Redert, 2020; Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020). In contrast, in policy areas with a high level of lobbying activity and active engagement from a plurality of different interest groups, the benefits associated with recruiting from the public sector are anticipated to diminish. In such setting, policymakers prioritize acquiring *political information* over actionable policy expertise (Agnone, 2007; Kollman, 1998; Rasmussen et al., 2018). This is a different type of exchange good that is not necessarily facilitated by possessing process-oriented knowledge but rather depends on interest groups' political capabilities (Flöthe, 2019b).

To test our expectations, we rely on the CIG-survey, which provides expert data from interest groups representatives in seven European political systems (Beyers et al., 2020). Our results highlight that interest groups that hire from the public sector gain more frequent access than organisations that do not employ revolving door lobbyists. Nonetheless, this competitive edge diminishes and eventually fades away in policy areas that attract heightened levels of interest mobilisation. Consequently, increased lobbying activity in a particular policy domain seems to counteract the biases towards groups hiring revolving door lobbyists.

*Revolving doors dynamics in existing literature.*

he revolving door phenomenon is commonly defined as the movement of individuals from the public sector to interest groups (Gormley, 1979). This definition has been retrieved from a body of literature underscoring the significance of individual lobbyists' career paths and focus on the personal incentives and individual motivations to enter the revolving door (Bolton & McCrain, 2023; Halpin & Lotric, 2023; Lee & You, 2023; Shepherd & You, 2020). For instance, scholars have demonstrated that these individuals can leverage their public sector experience to increase their earnings, receiving higher salaries compared to regular lobbyists (Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012b). Moreover, through the analysis

of data on career trajectories and earnings, studies have shown that revolving door lobbyists tend to secure more prestigious roles in the private sector (Thomas & LaPira, 2017). In essence, it is evident that prior experience in the public sector yields tangible benefits in terms of career advancements within the private sector.

While it is ultimately the decision of the former public officials as to whether they turnover into lobbying, revolving door practices also depend substantially on the needs of interest groups seeking to hire staff with a public sector background. Consequently, several studies aim to understand the rationale behind interest groups hiring lobbyists with backgrounds in the public sector (Belli & Bursens, 2021; Coen & Vannoni, 2020; J. McCrain, 2018a; A. M. McKay & Lazarus, 2023b; Strickland, 2020). These studies put the focus on the recruitment process as a systematic undertaking in which the agency lies with the organsational leadership of interest groups. This body of research has presented various explanations regarding why interest groups, as organisations with political objectives, perceive revolving door lobbyists as valuable assets in advancing their interests.

The first explanation, centred on relational capital, emphasizing the significance of networks and personal relationships held by former public officials who transition into roles as lobbyists (Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012b; J. McCrain, 2018a). These individuals maintain connections with their former colleagues who continue to work within government circles (Cain & Drutman, 2014b). Through this analytical lens, scholars have shown that lucrative positions in the lobbying industry are often assigned to former public officials with networks in the public sector, as long as their political connections remain intact (Bertrand et al., 2014b). From this perspective, revolving door lobbyists leverage their prior experience in the public sector to harness their network and political connections to secure access. By capitalizing on these established relationships and networks forged during their tenure in public sector positions, these lobbyists navigate political circles more effectively compared to lobbyists lacking such experience. Additionally, personal

relationships can play a pivotal role in fostering trust between lobbyists and their targets (Bolton & McCrain, 2023).

The second theoretical perspective explaining the rationale behind interest organisations hiring lobbyists from the public sector focuses on the value of human capital (LaPira & Thomas, 2017a). Contrary to the emphasis on relational capital, this viewpoint underscores the value of revolving door lobbyists beyond their mere networks or political connections, highlighting their comprehensive understanding of the functioning of policy processes (Salisbury et al., 1989b). Their grasp of complex policy procedures, familiarity with internal institutional workings, and insider insights into power dynamics make hiring staff with public sector backgrounds advantageous for groups that need to effectively navigate policy processes. This process-oriented knowledge enables organisations to identify crucial moments for initiating lobbying efforts and targeting influential decision-makers (Ban et al., 2019). Moreover, by enlisting revolving door lobbyists, interest groups gain exclusive insights into the factors influencing political decision-making.

An important gap in this existing literature pertains to the insufficient consideration given to the impact of the revolving door phenomenon on organisational effectiveness. Despite the presumption in several studies that hiring individuals with a public sector background positively influences access, there remains a scarcity of research assessing this relationship empirically. Although a few recent studies have commenced investigating the impact of revolving doors for organisational effectiveness (Belli & Beyers, 2023; McKay & Lazarus, 2023b), they have not considered how the policy environment might shape the link between recruiting from the public sector and accessing policymaking. To address this gap, the following section integrates insights from the revolving door literature with resource exchange theory, a widely employed framework for elucidating access dynamics among interest groups in Europe.

## 6.2 The Argument: Access, Revolving Doors, and Interest Mobilisation

Access is commonly defined as the point at which a group enters a political arena, whether it is a parliamentary or governmental setting, by surpassing a threshold controlled by relevant gatekeepers such as politicians or civil servants (Binderkrantz et al., 2017). In the extant European interest group literature, this interaction is typically conceptualized as a resource exchange relation (Berkhout, 2013; Beyers & Braun, 2014; Bouwen, 2002). Within exchange approaches, resources are not synonymous with *organisational capacities*; rather, they denote exchange goods like *policy expertise*, encompassing information about technical aspects, policy effectiveness, legal dimensions, and the economic implications of a policy. Policymakers rely on intermediary organisations to obtain such valuable policy goods, as they might not always be capable to gather these themselves due to limited time and resources (Braun, 2012; Stevens, 2022). Interest groups emerge as interesting exchange partners in this regard: through their interactions with their constituencies and daily engagement within specific policy issues, they can collect the resources policymakers require (Albareda, 2020; Albareda & Braun, 2019b; Flöthe, 2019b). Indeed, interest groups can play a crucial role in assisting policymakers in recognizing market failures, formulating measures to address these failures, and evaluating the potential impacts of proposed regulatory actions (Arras & Braun, 2018; Beyers & Arras, 2020b). In return for sharing their valuable policy goods, they hope to gain access to the decision-making process— an invaluable asset for these organisations as it is often seen as essential for exerting political influence (Eising, 2007b). In sum, mutual resource dependencies trigger reciprocal exchanges between interest groups and policymakers (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020).

Bridging insights from the human capital perspective with resource exchange approaches, we argue that enlisting individuals with public sector experience significantly reinforces the organisational capacity of

interest groups, enabling them to function more effectively as providers of policy expertise. Specifically, we anticipate that policymakers attach greater value to policy expertise when it is translated into coherent and suitable policy alternatives. Conventional applications of the resource exchange perspective in interest group studies tend to overlook the importance of effectively communicating complex and technocratic information. Hence, we propose that the focus should not solely rest on which organisations can offer policy expertise. After all, all interest groups are expected to embed their input in evidence-based information while participating in the policymaking process. Instead, the emphasis should move toward assessing the differences among organisations in whether they can present their policy expertise clearly and understandably, effectively resonating within a policymaking setting.

Process-oriented knowledge plays a vital role in this regard by enhancing a group's ability to aid policymakers in discerning between actionable and unhelpful policy expertise (Salisbury et al., 1989b). Groups that employ revolving door lobbyists, from a human capital perspective, possess a unique advantage within the lobbying community due to their comprehensive understanding of opportune moments for exerting influence and the key decision-makers to target for effective influence strategies (Thomas & LaPira, 2017). This comprehension of policy processes not only allows them to identify legislative opportunities but also empowers them to translate scientific know-how into tangible legislative opportunities (Ban et al., 2019). In contrast to interest groups armed solely with specialized knowledge but lacking insights into the intricacies of policy processes, groups with process-oriented knowledge are better equipped to support policymakers in navigating political uncertainties (Belli & Bursens, 2021). This ability to present politically feasible policy options embedded in evidence-based information is critical in contexts where policy complexities often breed uncertainty, hampering efficient decision-making processes (LaPira & Thomas, 2017a). So, by recruiting individuals with public sector experience interest groups substantially increase their prospects of gaining increased access to policymakers.

So:

**Hypothesis 1:** Organisations that hire staff with a public sector background gain more frequent access than groups that do not.

However, recruiting personnel from the public sector does not invariably grants increased access. Recent research suggests that the beneficial role of engaging in revolving door practices is contingent upon the organisational characteristics of interest groups (Belli & Beyers, 2023). Following up on this, we argue that the relationship between hiring practices and access opportunities is also profoundly influenced by the broader policy environment (Klüver et al., 2015a). One of the key conclusions within the interest group literature to date is that interactions between interest groups and policymakers do not occur in a political vacuum. From a resource dependency perspective, interest groups and policymakers rely on their environment to acquire the resources necessary for survival (Bouwen, 2002). When this environment changes, mutual dependencies shift and tilt (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020).

In the existing literature, several scholars have claimed that the level of interest mobilisation – pertaining to the number of mobilized groups in a policy domain that are potentially seeking access and challenging the composition of political-administrative venues – crucially affects interest groups' level of access (Willems, 2020). Indeed, policy domains differ extensively in the number of interest groups competing for access (Wonka et al., 2018). In this regard, we can differentiate between *niche* policy domains and *bandwagon* areas (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998). On the one hand, niche policy domains are characterized by a limited scope of interests, where only a handful of actors actively engage in lobbying. For example, consider financial regulation, a policy area dominated by a concentrated group of business interests (Berkhout et al., 2018b; Coen & Katsaitis, 2013). On the other hand, bandwagon policy areas attract a large multitude of actors, often having conflicting agendas, and encompassing diverse segments of society. For instance, environmental or healthcare policies illustrate this scenario well, involving

a broad array of stakeholders with differing perspectives and interests. In general terms, this distinction is important because it directly affects the access opportunities for interest groups: the more interest groups mobilize in a policy area, the more competitors an individual organisation faces and the more difficult it becomes to gain access (Hanegraaff et al., 2020).

In this vein, we argue that the favourable impact of employing lobbyists with prior public sector experience on the level of access is conditioned by the degree of interest mobilisation within a policy area. Starting with niche policy areas, we expect that the propensity to hire revolving door lobbyists continues to be advantageous for gaining access for three main reasons. First, when only a limited number of interest groups are mobilized, the spectrum of conflicting policy positions is narrowed, reducing the likelihood of widespread conflicts escalating (Hutter & Grande, 2014; Schattschneider, 1960). In this scenario, limited societal support suffices for practical and viable policy outcomes, fostering interactions between policymakers and interest groups primarily characterized by exchanges based on actionable policy expertise (Beyers & Kerremans, 2004; De Bruycker, 2016a). Consequently, the recruitment of revolving door lobbyists becomes indispensable in efficiently engaging with policymakers. Second, issues deliberated within a confined set of interest groups often elude widespread public attention (Agnone, 2007; De Wilde, 2011; Kollman, 1998). The lack of public scrutiny and awareness regarding these niche policy domains enables policymakers to operate with less oversight and external pressure. Under such conditions, they are less susceptible to the level of societal support and more inclined to rely on groups capable of effectively converting their policy expertise in viable policy alternatives (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020; Willems, 2020). Consequently, interest groups employing revolving door lobbyists from the public sector can leverage their process-oriented knowledge to gain enhanced access to decisionmakers (Culpepper, 2011). Lastly, niche policy domains, often involve highly complex and largely technocratic issues discussions that require an in-dept understanding of the subject matter (Klüver et al.,

2015a; Redert, 2020). In such cases, organisations that recruit lobbyists with prior public sector experience hold a distinct advantage due to their ability to articulate the necessary evidence-based input in a clear, concise, and understandable manner.

However, the dynamics of resource exchange relationships can significantly change when once policy domains attract increased levels of interest mobilisation. First, high level of lobbying activity increases the likelihood that multiple and contrasting policy demands will be voiced and that policy conflicts expand (Schattschneider, 1960). This puts significant pressure on policymakers to heed the demands of diverse stakeholders involved (De Bruycker, 2017, 2020). Hence, within bandwagon policy domains, policymakers show decreased receptiveness to actionable policy expertise. Instead, they aim to acquire political information, related to the level of political support, insights into public preferences, electoral repercussions, or ethical considerations (Flöthe, 2019a; Rasmussen et al., 2018). While process-oriented knowledge aids in supplying actionable policy expertise, the conveyance of such political exchange goods relies more heavily on other organisational capacities such as the ability to represent the public, to act as an intermediary between citizens and policymakers, and to mobilize public support (Albareda, 2020; Flöthe, 2019b). Second, densely populated policy areas often draw heightened public attention due to the diverse range of stakeholders engaged in the discussions (Dür & Mateo, 2014; Kollman, 1998; Kriesi et al., 1992). The plurality of groups involved in such areas utilize a range of tactics, including public campaigns, media engagement, and grassroots mobilisation, to garner attention for their respective causes (De Bruycker & Beyers, 2019b; Rasmussen et al., 2018). This increases public attention and leads to greater scrutiny and media coverage, simplifying discussions for broader public understanding and amplifying the significance of political exchange goods (De Bruycker & Beyers, 2019; Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020). Organisations that enlist lobbyists with public sector experience may find that their advantage in converting complex policy expertise into politically feasible policy options becomes less substantial in such environments as

the focus shifts to leveraging political information. Finally, because of increased interest mobilisation and the concentrated efforts to secure political support and build coalitions, discussions within bandwagon policy areas may experience simplification. Even though the topics remain inherently complex, the shift in discourse towards seeking support and creating alliances – instead of deeply exploring the complex technical facets of policy issues – might reduce the perceived complexity, thereby reinforcing the aforementioned mechanisms (Redert, 2020). Therefore, we conclude that increased levels of interest mobilisation diminish the advantageous impact of the inclination to enlist revolving door lobbyists. Hence:

> **Hypothesis 2:** The more interest mobilisation a policy domain attracts, the less likely it is that hiring from the public sector will lead to more access.

## 6.3 Research Design

This paper relies on the data from the CIG-survey, a tool designed to examine organisational characteristics and policy activities of interest groups in a comparative setting (for details see Beyers et al., 2020, www.cigsurvey.eu). The survey spanned from March 2015 to June 2020 and targeted senior leaders within interest groups. Our analyses draw from evidence from a diverse range of countries, encompassing Western (Belgium and the Netherlands), Eastern (Czech Republic, Lithuania, and Poland), Southern (Portugal), and Northern (Sweden) European regions. This selection resulted in a heterogeneous mix of political systems characterized by variations in economic size, state-society relations, and democratic maturity. We are confident that this diversity among the countries examined enhances the generalizability of our findings, extending their relevance to a broader array of European systems.

The dependent variable in our analysis is the *level of access*. In line with previous research (Albareda, 2020; A. Binderkrantz et al., 2015,

2017), we do not conceive of access as a binary phenomenon but instead focus on gradations of access. For this reason, access is operationalised measuring the frequency of contact within both governmental and parliamentary arenas. Specifically, we rely on the following survey question: '*During the last 12 months, how often has your group been in contact with the following political institutions and agencies in order to influence public policies*?'. The following institutional answer-categories were offered: (1) national ministers and their assistants, (2) national civil servants working in departmental ministries, (3) elected members from the majority or governing parties of the national parliament and (4) elected members from minority or opposition parties of the national parliament. Respondents were asked to indicate for whether on a yearly basis they had contact 'never (=1)', 'at least once (=2)', 'at least quarterly (=3)', 'at least monthly (=4)' and 'at least weekly (=5)'. We calculated a mean score for each group by summing the numerical values across all categories and dividing it by four. We are confident that the resultant scale is adequate to measure for several reasons. First, it captures exclusive contacts, as policymakers, acting as gatekeepers, granted interest groups access to relevant venues (Binderkrantz et al., 2017). Second, it encompasses contacts within both governmental and parliamentary arenas (Binderkrantz et al., 2015). Lastly, our measure accounts for the non-linear nature of access within which there is a lower threshold and subsequent declining marginal returns on access to policymaking arenas (Hanegraaff et al., 2020). Nonetheless, we are aware of the limitations of this self-reported measure, which can trigger cognitive biases. However, it remains difficult to find uniform and comparable unobtrusive measures of access across different political systems. Nonetheless, evidence from the EU-level data in the CIG-survey project confirms that a simple survey questions display considerable strength in predicting the number of meetings as indicated by publicly available government records (Beyers and Belli, 2020).

Our primary explanatory variable centres on the inclination to recruit individuals from the public sector, gauged through the survey question: '*What are the typical backgrounds of your paid staff members? Please*

*tick all boxes that apply*'. Respondents were presented with a set of employees' backgrounds (see Appendix D Table D1). We constructed our revolving door measure by collapsing the items 'experience in a government agency' and 'experience in party politics'. This variable delineates organisations into two groups: those employing staff with backgrounds in the public sector and those that do not hire former public officials. Admittedly, this measure might be considered crude as it lacks specifics regarding the duration of public sector experience, or the proportion of an organisation's staff sourced from the public sector. However, despite its limitations, this measure aligns with our aim to assess whether groups employing individuals from the public sector achieve more frequent access compared to those that do not. Additionally, recognizing the potential differential impact of different types of public sector experiences on access, the Appendix D Table D2 offers a supplementary robustness check. This check examines the distinct effects of hiring former politicians versus hiring former government agency staff. Furthermore, Appendix D Table D3 presents a more nuanced analysis, evaluating whether hiring former politicians facilitates parliamentary access while recruiting government agency staff leads to increased governmental access.

We furthermore expect that the relationship between revolving doors and the level of access is contingent on the level of interest mobilisation in a policy area. We constructed this measure by aggregating the responses of respondents in each system to the question: '*Looking at the list below: which areas is your organisation involved in?*'. For each of the 22 policy fields, we counted the number of organisations indicating that they are active in it. Appendix D Table D4 provides an overview of the level of interest mobilisation across policy fields and countries.

Various control variables were integrated in the models to account for alternative explanations. On the group-level, we first tested whether policymakers make a distinction between group types (Hanegraaff & Berkhout, 2019). In the extant literature, scholars often point toward a business bias. Therefore, we tested whether 'Business' interests (including

business associations and professional organisations) gain more frequent access than 'Other' interests (including identity and cause organisations, labour groups, leisure associations, associations representing public authorities and a rest category). Second, well-staffed groups are expected to enjoy more access because they have the necessary personnel to collect, process, and communicate expert knowledge to policymakers (Stevens & De Bruycker, 2020). We subsequently control for the number of full-time equivalent lobbying staff working in an organisation. Third, we control for functional differentiation as several scholars highlight that it helps to monitor the behaviour of public officials and to notice the emergence of new policy initiatives at early stages, which enable groups to develop expert-based information demanded by policymakers (Albareda, 2020). To gauge functional differentiation, we distinguish between groups that have established committees for specific tasks and those that do not. Fourth, we included a measure that captures the intensity of inside lobbying, specifically how frequently organisations themselves initiated contacts with policymakers, ranging from 'never =(1)' to 'weekly (=5)'. Indeed, not all organisations are equally interested in gaining access as some may prefer to remain outsiders. As such, the latter may gain less frequent contacts with policymakers compared to groups that actively seek to attain 'insider' status (Dür & Mateo, 2016). As one may argue that these organisational controls may affect the tendency of interest groups to hire revolving door lobbyists, we conducted a VIF test (see Appendix D Table D5), which confirms that collinearity is not an issue in our empirical analysis.

On the system-level, we control for type of interest mediation system by drawing on the index of neo-corporatism of Jahn (2016). As part of neo-corporatist practices, policymakers may grant access exclusively to only a set of key players. Additionally, we accounted for the maturity of the democratic system. Old and more established democratic systems in countries like Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden have evolved to place more emphasis on accommodating diverse societal interests, resulting in policymakers feeling greater pressure to distribute their attention evenly among various groups. Conversely, in 'New'

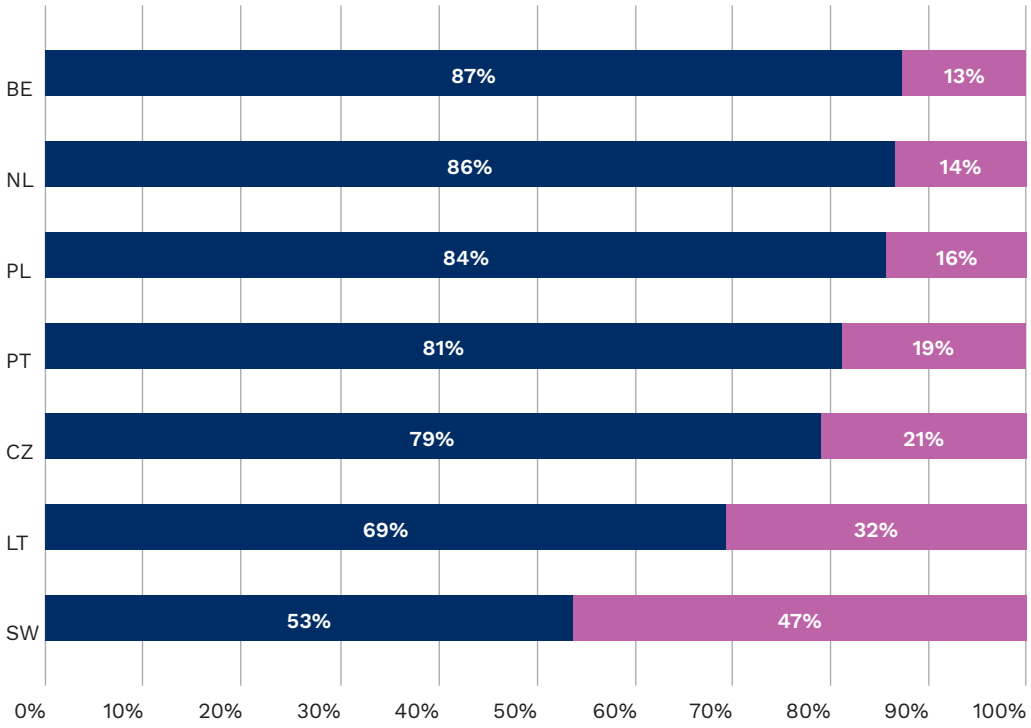
democracies such as the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland, and Portugal, the relatively shorter period of democratic development may mean policymakers face different pressures, potentially leading to differing patterns of attention allocation among interest groups (Stevens, 2022).

## 6.4 Analysis

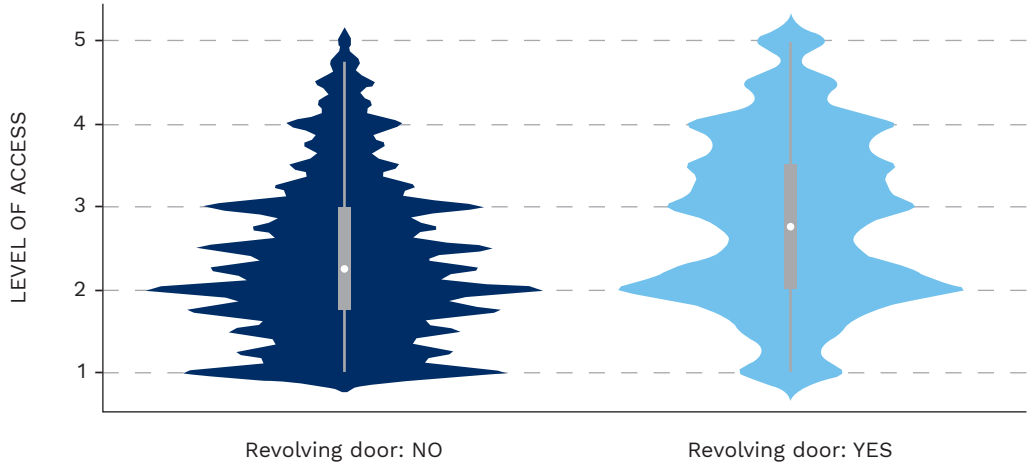
Before examining the hypotheses, we first explore the distribution of the independent variable. On average, 74.5% of organisations refrain from involvement in revolving door practices, while 25.5% of these groups have staff members originating from the public sector. Further investigation into variations across political systems (see Figure 1) reveals that revolving door practices exist within both established and emerging democracies.

Remarkably, Swedish organisations notably stand out by significantly recruiting from the public sector, exceeding the rate by over three times compared to groups in Belgium. Since the 1980s, Sweden's transition from a corporatist model to a more pluralistic system has empowered new interest groups and expanded the scope of lobbying activities (Selling, 2015). This shift has created a larger space for former public officials and political aides to transition into lobbying roles within the private sector. Additionally, the convergence between major political factions and the growing influence of interest groups have further facilitated the movement of individuals between the public and private sectors in Sweden.

## Figure 1: The propensity to hire revolving door lobbyists across political systems




## Figure 1: The propensity to hire revolving door lobbyists across political systems



Furthermore, we explore the bivariate relationship between revolving doors and access. Figure 2 shows the distribution of access by the propensity to hire from the public sector. It illustrates that groups that employ staff with public sector backgrounds gain more frequent access than groups that do not. A Spearman rank order correlation demonstrates that this positive relationship is significant ($r = 0.21$ $n = 6{,}358$, $p = 0.00$).

We utilize multi-level linear regression models to assess whether this finding holds in a multivariate setting. Due to the nested nature of interest groups within countries, these regressions incorporate random intercepts specific to the countries of origin for these organisations. Additionally, some organisations indicated activity across multiple policy fields in the survey. On average, respondents indicated organisational activity in approximately four policy fields. As such, the unit of analysis becomes the organisation-policy field dyad. One limitation of this approach is that we solely observe the frequency of access at the organisational level rather than within specific policy fields. Still, analysing organisation-policy field dyads remains valuable as it maximizes the available data and allows for a comprehensive examination of the overall engagement and activity of organisations across various policy areas (also discussed in Hanegraaff et al., 2020 following a similar approach). Nonetheless, we address this flaw in our research design by conducting additional analyses focusing on organisations active in a single policy field (as outlined in Appendix D Table D6). For these organisations we can be sure that the level of interest mobilisation and the degree of access we measure are related to the same policy field. It should be noted, however, that these organisations may be different from the average organisation (as they are policy specialists).

The results of our regression analyses are presented in Table 1. In Model 1, we examine the direct impact of our main independent variable, the inclination to employ revolving door lobbyists (H1). To investigate our second hypothesis, we assess the interaction between our revolving door measures and interest mobilisation in Model 2. When

interpreting the main effects in Model 1, we see that hiring from the public sector significantly increases the level of access, which supports *Hypothesis 1*. Whereas groups that do not employ professionals with public sector experience have a predicted access score of 2.42 (SE = 0.07), organisations that actively recruit former public officials have a significantly higher predicted value of 2.58 (SE = 0.07). In line with studies presuming a positive impact of hiring from the public sector on organisational effectiveness (e.g. LaPira & Thomas, 2017a; Belli & Bursens, 2021), we find that groups that employ revolving door lobbyists enjoy significantly frequent access to decision- making venues. In addition, increased interest mobilisation in a policy domain leads to less access. Under low levels of interest mobilisation (μ - 1SD), organisations have a predicted access value of 2.51 (SE = 0.07). In contrast, the predicted access score for high levels of interest mobilisation (μ + 1SD) is significantly lower: 2.33 (SE = 0.08). This is not surprising as previous studies pointed out that when a larger number of advocates are active in a particular policy field, policymakers are more selective regarding whom to grant access (Hanegraaff et al., 2020).

## Table 1: Multi-level linear regression on the level of access

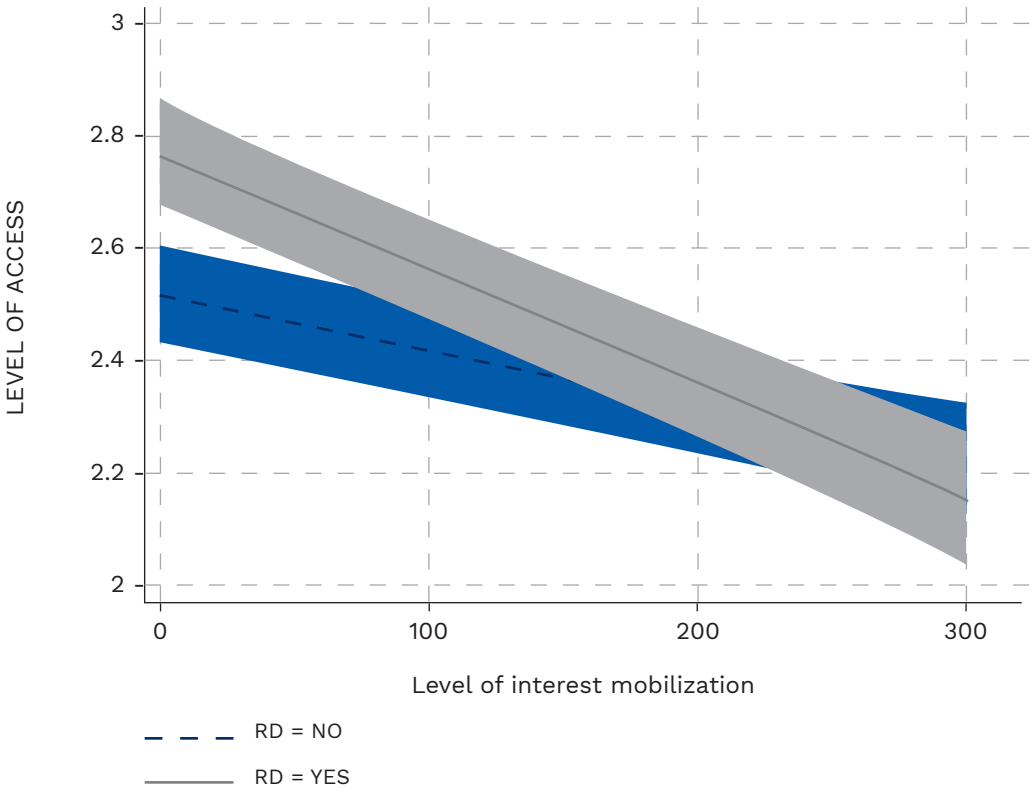
| PREDICTOR | MODEL 1 | | MODEL 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Independent variables** | | | | |
| Revolving door (ref = no) | 0.153*** | (0.021) | 0.254*** | (0.043) |
| Interest mobilisation | -0.001*** | (0.000) | -0.001*** | (0.000) |
| **Interactions** | | | | |
| Revolving door x Interest mobilisation | | | -0.001*** | (0.000) |
| **Control Variables** | | | | |
| Group type (ref = Business) | 0.077*** | (0.019) | 0.077*** | (0.019) |
| Staff size | 0.129*** | (0.009) | 0.129*** | (0.009) |
| Functional differentiation (ref = no) | 0.172*** | (0.020) | 0.172*** | (0.020) |
| Inside lobbying | 0.552*** | (0.001) | 0.553*** | (0.001) |
| Corporatism | -0.011 | (0.0107) | -0.011 | (0.0107) |
| System maturity (ref = new) | -0.288 | (0.0194) | -0.288 | (0.0194) |
| **Country-level intercept** | 0.035 | (0.019) | 0.035 | (0.019) |
| **Fit statistics** | | | | |
| N | 6,206 | | 6,206 | |
| Df | 11 | | 12 | |
| AIC | 13,314.57 | | 13,109.14 | |
| BIC | 13,388.64 | | 13,389.94 | |

Note: standard errors are shown in parentheses. *p < 0.10. **p < 0.05. ***p <0.01

Examining the interaction term *revolving door × interest mobilisation* in Model 2 reveals that the effect of hiring from the public sector is nuanced. The negative interaction coefficient suggests that within policy areas where interest mobilisation is minimal, employing revolving door lobbyists enhances access. Furthermore, the positive coefficient associated with the revolving door variable in Model 2 illustrates how its effect intensifies in policy areas with no interest mobilisation. Figure 3 visually illustrates this interaction by presenting variations in predicted values of access across different levels of interest mobilisation and the inclination of interest groups to enlist revolving door lobbyists. For interest groups engaged in policy domains with low interest mobilisation (involving 50 active organisations), those employing individuals from the public sector have a predicted access score of 2.67 (SE = 0.08). Conversely, interest groups not employing revolving door lobbyists exhibit a significantly lower predicted access score of 2.47 (SE = 0.07). On the other hand, in policy domains with high interest mobilisation (involving 250 active organisations), interest groups hiring professionals with public sector experience show a predicted access score of 2.26 (SE = 0.07), while those not hiring revolving door lobbyists have a slightly higher predicted access score of 2.28 (SE = 0.08), although this difference is not statistically significant.

In summary, our findings suggest that employing revolving door lobbyists might offer advantages in policy areas with low interest mobilisation. However, their impact on access appears less significant in policy domains characterized by high interest mobilisation. These results underscore the nuanced role of hiring former public officials as lobbyists in gaining access, contingent upon the specific policy environment.

## Figure 3: Predicted values of gaining access to different levels of interest mobilisation by hiring revolving door lobbyists




Our control variables also yield interesting insights, confirming well-established findings in the interest groups' literature, showing robustness of the data we employed. First, we find evidence of a business bias regarding access to the policymaking (Hanegraaff & Berkhout, 2019).

Second, we find support for the positive relationship between staff size and access — one of the best-established effects in the interest group literature (Binderkrantz et al., 2015). Thirdly, functional differentiation into specialized committees seems to allow organisation to interact more efficiently with policymakers, hence gain more access (Albareda, 2020). Fourthly, groups that engage more in inside lobbying

evidently are more likely to gain more contact with policymakers. Lastly, the lack of significant coefficients concerning country-level differences indicates the resilience of our argument across diverse political systems, irrespective of the type of interest mediation system and the level of democratic maturity.

## 6.5 Conclusions

This paper was set out to explain under which conditions hiring revolving door lobbyists will lead to more frequent access. The main argument put forward was that the impact of recruiting from the public sector on gaining access depends on the level of interest mobilisation in policy areas. Our main expectation was that employing former public officials would be more effective for interest groups active in policy domains with low levels of interest mobilisation. Conversely, when policy domains attract intensive interest mobilisation, the competitive advantage of groups hiring from the public sector disappears compared to those that do not employ former staff with public sector experience. To test these expectations, survey data from seven European political systems were utilised, and the analysis demonstrated that the revolving door phenomenon plays a crucial role in explaining interest group access to policymaking. Nonetheless, the beneficial role of recruiting from the public sector is contingent on the level of interest mobilisation in policy domains.

Our study has clear normative implications. At first glance, our results paint a somewhat apolitical picture of policy-making where the understanding of complex political processes and the ability to convert complex and technical policy expertise into tangible policy options hold significant sway (Belli & Bursens, 2021; McCrain, 2018; Thomas & LaPira, 2017). In other words, revolving door lobbyists have substantial opportunities to leverage their process-oriented knowledge for political gains. However, the findings also suggest that interest mobilisation and increased lobbying pressures can counterbalance the beneficial impact

of hiring from the public sector in gaining access. This nuanced perspective challenges the widespread concern that hiring revolving door lobbyists grants organisations a golden key to political-administrative venues.

While this research makes valuable contributions to ongoing debates, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. One pitfall of the analyses presented in our paper is that there is a measurement problem with the dependent variable (access), which is not measured at the same level as our critical moderating variable (interest mobilisation). For our units of observation, which are organisation–policy field combinations, access is measured at the level of the organisation, whereas the level of interest mobilisation is measured at the level of the policy field. However, the access that organisations gain can be related to multiple policy fields. While we tried to account for this mismatch in the level at which both variables are measured, future studies should address this issue by adopting a more aligned measurement strategy that captures both variables at compatible levels of analysis. Moreover, our data does not allow us to account for the duration of public sector experience, or the proportion of an organisation's staff sourced from the public sector. Subsequent research could address this limitation by integrating organisational data with information about the career backgrounds of group staff to gain a more detailed understanding of the relationship between revolving doors and access (Halpin & Lotric, 2023). Lastly, it is important to note that our statistical analyses do allow us to establish the causal claims we propose, and it remains plausible that the causal direction of certain multivariate findings could be reversed. Still, the sequence of causation we present aligns with a substantial body of empirical research on the effects of revolving doors and interest group mobilisation. In this vein, we suggest that future studies employ qualitative process-tracing methodologies to explore the underlying mechanisms more comprehensively and utilize experimental research designs to validate the suggested causal relationships.

Despite these shortcomings, this study makes a substantial contri-

bution by examining the conditional nature of the link between hiring revolving door lobbyists and accessing decision- making processes. While the transition of high-profile public figures into lobbying roles has captured heightened societal attention, comprehensive political science research investigating the effects of revolving doors in Europe remains limited. Specifically, the exploration of how the efficacy of revolving door practices in facilitating access and influence might vary across different policy dynamics has been rarely explored. This paper presents one of the first comparative analysis of the effect of the propensity to hire from the public sector on access in a European context. Its primary finding underscores the noteworthy impact of revolving door practices on shaping patterns of access for interest groups, particularly within policy domains characterized by limited interest mobilisation.

# 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The “revolving door” concept typically refers to the movement of people, often professionals or experts, between positions in the public sector (government or government-related roles) and organized interests. This movement of people from public sector to organized interest can have detrimental consequences for interest representations. Former public officials moving to interest representation carry with then connections, insider knowledge and information rising concerns about potential conflicts of interest. It can also raise questions about transparency, accountability, and whether the interests of the public are adequately represented when such transitions occur.

While lobbying and interest representation itself is a legitimate and recognized means of influencing government decisions, it has faced criticism for its potential to undermine democratic processes and accountability. These criticisms are particularly concerning within the EU context. On the one hand, interest organisations are expected to fulfil the essential role of representing civil society, effectively acting as intermediaries between the public and policymakers. However, on the other hand, there have been instances such as the Barroso gate that cast doubt within public opinion about whether organized interests truly serve as a transmission belt between civil society and interest organisations if they are more focused on pursuing their own self-interests. Despite the media attention on scandals, we know quite little about the extent to which revolving door dynamics are common in the EU interest groups populations. Within this context, the research questions addressed in this study gain prominence: **why do interest groups hire from the public sector? To what extent and under which conditions do interest groups hire from the public sector? Under which conditions do interest groups who hire from the public sector gain access to policymaking?**

Limited research has been conducted within the EU context concerning the revolving door phenomenon. Thus, to effectively address these questions within the EU context, it was imperative to rely significantly on the body of American interest group literature, in which the study of revolving doors between interest groups and public officials working in governmental agency has a long tradition. As highlighted in seminal works like Heinz et al.'s research from 1993, this literature has put in contrast two prominent hypotheses concerning the revolving door phenomenon: first, the notion of "*cozy triangles*," where a mutual exchange of knowledge fosters a symbiotic relationship between the public and private sectors (Herring, 1929, Deakin 1966). Second, the "*good old boy*" hypothesis posits that lobbyists transition from the public to the private sector due to their in-depth understanding of policy processes, leveraging this knowledge in their new roles (Milbrath, 1963). Recent American studies, which have evolved from these seminal works, have added another important piece to the puzzle: process-oriented expertise. For instance, the work of LaPira and Thomas (2017) highlighted this aspect, showing how such expertise gives certain groups an edge in influencing policy.

Various other studies have proposed the personal connection hypothesis, focusing on the personal incentives of lobbyists transitioning from the public to the private sector and studying how experience in the public sector translates in high salary in the lobbying business (Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012; McCrain, 2019). Starting from this basis, in this dissertation revolving door dynamics have been studied from an organisational perspective in two difference stages of the influence production process: strategy choice (why interest groups hire from the public sector) and access (under which conditions hiring from the public sector increases access to policymaking).

This chapter summarizes key findings on EU interest groups and the revolving door, connecting them to existing research. It also outlines limitations and future research directions. A detailed summary of the findings follows in the next section.

## 7.1 Findings and Implications for the Interest Groups Literature: Public Sector Expertise in European Civil Society Organisations

What does the empirical evidence across the four chapters tell us about revolving door dynamics in the EU? Upon reviewing the findings presented across the different chapters, a clear pattern emerges indicating that **EU interest groups intentionally recruit individuals from the public sector because they seek to obtain process-oriented expertise**. This finding occurs in the first empirical study, which examined whether interest groups representatives actively seek out and purposefully hire individuals with public sector backgrounds. The study underscores the crucial role of public sector experience for interest organisations which focus on strategies directed towards the EC and the EP to effectively navigate the policymaking landscape. When looking at the rationale beyond the demand for lobbyists with a public sector background the study challenges the notion that personal connections are the key to successful advocacy in European institutions. Instead, it emphasizes the **crucial role of process-oriented knowledge** – namely understanding how EU institutions operate within and interact with each other. The study shows that while policy expertise is important, interest groups prioritize lobbyists with insights into institutional workings proved by experiences in the public sector over those solely possessing policy expertise. Interviews highlight that in EU institutions marked by extensive staff rotation, personal connections tend to be unstable, whereas comprehending the intricacies of policymakers' inner workings necessitates an understanding that solely experience in the public sector can offer.

The finding that process-oriented knowledge is central to organised interests hiring strategies engages with debates across different academic disciplines. First, the emphasis on process- oriented knowledge as a key driver in hiring strategies for interest groups resonates across both EU and US lobbying landscapes. As La Pira and Thomas (2017) suggest, this specific expertise found within the public sector

offers a distinct advantage for organisations seeking to gain access and influence. This aligns with findings from both regions, where interest groups recognize the value of recruiting individuals with public sector experience to better anticipate and navigate the complexities of policymaking processes, particularly when engaging with institutions like the European Commission at the early stage of the legislative process. In line with Baumgartner et al. (2009), process knowledge acquired in the public sector emerges as the most important resource for monitor policymakers and increase the chances for interest organisations to lobby effectively.

Second, this study enhances our understanding of managing interest organisations (including business, citizens and cause groups) and the strategic design of lobbying capabilities, particularly in the context of overcoming resource limitations (Albareda, 2018, 2020; Albareda & Braun, 2019; Binderkrantz, 2009; Jordan & Maloney, 1998; Kohler-Koch, 2010). Drawing insights from resource dependency theory, this research expands existing literature by highlighting the strategic recruitment of public sector individuals as a response to resource constraints faced by interest groups (Malatesta & Smith, 2014). Interest group representatives recognize that hiring from the public sector is a necessary and effective strategy for developing, acquiring, and maintaining organisational resources. This emphasizes that interest groups, while managing their internal democratic structures (membership involvement) and organisational capacity (professionalization level), actively seek human capital from the public sector to enhance their ability to generate, process, and communicate information effectively to policymakers.

Related to the previous point, the qualitative study suggests that smaller organisations and non-profit entities in Brussels may place even greater emphasis on recruiting staff and lobbyists with public sector backgrounds. This aligns with research on non-profit leadership, which indicates that managers in this sector often prioritize cooperation and understanding of other organisations (particularly public ones) over specific expertise to balance mission and resource demands

(Chetkovich & Frumkin, 2003; Frumkin & Andre-Clark, 1999; Suárez, 2011).

Third, this study contributes to the literature on organisational politics and political skills by illuminating the vital role of public sector experience in advocacy work. It underscores that effective advocacy within interest organisations necessitates a profound understanding of the intricacies of the public sector—an essential dimension crucial for internal organisational functioning, deployment of lobbying strategies and the exercise of influence (Ferris et al., 2007; Holyoke et al., 2015).

Last, the study suggests that the pursuit of human capital from the public sector is a practice deeply ingrained within the Brussels interest group community (Adler & Haas, 1992). And the prevalence of "revolving door" practices in Brussels and calls for further research on how these practices impact civil society strategies and EU governance legitimacy. Specifically, it warrants an examination of whether access to human resources from the public sector contributes to more effective representation or perpetuates inherent biases in political mobilisation (Beyers et al., 2008). On the one hand, the recruitment of individuals from the public sector could be interpreted as a mechanism aimed at redistributing participation, potentially favouring groups that have fewer financial resources for engagement in policymaking. Conversely, the phenomenon of the revolving door might stem from the increasing professionalization within interest groups, inadvertently weakening the connection between these groups and their memberships. This could further entrench existing inequalities within interest group populations ( Hwang & Powell, 2009; Maloney, 2015; Heylen et al., 2020).

## 7.2 Public Sector Recruitment and Interest Groups: Insights from Cross-sectional Analysis

Upon establishing the significance of recruiting individuals from the public sector for interest organisations, this manuscript delves into

an exploration of the circumstances that dictate when and why interest groups opt to hire from this domain. Through a large-N analysis and using data from the Comparative Interest Group-survey project (CIG, -survey), the study reveals that revolving door practices are common across interest groups politically active in Brussels, confirming the finding of the small-N qualitative analysis. Yet the **propensity to hire from the public sector isn't uniform across interest organisations**. Instead, specific conditions influence the likelihood of attracting or seeking employees from the public sector. Citizen organisations are more likely to hire individuals with public sector experience compared to business groups, especially when they have greater resources. This suggests a resource- dependent strategy, where citizen groups leverage public sector expertise to navigate complex policy environments and compensate for potential resource limitations.

While existing research has examined various aspects of this phenomenon, including corporate influence (Luechinger & Moser, 2020, 2014), financial regulation (Chalmers et al., 2022), and individual career transitions (Coen & Vannoni, 2016, 2018, 2020), this chapter's unique contribution to the interest group literature is its pioneering attempt to observe the inclination of a wide array of interest groups towards hiring from the public sector.

The finding that **wealthier citizen groups are more inclined to hire from the public sector when they have the financial means** challenges the simple notion that they solely engage in revolving door practices to catch up with business groups, who have historically enjoyed stronger representation in EU decision-making (Rasmussen & Carroll, 2014; Mahoney & Beckstrand, 2011). Instead, it suggests a more nuanced approach where citizen groups strategically utilize public sector expertise to enhance their political capabilities and overall effectiveness.

This practice carries several implications. Firstly, hiring individuals with public sector backgrounds can elevate the perceived legitimacy and effectiveness of citizen groups, especially those aligned with social

or community-oriented causes (Coen & Vannoni, 2018). This alignment strengthens their voice and ability to present their interests to policy-makers. Secondly, recruiting from the public sector can provide citizen groups with greater access to public resources, funding, and governmental support, further empowering them to pursue their goals. However, this advantage may create a disparity, potentially disadvantaging newer or less established groups who struggle to attract individuals with public sector experience.

Future research could delve deeper into the challenges faced by less-connected interest groups in recruiting from the public sector and the strategies they employ to overcome these barriers (Junk et al., 2023). Additionally, further exploration of the influence of context on interest groups' recruitment choices and access to specific human capital would build upon existing research on lobbying strategies, organisational structures, and coalition-building (Binderkrantz, 2009; Bolleyer & Correa, 2020; De Bruycker, 2016b; De Bruycker & Beyers, 2019a; Jordan & Maloney, 1998; Klüver, 2012; Klüver, 2013).

This study contributes to the literature on the revolving door phenomenon by considering the institutional context and the complexity of the policy environment (Mahoney, 2007). It highlights that interest groups strategically mobilize human resources, particularly from the public sector, to navigate complex policy landscapes, such as the multi-layered and fragmented EU institutional framework (Eising, 2008; Grande, 1996).

## 7.3 Revolving Door and Access to the EU Institution

The second part of this dissertation has treated propensity to hire from the public sector as an independent variable focusing on access as the core dependent variable. Access is conceived as the moment when an interest group is granted a contact with policymakers ( Binderkrantz et al., 2015; Binderkrantz et al., 2017; Binderkrantz & Pedersen, 2020; Fraussen & Halpin, 2016). Both empirical studies (chapter 6 and 7) exploring the relationship between access and propensity to hire from the public sector emphasized that employing individuals with public sector experience is embedded to the organised interests' operational strategies.

The third empirical study within this dissertation reveals a significant positive correlation between an interest group's propensity to hire individuals from the public sector and the level of access they secure to policymakers. This relationship holds true when measuring access through both direct observation of interactions within legislative venues (e.g., frequency of meetings with the European Commission) and self-reported measures (e.g., participation in advisory councils). However, the relationship between access and revolving door practices is more nuanced than initially anticipated. While hiring from the public sector positively influences the degree of access, it does not necessarily increase the likelihood of initially gaining access to policymakers.

This finding is crucial for understanding the dynamics of policy insider communities within a pluralistic system of interest representation. The impact of the revolving door on access suggests a reinforcement of the insider-outsider divide within EU interest group communities (Fraussen et al., 2015; Fraussen & Beyers, 2016). By recruiting lobbyists with public sector experience, interest groups engage more frequently in policy discussions, increasing their chances of transitioning into insider status. However, it's important to note that increased access does not automatically translate to greater influence, as this dissertation

does not quantify lobbying success or influence. Nevertheless, by establishing a positive correlation between access and public sector recruitment, this thesis demonstrates that revolving door practices can significantly impact access and the overall influence production process.

Furthermore, this research contributes to the discourse on the revolving door phenomenon within the EU context, drawing parallels with the American system. It enriches the literature on access to policymaking by highlighting public sector hiring as a means to expand lobbying capacity. These findings also hold implications for policymakers who may lack necessary information. Interest groups that recruit from the public sector are potentially better equipped to navigate and translate complex issues, aligning with the theory of the revolving door of process-oriented expertise (LaPira, 2014; LaPira & Thomas, 2017; Holyoke et al., 2015). This suggests that staff with public sector experience could potentially reduce complexity for policymakers, facilitating more effective comprehension and decision-making.

In conclusion, this research confirms the significance of hiring from the public sector as a strategic move for interest groups to build lobbying capacity and gain access to policymakers. It also sheds light on the potential role of these groups in aiding policymakers' understanding of complex issues, thereby potentially influencing policy outcomes more effectively. Additionally, these findings contribute to the discourse on bias in interest groups' access to policymaking, suggesting that the revolving door variable should be considered when examining potential biases (Rasmussen & Gross, 2015; Lowery et al., 2015; Hanegraaff & Berkhout, 2019).

## 7.4 Policy Access: the Interplay between Degree of Professionalisation and Propensity to Hire from the Public Sector

Another significant contribution of this dissertation lies in scrutinizing the positive impact of revolving door practices on access. It does so by examining organisational factors that may reinforce or moderate its effect on policy access.

This study examines the relationship between access to policymakers and revolving door practices, considering the dominant logic within an interest organisation: the logic of influence- or the logic of membership. The dissertation tested whether professionalized groups hiring from the public sector gain more access than similar organisations without such hiring practices. It was hypothesized that the impact of public sector hiring on access would vary depending on the level of membership influence.

To assess the prevalence of the logic of influence, the study examined the extent to which paid staff influence decision-making, policy positions, and lobbying strategies (Bolleyer & Correa, 2020; Maloney, 2015). Conversely, the logic of membership was analysed by measuring member involvement in key organisational decisions.

The analysis confirmed that hiring from the public sector positively predicts access among highly professionalized organisations. However, at lower professionalization levels, the revolving door shows no significant relationship with access. Professionalized groups with public sector hires demonstrate greater access to policymaking compared to those without such hires. Interestingly, membership influence does not impact the degree of access.

The findings of this study hold significant implications for understanding the dynamics of interest representation within civil society

organisations. It reinforces the argument that only a select set of organised interests manage to attain the status of insiders, potentially deviating from the desired representative diversity. The status of policy insiders - which typically depends on resource endowment, policy expertise, political support and organisational features (e.g., number of employees) – is also defined by the interplay between their degree of professionalization and their access to human resources from the public sector (see Fraussen & Beyers, 2016).

This thesis also corroborates existing findings, showing that involving members does not have an effect on access to the policymaking (Albareda, 2018; Albareda & Braun, 2019; Albareda, 2020; Grömping & Halpin, 2019). On the contrary, these findings reiterate that for organized interests when the logic of membership prevails it lowers the chance to voice interests effectively. The trade-off between a logic of influence and a logic of membership is not that pronounced in the day-to-day operation of EU interest organisations as we see that at high level of membership involvement, organisations still profit significantly from the revolving door and improve their access, more when they are highly professionalised.

## 7.5 Revolving Door Dynamics and the Policy Context

After providing evidence that hiring from the public sector is important for gaining higher levels of access, this thesis engaged with how the policy context affects this relationship.

Building upon the findings that highlight the contingent nature of revolving door effects based on organisational characteristics and the broader policy environment (Klüver et al., 2015), this thesis proposed that as interest group mobilisation intensifies within a policy area, the positive impact of hiring from the public sector on access diminishes.

Drawing on the distinction between niche policy domains and bandwagon areas (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998), the hypothesis posits that in bandwagon areas with high levels of interest group activity and public attention, the advantages of process-oriented expertise diminish.

The rationale behind this hypothesis is that in bandwagon policy areas, policymakers face intense pressure and scrutiny, shifting their focus from specialized policy expertise to broader political support. Consequently, interest groups prioritize coalition-building and representing diverse societal segments to demonstrate political backing. While process-oriented expertise remains valuable, its importance pales in comparison to the need for showcasing political support. As a result, the propensity to hire from the public sector has a lesser impact on access in such scenarios.

Chapter 6 confirms these expectations, demonstrating that employing revolving door lobbyists offers advantages by increasing access in policy areas with low interest mobilisation, where process-oriented expertise and insider knowledge hold greater value for policymakers.

The interest group literature has long acknowledged that the success of interest organisations in lobbying is influenced by the policy context. This context is shaped by factors such as the type of policy, existing norms, issue importance, and levels of conflict (Eising, 2007; Klüver et al., 2015; Mahoney, 2007; Smith, 2000; Baumgartner, 2009). This manuscript offers a fresh perspective to this body of work by providing more evidence about the link between access and the effect of the policy context. It has explored how propensity to hire from the public sector, particularly in policy areas with relatively low levels of interest mobilisation, reinforces the relationship between policy context and interest groups success.

One implication of this study is showing the value of process-oriented expertise for organised interests. This value amplifies when interest groups aim to gain access in policy domains with fewer mobilized groups.

Conversely, in areas marked by fragmentation, this expertise tends to diminish in significance. The discovery that lower interest mobilisation and a tendency to hire from the public sector led to increased access underscores several implications for fair representation within legislative arenas. First, in scenarios where public scrutiny is limited, and policymakers engage with only a handful of actors, there exists a risk of capture. Closed networks comprising entrenched interest groups with deep ties and insider knowledge about the public sector can impede new interest groups from entering the policy sphere and voicing their concerns. Second, organised groups with the resources to hire individuals with public sector experience gain an advantage in accessing policymakers, particularly in niche policy areas. This creates an uneven playing field, where less-resourced groups or those representing less popular causes may struggle to have their voices heard.

Unearthing the fact that within low levels of interest mobilisation, groups with staff originating from the public sector are more likely to secure increased legislative access represents an initial step for future research. Subsequent studies could delve deeper into how the revolving door practice shapes access to policymaking under different conditions tied to the nature of the policy issues in question. For instance, exploring how the positive relationship between access and the propensity to hire from the public sector varies based on factors such as lobbying coalitions, the complexity of issues, and levels of conflict in specific policy domains would provide valuable insights.

## 7.6 Broader Implications

While this research primarily focuses on the relationship between interest groups and government within the EU, its findings hold broader implications for understanding revolving door dynamics in transnational governance (Lucas et al., 2019; Seabrooke, 2014; Seabrooke & Tsingou, 2009, 2021;). As EU interest groups can be considered transnational

actors (Dür & Mateo, 2016), the observed positive relationship between access to policymaking and revolving door practices is relevant to scholars studying international organisations and their interactions with various stakeholders. Furthermore, the implications for national interest groups and their systems must also be considered. Revolving door dynamics can differ significantly between national and supranational levels, impacting access to policymaking in various ways or potentially not affecting access at all. These differences might include the extent of revolving door practices, regulatory frameworks, and the influence of political culture. National interest groups may encounter distinct challenges and opportunities depending on their specific democratic context, including variations in transparency norms, lobbying regulations, and public perceptions of government-industry interactions. This research contributes to the literature by highlighting the importance of comparing the diversity of national and EU-level systems of interest representation, as revolving door practices can affect—or not affect—access to policymaking differently across these levels (Berkhout et al., 2017).

The contribution of this thesis is also relevant for political economists researching regulatory and cognitive capture (Carpenter, 2014; Kwak, 2014). One key finding is that in policy areas with fewer mobilized interest groups, hiring from the public sector and a high degree of professionalization reinforce a divide between insider and outsider interest groups. This suggests that policymakers and regulators are more likely to receive expertise from organized interests with whom they are socialized, potentially limiting the influence of other interests on regulatory outcomes. This dynamic is particularly relevant for EU independent regulatory agencies in sectors like telecommunications, postal services, water, financial markets, health, and pharmaceuticals. Revolving door practices in these agencies can lead to regulatory capture, where former industry employees favour their previous employers, undermining regulatory independence. Although hiring industry-experienced individuals can bring valuable expertise, it also raises risks of conflicts of interest and public distrust. To address these risks,

transparency in hiring and strict conflict- of-interest policies are crucial. This thesis underscores the dual nature of revolving door practices: enhancing regulatory expertise but posing risks of capture and bias. Thus, the insights provided by this thesis are also relevant to scholars studying access and stakeholder representation in EU regulatory bodies (Arras and Beyers, 2020;

These findings also speak to organisational studies engaged with the constructivist theory concerning the revolving door as mechanisms involved in cultural capture and career socialisation (Georgakakis, 2013; Georgakakis & Rowell, 2013; Tyllström, 2021). The findings of this dissertation might suggest that the interest groups representatives' mindset might be influenced through their engagement with policymakers, at the expense of their constituency and so failing to perform their democratic function as 'transmission belt' of civil society.

## 7.7 Limitation of the Study

While the research sheds light on variation in terms of propensity to hire from the public sector across interest organisations and critical aspects of the relationship between propensity to hire from the public sector and access, certain limitations warrant consideration.

First, one issue surrounding the concept of the revolving door pertains to its ambiguous nature and the varied interpretations associated with it. The revolving door typically refers to the movement of individuals between the public sector (government or regulatory bodies) and the private sector (businesses, lobbying firms, or interest groups) (Salisbury et al., 1989a). Studies that have dealt with revolving door dynamics have extensively focused on how individual incentives affect regulatory behaviour, by identifying *ex ante (from the private to public sector*) and *ex post (from the public sector to the private sector)* (Gormley 1979; Dal Bo 2006). While the concept captures the movement

of people from the public sector towards interest organisations, there are conceptual challenge. Defining the “revolving door” is complex due to the diverse ways individuals move between the public and private sectors, including indirect influence and future employment expectations. This complexity poses challenges for quantifying and tracking the phenomenon. This dissertation further complicates the concept by adopting an organisational perspective, defining revolving door practices as the propensity of interest groups to hire from the public sector (ex-post dynamic). This approach, while offering valuable insights, acknowledges the limitations of “conceptual stretching” and the resulting measurement challenges. Thus, future research should refine the revolving door concept to capture greater variation and enable large-scale quantitative analysis.

Second, one weakness of this dissertation deriving from the conceptual stretching, is that approaching revolving door dynamics as propensity to hire from the public sector limits the large N analysis to measure the presence or the absence of staff with public sector background within interest organisations. This means that it does not make it possible to quantify how many lobbyists with public sector background populate interest organisations and what are their characteristics in terms of socio-demographic background, type of public sector careers and number of movements lobbyist make between the public and private sector.

Third, large-N follow up studies attempting to understand better why interest organisations hire from the public sector are paramount to support the findings that interest organisations strategically seek lobbyists with a public sector background and prefer these profiles because of their process-oriented expertise and inside knowledge. Due to the limitations which generally come with the small N qualitative studies, the applicability of the above-mentioned findings beyond the Brussels context are limited as generalizability of the research outcomes can be questioned. Consequently, the findings may overlook variations or nuances that exist beyond the limited sample.

Fourth, this dissertation found a consistent correlation between interest groups hiring people from the public sector and their level of access to policymakers. This is observed across different ways of measuring access, encompassing both self-reported survey data and objective measures (see chapter 5 and 6). This consistency holds true whether considering the EU interest groups population or expanding the analysis to include groups from other countries. However, the limitation of this correlation lies in its directionality. While the study considered various factors influencing access, proving a direct cause-and-effect relationship is difficult. Future research could use long-term studies to track changes in access before and after interest groups start hiring from the public sector. Studying situations with sudden changes in revolving door policies could also provide insights. However, even these approaches have limitations because external events like elections or scandals can also impact access over time.(Mahoney, 2007).

Fifth, this thesis argues that organizations following the logic of influence are more likely to benefit from hiring from the public sector. The interaction between a high level of professionalization and a propensity to hire from the public sector increases the likelihood of gaining access to executive branches. However, this finding should be interpreted with caution. It is possible that interest groups with large memberships do not need to hire from the public sector, as their substantial member base provides sufficient political currency to gain access to policymakers. This aspect requires further investigation to fully understand the dynamics at play.

Furthermore, the thesis is not able to assess the impact of the revolving door on influence, namely its effect on the policymaking such as regulatory decisions. Not be able to study the impact of revolving doors on the policymaking relates to the challenges of conceptualise and measuring influence. As it is often the case, for interest group scholars it is more practical to look at level of access as a precondition of influence (see Beyers 2020 for a discussion of measurements and comceptualisation of influence). Yet, the research strategy of linking

access and revolving door does not allow to provide the “smoking gun” evidence that hiring from the public sector leads to greater power in shaping policy and redistribute resources.

Last, this thesis primarily draws from literature developed within the American context, where the revolving door phenomenon between interest groups and policymakers has received considerable attention (e.g. Gormley, 1979; Cain & Drutman, 2014; Hall & Lorenz, 2018; LaPira & Thomas, 2016; Lazarus & McKay, 2012; Lazarus et al., 2016; McCrain, 2018; McKay & Lazarus, 2023; Shepherd & You, 2020). Despite revealing similarities within American theories on the revolving door and successfully applying these concepts to the EU context, this thesis lacks a systematic comparison of how revolving door dynamics operate across both political landscapes. Future research should aim to address this gap by conducting systematic comparative analyses to provide a more comprehensive understanding of revolving door mechanisms in different political contexts.

## 7.8 Normative Implications of the Study

This manuscript starts by analyzing the prevalence of revolving door practices within the Brussels interest group landscape. The research is motivated by normative concerns raised by advocacy groups and global movements regarding the potential impact of such practices on transparency within the EU.

To begin with, individual moving from public sector into interest organisations, from the public may misuse insider knowledge or process-oriented expertise to give certain private actors an unfair competitive advantage. This raises concerns about compromised opportunities for disadvantaged interest groups to establish and maintain close relationships with policymakers. As demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6, while the propensity to hire from the public sector may not directly influence

the likelihood of meeting policymakers, it does appear to provide an advantage in terms of 'amount' of access. This suggests that revolving door dynamics can favor certain interest groups at the expense of those lacking the resources to recruit individuals with public sector experience, potentially exacerbating existing inequalities in access and representation.

Furthermore, the advantages gained by interest groups through hiring individuals with public sector experience extend beyond financial resources and raise concerns about fair representation and democratic processes within the EU. Even grassroots organisations with strong internal democratic processes may struggle to have their voices heard by policymakers who might favor interacting with former colleagues representing organisations engaging in revolving door practices. This preference can potentially undermine the integrity of policy decisions and negotiations between civil society and decision-makers.

Additionally, the influence exerted by former EU officials leveraging their connections and insider knowledge for their new employers is a significant concern. This practice could skew the policymaking process in favor of those who can afford to hire such individuals, further exacerbating inequalities in representation and access.

Finally, revolving door practices can have an impact on public trust in the EU policymaking process. The perception of close connections and movement between interest groups and policymakers can lead to concerns that policies are being shaped to benefit specific interests rather than serving the broader public good. This erosion of trust can have detrimental consequences for the legitimacy and effectiveness of EU institutions and policies.

The EU has established rules and regulations to monitor interest organisations and reduce the risks of special interest or small set of interest capturing the decision-making process (see Naurin, 2007; Cini, 2008; Lehmann, 2003; Mihut, 2008; Dinan, 2021; Greenwood & Dreger,

2013; Sgueo, 2015). Some rules implemented to tackle revolving door dynamics include (1) a cooling off period of high-ranking EU officials which are required to adhere to an 18-month of avoidance of lobbying and advocating on topics related to their work. This period aims to avoid the misusage of insider knowledge and contacts for the benefit of private sector; (2) a Transparency Register compulsory for all lobbyists and interest groups to hold meetings with MEPs or other EU officials. This tool aims to provide a level of transparency about who is lobbying and influencing the EU decision making process; (3) an independent Ethics Committee that reviews cases where there might be potential conflict of interests. This committee can provide advice and recommendations on individual cases. These rules and mechanisms have faced criticism as they are hard to enforce or too lenient, especially for what it concerns lobbying activities.

This dissertation underscores the complex nature of revolving door practices within the EU interest group landscape. While acknowledging potential drawbacks such as insider dominance, conflicts of interest, and threats to transparency, it also recognizes the valuable exchange of expertise facilitated by movement between the public and private sectors. This exchange can lead to better-informed policy decisions and improved outcomes for the public good.

Similar to Putnam's observations in "Democracy in Flux" (2002), the dissertation suggests that the flow of human capital between sectors, driven by increased social interaction and enhanced social capital at the EU level, can reduce opportunism and promote policies that prioritize the common good. This allows interest organisations to effectively fulfill their "transmission belt function" by connecting citizens' interests with policymakers.

However, the potential for negative externalities, such as the exclusion of new interest groups from knowledge exchange and access networks, leading to disparities in influence, must be addressed. Therefore, a balanced approach is crucial, one that fosters an ethical,

accountable, and transparent framework for revolving door practices while ensuring inclusivity and fair representation within the EU policy arena. This involves carefully considering regulatory measures that mitigate risks without stifling the beneficial exchange of expertise and the dynamism it brings to the policy process.

Yet, the issue of mitigating and preventing revolving door dynamics within the EU decision- making process is complex and multifaceted. To enhance the effectiveness of existing regulations, several improvements can be proposed. First, strengthening the Transparency Register by making it mandatory for all lobbying activities, not just meetings with MEPs or other EU officials, would provide a more comprehensive view of lobbying activities and ensure greater transparency. Furthermore, enhancing the powers and resources of the Independent Ethics Committee to conduct thorough investigations and enforce recommendations, including imposing sanctions for breaches, would improve compliance with ethical standards and increase the deterrent effect of regulations. Finally, requiring all EU officials and MEPs to submit and regularly update detailed conflict of interest declarations would help identify and manage potential conflicts proactively, safeguarding the integrity of the decision-making process. By implementing these regulatory solutions, the EU can strengthen its efforts to monitor interest organizations, enhance transparency, and thereby building a more accountable and transparent system that better serves the public interest.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### *First empirical chapter: Revolving Doors in Brussels: Seeking Lobbyists from the Public Sector to Build Advocacy Capacities*

### Table A1. Participants recruitment strategy

**Recruitment:** An opt-in strategy was used to access leaders of interest organisations to find participants for the study. Opt-in strategies imply that participants are contacted and asked to express their desire to participate in the study. Contrary to the opt- out strategy, participants cannot be contacted twice, and no reply is considered as no consent. Participants were asked to express their desire to participate via email, using their contacts, which are publicly available on the website of the organisations. In addition to formal recruitment via email, through snowballing, additional potential participants were recommended by some organisations, and after verification of meeting criteria, those were contacted. All interviewees were sent an introductory document on the University of Antwerp letterhead paper containing information about the study's objectives. Over 51 emails, 17 responded positively to the request (details on timing and length of the interviews are provided in chapter 3). Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, interviews were conducted via video calls (Microsoft Teams). All the interviews were conducted in English, except for one, who identified better with Italian and requested it.

## Table A2. Pilot guide (questionnaire, vignettes, probing notes)

**SECTION A: OPENING QUESTION**

**Q1.** How do you label staff that works in the front line with the EU institutions?

**Q2.** What makes public affairs managers/policy officers/lobbysts an important for the mission of your organisation and why?

*Probe: the centrality of insider strategies.*

**SECTION B: INTERNAL HIRING PROCESS & RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES**

**Q3.** Would you please describe how the hiring process of a lobbyist unfolds step by step, in your organisation?

*Probe: Components of the hiring process*

- *decision making on the candidate's profile*
- *hiring process and channels*
- *decision-making on the final selection*

**Q4.** To what extent do members have a say on profiles you select.

*Probe: membership influence/involvement in hiring decision, membership influence/involvement in lobbying strategies*

**Follow up:** why are they/are they not involved? To what extent members are involved in the selection process? To what extent members shape lobbying/advocacy strategies?

**SECTION C: SKILLS & TASKS**

**Q5.** Which are the tasks a public affairs manager is supposed to perform for your organisation? Which type of professional qualifications and expertise do you expect lobbyists to possess?

*Probe: task*

- *Influencing, Monitoring*
- *Building Relationships*
- *Research*

*Probe: skills*

- *Analitical Skills, Soft Skills*
- *Communication and Messaging Skills*

*Commitment to organisational objectives*

**SECTION D: PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES**

**Q6.** Most of the job advertisement for the recruitment of lobbyists in Brussels specifies that an essential skill for associations as yours is 'an understanding and knowledge of the EU institutions. What does this entail from your perspective and why this is so essential?

*Probe: Career Background*

- *PublicSectorBackground*
- *PrivateSectorBackground*

**Follow up:** How do you think public affair managers develop these skills? Do you provide them with training about how to interact with EU institutions? Could you tell me more about these training programs? Could you explain to me more in detail what do you mean by "learning by doing it?". Could you describe which type of networks public affairs managers/ policy officers/ are expected to maintain?

**VIGNETTES**

**Q7.** Could you look at the following features/profile of three potential candidates. For each profile, would you tell me more about the advantages and disadvantages of hiring such a profile and why you see it in this way?
*(Note: the vignettes are shown one by one, the order changes across participants).*

*Probe: ideal skills of a candidate,*
- *Value of public sector experience*

*Value of sector-based technical expertise*

**Candidate 1**
Maria has 10 years of experience working as a police officer in your sector. She has worked consistently in the same sector for 10 years. You have interviewed the candidate and she has proved to have the substantial technical expertise and deep knowledge about the range of subjects you work in.

**Follow up:** Could you describe to me which details you would like to know more about this candidate? Why do you think that **specialized expertise** is such an important/unimportant skill?
In your view, which type of skills and competencies this candidate has acquired working consistently in your sector?

**Candidate 2**
Sarah has 10 years of experience in Brussels. She started her career as an employee at the European Commission, where she worked for 3 years. 5 years ago, she left the European Commission, and since then has worked as a policy officer for various organisations in different sectors on a wide range of issues and policies. She has substantial experience as a public affairs manager.

**Follow up:** Could you describe me what to you would like to know more about this candidate? Why does **experience in the public sector** facilitate the work of your organisations? How experience in the EC a as civil servant can/cannot facilitate the work of your organisation?

**Candidate 3**

Andrea has worked three years as an assistant in the European Parliament for a prominent MEP. Afterward, she joined the European Commission. After experiencing work for both institutions, she has realized that she would like to work as a policy officer. Although she shows a strong interest in your area and has the necessary technical expertise, this will be the first experience as a policy officer.

**Follow up:** Could you describe to me that you would like to know more about this candidate? Why does **experience in the public sector** does/does not facilitate the work of your organisations? How experience in the EP is/is not valuable for your organisation? How experience in the EC is/is not valuable for your organisation?

**Q8.** How would you rate on a scale from 0 to 10 the adequacy of each candidate for the role of PAM?

1. Candidate 1. _____
2. Candidate 2. _____
3. Candidate 3. _____

**Q9.** Having people who have worked for EU institutions seems to be an asset for your organisations. What counts more about this experience: having connections with policymakers or having a deep understanding of how institutions work?

**Q10.** Could you reflect on the below educational backgrounds and tell me which of these are suitable for a career in public affairs management?

- Natural Science
- Social science/ Humanities/ Economics
- Law
- Communication/Journalism

**Closing Questions**

**Q11.** Do you see a systematic exchange of people between Eu institutions and interest organisations as problematic?

**Q12.** Are there any additional aspects related to the management of human resources that, in your view, we have not addressed in this interview?

**THANK YOU**

The information you have provided is insightful and interesting. I would like to thank you for your participation. If you want to have more details on the project, feel free to write to me. I will leave you my personal contact details and I will be happy to share the results of my study.

*(Expected time= 40-60 minutes).*

## Table A3. Data management and ethical considerations

Before each interview, participants in the study were requested to fill and sign a copy of the consent form, dated, and signed by the respondents and myself. After explaining confidentiality rules and conditions of anonymity, participants' agreement to tape the conversations was sought.

All interviews were digitally recorded and stored on my personal computer hard drive with a password. For each interview, a personal file was created where demographic data, organisational information, and a verbatim transcript were stored. The recorded interviews and the

transcripts will be deleted upon the termination of this thesis and related publications. All 17 interviews were transcribed verbatim in English and anonymized to protect the personal identity of participants. The qualitative analysis of the empirical data was computer-assisted. Therefore, after transcription, the documents were uploaded on the software for qualitative data analysis Atlas.ti.

During the recruitment process, participants were offered no financial compensation to participate in the study, which was also clarified in the invitation email.

## Table A4. The iterative process

I deducted - from existing literature - themes that allowed to map the dimensions of *individual lobbyists' characteristics*. The themes were inspired by Holyoke et al (2015), which proposes a systematic review of skills, knowledge, and abilities, which can be considered common to the variety of professional lobbyists (i.e., professional advocates, regulatory experts). Accordingly, the following themes were identified: activities individual lobbyists are expected to perform (**TASKS**), soft skills, commitment to the mission of the organisations and analytical skills (**SKILLS**), type of expertise demanded by recruiters (**TYPE OF PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES**). The application of these themes allows me to achieve the first two-goal of the study. As a first step, the key characteristics of the typical Brussels lobbyists are identified and relate to experience in the public sector. More precisely, "having experience in the public sector" as a central prerequisite, without stimulus in the questionnaire. Secondly, the iterative coding process identified associations between codes describing individual lobbyists' characteristics and the code describing the experiences in the public sector. The identification of associations between codes allows to 1) identify which skills acquired in the public sector are relevant for interest organisations' leaders, 2) which tasks are facilitated by having lobbyists with such public sector experience.

## Table A5. Preliminary study template and code development (dimensions, themes, codes)

| DIMENSIONS | QUESTIONNAIRE | A PRIORI THEMES | GENERATED CODES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Hiring Processes and Recruitment Strategies** | Questions N. 3 & 4 | **INTEREST GROUPS PRIORITIES** | **CHANNELS**<br>**MEMBERSHIP INFLUENCE** |
| **Individual Characteristics (IC)** | Questions N. 5 | **TASK** | **INFORMATION SEEKING, MONITORING & INFLUENCING MANAGEMENT OF THE MEMBER-BASE** |
| | Questions N. 5 | **SKILLS** | **SOFT SKILLS & COMMITMENT**<br>**ANALITICAL COMMUNICATION & MESSAGING**<br>**SENSE BELONGING TO THE EU SPACE** |
| | Questions N. 6 | **TYPE OF PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE** | **PUBLIC_SECTOR**<br>**PRIVATE_SECTOR**<br>**OTHERS** |
| **Public Sector Experience** | Vignettes N. 7 | **PUBLIC SECTOR EXPERIENCE** | **PERSONAL CONNECTIONS (motive 1)**<br>**PROCESS (OR PROCEDURAL) KNOWLEDGE (motive 2)**<br>**SUBSTANTIVE POLICY EXPERTISE (motive 3)** |

## Table A6 Codebook structure of the deductive and inductive codes.

**Theme: Tasks**

Information Seeking, Monitoring & Influencing

**Definition:** the code refers to description of daily tasks and activities of lobbyists. This includes description of the way lobbyists seek information, how they monitor the policymaking and

how they act to influence/impact policymaker.

**Origins:** This code was deductive (Beyers et al., 2008) Management Of the Member-Base

**Definition:** the code refers to the description of all the activities which include any type of interaction with members. These interactions include keeping members updated about advocacy strategies, demand inputs from members, build consensus among members.

**Origins:** This code was inductive, as it emerged from the data.

**Theme: Skills**

Soft skills & Commitment

**Definition:** the code is applied when respondents refer to personal attributes of potential candidates. Personal attributes include social skills, and other being agile, curious, flexible, and stress resistant.

**Origins:** The code was deductive (Holyoke, 2015).

Analytical Skills

**Definition:** the code applies when respondent is referring to the ability to collect, analyze and deconstruct complex information (i.e., languages, quantitative reasoning, mastering applied data analysis).

**Origins:** The code was deductive (Holyoke, 2015).

Communication and Messaging

**Definition:** used when respondent is referring to the ability of lobbyists to 1) formulate and deliver effective messages (writing competences, concise messaging strategy, persuasive writing) 2) target and deliver meaningful message to policymakers 3) engage in communication strategies to keep member/supporters and clients active and informed.

**Origins:** The code was deductive (Holyoke, 2015; Lathrop, 2009) Sense of belonging to the EU Public Sphere.

**Definition:** the code is applied when respondents refer to the relevance of the commitment towards the idea and values of the EU.

**Origins:** The code was inductive as it emerged from multiple trascripts.

**Vignettes: motives to hire lobbyists with public sector background.**

**Personal connection (motive 1).**

**Definition:** this code is applied when a respondent is describing the candidates with experience in the public sector (Commission or EP) as positive. The candidate is considered an asset because it brings to the organisation political and staff-to-staff connection.

**Origins:** The code was deductive (Bertrand et al., 2014a; Blanes i Vidal et al., 2012a).

**Process (or procedural) knowledge (motive 2).**

**Definition:** this code is applied when a respondent is describing candidates

with experience in the public sector (Commission or EP) as positive. The candidate is considered an asset because: 1) it is knowledgeable about the legislative process, about how EU institutions work, which role they play in the policymaking, how they interact with each other 2) it has access to insider knowledge.

**Origins:** The code was deductive (T. M. LaPira & Thomas, 2017a).

**Substantive policy expertise (motive 3).**

**Definition:** this code is applied when a respondent is describing candidates with experience in the public sector (Commission or EP) as positive. The candidate is considered an asset because he/she master policy information about a specific sector.

**Origins:** The code was deductivee (T. M. LaPira & Thomas, 2017a).

## Table A7. Illustrative quotes

***The value of public sector experience in the lobbying profession.***

**1.** ...the workplan of a policy officer is... it is influenced by what's going on in the Commission (...), in 2020 we knew was going on in terms of envision legislation, for instance, and we need to be able to respond and to be able to propose, to be able to support, to be able to have our say on these processes. *(Business Organisation, Interview 8).*

**2.** They have to follow what is going on at European level and they have to explore, dive into the different debates and bring in our service providers perspectives.
*(Business Organisation, Interview 3).*

**3.** ....need to figure how you can influence the different stages way

before the European Commission actually comes out with a white paper or a draft or something, you know who you need to be connected to, you know what's going on and how you can influence the process at the earliest possible stage, because if you wait until they say "oh this is open for public consultation" it's too late, it's not going to change very much. Afte that, you need to influence it way before that, so that the first draft they come out with already has what you want to see in it, or close to it. (Citizens Organisation, Interview 2).

**4.** ...we need to be able to understand at what point in time we have to intervene. If I intervene prior to legislation being proposed, that's much more efficient than once you're in second reading for instance, in the second reading you come to you can't do much you can just barely oppose the adoption of a piece of legislation. So, I think it is, it is very important for us to know when we will be able to intervene and to be able to explain to our members what's going on, not to be I don't know! *(Business Organisation, Interview 3).*

**5.** So, the first thing is identifying the members position, that means that they (lobbyists) need to work first with members to come to an agreement. For example, what is the position (of members) on carbon pricing or on energy efficiency and that is the official consumer position. And for that there is a lot of ping pong, members do not necessarily agree, most of the time they do, but that means that among the tasks of the policy officers (lobbyists) is also the fact that they need to mediate between members, so finding consensus. *(Citizens Organisation Interview 4).*

**6.** In the Brussels context (...) we represent the national federations from European countries and we operate on the principle of subsidiarity so we focus on the things at European level, having said that, we also make sure that you know we work for our members and we make sure that our members know what they have to do at national regional or local level in order to access to funds or influence the

things that will then help influence things at European level to.
*(Citizens Organisation, Interview 2).*

**7.** What the person (lobbyists) is going to have to do in terms of tasks.... You know, for that position you have two parts, two identities. Of course, you're going to have to work for what your members express and deliver, you to have to be able to deliver and you have to be able to convince policymakers. You must convince commissioners, MEPs and have amendments tabled and voted. But you also have a big part of your work which is to explain to your members what the European Commission initiative is or what a piece of legislation means for their daily business, and that's I mean in some cases in 50/50 in terms of your workload. Members are paying you because they are not experts in European law. So, you need to be able to pick up the phone and call them to say what does it means that directive and or what is the difference with a regulation. And if you don't know how it compares with the regulation you won't be able to explain to your members what we're going be able to do in the legislative process to influence that, but if so, what the impact will be on their business. Something that will be immediately applicable or something that will have to be replicated in national legislation, which therefore he will have to understand clearly because, he has yet another opportunity to influence the implementation costs.
*(Citizens Group, Interview 3).*

**8.** It is often important that they have done a EU train sheep in the EC or a traineeship in the EP.
*(Business Organisation, Interview 12).*

**9.** We do not use professional employment agencies. I don't do this but Euractive, College of Europe, mailing list of alumni, mailing list of traineeships for Parliamentary Assistants. The network, sorry, we use (for recruitment purpose) the network of collogues and social media so LinkedIn. Very much within the network and very informally.
*(Business Organisation, Interview 12).*

**10.** When people come to us, they've already had a job as either an intern or a position with a member of the European Parliament or they might have done it internship at the European Commission or at a law firm or something that's worked in this environment, so they bring something when they join us.
(Citizen Organisation, Interview 2).

**11.** All the people we hired were hired has been doing an internship in the European Central Bank, Commission or Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for a lot of people normally it's quite a typical thing, normally they do a stage in the ministry of foreign affairs then they do a stage in the European Commission then they look for another job.
(Business Organisation, Interview 1).

***The value of personal connections.***

**12.** We used to ask for big range portfolio, business cards of people". Nowadays, however, to have established personal connections with other organisations and with policymakers is not a prerequisite as "the world is very connected and it's also a very small world, so to really get access to somebody it's not so difficult".
(Cause Organisation, Interview 5).

**13.** Major asset as you know whom to go and see when something needs to be done and they know whom to phone to see whether it's worth having a meeting.
(Citizens Organisation, Interview 6).

**14.** Knowing a bit, the people in the EP it's not everything because they change very-very rapidly, and the same thing goes for the Commission"
(Business Organisation, Interview 9).

**15.** ...because national experts are changing, because people in the Commission are rotating, assistants are changing, MEPs are changing
(Business Organisation, Interview 1).

**16.** Major asset as you know whom to go and see when something needs to be done and they know whom to phone to see whether it's worth having a meeting.
*(Citizens Organisation, Interview 6).*

**17.** Knowing a bit, the people in the EP it's not everything because they change very-very rapidly, and the same thing goes for the Commission".
*(Business Organisation. Interview 9).*

**18.** Expect them to nourish these relationships and not be shy in picking the phone up or writing an email and build a personal relationship.
*(Business Organisation, Interview 12).*

**19.** However, what you need to know is that among the tasks of a policy officer, in pre- covid times, is having a coffee, you know having coffee with the assistance of MEPs, with desk officers at the European Commission, with other stakeholders to see whether we can build alliances. So, a huge part of the policy officer work is social skills, meaning having not just reaching out to other people in an informal way - and it's a very important especially when it comes to policy-makers - it's a very powerful way of getting knowledge, and having intelligence, access to intelligence but also to influence.
*(Citizens Organisation, Interview 6).*

***The value of process (or procedural) knowledge.***

**20.** Well, you know there is a lot of very complicated procedures at the Parliament, assistance know all about that, so they know when it is timely to send an amendment, a proposal for the amendment or a voting recommendation.
*(Citizen Organisations, Interview 6).*

**21.** And also working in the EP, it means that this person has been in touch with the EC and with the Council, so this person has been at the center of the triangular negotiations so and the EP has much

more leverage than the EC or the Council. they are really at the center of the triangle. I would hardly hire a policy officer or somebody working for the EC, except those working for the Cabinets and assistants of MEPs, absolutely.
*(Citizens Organisation, Interview 11).*

**22.** They know to whom to write they know whom to phone to see whether it's worth having a meeting, so they know all the inside stuff of the European Parliament and that's you know it's a labyrinth, not only the building but also the way the different committees work and then the rapporteurs and the shadow rapporteurs, and who decides who becomes what. Having somewhat and we have different people in our team, knowing how this works in practice is really very useful.
*(Citizens Organisation, Interview 6).*

**23.** If you want to make a difference about what a policy officers should do, you need to understand how to best...when and how to intervene in the process, that's why you need to understand how those institutions function formally and informally. Meaning formally you have the impact assessment, you have the public consultation you have the hearings you have plenty of formalities, but the informal part is very important, so if you are an NGO you have limited resources, you cannot put like Google of this world 20 lobbyists on a case, you need to be very effective , that means that we cannot really take the time to train the people on that, because that you train it on the spot you cannot really even if you read a lot of books about how the institutions work, you need to train it on the spot. So that's why we always request for experience towards that because we don't really have the means for doing it.
*(Citizens Organisation, Interview 6).*

**24.** ... experience in the public sector is important because, let's say 80% of the work is or 70% of the work is working with civil servants (...) working with people that have that background here in Brus-

sels or in Strasbourg, so it is important to understand how people function, how people work in in public in a public environment, in the public sector and that is it is helping if you have a bit of that background. (...). Public organisations have very specific way of looking at things, way of approaching things and understanding that helps you to bring important messages to them. And it's about understanding who's on the other side of the table and that is a key success factor for policy work, I think. If you don't understand the drive, if you don't understand the needs, the objectives of the people on the other side of the table you will never achieve your own policy objectives, you will not never be able to discuss different options, to work towards compromise and so on.
*(Citizens Organisation Interview 4).*

**25.** "20 years ago, that kind of experience wasn't that important". This is because the EP "was perceived as not having that much influence but I think that's changing (...) they have a lot more to say they have more power and they could influence the process more than they used to be able to so we find ourselves as well working more closely with members of European Parliament because their reach into constituents, and we've seen they have an influence on the European Commission and in its policymaking and that is very interesting".
*(Citizens Organisation Interview 2).*

**26.** " a lot of very complicated procedures (...) assistants know when it is time to send an amendment, a proposal for the amendment or a voting recommendation, (...) they know all the inside stuff of the European Parliament and that's you know it's a labyrinth - not only the building - but also the way the different committees work, the rapporteurs and the shadow rapporteurs, and who decides who becomes what .
*(Citizens Organisation, Interview 6).*

**27.** ...well certainly the fact that she works as an assistant, I mean within an MEP and then with the Commission is a major asset when you

want to work as a policy.
*(Citizens Organisation, Interview 6).*

**28.** Ideally, the candidates have worked in the cabinets or in the offices of the DGs even of the Director. Even the secretary of the director, the policy advisor of the director is more relevant than a random head of unit or administrator. Operational persons in the EC are not good for the role of head of advocacy, because they only know that side of the story.
*(Citizens Organisation, Interview 11).*

**29.** People who work in the Cabinets are better suited because they are responsible to develop policies in a negotiating environment. There is a lot of humility that they must display. They take the material, they take the policy, they take the content, the take the strategies, the civil society and they need to put all the pieces together for their advance. While the persons that are working within the Unites and the directorate, they do their job, and they leave it. It is a different approach, especially when it comes to relate with civil society organisations. People working in Cabinets, they must have this outlook. So how to bring the paper out of the office, how to bring the paper out of the building of the EC. How to stimulate civil society and respective area or responsibility and how a policy can be re-elaborated, and back and forth.
*(Citizens Organisation, Interview 11).*

**30.** We are looking for experience in the EU public affairs and policy officer, we are looking for experience in the energy field. We are looking for experience inside the institutions. It is often important that they have done a EU traineeship in the EC or a traineeship in the EP. We are often looking for somebody who has already worked also just 6 months in an association. If those three aspects come together the candidate is likely to be called for an interview. So, previous experience in our field, work or traineeship in one of the EU institutions and even a short placement in an association.

(Business Organisation, Interview 12).

**31.** 3 years in the EC and 0 in the Ep she will have an in-depth knowledge of the institutions. For us, the fact that she has worked for a prominent MEP, MEP that you probably had a rapport, and he/she knows the committees' proceedings, this is probably going to be a big advantage. And the fact that a person like that does not have a technical expertise, that would not be a big break. Someone with that profile would be selected for an interview and not on an entry level. *(Business Organisation, Interview 12).*

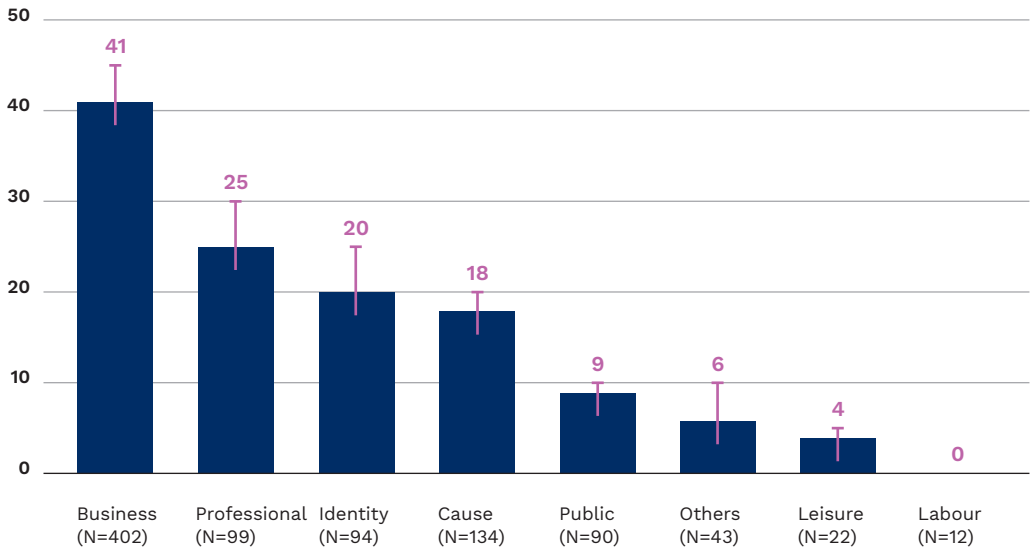
**32.** We want very often some experience at European level, meaning they need to understand how the institutions function, because you can sometimes build up your expertise on a technical matter, it can last a long time before you get knowledge about how the EU works and that is always very important that you don't lose the time and that you are not writing to the wrong person, if that person has nothing to say at the end of the day.
*(Citizens Organisation, Interview 6).*

**33.** It's good to know how things have developed, how the Commission has changed views through time and to know which files were dormant and then all the sudden they retain them, all of that happens and people who have that (sector-based expertise) are an added value. And then there is insider vocabulary, the people around that you know, it is... it is important. Not essential, nothing that cannot be learned.
*(Business Organisation Interview 9).*

## Appendix B

### *Second empirical chapter: The Revolving Door in Brussels: a Process-Oriented Approach to Employee Recruitment by Interest Organisations.*

**Figure B1. Distribution of interest organisations that rely on external professionals, interns, and volunteers by group type (N = 896)**



## Table B1. Polychoric correlation matrix: typical staff backgrounds (N = 516)

| VARIABLES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Political Party | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 2. Government Agency | 0.51** | 1 | | | | | | |
| 3. Business | -0.03 | 0.08 | 1 | | | | | |
| 4. Private Sector | -0.04 | 0.01 | 0.25** | 1 | | | | |
| 5. Voluntary Organisation | 0.14* | 0.14 | -0.24** | -0.16 | 1 | | | |
| 6. Research Institute / Think Tank | 0.15* | 0.38** | 0.12 | 0.03 | 0.25** | 1 | | |
| 7. Higher Education | 0.10* | 0.22 | -0.00 | 0.10 | 0.17 | 0.52** | 1 | |
| 8. First Job | 0.02 | 0.13 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.18** | 0.13 | 0.04 | 1 |

Note: N= 516, *p<.05. ** p<.01, *** p< 0.001

## Table B2. Group type categorization

| ORGANISATION TYPE | CHARACTERISTICS |
|---|---|
| Business Organisations | Membership organisations promoting the business interest of their members |
| Associations of Professionals | Membership asssociations of professionals or trade (e.g., lawyers, bankers, architects) |
| Citizens Organisations | Membership organisations of citizens promoting political action (including trade unions) and putting emphasis on service provision |
| Other | Organisations not fitting in the above categories (e.g., networks, platforms, lobbying firms, leisure groups) |

[i] See https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/de-minister-schond-geen-regels-toen-ze-lobbyist-werd-maar-dat-is-precies-het-probleem~b92dfb86/

[ii] See www.euobserver.com/eu-political/156436

## Table B3. Summary statistics for variables used for robustness check

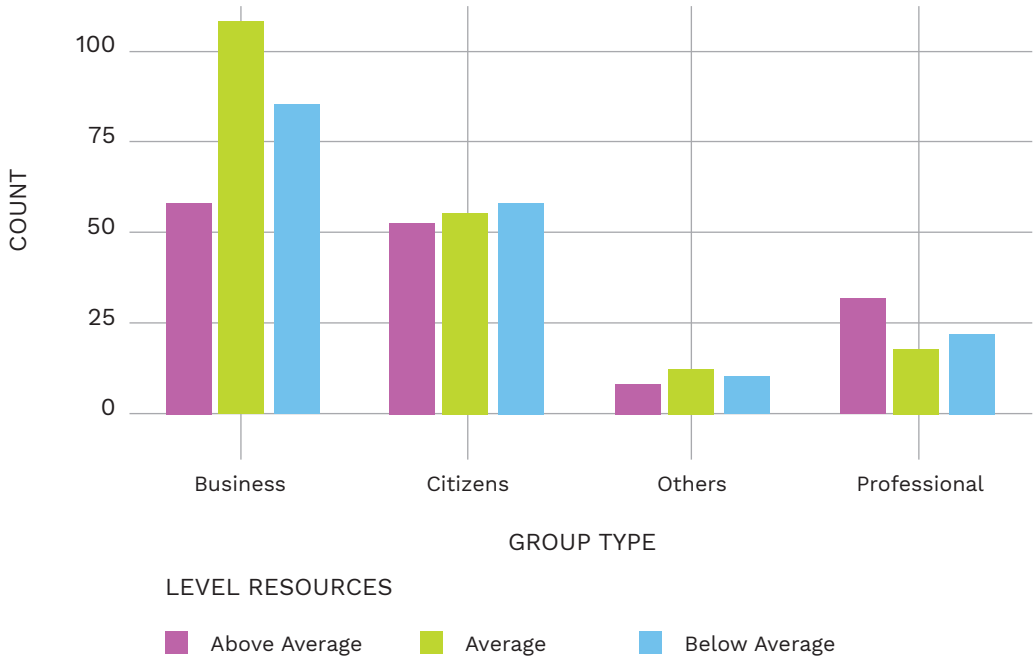
| VARIABLES | TYPE | OBS. | M | SD. | FREQ. | MIN. | MAX |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Number of Employees (log)** | Continuous | 558 | 1.5 | 1.30 | | 0 | 7 |
| **Governmental Experience** | Categorical | 516 | | | | | |
| 1= Yes | | | | | 390 | | |
| 2= No | | | | | 126 | | |
| **Private Sector Background** | Categorical | 516 | | | | | |
| 1= Yes | | | | | 379 | | |
| 2= No | | | | | 137 | | |
| **Non-Profit Sector Background** | Categorical | 516 | | | | | |
| 1= Yes | | | | | 172 | | |
| 2= No | | | | | 344 | | |
| **Research Background** | Categorical | 516 | | | | | |
| 1= Yes | | | | | 166 | | |
| 2= No | | | | | 350 | | |

## Table B4. Polychoric correlation matrix between explanatory variables (Model 1 & Model 2)

| VARIABLES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Resources** | 1 | | | | | |
| **2. Organisation Type** | -0.05 | 1 | | | | |
| **3 Degree of Politcal Involvement** | 0.34** | -0.12* | 1 | | | |
| **4. Perceived Complexity** | -0.02 | -0.12* | 0.11** | 1 | | |
| **5. Breadth of Policy Engagement** | 0.16** | 0.19** | 0.26** | 0.11* | 1 | |
| **6. Age** | 0.31** | -0.05 | 0.07 | -0.04 | 0.11* | 1 |

Note: N= 516, *p<.05. ** p<.01, *** p< 0.001

## Figure B2. Distribution of grour type across level of resource categories (N= 516)



# Table B5. Logistic regression models for propensity to hire from the public sector, with alternative measure for resources (number of employees).

| | Direct Effect Model 1 | Odds Ratio | Interactions Effect Model 2 | Odds Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INDEPENDENT VARIABLES** | | | | |
| **Resources** Number of employees (log) | 0.37 (0.08)*** | 1.45 | 0.57 (0.13)*** | 1.98 |
| **Group Type** (1 = business org., ref.) | | | | |
| 2 = Professionals | -0.34 (0.31) | 0.70 | 0.54 (0.46) | 1.13 |
| 3 = Citizens | 0.60 (0.22)** | 1.82 | 1.05 (0.35)** | 2.09 |
| 4 = Other | 0.96 (0.38)* | 2.63 | 0.62 (0.71) | 1.28 |
| **Index Degree of Involvement** | 0.12 (0.04)** | 1.11 | 0.09 (0.03)* | 1.12 |
| **Perceived Complexity** (1 = Median, Ref.) | | | | |
| 2 = below the median cat. | 0.54 (0.23)* | 1.72 | 0.58 (0.22)** | 1.70 |
| 3 = above the median cat. | 0.58 (0.00)* | 1.79 | 0.62 (0.23)** | 0.00 |
| **CONTROL** | | | | |
| **Index Breadth of Policy Engagement** | 0.04 (0.03) | 1.04 | 0.03 (0.03) | 1.02 |
| **Age Organisations** (log) | -0.10 (0.10) | 0.90 | -0.10 (0.10) | 0.66 |
| Interaction Group Type X Level of Resources | | | | |
| Number of employees (log) x Professionals | | | -0.58 (0.24)* | 0.70 |
| Number of employees (log) x Citizens | | | -0.29 (0.17) † | 0.87 |
| Number of employees (log) x Others | | | 0.23 (0.23) | 1.18 |
| **Constant** | -1.58 (0.37)*** | | 1.91 (0.27)*** | |
| Observations | 558 | | 558 | |
| Log Likelihood | -291.8957 | | -326.6618 | |
| AIC | 681.64 | | 735.5404 | |
| BIC | 724.8786 | | 656.9741 | |
| McFadden | 0.10 | | 0.12 | |

Notes: standard errors between brackets; †p<1*, p<0.05 **, p<0.01 ***, p<0.0001; VIF-scores are below 4, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a problem.

# Table B6. Models with the dichotomous dependent variable 'having staff with experience in government agency' vs. 'not having staff with experience government agency'

| | Direct Effect Model 1 | Odds Ratio | Interactions Effect Model 2 | Odds Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INDEPENDENT VARIABLES** | | | | |
| **Resources** (1= below the median, ref.) | | | | |
| 2 = at the median cat. | 1.10 (0.32)*** | 3.01 | -0.05 (0.45) | 0.94 |
| 3 = above the median cat. | 1.41 (0.34)*** | 4.13 | 0.71 (0.45) | 2.04 |
| **Group Type** (1 = business org., ref.) | | | | |
| 2 = Professionals | 0.23 (0.39) | 0.79 | -1.62 (1.08) | 0.19 |
| 3 = Citizens | 0.70 (0.25)** | 2.03 | 0.73 (0.61) | 0.47 |
| 4 = Other | 0.74 (0.42) † | 2.11 | -0.38 (1.13) | 0.67 |
| **Index Degree of Involvement** | 0.06 (0.04) | 1.07 | 0.06 (0.04) | 1.06 |
| **Perceived Complexity** (1 = the median, Ref.) | | | | |
| 2 = below the median cat. | 0.39 (0.25) | 1.48 | 0.41 (0.26) | 1.52 |
| 3 = above the median cat. | 0.58 (0.27)* | 1.79 | 0.53 (0.27)* | 1.73 |
| **CONTROL** | | | | |
| **Index Breadth of Policy Engagement** | 0.05 (0.03) | 1.06 | 0.06 (0.03) † | 0.99 |
| **Age Organisations** (log) | -0.12 (0.12) | 0.88 | -0.16 (0.12) | 0.85 |
| Interaction Group Type X Level of Resources | | | | |
| Professionals x M. Level of Resources | | | 2.45 (1.22)* | 11.68 |
| Professionals x High Level of Resources | | | 0.77 (1.27) | 2.17 |
| Citizens x M. Level of Resources | | | 2.05 (0.72)** | 7.84 |
| Citizens x High Level of Resources | | | 1.39 (0.70)* | 4.04 |
| Other x M. Level of Resources | | | 1.57 (1.31) | 4.82 |
| Other x High Level of Resources | | | 1.09 (1.31) | 2.97 |
| **Constant** | -2.68 (0.34) *** | | -1.88 (0.38)*** | |
| Observations | 516 | | 516 | |
| Log Likelihood | -258.8985 | | -252.8425 | |
| AIC | 539.8 | | 539.69 | |
| BIC | 586.5042 | | 611.8689 | |
| McFadden | 0.09 | | 0.11 | |

Notes: standard errors between brackets; †p<1*, p<0.05 **, p<0.01 ***, p<0.0001; VIF-scores are below 4, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a problem

# Table B7. Models with the dichotomous dependent variable measuring alternative staff backgrounds

| | Research Backgrounds DIRECT EFFECT Model 1a | Odds Ratio | Research Backgrounds INTERACTIONS EFFECT Model 1b | Odds Ratio | Research Backgrounds DIRECT EFFECT Model 2a | Odds Ratio | Research Backgrounds INTERACTIONS EFFECT Model 2b | Odds Ratio | Research Backgrounds DIRECT EFFECT Model 3a | Odds Ratio | Research Backgrounds INTERACTIONS EFFECT Model 3b | Odds Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INDEPENDENT VARIABLES** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Resources** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (1=below the median cat., ref) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 = at the median cat. | 0.54 (0.26)* | 1.72 | 0.85 (0.43)† | 2.35 | 0.04 (0.44) | 1.04 | -0.34 (0.47) | 0.71 | 0.56 (0.26)* | 1.76 | 0.87 (0.44)* | 2.39 |
| 3= above the median cat. | 1.09 (0.30)*** | 2.99 | 2.07 (0.67)** | 7.99 | 0.45 (0.30) | 1.57 | -0.68 (0.55) | 0.50 | 0.90 (0.28)** | 2.47 | 0.86 (0.46) † | 2.37 |
| **Group Type** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (1 = business org., ref.) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 = Professionals | -0.94 (0.33)** | 0.38 | -0.57 (0.49) | 0.56 | 1.67 (0.31)*** | 5.33 | 1.02 (0.53) † | 2.77 | 0.69 (0.30)* | 2.00 | 1.05 (0.56) | 2.87 |
| 3 = Citizens | -1.92 (0.27)*** | 0.14 | -1.48 (0.43)*** | 0.22 | 2.77 (0.27)** | 15.98 | 2.06 (0.47)*** | 7.87 | 0.62 (0.23)** | 1.87 | 0.80 (0.50) | 2.24 |
| 4 = Other | -1.67 (0.42)*** | 0.18 | -0.87 (0.74) | 0.41 | 1.29 (0.43)*** | 3.68 | 0.47 (0.88) | 1.61 | 0.36 (0.41) | 1.44 | -0.42 (1.15) | 0.65 |
| **Index Degree of Involvement** | 0.04 (0.04) | 1.04 | 0.05 (0.04) | 1.05 | -0.02 (0.04) | 0.97 | -0.01 (0.04) | 0.98 | -0.00 (0.04) | 0.99 | -0.00 (0.04) | 1.00 |
| **Perceived Complexity** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (1 = average, ref.) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 = below the median cat. | 0.03 (0.25) | 1.03 | 0.00 (0.25) | 1.00 | 0.11 (0.25) | 1.12 | 0.09 (0.25) | 1.09 | 0.28 (0.23) | 1.32 | 0.25 (0.23) | 1.29 |
| 3= above the median cat. | 0.38 (0.31) | 1.47 | 0.39 (0.31) | 1.48 | 0.04 (0.28) | 1.04 | 0.02 (0.29) | 1.02 | 0.43 (0.25) † | 1.54 | 0.42 (0.25) † | 1.52 |
| **CONTROL** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Index Breadth of Policy Engagement** | 0.00 (0.03) | 0.92 | 0.03 (0.05) | 1.00 | -0.02 (0.04) | 0.97 | -0.02 (0.04) | 0.97 | 0.12 (0.03)*** | 1.13 | 0.13 (0.03)*** | 1.13 |
| **Age Organisations** (log) | -0.11 (0.12) | 0.89 | -0.09 (0.12) | 0.91 | 0.10 (0.12) | 1.10 | 0.07 (0.12) | 1.07 | -0.19 (0.11) † | 0.94 | -0.20 (0.11) † | 0.81 |
| Interaction Group Type X Level of Resources | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Professionals x Av. Level of Resources | | | -0.84 (0.74) | 0.43 | | | 0.39 (0.77) | 1.49 | | | 1.68 (1.25) | 0.47 |
| Professionals x High Level of Resources | | | -0.61 (0.98) | 0.54 | | | 1.50 (0.78) † | 4.48 | | | -0.74 (0.77) | 0.77 |
| Citizens x Av. Level of Resources | | | -0.29 (0.59) | 0.74 | | | 0.58 (0.62) | 1.79 | | | -0.26 (0.74) | 0.62 |
| Citizens x High Level of Resources | | | -1.40 (0.77) † | 0.24 | | | 1.44 (0.68)* | 4.26 | | | 0.04 (0.61) | 1.04 |
| Other x Av. Level of Resources | | | -0.91 (1.00) | 0.39 | | | 0.01 (1.21) | 1.01 | | | 0.03 (1.35) | 1.03 |
| Other x High Level of Resources | | | -1.80 (1.14) | 0.16 | | | 2.08 (1.14) † | 8.02 | | | 1.93 (1.34) | 6.91 |
| **Constant** | 1.72 (0.46)*** | | 1.37 (0.52)** | | -2.60 (0.44)*** | | -1.98 (0.52)** | | -2.40 (0.44)*** | | -1.95 (0.40)** | |
| Observations | 516 | | 516 | | 516 | | 516 | | 516 | | 516 | |
| Log Likelihood | -255.2215 | | -252.0049 | | -257.4168 | | -253.4182 | | -301.3187 | | -298.3164 | |
| AIC | 532.44 | | 538.01 | | 536.83 | | 540.84 | | 624.64 | | 630.63 | |
| BIC | 579.1502 | | 610.1937 | | 583.5407 | | 613.0201 | | 671.3445 | | 702.8165 | |

Notes: (1) standard errors between brackets; †p<1*, p<0.05 **, p<0.01 ***, (2) The actual strength of Model 1b in questionable due to the large standard errors.

# Appendix C

## *Third empirical chapter: The revolving door and access to the EC. Does the logic of influence prevail?*

## Table C1. Predicting access to the European Commission (zero-inflated Poisson-model without imputation of missing values)

| | Logit Model | | | Poisson Model | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Estimate** | **SE** | **p** | **Estimate** | **SE** | **p** |
| CONSTANT | 2.838 | (0.731) | <.0001 | - 1.024 | (0.307) | .0008 |
| **Independent variables** | | | | | | |
| Revolving door | | | | | | |
| 0=not hiring from public sector (ref) | - | - | . | - | - | - |
| 1=hiring from the public sector | - 0.144 | (0.950) | .8798 | - 1.385 | (0.364) | .0001 |
| Staff influence | - 0.283 | (0.664) | .6607 | - 0.721 | (0.274) | .0086 |
| Member influence | - 0.217 | (0.551) | .6935 | -0.015 | (0.230) | .9469 |
| **Interactions** | | | | | | |
| Staff influence*not hiring (ref) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Staff influence*hiring | 0.190 | (1.095) | .8620 | 1.939 | (0.394) | <.0001 |
| Member influence*not hiring (ref) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Member influence*hiring | -0.313 | (0.784) | .6894 | 0.111 | (0.282) | .6950 |
| **Control variables** | | | | | | |
| Staff size (logged) | - 0.195 | (0.098) | .0480 | 0.296 | (0.030) | <.0001 |
| Group type | | | | | | |
| 1=business groups (ref) | - | - | - | - | - | . |
| 2=professional groups | 0.706 | (0.375) | .0480 | 0.320 | (0.138) | .0207 |
| 3=NGOs/civil society | 0.417 | (0.283) | .1423 | - 0.019 | (0.081) | .8135 |
| 4=other | - 0.061 | (0.433) | .8881 | - 1.097 | (0.200) | <.0001 |
| Access strategies | - 0.368 | (0.70) | <.0001 | 0.346 | (0.025) | <.0001 |
| Breath of policy involvement | - 0.009 | (0.037) | .8124 | 0.027 | (0.011) | .0173 |
| Age (not logged) | 0.106 | (0.132) | .4207 | - 0.091 | (0.044) | .0396 |
| **Diagnostics** | | | | | | |
| Deviance | 1638.2 | | | | | |
| Log Likelihood | - 819.31 | | | | | |
| Pearson $Chi^2$ (df=577) | 820.83 | | | | | |
| p $Chi^2$ | <.0001 | | | | | |
| AIC | 1690.2 | | | | | |
| BIC | 1805.7 | | | | | |
| N | 603 | | | | | |

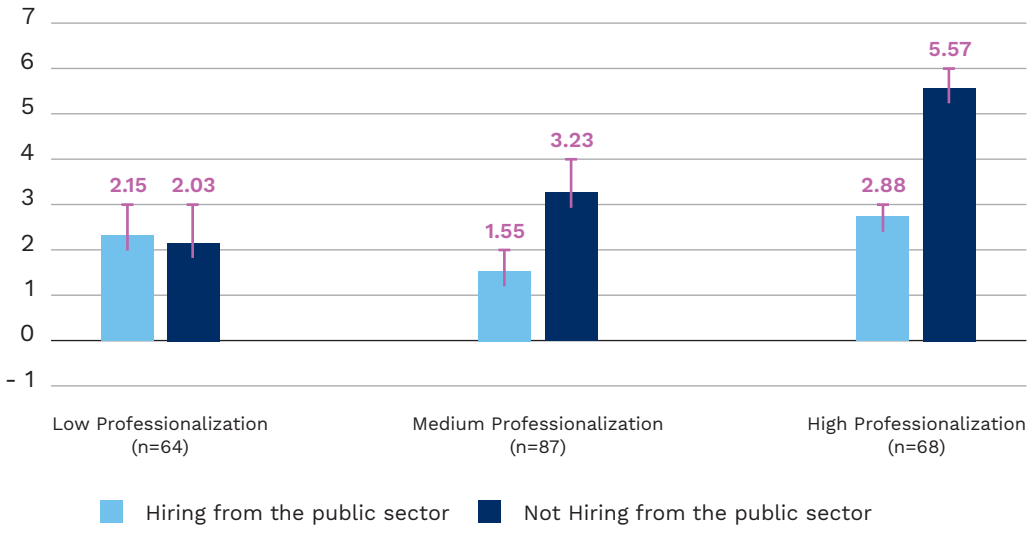
# Table C2. Predicting access to the European Commission (zero-inflated Poisson-model without imputation, without the transformation of age and staff)

| | Logit Model | | | Poisson Model | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Estimate** | **SE** | **p** | **Estimate** | **SE** | **p** |
| CONSTANT | 3.388 | (0.661) | <.0001 | - 1.159 | (0.298) | 0.0001 |
| **Independent variables** | | | | | | |
| Revolving door | | | | | | |
| 0=not hiring from public sector (ref) | - | - | . | - | - | - |
| 1=hiring from the public sector | - 0.180 | (0.900) | .8414 | - 1.087 | (0.349) | .0019 |
| Staff influence | - 0.510 | (0.627) | .4158 | - 0.602 | (0.273) | .0274 |
| Member influence | - 0.167 | (0.544) | .7593 | - 0.073 | (0.236) | .7572 |
| **Interactions** | | | | | | |
| Staff influence*not hiring (ref) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Staff influence*hiring | 0.155 | (1.029) | .8804 | 1.655 | (0.389) | <.0001 |
| Member influence*not hiring (ref) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Member influence*hiring | - 0.264 | (1.760) | .7297 | 0.262 | (0.282) | .3434 |
| **Control variables** | | | | | | |
| Staff size (not logged) | 0.000 | (0.000) | .3476 | 0.001 | (0.000) | .0003 |
| Group type | | | | | | |
| 1=business groups (ref) | - | - | - | - | - | . |
| 2=professional groups | 0.679 | (0.366) | .0639 | 0.388 | (0.135) | .0042 |
| 3=NGOs/civil society | 0.289 | (0.279) | .2990 | 0.011 | (0.083) | .8918 |
| 4=other | - 0.111 | (0.425) | .7946 | - 1.220 | (0.199) | <.0001 |
| Access strategies | - 0.409 | (0.069) | <.0001 | 0.391 | (0.025) | <.0001 |
| Breath of policy involvement | - 0.008 | (0.036) | .8198 | 0.051 | (0.011) | <.0001 |
| Age (not logged) | - 0.004 | (0.005) | .4128 | - 0.002 | (0.002) | .3153 |
| **Diagnostics** | | | | | | |
| Deviance | 1728.85 | | | | | |
| Log Likelihood | - 864.43 | | | | | |
| Pearson $Chi^2$ (df=577) | 902.26 | | | | | |
| p $Chi^2$ | <.0001 | | | | | |
| AIC | 1780.85 | | | | | |
| BIC | 1895.30 | | | | | |
| N | 603 | | | | | |

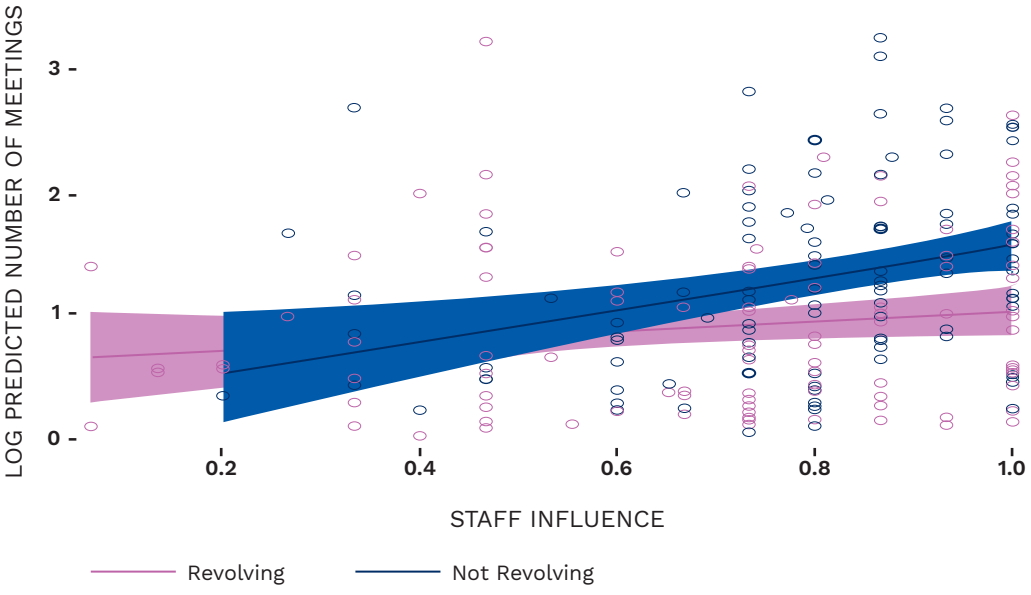
# Table C3. Predicting access to the European Commission (zero-inflated Poisson-model with imputation, without the transformation of age and staff)

| | Logit Model | | | Poisson Model | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Estimate** | **SE** | **p** | **Estimate** | **SE** | **p** |
| CONSTANT | 3.156 | (0.546) | <.0001 | - 0.890 | (0.229) | 0.0001 |
| **Independent variables** | | | | | | |
| Revolving door | | | | | | |
| 0=not hiring from public sector (ref) | - | - | . | - | - | - |
| 1=hiring from the public sector | - 0.295 | (0.764) | .6990 | - 0.608 | (0.292) | .0371 |
| Staff influence | - 0.210 | (0.555) | .7046 | - 0.355 | (0.227) | .1175 |
| Member influence | - 0.200 | (0.490) | .6833 | - 0.331 | (0.210) | .1144 |
| **Interactions** | | | | | | |
| Staff influence*not hiring (ref) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Staff influence*hiring | - 0.337 | (0.905) | .7101 | 1.003 | (0.340) | .0032 |
| Member influence*not hiring (ref) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Member influence*hiring | - 0.545 | (0.703) | .4385 | 0.180 | (0.255) | .4807 |
| **Control variables** | | | | | | |
| Staff size (not logged) | 0.000 | (0.000) | .2943 | 0.001 | (0.000) | .0005 |
| Group type | | | | | | |
| 1=business groups (ref) | - | - | - | - | - | . |
| 2=professional groups | 0.582 | (0.326) | .0740 | 0.340 | (0.106) | .0043 |
| 3=NGOs/civil society | 0.297 | (0.254) | .2417 | 0.015 | (0.079) | .8477 |
| 4=other | 0.165 | (0.378) | .6646 | - 1.212 | (0.189) | <.0001 |
| Access strategies | - 0.487 | (0.065) | <.0001 | 0.380 | (0.022) | <.0001 |
| Breath of policy involvement | - 0.006 | (0.034) | .8684 | 0.022 | (0.010) | <.0354 |
| Age (not logged) | - 0.006 | (0.004) | .1972 | - 0.000 | (0.002) | .9605 |
| **Diagnostics** | | | | | | |
| Deviance | 2127.87 | | | | | |
| Log Likelihood | - 1063.93 | | | | | |
| Pearson $Chi^2$ (df=577) | 1118.97 | | | | | |
| p $Chi^2$ | <.0001 | | | | | |
| AIC | 2179.87 | | | | | |
| BIC | 2299.40 | | | | | |
| N | 733 | | | | | |

## Figure C1. Predicted number of meetings (average) for three levels of professionalization and revolving door (only groups gaining access, N=280, C.I. 95%)




## Figure C2. Predicted probabilities of number EC-meetings (logged) by professionalization and hiring from the public sector (only groups gaining access, N=280, C.I. 95%)



# Appendix D

## *Fourth empirical chapter: Revolving doors and access in context: the conditional effect of interest mobilisation*

### Table D1: Staff backgrounds

**PUBLIC SECTOR BACKGROUNDS**

1. Worked for a ministry or a government agency.
2. Worked for a political party or party group in the parliament.

**NON-PUBLIC SECTOR BACKGROUNDS**

1. First job.
2. Worked for an NGO, civil society organisation, voluntary organiation or charity.
3. Worked for a business association.
4. Worked for a company or firm.
5. Worked for a research institute, think thank or higher education institution 6. Worked abroad.

# Table D2: Robustness check accounting for different types of public sector experience

| PREDICTOR | MODEL 1 | | MODEL 2 | | MODEL 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Independent variables** | | | | | | |
| Governmental exp. (ref = no) | 0.176*** | (0.023) | 0.234*** | (0.044) | 0.176*** | (0.023) |
| Parliamentary exp. (ref = no) | - 0.044 | (0.037) | - 0.041 | (0.037) | - 0.056 | (0.076) |
| Interest mobilisation | - 0.001*** | (0.000) | - 0.001*** | (0.000) | - 0.001*** | (0.000) |
| **Interactions** | | | | | | |
| Gov. exp. x Int. Mob. | | | - 0.001 | (0.000) | | |
| Parl. exp. x Int. Mob. | | | | | 0.000 | (0.001) |
| **Control variables** | | | | | | |
| Group type (ref = Business) | 0.075*** | (0.018) | 0.075*** | (0.019) | 0.075*** | (0.018) |
| Staff size | 0.129*** | (0.009) | 0.129*** | (0.009) | 0.129*** | (0.009) |
| Functional diff. (ref = no) | 0.175*** | (0.020) | 0.175*** | (0.020) | 0.175*** | (0.020) |
| Inside lobbying | 0.553*** | (0.009) | 0.553*** | (0.009) | 0.553*** | (0.009) |
| Corporatism | - 0.011 | (0.108) | 0.011 | (0.108) | 0.553*** | (0.009) |
| System maturity (ref = new) | - 0.281 | (0.195) | - 0.281 | (0.195) | - 0.280 | (0.195) |
| **Country-levelintercept** | 0.035 | 0.019 | 0.035 | (0.019) | 0.035 | (0.019) |
| **Fit statistics** | | | | | | |
| N | 6,206 | | 6,206 | | 6,206 | |
| Df | 12 | | 13 | | 13 | |
| AIC | 13,308.22 | | 13,307.86 | | 13,310.18 | |
| BIC | 13,389.01 | | 13,395.39 | | 13,397.71 | |

Note: standard errors are shown in parentheses. *p < 0.10. **p < 0.05. ***p <0.01

## Table D3: Robustness check accounting for different types of public sector backgrounds and different types of access

| | GOVERNMENTAL ACCESS | | | | | | PARLIAMENTARY ACCESS | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PREDICTOR** | **MODEL 1** | | **MODEL 2** | | **MODEL 3** | | **MODEL 4** | | **MODEL 5** | | **MODEL 6** | |
| **Independent variables** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Governmental exp. (ref = no) | 0.193*** | (0.020) | 0.267*** | (0.039) | 0.194*** | (0.020) | 0.098*** | (0.027) | 0.179*** | (0.054) | 0.098*** | (0.027) |
| Parliamentary exp. (ref = no) | 0.072** | (0.030) | 0.072** | (0.030) | - 0.055 | (0.067) | - 0.026 | (0.045) | - 0.021 | (0.045) | - 0.095 | (0.093) |
| Interest mobilisation | - 0.001*** | (0.000) | - 0.001*** | (0.000) | - 0.001*** | (0.000) | - 0.001*** | (0.000) | - 0.001*** | (0.000) | - 0.001*** | (0.000) |
| **Interactions** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gov. exp. x Int. Mob. | | | - 0.001** | (0.000) | | | | | - 0.001* | (0.001) | | |
| Parl. exp. x Int. Mob. | | | | | 0.001** | (0.000) | | | | | 0.001 | (0.000) |
| **Control variables** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Group type (ref = Business) | 0.227*** | (0.018) | 0.227*** | (0.018) | 0.227*** | (0.018) | - 0.083*** | (0.023) | - 0.084*** | (0.023) | - 0.083*** | (0.023) |
| Staff size | 0.121*** | (0.008) | 0.121*** | (0.008) | 0.122*** | (0.008) | 0.129*** | (0.011) | 0.129*** | (0.011) | 0.129*** | (0.011) |
| Functional diff. (ref = no) | 0.140*** | (0.019) | 0.140*** | (0.019) | 0.142*** | (0.019) | 0.192*** | (0.024) | 0.192*** | (0.024) | 0.192*** | (0.024) |
| Inside lobbying | 0.575*** | (0.009) | 0.574*** | (0.009) | 0.574*** | (0.009) | 0.541*** | (0.011) | 0.540*** | (0.011) | 0.540*** | (0.011) |
| Corporatism | 0.037 | (0.113) | 0.039 | (0.113) | 0.037 | (0.113) | - 0.056 | (0.148) | - 0.056 | (0.148) | - 0.056 | (0.148) |
| System maturity (ref = new) | - 0.480** | (0.190) | - 0.479** | (0.191) | - 0.477** | (0.191) | - 0.033 | (0.267) | - 0.034 | (0.267) | - 0.033 | (0.267) |
| **Country-level intercept** | 0.039 | (0.020) | 0.039 | (0.020) | 0.039 | (0.020) | 0.067 | (0.036) | 0.067 | (0.036) | 0.667 | (0.036) |
| **Fit statistics** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| n | 8,569 | | | | 8,569 | | 6,206 | | 6,206 | | 6,206 | |
| Df | 12 | | | | 12 | | 12 | | 12 | | 12 | |
| AIC | 20,029.99 | | 20,027.25 | | 20,027.43 | | 15,759.74 | | 15,758.68 | | 15,761.03 | |
| BIC | 20,114.66 | | 20,118.98 | | 20,119.15 | | 15,840.54 | | 15,846.21 | | 15,848.56 | |

Note: standard errors are shown in parentheses. *p < 0.10. **p < 0.05. ***p <0.01

## Table D4. Number of interest groups active in policy fields by country

| Policy Domain | BE | CZ | LT | NL | PL | PT | SW |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agricultural policy | 81 | 36 | 33 | 55 | 27 | 77 | 125 |
| Citizens' rights | 113 | 59 | 74 | 58 | 50 | 160 | 0 |
| Consumer protection | 68 | 43 | 43 | 51 | 35 | 88 | 104 |
| Cultural policy | 161 | 67 | 62 | 73 | 40 | 69 | 180 |
| Defence policy | 10 | 11 | 13 | 14 | 7 | 18 | 31 |
| Development cooperation policy | 88 | 28 | 30 | 72 | 36 | 148 | 61 |
| Economic, fiscal and monetary policy | 109 | 27 | 58 | 90 | 53 | 95 | 213 |
| Education policy | 203 | 170 | 158 | 162 | 135 | 158 | 289 |
| Employment policy | 113 | 54 | 66 | 95 | 39 | 140 | 173 |
| Energy policy | 91 | 36 | 24 | 63 | 29 | 67 | 112 |
| Environmental policy | 174 | 112 | 55 | 109 | 60 | 149 | 225 |
| European integration and cooperation | 59 | 44 | 41 | 54 | 40 | 125 | 173 |
| Fight against crime | 14 | 19 | 23 | 61 | 20 | 38 | 65 |
| Foreign policy | 31 | 16 | 25 | 43 | 19 | 42 | 99 |
| Gender policy | 71 | 48 | 23 | 33 | 40 | 77 | 181 |
| Health policy | 184 | 94 | 103 | 149 | 63 | 115 | 198 |
| Human rights | 100 | 86 | 62 | 0 | 47 | 107 | 225 |
| Migration and asylum policy | 64 | 21 | 16 | 31 | 22 | 30 | 161 |
| Regional policy of the EU | 27 | 30 | 29 | 0 | 29 | 71 | 0 |
| Scientific research policy | 64 | 47 | 68 | 66 | 56 | 102 | 212 |
| Social policy | 211 | 120 | 111 | 127 | 93 | 166 | 182 |
| Transport policy | 95 | 37 | 26 | 40 | 22 | 63 | 130 |
| **Total** | **2131** | **1205** | **1143** | **1446** | **962** | **2105** | **3139** |

## Table D5: Assessing multicollinearity

| Predictor | VIF | 1/VIF |
|---|---|---|
| Revolving door | 1.08 | 0.93 |
| Interest mobilisation | 1.08 | 0.92 |
| Group type | 1.05 | 0.95 |
| Staff size | 1.11 | 0.90 |
| Functional differentiation | 1.13 | 0.88 |
| Inside lobbying | 1.99 | 0.50 |
| Corporatism | 2.16 | 0.46 |
| System maturity | 1.21 | 0.83 |

## Appendix D6: Robustness checks accounting for access measurement problem

In the main analysis, the level of access that or—ganisations gained could not be related to the specific policy field in which they are active. To account for this mismatch inherent in the research design, Table A6 displays multi-level linear regression models focusing exclusively on organisations that indicated being active on only one policy field. For these organisations we can be sure that the level of interest mobilisation and access that we measure are related to the same policy field. Due to the greatly reduced number of observations, we only control for group type and staff in these models.

## Table D6: Multi-level linear regression on the level of access, only including organisations active on one policy field.

| PREDICTOR | MODEL 1 | | MODEL 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Independent variables** | | | | |
| Revolving door (ref = no) | 0.219 | (0.147) | - 0.250 | (0.295) |
| Interest mobilisation | - 0.001 | (0.001) | - 0.002 | (0.001) |
| **Interactions** | | | | |
| Revolving door x Interest mobilisation | | | - 0.005* | (0.002) |
| **Control variables** | | | | |
| Group type (ref = Business) | 0.183*** | (0.107) | 0.179* | (0.107) |
| Staff size | 0.288*** | (0.073) | 0.288*** | (0.072) |
| **Country-level intercept** | 0.027 | (0.026) | 0.031 | (0.028) |
| **Fit statistics** | | | | |
| N | 291 | | 291 | |
| Df | 7 | | 8 | |
| AIC | 758.58 | | 757.28 | |
| BIC | 784.29 | | 786.66 | |

Note: standard errors are shown in parentheses. *p < 0.10. **p < 0.05. ***p <0.01

# Appendix E

## *Overview of the contribution of each co-author to the empirical chapters*

### Chapter 4

**PHD CANDIDATE BELLI SHARON**

- Led the conception of the study.
- Set up the methodology and performed coding and data analysis.
- Drafted the manuscript and carried out revisions.

**SUPERVISOR: PETER BURSENS**

- Provided feedback on the study.
- Conducted a critical revision of the manuscript.

### Chapter 5

**PHD CANDIDATE BELLI SHARON**

- Led the conception of the study.
- Set up the methodology and performed coding and data analysis.
- Drafted the manuscript and carried out revisions.

**SUPERVISOR: JAN BEYERS**

- Provided feedback on the study.
- Supported data analysis.
- Conducted a critical revision of the manuscript.

### Chapter 6

**PHD CANDIDATE BELLI SHARON**

- Led the conception of the study.
- Set up the methodology and performed coding and data analysis.
- Drafted the manuscript and carried out revisions.

**COLLEAGUE: PHD CANDIDATE FREDERIK STEVENS**

- Collaborated in the conceptualisation and set up of the study.
- Assisted with data analysis and coding and provided critical feedback.

## Bibliography


Ackrill, R., Kay, A., & Zahariadis, N. (2013). Ambiguity, multiple streams, and EU policy. Journal of European Public Policy, 20(6), 871–887.

Adler, E., & Haas, P. M. (1992). Conclusion: epistemic communities, world order, and the creation of a reflective research program. International organization, 46(1), 367-390.

Agnone, J. (2007). Amplifying public opinion: The policy impact of the US environmental movement. Social Forces, 85(4), 1593–1620.

Albareda, A. (2018). Connecting society and policymakers? Conceptualizing and measuring the capacity of civil society organizations to act as transmission belts. VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, 29(6), 1216–1232.

Albareda, A. (2020). Prioritizing professionals? How the democratic and professionalized nature of interest groups shapes their degree of access to EU officials. European Political Science Review, 1–17.

Albareda, A., & Braun, C. (2019). Organizing Transmission Belts: The Effect of Organizational Design on Interest Group Access to EU Policy-making. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 57(3), 468–485.

Albareda, A., & Fraussen, B. (2023). The representative capacity of interest groups: explaining how issue features shape membership involvement when establishing policy positions. Journal of Public Policy, 43(4), 791-811.

Alvesson, M., & Kärreman, D. (2000). Taking the linguistic turn in organizational research: Challenges, responses, consequences. The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 36(2), 136–158.

Arras, S., & Braun, C. (2018). Stakeholders wanted! Why and how European Union agencies involve non-state stakeholders. Journal of European Public Policy, 25(9), 1257–1275.

Asai, K., Kawai, K., & Nakabayashi, J. (2021). Regulatory capture in public procurement: Evidence from revolving door bureaucrats in Japan. Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, 186, 328–343.

Austen-Smith, D. (1992) 'Strategic Models of Talk in Political Decision Making'. International Political Science Review, Vol. 13, No.1, pp. 45–58.

Ban, P., Palmer, M., & Schneer, B. (2019). From the Halls of Congress to K Street: Government Experience and its Value for Lobbying. Legislative Studies Quarterly, 44(4), 713–752.

Baumgartner, F. R. (Ed.). (2009). Lobbying and policy change: Who wins, who loses, and why. University of Chicago Press.

Baumgartner, F. R., & Leech, B. L. (1998). Basic interests: The importance of groups in politics and in political science. Princeton University Press.

Baumgartner, F. R., & Mahoney, C. (2008). The two faces of framing: individual-level framing and collective issue-definition in the EU. European Union Politics, 9(3), 435-449.

Belli, S. S., & Beyers, J. (2020). Access. A Note on Operationalization and Measurements. ECPR General Conference. https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/PaperDetails/54891. Accessed 28 May 2024.

Belli, S. S., & Beyers, J. (2024). The Revolving Door and Access to the European Commission: Does the Logic of Influence Prevail? JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 62(1), 186-20.

Belli, S. S., & Bursens, P. (2021). The revolving door in Brussels: A pro-

cess-oriented approach to employee recruitment by interest organisations. Journal of European Public Policy, 1–22.

Berkhout, J. (2013). Why interest organizations do what they do: Assessing the explanatory potential of 'exchange' approaches. Interest Groups & Advocacy, 2(2), Article 2.

Berkhout, J., Hanegraaff, M. and Braun, C. (2018) 'Is the EU Different? Comparing the Diversity of National and EU-level Systems of Interest Organizations'. West European Politics, Vol. 40, No. 5, pp. 1109–11—31.

Berkhout, J., Hanegraaff, M., & Maloney, W. A. (2021). Looking for 'Voice'in Business and Citizen Groups: Who's Being Heard? Political Studies, 00323217211019318.

Bernstein, M. H. (2015). Regulating business by independent commission (Vol. 2324). Princeton University Press.

Bertrand, M., Bombardini, M., & Trebbi, F. (2014). Is It Whom You Know or What You Know? An Empirical Assessment of the Lobbying Process. American Economic Review, 104(12), 3885–3920.

Beyers, J. (2002). Gaining and seeking access: The European adaptation of domestic interest associations. European Journal of Political Research, 41(5), 585–612.

Beyers, J. (2020). Influence. In The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Interest Groups, Lobbying and Public Affairs. Palgrave Macmillan.

Beyers, J. (2004). Voice and access: Political practices of European interest associations. European Union Politics, 5(2), 211–240.

Beyers, J., & Arras, S. (2020). Who feeds information to regulators? Stakeholder diversity in European Union regulatory agency consultations. Journal of Public Policy, 40(4), 573– 598.

Beyers, J., & Braun, C. (2014). Ties that count: Explaining interest group access to policymakers. Journal of Public Policy, 34(1), 93–121.

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

Beyers, J., Fink-Hafner, D., Maloney, W. A., Novak, M., & Heylen, F. (2020). The Comparative Interest Group-survey project: Design, practical lessons, and data sets. Interest Groups & Advocacy, 9(3), 272–289.

Beyers, J., & Kerremans, B. (2004). Bureaucrats, Politicians, and Societal Interests: How Is European Policy-making Politicized? Comparative Political Studies, 37(10), Article 10.

Binderkrantz, A. (2005). Interest Group Strategies: Navigating between Privileged Access and Strategies of Pressure. Political—Studies, 53(4), 694–715.

Binderkrantz, A., Christiansen, P. M., & Pedersen, H. H. (2015). Interest Group Access to the Bureaucracy, Parliament, and the Media. Governance, 28(1), Article 1.

Binderkrantz, A., Pedersen, H. H., & Beyers, J. (2017). What is access? A discussion of the definition and measurement of interest group access. European Political Science, 16(3), 306–321.

Binderkrantz, A. S. (2009). Membership recruitment and internal democracy in interest groups: Do group–membership relations vary between group types? West European Politics, 32(3), 657–678.

Binderkrantz, A. S., Christiansen, P. M., & Pedersen, H. H. (2015). Interest Group Access to the Bureaucracy, Parliament, and the Media: Interest Group Access. Governance, 28(1), 95–112.

Binderkrantz, A. S., Pedersen, E. H., & Beyers, J. (2017). What is access? A discussion of the definition and measurement of interest group access. European Political Science, 16, 306–321.

Binderkrantz Skorkjær, A., & Pedersen, H. H. (2020). Interest Group Access. In The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Interest Groups, Lobbying and Public Affairs (pp. 1–6). Springer International Publishing.

Blanes i Vidal, J., Draca, M., & Fons-Rosen, C. (2012a). Revolving Door Lobbyists. American Economic Review, 102(7), 3731–3748.

Bolleyer, N., & Correa, P. (2020). Member Influence and Involvement in Civil Society Organizations: A Resource Dependency Perspective on Groups and Parties. Political Studies, 0032321720968018.

Bolton, A., & McCrain, J. (2023). A foot out the door: What drives bureaucratic exit into lobbying careers? Political Science Research and Methods, 1–20.

Bouwen, P. (2002). Corporate lobbying in the European Union: The logic of access. Journal of European Public Policy, 9(3), 365–390.

Bouwen, P. (2004). Exchanging access goods for access: A comparative study of business lobbying in the European Union institutions. European Journal of Political Research, 43(3), 337–369.

Brans, M., & Peters, B. G. (Eds.). (2012). Rewards for high public office in Europe and North America (Vol. 9). London: Routledge.

Braun, C. (2012). The Captive or the Broker? Explaining Public Agency-Interest Group Interactions. Governance, 25(2), 291–314.

Brooks, J., McCluskey, S., Turley, E., & King, N. (2015). The utility of template analysis in qualitative psychology research. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 12(2), 202–222.

Broscheid, A., & Coen, D. (2003). Insider and outsider lobbying of the European Commission: An informational model of forum politics. European Union Politics, 4(2), 165–189.

Bunea, A. (2018). Legitimacy through targeted transparency? Regulatory effectiveness and sustainability of lobbying regulation in the European Union. European Journal of Political Research, 57(2), 378–403.

Bunea, A. (2019). Regulating European Union lobbying: In whose interest? Journal of European Public Policy, 26(11), 1579–1599.

Cain, B. E., & Drutman, L. (2014). Congressional staff and the revolving door: The impact of regulatory change. Election Law Journal, 13(1), 27–44.

Carpenter, D. (2014). Detecting and measuring capture. In Preventing regulatory capture: Special interest influence and how to limit it (pp. 57–68). Cambridge University Press New York.

Cerrillo-i-Martínez, A. (2017). Beyond Revolving Doors: The Prevention of Conflicts of Interests Through Regulation. Public Integrity, 19(4), 357–373.

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

Chalmers, A. W. (2019). Informational lobbying in the EU: Mechanisms of probity, dissembling, and transparency. In Lobbying in the European Union (pp. 65–79). Springer.

Chalmers, A. W., Klingler-Vidra, R., Puglisi, A., & Remke, L. (2022). In and out of revolving doors in European Union financial regulatory authorities. Regulation & Governance, 16(4), 1233–1249.

Chari, R., Hogan, J., Murphy, G., & Crepaz, M. (2020). Regulating lob-

bying: A global comparison. In Regulating lobbying (second edition). Manchester University Press. Chari, R., Murphy, G., & Hogan, J. (2007). Regulating Lobbyists: A Comparative Analysis of

the United States, Canada, Germany and the European Union. The Political Quarterly, 78(3), 422–438.

Che, Y.-K. (1995). Revolving doors and the optimal tolerance for agency collusion. The Rand Journal of Economics, 378–397.

Cheal, D. (2015). The gift economy. Routledge.

Chetkovich, C., & Frumkin, P. (2003). Balancing margin and mission: Nonprofit competition in charitable versus fee-based programs. Administration & Society, 35(5), 564–596. Cini, M. (2008). European Commission reform and the origins of the European Transparency Initiative. Journal of European Public Policy, 15(5), 743–760.

Clausen, J., & Can, V. (2011). Block the revolving door: Why we need to stop EU officials becoming lobbyists (pp. 1–32). ALTER-EU.

Coen, D. (2007). Empirical and theoretical studies in EU lobbying. Journal of European Public Policy, 14(3), 333–345.

Coen, D., & Katsaitis, A. (2013). Chameleon pluralism in the EU: An empirical study of the European Commission interest group density and diversity across policy domains. Journal of European Public Policy, 20(8), 1104–1119.

Coen, D., & Richardson, J. (Eds.). (2009). Lobbying the European Union: institutions, actors, and issues. OUP Oxford.

Coen, D., & Vannoni, M. (2016). Sliding doors in Brussels: A career path analysis of EU affairs managers. European Journal of Political Research, 55(4), 811–826.

Coen, D., & Vannoni, M. (2018). The Strategic Management of Government Affairs in Brussels. Business & Society, 59(4), 612–641.

Coen, D., & Vannoni, M. (2020). Where Are the Revolving Doors in Brussels? Sector Switching and Career Progression in EU Business–Government Affairs. The American Review of Public Administration, 50(1), 3–17.

Cohen, J E. (1986). The Dynamics of the" Revolving Door" on the FCC. American Journal of Political Science, 689–708.

Commission of the European Communities. (2001) European Governance. A White Paper. COM (2001)428 final. (Brussels: CEC).

Crepaz, M., Hanegraaff, M., & Junk, W. M. (2022). Is There a First Mover Advantage in Lobbying? A Comparative Analysis of How the Timing of Mobilization Affects the Influence of Interest Groups in 10 Polities. Comparative Political Studies, 00104140221109441.

Crombez, C. (2002). Information, Lobbying and the Legislative Process in the European Union. European Union Politics, 3(1), 7–32.

Culpepper, P. D. (2011). Quiet politics and business power: Corporate control in Europe and Japan. Cambridge University Press.

Dal Bó, E. (2006). Regulatory capture: A review. Oxford Review of Economic Policy, 22(2), 203–225.

Deakin, J. (1966). The Lobbyst. Washigton, DC: Public Affairs Press.

De Bruycker, I. (2016). Pressure and Expertise: Explaining the Information Supply of Interest Groups in EU Legislative Lobbying. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 54(3), Article 3.

De Bruycker, I. (2017). Politicization and the public interest: When do

the elites in Brussels address public interests in EU policy debates? European Union Politics, 18(4), Article 4.

De Bruycker, I. (2020). Democratically deficient, yet responsive? How politicization facilitates responsiveness in the European Union. Journal of European Public Policy, 27(6), Article 6.

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

De Wilde, P. (2011). No Polity for Old Politics? A Framework for Analyzing the Politicization of European Integration. Journal of European Integration, 33(5), 559–575.

Dinan, W. (2021). Lobbying transparency: The limits of EU monitory democracy. Politics and Governance, 9(1), 237–247.

Divjak, T. and Forbici, G. (2017) The Future Evolution of Civil Society in the European Union by 2030 (Brussels: European Economic and Social Committee).

Dörrenbächer, N. (2016) 'Patterns of Post-cabinet Careers: When One Door Closes Another Door Opens?' Acta Politica, Vol. 51, No. 4, pp. 472–791.

Draca, M. (2014). Institutional corruption? The revolving door in American and British politics. SMF-CAGE Global Perspectives Series, 1.

Dür, A., & Mateo, G. (2013). Gaining access or going public? Interest group strategies in five E uropean countries. European Journal of Political Research, 52(5), 660–686.

Dür, A., & Mateo, G. (2014). Public opinion and interest group influence: How citizen groups derailed the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement. Journal of European Public Policy, 21(8), Article 8.

Dür, A., & Mateo, G. (2016). Insiders Versus Outsiders: Interest Group Politics in Multilevel Europe. Oxford University Press.

Easton, D. (1950). Harold Lasswell; Policy scientist for a democratic society. The Journal of Politics, 12(3), 450–477.

Eichenberger, S., Varone, F., & Helfer, L. (2022). Do interest groups bias MPs' perception of party voters' preferences? Party Politics, 28(3), 567-579.

Egerod, B. C. (2019). The Revolving Door and Regulatory Enforcement.

Egerod, B. C., & Junk, W. M. (2022). Competitive lobbying in the influence production process and the use of spatial econometrics in lobbying research. Public Choice, 191(1–2), 193–215.

Egerod, B., van der Ploeg, J., & Rasmussen, A. (2024). Organized Interests & the Revolving Door: The political and economic effects of hiring revolvers in the European Union. Eggers, A. (2010). The partisan revolving door. Harvard University.

Eising, R. (2004). Multilevel Governance and Business Interests in the European Union. Governance, 17(2), 211–245.

Eising, R. (2007). Institutional Context, Organizational Resources and Strategic Choices: Explaining Interest Group Access in the European Union. European Union Politics, 8(3), 329–362.

Eising, R. (2008). Interest groups in EU policy-making. Living Reviews in European Governance (LREG).

Elnayal, O. (2019). Firms and the State: An Examination of Corporate Political Activity and the Business-Government Interface (Issue EPS-2018-469-S&E).

Esterling Kevin M. (2004). The Political Economy of Expertise: Information and Efficiency in American National Politics (2007th ed.). The University of Michigan Press Ann Arbor.

Ferris, G. R., Treadway, D. C., Perrewé, P. L., Brouer, R. L., Douglas, C., & Lux, S. (2007). Political skill in organizations. Journal of Management, 33(3), 290–320.

Fisker, H. M. (2015). Dead or alive? Explaining the long-term survival chances of interest groups. West European Politics, 38(3), 709-729.

Flöthe, L. (2019a). Technocratic or democratic interest representation? How different types of information affect lobbying success. Interest Groups & Advocacy, 8(2), 165–183. Flöthe, L. (2019b). The costs of interest representation – a resource perspective on informational lobbying. European P—olitical Science Review, 11(2), 161–178.

Flöthe, L., & Rasmussen, A. (2019). Public voices in the heavenly chorus? Group type bias and opinion representation. Journal of European Public Policy, 26(6), 824–842.

Fraussen, B., & Beyers, J. (2016). Who's in and who's out?: Explaining access to policymakers in Belgium. Acta Politica, 51(2), 214–236.

Fraussen, B., Beyers, J., & Donas, T. (2015). The Expanding Core and Varying Degrees of Insiderness: Institutionalised Interest Group Access to Advisory Councils. Political Studies, 63(3), 569–588.

Fraussen, B., & Halpin, D. (2016). Assessing the composition and diversity of the Australian interest group system. Australian Journal of Public Administration, 75(4), 476–491.

Freund, D., & Yannik, B. (2014). Access all areas: When EU politicians become lobbyists (pp. 1–34). Transparency International EU.

Frumkin, P., & Andre-Clark, A. (1999). Nonprofit compensation and the market. U. Haw. L. Rev., 21, 425.

Gelman, A. (2008). Scaling regression inputs by dividing by two standard deviations. Statistics in Medicine, 27(15), 2865–2873.

Georgakakis, D. (2013). Conclusion: The field of Eurocracy: A new map for new research horizons. The Field of Eurocracy: Mapping EU Actors and Professionals, 226–247.

Georgakakis, D., & Rowell, J. (2013). The field of eurocracy: Mapping EU actors and professionals. Springer.

Gormley, W. T. (1979). A Test of the Revolving Door Hypothesis at the FCC. American Journal of Political Science, 23(4), 665.

Grande, E. (1996). The state and interest groups in a framework of multi-level decision- making: The case of the European Union. Journal of European Public Policy, 3(3), 318–338.

Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 11(3), 255–274.

Greenwood, J. (2002) Inside the EU Busines—s Associations (New York: Palgrave).

Greenwood, J. (2017). Interest representation in the European Union (4th ed.). Palgrave.

Greenwood, J. (2007) 'Organized Civil Society and Democratic Legitimacy in the European Union'. British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 333–357.

Greenwood, J., & Dreger, J. (2013). The Transparency Register: A Euro-

pean vanguard of strong lobby regulation? Interest Groups & Advocacy, 2(2), 139–162.

Greenwood, J., Grote, J. and Ronit, K. (1992) Organized Interests and the European Community (London: Sage).

Grömping, M., & Halpin, D. R. (2019). Does group engagement with members constitute a "beneficial inefficiency"? Governance, 32(3), 511–529.

Grose, C.R., Lopez, P., Sadhwani, S. and Yoshinaka, A. (2022) 'Social Lobbying'. Journal of Politics, Vol. 84, No. 1, pp. 367–382.

Hall, R. L., & Deardorff, A. V. (2006). Lobbying as legislative subsidy. American Political Science Review, 69–84.

Hall, R., & Lorenz, G. (2018). Revolving Door Access: Insider Ties, Legislative Allies, and Lobbying on the Afforable Care Act. Working Paper.

Halpin, D. (2014). The organization of political interest groups: Designing advocacy. Routledge.

Halpin, D. R. (2006). The participatory and democratic potential and practice of interest groups: Between solidarity and representation. Public Administration, 84(4), 919–940.

Halpin, D. R., & Fraussen, B. (2017). Conceptualising the policy engagement of interest groups: Involvement, access and prominence. European Journal of Political Research, 56(3), 723–732

Halpin, D., & Jordan, G. (2009). Interpreting environments: Interest group response to population ecology pressures. British Journal of Political Science, 39(2), 243-265.

Halpin, D. R., & Lotric, A. (2024). The place of political experience in lobbyist careers: Decisive, divergent or diverse?. European Journal of

Political Research, 63(1), 192-213.

Halpin, D. R., & Thomas, H. F. (2012). Interest group survival: Explaining sources of mortality anxiety. Interest Groups & Advocacy, 1, 215-238.

Hammond, S. W. (1984). Legislative staffs. Legislative Studies Quarterly, 271–317.

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

Hanegraaff, M., & De Bruycker, I. (2020). Informational demand across the globe: toward a comparative understanding of information exchange. European Political Science Review, 12(4), 525-543.

Hanegraaff, M., van der Ploeg, J., & Berkhout, J. (2020). Standing in a crowded room: Exploring the relation between interest group system density and access to policymakers. Political Research Quarterly, 73(1), 51–64.

Hansen, J. M. (1991). Gaining access: Congress and the farm lobby, 1919-1981. University of Chicago Press.

Heinz, J. P., Laumann, E. O., & Nelson, R. L. (1993). The hollow core: Private interests in national policy making. Harvard University Press.

Hennink, M. M., & Kaiser, B. N. (2020). Saturation in qualitative research. SAGE Publications Limited.

Herring, E.P. (1929). Group Representation before Congress. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Hertel-Fernandez, A., Mildenberger, M., & Stokes, L. C. (2019). Legislative staff and representation in Congress. American Political Science Review, 113(1), 1-18.

Heylen, F., Fraussen, B., & Beyers, J. (2018). Live to Fight Another Day? Organizational Maintenance and Mortality Anxiety of Civil Society Organizations. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 089976401878866.

Heylen, F., Willems, E., & Beyers, J. (2020). Do Professionals Take Over? Professionalisation and Membership Influence in Civil Society Organisations. VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit —Organizations.

Holyoke, T. T., Brown, H., & LaPira, T. M. (2015). Learnable skills, or unteachable instinct? What can and what cannot be taught in the lobbying profession. Interest Groups & Advocacy, 4(1), 7–24.

Hong, S., & Kim, T. K. (2017). Regulatory capture in agency performance evaluation: industry expertise versus revolving-door lobbying. Public Choice, 171, 167-186.

Hussein, A. (2009). The use of triangulation in social sciences research. Journal of Comparative Social Work, 4(1), 106–117.

Hutter, S., & Grande, E. (2014). Politicizing Europe in the National Electoral Arena: A Comparative Analysis of Five West European Countries, 1970–2010. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 52(5), 1002–1018.

Hwang, H., & Powell, W. W. (2009). The rationalization of charity: The influences of professionalism in the nonprofit sector. Administrative Science Quarterly, 54(2), 268– 298.

Huwyler, O. (2020). Interest groups in the European Union and their hiring of political consultancies. European Union Politics, 21(2), 333-354.

Jahn, D. (2016). Changing of the guard: Trends in corporatist arrangementsin 42 highly industrialized societies from 1960 to 2010. Socio-Economic Review, 14(1), 47–71.

Jenkins, N., Bloor, M., Fischer, J., Berney, L., & Neale, J. (2010). Putting it in context: The use of vignettes in qualitative interviewing. Qualitative Research, 10(2), 175–198.

Jordan, G., & Maloney, W. (1998). Manipulating Membership: Supply-Side Influences on Group Size. British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 28(No. 2), 389–409.

Junk, W. M., Crepaz, M., & Aizenberg, E. (2023). Fight or flight: How access barriers and interest disruption affect the activities of interest organizations. European Journal of Political Research.

Kalla, J. L., & Porter, E. (2021). Correcting bias in perceptions of public opinion among American elected officials: results from two field experiments. British Journal of Political Science, 51(4), 1792-1800.

King, N. (2012). Doing template analysis. Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges, 426, 77–101.

King, G., Honaker, J., Joseph, A. and Scheve, K. (2001) 'Analyzing Incomplete Political Science Data: An Alternative Algorithm for Multiple Imputation'. American Political Science Review, Vol. 95, No. 1, pp. 50–69.

Klüver, H. (2012). Informational Lobbying in the European Union: The Effect of Organisational Characteristics. West European Politics, 35(3), 491–510.

Klüver, H. (2013). Lobbying as a collective enterprise: Winners and losers of policy formulation in the European Union. Journal of European Public Policy, 20(1), 59–76.

Klüver, H. and Saurugger, S. (2013) 'Opening the Black Box: The Professionalization of Interest Groups in the European Union'. Interest Groups & Advocacy, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 185–205.

Klüver, H., Braun, C., & Beyers, J. (2015). Legislative lobbying in context: Towards a conceptual framework of interest group lobbying in the European Union. In Journal of European Public Policy (Vol. 22, Issue 4, pp. 447–461). Taylor & Francis.

Kohler-Koch, B. (2010) 'Civil Society and EU Democracy: 'Astroturf' Representation?' Journal of European Public Policy, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 100–116.

Kohler-Koch, B. (2009). The three worlds of European civil society—What role for civil society for what kind of Europe? Policy and Society, 28(1), 47–57.

Kohler-Koch, B., & Finke, B. (2007). The Institutional Shaping of EU–Society Relations: A Contribution to Democracy via Participation? Journal of Civil Society, 3(3), 205–221.

Kollman, K. (1998). Outside Lobbying: Public Opinion and Interest Group Strategies. Princeton University Press.

Kriesi, H., Koopmans, R., Duyvendak, J. W., & Giugni, M. G. (1992). New social movements and political opportunities in Western Europe. European Journal of Political Research, 22(2), 219–244.

Kwak, J. (2014). Cultural capture and the financial crisis. Preventing Regulatory Capture: Special Interest Influence and How to Limit It,71,79–81.

LaPira, T. (2014). Lobbying in the Shadows: How Private Interests Hide from Public Scrutiny, and Why that Matters. SSRN Electronic Journal.

LaPira, T. M., & Thomas, H. F. (2014). Revolving door lobbyists and interest representation. Interest Groups & Advocacy, 3(1), 4–29.

LaPira, T. M., & Thomas, H. F. (2017). Revolving Door Lobbying: Public

Service, Private Influence, and the Unequal Representation of Interests. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

LaPira, T. M., Thomas, H. F., & Baumgartner, F. (2012). The Two Worlds of Lobbying: The Core-Periphery Structure of the Interest Group System. SSRN Electronic Journal.

Lazarus, J., & McKay, A. (2012). Consequences of the revolving door: Evaluating the lobbying success of former congressional members and staff. A Paper Prepared for Presentation at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting,Chicago.

Lazarus, J., McKay, A., & Herbel, L. (2016). Who walks through the revolving door? Examining the lobbying activity of former members of Congress. Interest Groups & Advocacy, 5(1), 82–100.

Leana III, C. R., & Van Buren, H. J. (1999). Organizational social capital and employment practices. Academy of Management Review, 24(3), 538–555.

Lee, K., & You, H. Y. (2023). Bureaucratic Revolving Doors and Interest Group Participation in Policy Making. The Journal of Politics, 85(2), 701–717.

Lehmann, W. (2003). Lobbying in the European Union: Current rules and practices.

Lowery, D., Baumgartner, F. R., Berkhout, J., Berry, J. M., Halpin, D., Hojnacki, M., Klüver, H., Kohler-Koch, B., Richardson, J., & Schlozman, K. L. (2015). Images Of An Unbiased Interest System. Journal of European Public Policy, 22(8), 1212–1231.

Lowery, D., & Gray, V. (1998). Representational concentration and interest community size: A population ecology interpretation. Political Research Quarterly, 51(4), 919–944.

Lowery, D., & Gray, V. (2004). A neopluralist perspective on research on organized interests. Political Research Quarterly, 57(1), 164-175.

Lowery, D., & Gray, V. (2016). On the political origins of bias in the heavenly chorus. Interest Groups & Advocacy, 5, 25–56.

Lucas, K., Hanegraaff, M., & De Bruycker, I. (2019). Lobbying the lobbyists: When and why do policymakers seek to influence advocacy groups in global governance? Interest Groups & Advocacy, 8(2), 208–232.

Luechinger, S., & Moser, C. (2014). The value of the revolving door: Political appointees and the stock market. Journal of Public Economics, 119, 93–107.

Luechinger, S., & Moser, C. (2020). The European Commission and the revolving door. European Economic Review, 127, 103461.

Mahoney, C. (2007). Lobbying Success in the United States and the European Union. Journal of Public Policy, 27(1), 35–56.

Mahoney, C., & Beckstrand, M. J. (2011). Following the money: European Union funding of civil society organizations. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 49(6), 1339- 1361.

Mahoney, C., & Baumgartner, F. (2008). Converging perspectives on interest group research in Europe and America. West European Politics, 31(6), 1253–1273.

Mair, P., & Van Biezen, I. (2001). Party membership in twenty European democracies, 1980- 2000. Party politics, 7(1), 5-21.

Makkai, T., & Braithwaite, J. (1992). In and Out of the Revolving Door: Making Sense of Regulatory Capture. Cambridge University Press, Volume 12(Issue 1), 61–78.

Malatesta, D., & Smith, C. R. (2014). Lessons from resource dependence theory for contemporary public and nonprofit management. Public administration review, 74(1), 14-25.

Malbin, M. J. (1980). Unelected representatives: Congressional staff and the future of representative government. Basic Books.

Maloney, W. A. (2015). Organizational populations: Professionalization, maintenance and democratic delivery. In The organization ecology of interest communities (pp. 99–116). Springer.

Maloney, W. A., Jordan, G., & McLaughlin, A. M. (1994). Interest Groups and Public Policy: The Insider/Outsider Model Revisited. Journal of Public Policy, 14(1), 17–38.

Marcoux, J.-S. (2009). Escaping the gift economy. Journal of Consumer Research, 36(4), 671– 685.

Mason, J. (2002). Linking qualitative and quantitative data analysis. In Analyzing qualitative data (pp. 103–124). Routledge.

Mazey, S., & Richardson, J. (2001). 4 Institutionalizing Promiscuity: Commission-Inter-est Group Relations in the European 9. The institutionalization of Europe, 71.

McCrain, J. (2019). Revolving door Lobbyists and the value of Congressional staff Connections. The Journal of Politics, 80(4), 1369–1383.

McKay, A. (2012). Buying policy? The effects of lobbyists' resources on their policy success. Political Research Quarterly, 65(4), 908–923.

McKay, A. M., & Lazarus, J. (2023). Policy Consequences of Revolving-Door Lobbying. Political Research Quarterly, 10659129231177648.

Milbrath, L. (1963). The Washington Lobbyists. Chicago: Rand Mc Nally.

Mihut, L. (2008). Lobbying in the United States and the European: New Developments in Lobbying Regulation. Romanian J. Eur. Aff., 8, 5.

Morse, J. M. (2016). Mixed method design: Principles and procedures. Routledge.

Mueller, F. (1996). Human resources as strategic assets: an evolutionary resource-based theory. Journal of Management studies, 33(6), 757-785.

Naurin, D. (2007). Deliberation behind closed doors: Transparency and lobbying in the European Union. ECPR press.

Nugent, N., & Saurugger, S. (2002). Organizational structuring: The case of the European Commission and its external policy responsibilities. Journal of European Public Policy, 9(3), 345–364.

Pattitoni, P., Petracci, B., & Spisni, M. (2015). “Hit and Run” and “Revolving Doors”: Evidence from the Italian stock market. Journal of Management & Governance, 19(2), 285–301.

Pollack, M. A. (1997). Representing diffuse interests in EC policy-making. Journal of European Public Policy, 4(4), 572–590.

Pollack, E., & Allern, S. (2014). Revolving doors and democratic challenges. IAMCR 2014, Region as Frame: Politics, Presence, Practice, Hyderabad, India, July 15-19, 2014.

Putnam, R. D. (2002). Democracies in flux: The evolution of social capital in contemporary society. Oxford University Press, USA.

Radaelli, C. M. (1999). The public policy of the European Union: Whither politics of expertise? Journal of European Public Policy, 6(5), 757–774.

Rasmussen, A., Carroll, B. J., & Lowery, D. (2014). Representatives of

the public? Public opinion and interest group activity. European Journal of Political Research, 53(2), 250–268.

Rasmussen, A., & Gross, V. (2015). Biased access? Exploring selection to advisory committees. European Political Science Review, 7(3), 343–372.

Rasmussen, A., Mäder, L. K., & Reher, S. (2018). With a little help from the people? The role of public opinion in advocacy success. Comparative Political Studies, 51(2), Article 2.

Redert, B. (2020). Stakeholder Mobilization in Financial Regulation: A Comparison of EU Regulatory Politics over Time*. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 58(6),

Ruggiano, N., & Taliaferro, J. D. (2012). Resource dependency and agent theories: A framework for exploring nonprofit leaders' resistance to lobbying. Journal of Policy Practice, 11(4), 219–235.

Salisbury, R. H., Johnson, P., Heinz, J. P., Laumann, E. O., & Nelson, R. L. (1989). Who You Know versus What You Know: The Uses of Government Experience for Washington Lobbyists. American Journal of Political Science, 33(1), 175.

Salisbury, R. H., & Shepsle, K. A. (1981). Congressional Staff Turnover and the Ties-That-Bind. American Political Science Review, 75(2), 381–396.

Sandholtz, W., & Zysman, J. (1989). 1992: recasting the European bargain. World politics, 42(1), 95-128.

Scharpf, F. W. (2009). Legitimacy in the multilevel European polity. European political science review, 1(2), 173-204.

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

Schmitter, P.C. and Streeck, W. (1999 [1982]) 'The Organization of Business Interest. Studying Associative Action of Business in Advanced Industrial Societies'. Discussion paper 99/1. Cologne: Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies.

Schlozman, K. L., & Tierney, J. T. (1986). Organized Interests and American Democracy. New York.

Seabrooke, L. (2014). Epistemic arbitrage: Transnational professional knowledge in action. Journal of Professions and Organization, 1(1), 49–64.

Seabrooke, L., & Tsingou, E. (2009). Revolving doors and linked ecologies in the world economy: Policy locations and the practice of international financial reform.

Seabrooke, L., & Tsingou, E. (2021). Revolving doors in international financial governance. Global Networks, 21(2), 294–319.

Seale, C. (2003). Computer-assisted analysis of qualitative interview data. Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns, 289–308.

Seale, C., & Silverman, D. (1997). Ensuring rigour in qualitative research. The European Journal of Public Health, 7(4), 379–384.

Selling, N. (2015). The revolving door in a post-corporatist state: The case of Sweden. Annual Conference of the European Consortium of Political Research in Montreal, August, 26–29.

Sgueo, G. (2015). Transparency of lobbying at EU level. European Parliamentary Research Service.

Shepherd, M. E., & You, H. Y. (2020). Exit Strategy: Career Concerns and Revolving Doors in Congress. American Political Science Review, 114(1), 270–284.

Smith, M. A. (2000). American business and political power: Public opinion, elections, and democracy. University of Chicago Press.

Stevens, F. (2022). Reaching out to affluent interest groups? Assessing the moderating role of membership influence across old and new democracies. Governance, n/a(n/a).

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

Stolte, J. F. (1994). The context of satisficing in vignette research. The Journal of Social Psychology, 134(6), 727–733.

Streeck, W., & Schmttter, P. C. (1991). From national corporatism to transnational pluralism: Organized interests in the single European market. Politics & Society, 19(2), 133–164.

Strickland, J. M. (2020). The Declining Value of Revolving-Door Lobbyists: Evidence from the American States. American Journal of Political Science, 64(1), 67–81.

Suárez, D. F. (2011). Collaboration and professionalization: The contours of public sector funding for nonprofit organizations. Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 21(2), 307–326.

Taylor, B. J. (2006). Factorial surveys: Using vignettes to study professional judgement. British Journal of Social Work, 36(7), 1187–1207.

Thomas, H. F., & LaPira, T. M. (2017). How many lobbyists are in Washington? Shadow lobbying and the gray market for policy advocacy. Interst Groups & Advocacy, 6(3), 199–214.

Thurmond, V. A. (2001). The point of triangulation. Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 33(3), 253–258.

Tyllström, A. (2021). More than a revolving door: Corporate lobbying and the socialization of institutional carriers. Organization Studies, 42(4), 595–614.

Truman, D.B. (1951) The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion (New York: Alfred A. Knopf).

Varone, F., Eichenberger, S., Gava, R., Jourdain, C., & Mach, A. (2021). Business Groups and Advocacy Success: Insights from a Multi-venue Approach. Acta Politica, 56, 477-499.

Veltrop, D., & de Haan, J. (2014). I just cannot get you out of my head: Regulatory capture of financial sector supervisors.

Viñas, J. E. F., Martin, C. J. G., Piqueras, B. H., & Escribano, A. M. I. (2016). Revolving doors: Are they valued in the Spanish stock market? Academia Revista Latinoamericana de Administracion.

Walgrave, S., Jansen, A., Sevenans, J., Soontjens, K., Pilet, J. B., Brack, N., ... & Loewen, P. J. (2023). Inaccurate politicians: Elected representatives' estimations of public opinion in four countries. The Journal of Politics, 85(1), 209-222.

Weiler, F., Eichenberger, S., Mach, A., & Varone, F. (2019). More equal than others: Assessing economic and citizen groups' access across policymaking venues. Governance, 32(2), 277-293.

Wengraf, T. (2001). Preparing lightly structured depth interviews: A design for a BNIM-type biographic-narrative interview. Qualitative Research Interviewing, 111–152.

Willems, E. (2020). Politicized policy access: The effect of politicization on interest group access to advisory councils. Public Administration, 4(98), 856–872.

Wonka, A., De Bruycker, I., De Bièvre, D., Braun, C., & Beyers, J. (2018). Patterns of conflict and mobilization: Mapping interest group activity in EU legislative policymaking. Politics and Governance, 6(3), 136–146.

Wright, J. R. (1996). Interest groups and Congress: Lobbying, contributions, and influence. Allyn & Bacon.

You, H. Y. (2017). Ex post lobbying. The Journal of Politics, 79(4), 1162–1176.